

ORBA Steering Committee Notes

May 22, 2017

Items for Discussion:

- Call to order
- Roll call
- Adoption of agenda
- Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting
- Report from the Chairperson (Harry Stone)
- Reports from the other committee members
 - update from Financial Chairperson (Brian Farkas)
 - update from Website Team (MeganThompson/Gus Drum/Chuck Somerville/John King)
 - update from AWI Liaison (Chuck Somerville)
 - update from ORBCRE Liaison (Chris Lorentz)
- Reports from the working group leaders
 - Sustainable Growth And Competitiveness (Harry Stone)
 - Water Availability and Management (Ted Lozier)
 - Restoration and Protection (Sarah Hippensteel Hall)
 - Enterprise and Infrastructure (Kari Mackenbach)
- Unfinished business (45 minutes)
 - Status of Thomas More College fiscal sponsorship
 - Status of proposal for Ohio River Basin Initiative
 - ORBA 2017 Summit agenda and logistics planning (Chuck Somerville/Chris Lorentz)
 - Outreach plan to engage more organizations/individuals in ORBA to collaborate on high priority challenges
 - Need for communications and public relations leadership
- New business
 - Louisville District USACE Stakeholders Meeting
 - Letters of support
- Adjournment

Call to Order

Roll Call

Present: Harry Stone, Laurel Cornell, John King, Chuck Somerville, Megan Thompson, Brandon Brummett, Richard Harrison, Jim Lazorchak

Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted by consensus.

Approval of minutes from the previous meeting

Approval of the minutes by consensus.

Report from the Chairperson- Harry Stone

On April 28 Richard Harrison, ORSANCO Executive Director, hosted Harry Stone, ORSANCO's Chairperson, and Chris Lorentz, ORSANCO Steering Committee Member and Thomas More College liaison on potential fiscal sponsorship to discuss mutual interests in effective relationships. In subsequent discussions between Richard Harrison and Harry Stone, ORSANCO expressed interest in working out the details for ORSANCO's existing collaboration to serve as champions of the water quality goals and priorities. In addition, ORSANCO expressed interest in participating in the Fall Summit with the exact role still under discussion. Calls are being set up with the Water Availability and Management Working Group Leader (Ted Lozier) and with the Summit planning lead (Chuck Somerville) to work out the details. Deeper relationships between ORSANCO and ORBA were discussed by the ORSANCO Executive. A follow-up meeting with USACE and ORSANCO is expected in June. Gus Drum, USACE (retired) communicated that Dr. Kate White provided an executive summary of the Ohio River Basin pilot study that was performed by the USACE with collaboration through ORBA. Dr. White also stated that the report would be available in May. It is noteworthy that they placed a memorial page in the report for Dr. Jeff Kovatch. Don Hopey, Environment Reporter for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette requested an interview about the executive summary of the Ohio River Basin Climate Change Pilot Study Report. The Chairperson declined for many reasons. However, this does suggest ORBA should have a policy dealing with interviews in the name of ORBA.

Harry Stone was invited by the USACEW Louisville District, to a collaboration meeting on June 29, 2017 in Louisville. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the Louisville District's priorities and missions and to gather input from stakeholders. USACE is going to be sharing their 10 year outlook, and talking about some of the overarching missions within USACE; regulatory update, navigation/infrastructure update, potential discussion on lake levels, and including discussing the Ohio River Basin wide collaboration. Harry Stone was told by COL Beck to anticipate an invitation to participate in the USACE Ohio River Basin Inspection Tour (ORBIT) in October. One of the major topics is expected to be the Ohio River Basin Planning Initiative where ORBA would be asked to provide our Initiative plans to stakeholders of the basin. This makes it vitally important that ORBA continue our planning process apace. The USACE has submitted the entire Ohio River Basin Initiative as a funded planning study request for FY19 (we still not know for some time whether or not it receives funding). Note that either the USACE would perform the work or would contract the support work for the planning. ORBA would not expect to receive the funding, but would benefit from the work of the contractor's support of the planning process. Laurel Cornell, Indiana University, John King, WVDEP, Terry Van Offeren, Rural Action, and Scott Hercik, Appalachian Regional Commission have recommended potential collaborative partnerships that are being pursued.

Reports from other committee members

- Update from Financial Chairperson (Brian Farkas)
 - [E-mail from Brian Farkas with financial information and with draft expense/travel policy was forwarded to the Steering Committee and Advisors.]
 - The draft policy will be discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting
- Update from Website Team (Megan Thompson/Chuck Somerville/John King)
 - John noted that searches for ORBA still go to the old ohioriverbasin.com site. Chuck reported that he had a student working on getting the domain name pointed to the new ORBA website. They are still implementing the fix.
 - John noted that there is an ORBA Facebook page, but that it has not been updated since 2015. It was speculated that this was set up and maintained by Carolyn Hefner.
 - John expressed interest in possibly maintaining the Facebook page.
 - ACTION: Harry will contact Carolyn about the ORBA Facebook page.
- Update from AWI Liaison (Chuck Somerville).
 - The AWI Board has not met since the last ORBA teleconference, so there was no update.
- Update from ORBCRE Liaison (Chris Lorentz).
 - There was no update.

Reports from the working group leaders

- Sustainable Growth And Competitiveness (Harry Stone)
 - Mike Saffran informed Harry Stone of a USACE proposal to engage Federal and State agencies and other stakeholders to develop a basin-wide digital atlas; graphical tool to facilitate access to best available data and resources information to support government and private investment decisions. ORBA was included in the proposal as a contributor to the proposal and study, specifically in helping form and lead an Ohio River Basin Forum of subject matter experts from government, industry and academia.
 - The Appalachian Region Commission communicated that they have a multi-state tourism advisory council that focuses on opportunities to enhance and strengthen Appalachia's tourism success. On the water side, they focus on the challenges and the opportunities facing commercial navigation along the Ohio River. Because of the multijurisdictional nature of this challenge, no one business, community, or state can successfully address the issue. Therefore, ARC is working with a variety of navigation and economic development interests to establish an Ohio River Corridor Coalition. Follow-up phone calls are being planned to discuss coordination and collaboration.
- Water Availability and Management (Ted Lozier)
 - The Chairperson reiterated the challenges of this working group. A teleconference with ORSANCO is planned to engage ORSANCO collaboration's leadership in defining goals, priorities and strategies related to water quality.

- Restoration and Protection (Sarah Hippensteel Hall)
 - No report.
- Enterprise and Infrastructure (Kari Mackenbach)
 - No report.

Unfinished business

- Thomas More College fiscal sponsorship document has not yet been reviewed by an attorney. Four attorneys have been unsuccessfully contacted. John recommended, with endorsement from Chuck, Wendy Radcliff - 304-346-3965.
ACTION: Harry to contact Wendy
- Status of proposal for Ohio River Basin Initiative
 - The Ohio River Basin Initiative is in the USACE 2019 budget request. The fate of the budget request will not be known until next year. There remains a possibility of funding later this year (FY 17 funding) under the USACE Planning Assistance to States.
 - In the meantime, ORBA is moving forward with the planning process.
- ORBA 2017 Summit agenda and logistics planning (Chuck Somerville/Chris Lorentz)
 - A preliminary draft agenda will be distributed to the Steering Committee and Advisors.
NOTE: This is conceptual for Steering Committee planning purposes only. Some of the proposed persons on the agenda have not yet been asked to participate.
- Outreach plan to engage more organizations/individuals in ORBA to collaborate on high priority challenges
 - As presented earlier, progress is being made contacting and engaging organizations to collaborate on high priority challenges.
- Need for communications and public relations leadership
 - The Chairperson expressed a need for policies related to letters of support and media interviews. Consensus was that the fiscal sponsorship should be completed first. Then the support and policies of the fiscal sponsor can be used to guide next steps, e.g., establishing a communications working group. The first task of the communications working group could be to develop policies, e.g., who has authority to speak for ORBA? Who is the backup? Another task would be developing the “message triangle” with key speaking points. Media training could also be initiated.
 - The communications working group might be formed and meet at the September Summit.

New Business

- Upcoming Events for ORBA Participation [For addition to the calendar.]
 - The annual meeting for the “Ohio River Basin Fish Habitat Partnership.” (<http://www.fishhabitat.org/the-partnerships/ohio-river-basin-fish-habitat-partnership>) will be held on May 31 and June 1 at Thomas More College. I believe this is an open meeting and Chris Lorentz plans to get them more connected with ORBA. I would encourage our participation.
 - Laurel Cornell, ORBA Steering Committee Member, recommended that ORBA attend conference and exhibit a future River Rally Conference put on by River Network. <https://www.rivernet.org/events-learning/river-rally/about/> (April 29-May 02, 2018)
 - Citizen Science in June [Get information from John King and add to calendar]

Adjournment