

Cuyahoga River RAP-Up

To the Cuyahoga River RAP Coordinating Committee members

From Kelvin Rogers, OEPA RAP Coordinator
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September 2007



UPDATING RAP COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP – YOUR RESPONSE IS NEEDED

In the past few years the federal and state agencies that support the Great Lakes RAP programs have focused their attention (and monies) on projects and programs leading to delisting the Areas of Concern. It is important that the Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) have an effective membership working toward this goal. It is equally important that we have a mechanism in place to report the progress that we make as we move towards delisting.

The RAP must concentrate its efforts in identifying, supporting and implementing actions that lead to the delisting of the Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) that have been identified in our Area of Concern. RAP staff and member organizations have been working on wetland inventories, habitat restoration projects, tributary watershed group development, drafting watershed action plans, planning navigation channel habitat improvements, and developing an effective reporting

mechanism for measuring RAP progress.

Major focus areas for the BUI delisting effort include:

- **habitat restoration**
- **tributary watershed stewardship**
- **dam removals**
- **sediment management**
- **combined sewer overflows**
- **navigation channel issues**

It is important that RAP membership be involved in these actions, as either direct sponsors or partners in their implementation.

In order to achieve these goals, it is also critical that RAP members contribute expertise in identifying and **obtaining funding** for staffing and project implementation. Members are also needed to establish effective **communication strategies** to engage other stakeholders and public officials. **Monitoring programs** must also be developed, funded and implemented in order to measure the success of completed actions

and activities.

In this light I would like to request that you review your appointment to determine if you wish to continue participation in the RAP effort and to identify the areas in which you will participate and contribute. Members are asked to attend regular quarterly committee meetings as well as work group or technical advisory committee meetings throughout the year.

By now you should have received a response form from me under separate cover. Please complete the form and return it to my attention at the address below by **September 28**.

If you already completed the form at the July RAP meeting – you do not need to send anything to me.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. If you have any questions regarding RAP membership or the appointment process, please feel free to contact me at 330-963-1117.

Kelvin Rogers
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Big Grants for a

Big Creek

The Big Creek watershed communities of Brooklyn, Parma, Parma Heights, Brook Park, and the southwest wards of Cleveland partner with Friends of Big Creek and the Cuyahoga River Remedial Action Plan (RAP) to develop a comprehensive community plan for the Big Creek Watershed. Community based watershed management helps reduce flood damage, decreases the loss of greenspace, reduces soil erosion and improves water quality.

The water quality of Big Creek, a Cuyahoga River tributary, is the most severely impacted of the tributaries within the lower Cuyahoga River Watershed. And, as recent storms have shown, flooding can be a major problem. In 2005 the organization Friends of Big Creek (FOBC) was formed to act as the Big Creek Watershed stewardship organization. The Cuyahoga River RAP was chosen as the organization's fiscal agent and the entity to prepare the comprehensive watershed plan for Big Creek.

The first phase of the Watershed Management Plan will enable data collection and analysis of information that will be used to identify and create a Watershed Inventory of the Big Creek Watershed and an Assessment and Problem Definition. Phase I costs are estimated at \$40,000.

In May of 2007 the RAP was awarded \$20,000 from an Ohio Coastal Management Assistance Grant that required a 50% local match. The local match was met after FOBC gained minimum commitments from the five watershed communities making up 95% of the watershed area:

Cleveland (\$6,000), Parma (\$5,000), Brooklyn (\$2,500), Parma Heights (\$2,500) and Brook Park (\$2,500).

Other project partners include Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Cuyahoga Soil & Water Conservation District, Cuyahoga County Board of Health and Cleveland Metroparks.

In August, FOBC and project partners were awarded funding for a feasibility study to connect the Cleveland Metroparks Brookside and Big Creek Reservations with a trail alignment through the City of Brooklyn. FOBC, Cleveland Metroparks and the Cities of Cleveland and Parma join Brooklyn as co-sponsors for the \$75,000 study (\$60k grant with a \$15k local match) funded by the federal Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TCLI) grant program.

The Big Creek Greenway Trail Alignment and Neighborhood Connector Plan will examine potential linkages with surrounding neighborhoods as well as Brooklyn municipal/office/retail areas. The all purpose trail network will provide a safe alternative mode of transportation for its users and identify opportunities for interpretive exhibits and ecological restoration.

Upcoming Meetings

Several meetings and events that may be of interest include:

- **The Great Euclid Creek Clean Up – September 15** at various locations. Contact Lynn

Garrity at 216-524-6580 ext 16 for details.

- **Euclid Creek Public Involvement Committee – September 28 at 9:00am** at Richmond Heights City Hall. Contact Lynn Garrity at 216-524-6580 ext 16 for details.
- **34th Annual Natural Areas Association Conference – October 9 - 12** in Cleveland. Visit the conference website at <http://www.naturalarea.org/07conference/>
- **CRCPO Board of Directors/RAP Steering Committee – October 11 at 9:00am** at NOACA. Contact Jim White at 216-241-2414 ext 307 for details.
- **Euclid Creek Watershed Council – October 18 at 7:30 am.** Location TBA. Contact Lynn Garrity at 216-524-6580 ext 16 for details.
- **Cuyahoga River RAP Coordinating Committee – October 25.** Time and place TBA. Contact Jim White at 216-241-2414 ext 307 for details.
- **Yellow Creek Watershed Committee – September 17 and October 15 at 7:00pm** at Bath Township Hall. Check out their website at <http://www.yellowcreekwatershed.org/index.htm>