Approved Regional Planning Commission Stormwater Advisory and Educational Subcommittee Annual Meeting Minutes:

Date: November 6th, 2025

Location: Fairfield County Records Center, 138 West Chestnut Street, Lancaster, Ohio 43130

Attendance: **Jonathan Ferbrache** (Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District), **Charlotte Solomon** (Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District), **Margaret Roberts** (Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District, representing Violet Township), **Lindel Jackson** (Hunter's Run Conservancy District), **Lauren Vires** (Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District), **Wesley Sluga** (Ohio Environmental Protection Agency), **Mitch Noland** (Fairfield County Engineer's Office), **Tony Vogel** (Fairfield County Utilities), **Josh Anders** (Fairfield County Utilities), **Jade Heizer** (Ohio Division of Wildlife), **Greg Butcher** (City of Pickerington), **Austin Lynch** (City of Canal Winchester), **Dick Miller** (City of Canal Winchester), **Josh Hillberry** (Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission), **Holly Mattei** (Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission), **Nicholas Eastham** (Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission), **Steven Wellstead** (City of Lancaster), **Rachel Morasea** (Fairfield County Health Department), **Nathan Ralph** (Franklin County Public Health), **Shaun Starcher** (City of Canal Winchester), **Mario Campos** (Public Citizen- attended with Jade Heizer).

Via teleconference: **Linda Nicodemus** (Licking Soil and Water Conservation District), **Adrienne Earley** (Ohio Department of Transportation), **Amanda Wolin** (Village of Lithopolis), **Nathan Wagner** (Walnut Township).

Liberty Township was not represented at this meeting.

Meeting called to order at 2:30 pm by subcommittee chair, Lauren Vires. Lauren introduced the purpose of this meeting and gave a brief description of the voting process.

Review of subcommittee voting rights:

Violet Township-2 members (Margaret Roberts is their designee when one is not present)

Liberty Township-1 member

City of Pickerington-2 members

City of Lancaster-2 members

City of Canal Winchester-1 member

Village of Lithopolis-1 member

County Utilities-1 member

County Engineer-1 member

Soil and Water Conservation District-1 member

Fairfield Board of Health- 1 member

Franklin Board of Health- 1 member

Lauren Vires asked voting members if they had any questions- There were none.

Meeting minutes from 2024 were reviewed. A change that needs made was noted in Dick Miller's statements from the roundtable session. The statement needs changed from "Southfork and George Creek to "south fork of George Creek" and "Heron Creek" to "Pickering Creek".

Jonathan Ferbrache motioned to approve the minutes with the changes noted above. Dick Miller seconded. The vote was taken. All in favor. Motion passed.

Lauren Vires opened the floor for public comments. There were none.

Adrienne Earley from ODOT gave a presentation on "Waters of the United States and Waterway Permitting Updates". She briefly described her role as working with water way permits and not storm water permitting. She works as a Waterway Permit Program Manager at ODOT under the Clean Water Act. She works with agencies in the state and 12 districts.

End of presentation- Dick Miller asked the definition of a navigable stream, Answer- there are different levels.

Wesley Sluga from Ohio EPA gave a presentation:

Wesley shared that there are 2 new inspectors in Central Ohio, Sullivan and Lauren.

Notes from Wesley's presentation: Referring to the shutdown, the state is not the same as the federal, federal EPA is critically needed for permit renewals. Chad Lucht, asked about new MS4 permits last year, to answer his question Wesley stated that new communities do not need to be added at this time. New communities will be added in the 2026 update. To be considered an MS4

community must have a separate storm sewer system, and need coverage based on the census data. April 1, 2026, is when the new MS4 permit is going to be released. The new permit will include changes to the salt storage and application section to be more education-based; not as much monitoring based. One of the things that will be the same is E-reporting (NOI (Notice of Intent), annual reports change in the future). The new 2026 MS4 permit will be sent out for public comments in December or January. Overall, the MS4 permit will not look very different.

End of presentation questions:

Jonathan Ferbrache asked when annual reporting of the "new communities" is expected to occur. Wesley responded that the Ohio EPA has about 6 months until they must have annual reports together.

Jonathan Ferbrache asked what is meant by "depending on degradation of water and population determines new communities named". Wesley responded that the EPA determines MS4 communities based on population which is around 1,000 people based on census/tract. The Buckeye Lake area has a minimum of 1,000 people but does not have a storm system. Examples of degradation are agricultural and urban runoff, pollutants determined by sampling, and impairment levels determined by micro and macro invertebrates. They are only looking at urban runoff, heavy metals and sediment. They cross reference the EPA report with runoff.

Lauren Vires asked for nominees for chair and vice chair-

Margaret Roberts nominated Lauren Vires to serve as chair. Josh Anders seconded. Vote was taken. All in favor. Motion approved.

Margaret Roberts nominated Charlotte Solomon to serve as vice chair. Dick Miller seconded. All in favor. Motion approved.

Round Table: Lauren Vires opened the floor for round table discussion where everyone gave updates from the last year.

Virtual Attendees: Linda Nicodemus-Licking Soil and Water, no update.

Lauren Vires: FSWCD- Reached over 1000 Pickerington students, 128 Liberty Union students, and 176 Bloom Carroll students with stormwater and water quality education. She worked with Pickerington high school students during their field trip to Coyote Run to conduct an SQM survey in Sycamore Creek and got an excellent rating.

Jonathan Ferbrache: FSWCD- Involved in many stormwater initiatives throughout the community.

Charlotte Solomon: FSWCD- No comments.

Josh Hillberry- RPC, working on flood plain regulations.

Shaun Starcher: Canal Winchester- Working on chloride reduction grants, Equipment was received through a grant for salt reduction.

Dick Miller: Canal Winchester- Conducted a macroinvertebrate count at two areas north and south of the wastewater plant. They found that there were no dobson fly larvae, and there was an increased count of red midges. There was an increase in woody debris in the stream and an increase in the bass habitat. They noted an increase in black vultures, common ravens and sandhill cranes.

Austin Lynch: Canal Winchester- No comment

Lindel Jackson: HRCD- Is working on upper Hocking flood management.

> Jonathan said that there is an assessment update in the books for the first time since the 1950's.

Margaret Roberts: FSWCD- culvert inspection program is progressing using NOVOGOV road and storm system. Drainage Erosion Sediment Control (DESC) regulations were updated and will become active Jan 1, 2026.

Wesley Sluga: Ohio EPA- No additional comments.

Mario Campos: Public Citizen- No comment other than he is excited to hear all that is going on.

Jade Heizer: Fairfield County Wildlife Officer- Still focusing on stream litter, dumping and fish kills. ODNR had an incident of milk in a stream but no reported fish kill. Jade expressed concerns she heard concerning Old Columbus Road wetlands and operations for an apartment complex. There are concerns from the public about the nearby wetlands and tailwaters where an apartment complex would be built and there is also a bald eagle nest in the area. Division of wildlife has determined the bald eagle nest is not close enough to raise concerns.

> Jonathan mentioned the dye test the EPA conducted at a tile due to fuel spill off Marcy Road, this week that occurred.

Greg Butcher: City of Pickerington- Thanked FSWCD and Franklin Health for the MS4 audit preparation help.

Josh Anders: Fairfield County Utilities took one house in the Sycamore Creek region off septic.

Nathan Ralph: Franklin County Public Health- Helped with the Pickerington audit preparation and determined about 20 aerators are in the city still.

Rachel Morasea: Fairfield County Health Department- Continues inspections in the MS4 area, Violet and Liberty Township.

Steven Wellstead: City of Lancaster- MS4 audit identified some outdated SWPPP facilities. The city finished a sanitary overflow project last month on East Main.

Mitch Noland: Fairfield County Engineers Office- mapping the Drainage Maintenance District (DMD) systems and culverts and finding missing drainage in rights-of-way has been a focus in 2025. Fairfield County Engineers office converted from Pub-Works to NOVOGOV. Nick Dilley is the new GIS manager at Fairfield County Engineers' Office.

Holly Mattei: RPC- No comments

Nicholas Eastham: RPC- FSWCD will be onboarding with RPC for lot split reviews.

Questions: Lauren Vires FSWCD asked the group if there were any last concerns or questions.

Adrienne Earley – asked how often the meeting occurs? Lauren Vires answered that it is held annually. Adrienne Earley asked about topics for next year's meeting and suggested presenting research on culverts.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dick Miller. Josh Anders seconded. Vote was taken. All in Favor. Motion approved. Meeting ended at 3:45 pm.