

Chapter 10

Ongoing Areawide Water Quality Management Planning

This chapter describes, in turn, NOACA’s organizational structure for administering the areawide water quality management plan (208 Plan), its water quality planning functions, and agency policies for sustaining the ongoing planning process.

I. Organizational Structure of Areawide Management Planning

NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY (NOACA)

Ultimate responsibility for 208 Plan administration in the NOACA 208 Planning area is vested in the NOACA Governing Board which has been so designated by the Governor of Ohio. The NOACA Governing Board is composed of 37 local public officials who represent the counties, cities, villages, townships and key regional agencies within the five-county area. The NOACA Board includes the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District whose representative is a voting member and the chief of Ohio EPA’s Northeast Ohio District Office who serves as a non-voting ex-officio member. The composition of the NOACA Governing Board is spelled out in its Code of Regulations.

The Code of Regulations established the NOACA Environmental Advisory Committee as a standing committee of the Governing Board with the following charge:

Advising the Board and staff in developing the agency’s water quality management planning program;

Advising the Board and staff in identifying areawide goals, objectives and strategies for guiding water quality management improvements for the area.

Reviewing and Commenting on updates to the NOACA 208 Water Quality Plan.

The composition of the NOACA Environmental Advisory Committee and its subcommittees are spelled out in the NOACA Code of Regulations. The EAC includes at a minimum five Board members with a representative from among the jurisdictions in each member county, a representative of the area’s county health agencies, the area’s sanitary engineers, the area’s soil and water conservation districts, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and the City of Cleveland. The Board has also established a Water Quality Subcommittee of the NOACA EAC whose members include at a minimum seven members, including three Board members from different counties and four representatives of local water quality management agencies. The chief of Ohio EPA’s Northeast Ohio District Office serves as a non-voting member of the EAC.

II. Water Quality Planning Functions

The NOACA Board has adopted the following as a statement of its water quality planning functions. These functions are consistent with state and federal regulations and help to guide development of the agency work program. NOACA:

- a) Maintains the Section 208 Continuing Planning Process for the planning area in cooperation with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and coordinates planning with adjacent regions sharing common watersheds.
- b) Serves as a regional policy forum for the identification, discussion and resolution of water quality management planning issues confronting local communities and "Designated Management Agencies". (i.e., Agencies designated to perform water quality management functions under the 208 Plan.)
- c) Coordinates water quality information sharing among "Designated Management Agencies" and reports regional water quality trends and conditions.
- d) Assists "Designated Management Agencies" in planning and program development in cooperation with federal and state agencies. These plans and programs address public wastewater treatment, home sewage, package plants, storm water permits, nonpoint source management (such as storm water management and sediment control programs in urban areas and erosion control practices in rural areas), groundwater protection, wetlands, and other water quality strategies.
- e) Periodically updates plan elements addressing wastewater treatment management, home sewage, and nonpoint source controls.
- f) Plans and coordinates, in cooperation with Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and "Designated Management Agencies" water quality management planning in watersheds subject to remedial action plans. (RAPs are plans to restore and protect water quality required by the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement).
- g) Conducts limited field investigations of water quality conditions in cooperation with Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and "Designated Management Agencies".
- h) Assists "Designated Management Agencies" in identifying funds to carry out water quality management needs.
- i) Seeks to build public awareness of water quality management issues through public education and communications, and
- j) Advocates the interests of the region, and NOACA's members in particular, in support of water quality management goals for Northeast Ohio.

III. Ongoing Planning Policies for this Water Quality Management Plan Update

The following policies describe functions needed to administer and sustain the 208 Plan on a continuing basis. Staff and financial support will be needed to sustain ongoing planning activities. With the adoption of this plan update, the NOACA Governing Board reaffirms its intention to sustain this effort.

A. Wastewater Management Planning Support

Policy 10-1: The areawide planning agency will review applications for state revolving funds for wastewater treatment and advise the applicant agency and Ohio EPA on the consistency of such applications with the 208 Plan.

Policy 10-2: In consultation with Ohio EPA, the areawide planning agency will review permits to install for new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities for consistency with the 208 Plan.

Policy 10-3: The areawide planning agency will obtain review and comment through the Intergovernmental Review (IGR) process and forward results to appropriate agencies upon federal grant applications with potential water quality impacts.

Policy 10-4: The areawide planning agency will assist in the resolution of conflicts between management agencies concerning primacy for wastewater treatment management and facility planning. This would extend to conflicts between facility planning areas with respect to coordination of sewer planning. Means such as the following would be utilized:

- (a) serve as a third party, listening to all sides of a dispute concerning water quality management planning functions; and
- (b) establish an ad hoc fact-finding committee which would also recommend courses of action to appropriate officials.

Policy 10-5: The areawide planning agency will periodically update population projections and inventory land uses to guide ongoing facility planning efforts.

Policy 10-6: The areawide planning agency will maintain and update as necessary base maps of facility planning areas.

Policy 10-7: The areawide planning agency will consider new facility planning areas in response to requests from designated management agencies.

B. Management of Home Sewage Disposal Systems

Policy 10-8: The areawide planning agency will sponsor periodic forums of area local health departments to assess progress in plan implementation.

Policy 10-9: The areawide planning agency will provide planning support for the preparation of septage disposal management plans.

C. Nonpoint Source and Storm Water Management

Policy 10-10: The areawide planning agency will periodically review and update nonpoint source and storm water management model legislation.

D. Protection of Critical Water Resources

Policy 10-11: The areawide planning agency will coordinate local proposals for assimilative capacity set asides.

Policy 10-12: The areawide planning agency will periodically review and update critical water resource listings.

Policy 10-13: The areawide planning agency will maintain and update as necessary base maps of critical resource areas.

E. Watershed Planning Groups

Policy 10-14: The areawide planning agency will support and assist in the coordination of watershed level planning activities including administrative support of the Remedial Action Plans in Northeast Ohio.

F. Urban Streams Restoration Planning

Policy 10-15: The areawide planning agency will provide planning support for the urban streams restoration planning process.

G. Administrative Planning Support

Policy 10-16: The areawide planning agency will periodically assess and report to appropriate authorities financial needs for area water quality management and planning.

Policy 10-17: The areawide planning agency will maintain liaison with and provide limited technical assistance to other water quality related programs operating or with the potential to operate in the planning area.

Policy 10-18: The areawide planning agency will monitor progress in implementation of the plan and periodically report progress to Ohio EPA.

Policy 10-19: The areawide planning agency will review and comment on proposed changes to water quality standards for area bodies of water.

Policy 10-20: The areawide planning agency will assist local governments and other local water quality management agencies in their efforts to implement recommendations of this plan.

Policy 10-21: The areawide planning agency will recommend certification or decertification of management agencies to Ohio EPA.

Policy 10-22: The areawide planning agency will periodically update its 208 Plan and submit the Plan for certification by the State of Ohio.

Policy 10-23: The areawide planning agency will provide an opportunity for public participation in plan development discussions.

Policy 10-24: The areawide planning agency will provide staff to coordinate plan administration activities.