



MID-OHIO REGIONAL  
**MORPC**  
PLANNING COMMISSION

111 Liberty St., Suite 100  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
www.morpc.org

## NOTICE OF A MEETING

### CENTRAL OHIO BLUEWAYS *ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP WORKING GROUP*

### MID-OHIO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION *VIRTUAL MEETING*

February 24, 2025, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

## AGENDA

### 1. Welcome & Purpose

### 2. Onion Bag Project Implementation Plan

#### a. Review

##### Discussion Points:

- Need for communities to provide step-by-step procedures for acquiring approvals and installations.
- Various installation types discussed, including freestanding, post-mounted, and flat surface options.
- Importance of matching community branding with installation designs was emphasized.
- Maintenance, restocking, and graffiti management outlined as straightforward but needing further detail.

##### Input Requested:

- Members were asked to review the draft plan and to provide comments or corrections by March 24, 2025.
- Specific assistance was requested to flesh out the "Acquiring Approvals" section.

##### Project Review and Feedback:

- Members and staff discussed the current draft state of the Onion Bag Project Implementation Plan.
- Member Miller highlighted incomplete sections and requested assistance from other Members to complete these, especially focusing on the community-specific approval processes.
- Members and Staff discussed the variability of approval processes across different communities and the need for a general guideline.
- Member Steck shared insights from the City of Columbus' experience with permit requirements and MOUs for maintenance. The process involved a significant amount discussion primarily concerning liability, maintenance, and the location for the installations. The Onion Bag installations in Columbus were handled through an MOU with Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, the organization responsible for maintaining the installations, underscored the need for clear agreements on maintenance responsibilities in the implementation plan.

**William Murdock, AICP**  
*Executive Director*

**Chris Amorose Groomes**  
*Chair*

**Michelle Crandall**  
*Vice Chair*

**Ben Kessler**  
*Secretary*

### 3. Next Steps

- Member Miller will continue to draft the Installation and Maintenance sections of the plan.
- Members Kaderly and Steck will provide examples from their experience to guide the "Acquiring Approvals" section of the plan.

### 4. Other Business

Member Miller introduced a discussion about an initiative led by The Nature Conservancy focused on zoning code updates.

- Purpose of the Initiative: The goal is to help communities incorporate environmental and conservation elements into their zoning codes. This could include formalizing riparian buffers and other measures to limit development in sensitive areas to improve environmental outcomes. The initiative is inspired by successful efforts in areas around Cleveland, specifically mentioned were the Chagrin Watershed Partners, who have actively incorporated environmental considerations into local zoning.
- Potential Scope of Updates: Although the primary focus is on zoning codes, there is also the possibility of including updates to stormwater regulations as part of promoting sustainable practices.

Member Miller encouraged the other Working Group Members to think about whether their communities could be potential candidates for these updates and to share any contacts or insights that might help advance this initiative. He emphasized the early stages of this effort and the flexibility in the types of environmental protections that could be included.

### 5. Adjourn

Please notify Lynn Kaufman, [lkaufman@morpc.org](mailto:lkaufman@morpc.org) to confirm your attendance for this meeting or if you require special assistance.

The next Environmental Stewardship Working Group Meeting is March 31, 2025.  
This meeting will be virtual; details to follow.

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission  
Remote Meeting

Environmental Stewardship Working Group Meeting


February 24, 2025

---

Members Present

- Dan Kaderly, Metro Parks
- Jonathan Miller, Burgess & Niple
- Broc Sehen, Madison Soil & Water Conservation District
- Pamela Steck, City of Columbus

Staff Present

- Lynn Kaufman
  - Jessica Kuenzli
  - Meghan Means
  - Karina Peggau
  - Edwina Teye
- 



[CENTRAL OHIO BLUEWAYS]

# **ONION BAG PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP WORKING GROUP

*MONTH DAY, YEAR*

# CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>PROJECT BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<i>NEED &amp; PURPOSE</i> .....	5
<b>ACQUIRING APPROVALS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<i>TOWNSHIPS</i> .....	7
<i>MUNICIPALITIES</i> .....	7
<i>NON-PROFITS</i> .....	7
<b>CHOOSING A DESIGN</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<i>SITE LOCATION</i> .....	8
<i>INSTALLATION TYPE</i> .....	9
<i>COLORS</i> .....	9
<i>SIGNAGE</i> .....	10
<b>INSTALLATION</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<i>SITE PREPARATION</i> .....	11
<i>SPECIFICATIONS</i> .....	11
<b>MAINTENANCE</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<i>RESTOCKING / SUPPLY</i> .....	12
<i>BAG DISPOSAL</i> .....	12
<i>STRUCTURAL REPAIRS</i> .....	12
<i>GRAFFITI</i> .....	12
<b>OTHER CONSIDERATIONS</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<i>LIABILITY</i> .....	13
<i>DISCLAIMER / WARNINGS</i> .....	13
<b>TIMELINE</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>15</b>

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the following individuals who volunteered their time in putting this effort together:

**Aryeh Alex**; Executive Director  
*Keep Columbus Beautiful*

**Doug Crandall**  
*Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries (FACT)*

**Lisa Daris**; Owner  
*Olentangy Paddle*

**Elizabeth Ellman**; Sustainability Coordinator  
*City of Bexley*

**Laura Fay**  
*Friends of Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW)*

**Greg Hitzhusen**; Professor  
*The Ohio State University*

**James Ramsey, PE**; Riparian and  
Environmental Engineer  
*Franklin County Engineer's Office*

**Broc Sehen**; Wildlife Specialist  
*Madison County Soil and Water Conservation  
District*

**Pam Steck**; Conservation Field Coordinator  
*City of Columbus*

Additional thanks to the following individuals who assisted with the project:

**Charles Casto**; President  
*The Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project*

**Darcy Maas**; Community Development Intern  
*Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*

**Dr. Edwina Teye**; Water Resources Manager  
*Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission*



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

DRAFT



# PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2024, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission reinvigorated efforts surrounding Central Ohio's waterways by convening a Steering Committee with a mission to:

*“To promote and preserve both recreational and environmental stewardship opportunities along Central Ohio's waterways by convening and collaborating with local communities and partners on expanding safe and sustainable access to – and education of – our region's rivers and streams.”*

The Steering Committee formed three working groups to advance these efforts (Environmental Stewardship, User Experience, and Water Trail Designation) and developed a list of three goals for each to work on in 2025. The Environmental Stewardship Working Group chose to promote environmental stewardship among both newcomers to water recreation and seasoned experts by focusing on three areas: the promotion of the Onion Bag Project, and the development of invasive species and native vegetation guides.

This document reflects their work towards the first of those goals.

## NEED & PURPOSE

Litter in our region's waterways negatively impacts residents by polluting the water, harming aquatic ecosystems, and disrupting their natural functions. It can release toxic substances – such as chemicals and heavy metals – into the water, degrading water quality and making it unsafe for drinking, recreation, and wildlife. Plastics and other debris can be especially harmful to aquatic life, leading to entanglement, ingestion, or habitat destruction. Over time, these effects can disrupt entire ecosystems and harm both the environment and local economies that rely on clean waterways for activities like fishing, tourism, and recreation. *As a result, keeping litter out of waterways is essential to protect those ecosystems and the organisms that depend on them, as well as the recreational user experience.*


In response, several areas began utilizing onion bags to prevent litter from accumulating in our waterways. Onion bags are especially useful in preventing litter by providing bags to recreational users to dispose of their litter during their waterway experience. At the end of the trip, users could then dispose of the bags, or even empty and reuse the bags. The onion bags were also beneficial in the event of a kayak or canoe tipping by being permeable and highly visible. The bags didn't float away and could be easily retrieved with all the litter still captured inside.

Examples of organizations utilizing onion bags are found in Arkansas and Michigan and originated in Ohio through the Paddles for Heroes nonprofit organization. Paddles for Heroes installed onion bag boxes along the Kokosing River in Knox County. As a successful pilot, the effort resulted in the formation of another nonprofit organization: The Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project.

This Onion Bag Project Implementation Plan was created to promote the installation and usage of Onion Bag Project installations across the region by breaking down some of the barriers that may be preventing the installation of these useful and beneficial boxes. Many communities have several questions regarding the installations, such as:

- Who needs to approve the installation of Onion Bag Project Installations?



- 
- Where are the installations supposed to be located?
  - Can the installations be designed to match the existing colors and organizational branding?
  - Who's responsible for maintaining the boxes?
  - If our community installs an Onion Bag Project box, what kinds of liabilities does the community take on?

These questions – as well as others – are addressed within. It's the Environmental Stewardship Working Group's hope that this guide will answer any questions your community may have and encourage the installation of an Onion Bag Project to help promote the removal of litter and improve the health of our region's waterways.

DRAFT



## **ACQUIRING APPROVALS**

Acquiring approvals for an Onion Bag Project Installation will vary by the entity which may own or operate the public access point. Guidance for each type of entity which owns or operated publicly open access points are delineated below.

### *TOWNSHIPS*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

### *MUNICIPALITIES*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

### *NON-PROFITS*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

DRAFT

# CHOOSING A DESIGN

The Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project offers installation services for the onion bag receptacles. Their services include some flexibility in terms of the type of installation, mounting and colors. Any entity wanting to install a receptacle should also take into consideration the exact location to site the installation as well.

## *SITE LOCATION*

Many locations are excellent choices when determining where to locate an Onion Bag Project receptacle; including the following general locations:

- Canoe/Kayak Access Points
- Large Boat Launches
- Popular Fishing Spots
- Multi-Use Path Trailheads

For the purposes of this guide, the focus will be on waterway access points, boat launches, and popular fishing spots. To maximize usage of the bags, Onion Bag Project installations are recommended to be located close to the primary point of use, but not obstructive to the purpose of the location, and as close to any trash receptacle (if available) as possible. In the event that trash receptacles are not located near the recommended locations of the Onion Bag Project installations, it is recommended that the trash receptacles be relocated to the recommended site for the installation. Considerations for each location are identified below.

### **CANOE/KAYAK ACCESS POINTS / POPULAR FISHING SPOTS**

Canoe/Kayak Access Points are characterized as smaller waterway access points that are suitable for watercraft that can be carried, and are generally located along smaller sections of Central Ohio's rivers and streams. Fishing spots are generally similar in design to Canoe/Kayak Access Points, but are likely located farther from parking areas and are not used for accessing on-the-water recreation. For either location type, installations should be located at either the parking lot (if available) or water access.

For parking lot installations, the receptacle should be located close to the main path leading from the access point to the launch point and as close to any existing trash receptacle as possible, if one is available. See *Figure 1: Parking Lot Siting* for details.

Installations at the water access should be located outside of the floodway or ordinary high water mark, and close to the path or trail that leads to the launch point from the parking lot. If a trash receptacle is available near the launch point, the installation should be located as close to the trash receptacle as possible. See *Figure 2: Water Access Siting* for details.

### **LARGE BOAT LAUNCHES**

The locations are characterized by access points for large, predominately motorized, watercraft, and are generally located at dams and reservoirs around Central Ohio. Installations should be located at either the parking lot or boat launch piers.

For parking lot installations, the receptacle should be located close to the confluence between the boat launch and parking area or exit from the parking lanes – but before exiting the parking lot. See *Figure 1: Parking Lot Siting* for more details.

Installations are primarily recommended to be located at the entrance to – or on – the boat ramp piers. The installation is recommended to be on the boat ramp pier if the pier is wide enough to accommodate the installation without impeding the pathway, or approximately 6 feet wide. If the width of the boat ramp pier is less than 6 feet, the installation should be located as close to the entrance of the boat ramp pier as practicable without impeding pedestrian traffic. See *Figure 3: Large Boat Launch Pier Siting* for details.

## **INSTALLATION TYPE**

The Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project offer different styles of construction for the receptacles. Each type of installation offers different benefits, and all may be suitable at any location depending on the location’s context. The different types of installation include freestanding, pole/post mounted, and surface mounted. See *Figure 4: Installation Types* for reference.

### **FREESTANDING**

Freestanding installations provide mobility in the installations and – while recommended on soft surfaces - are able to placed on any type of surface: dirt, gravel, asphalt, etc. The mounting post is stabilized between two horizontal posts and then mounted on wooding footing. If the installation is located on a dirt or gravel surface, it would also be anchored by four 12-inch landscape spikes for further stabilization.

### **POST/POLE MOUNTED**

Onion Bag Receptacles can also be installed on wooden posts or metal sign poles; new or existing. If there is an existing sign pole, the receptacle can be secured by bolt and nuts through the existing holes.

Alternatively, the Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project can install new wooden posts for the receptacles. Wooden posts are traditional 4x4 posts in two to three-foot post holes. To be more sustainable, environmentally friendly, and more easily related, no concrete is used. Dirt fill is tamped in tightly.

### **SURFACE MOUNTED**



Finally, receptacles can be secured to an existing wooden surface; such as a railing. The receptacle is secured to the railing with anchor screws.

*Figure 5: Installation Types*

## **COLORS**

The Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project will also paint the box to match the community or nonprofits desired color. It is recommended that communities request colors to match their existing community branding by providing the Onion Bag Project with a sample and RGB value of the desired color.

If the community or nonprofit does not have a defined color scheme – or otherwise does not want to use their community’s or organization’s colors, the following colors are recommended for installations:

<b>COLOR</b>	<b>SAMPLE</b>	<b>R/G/B VALUE</b>
Blueways		54 / 80 / 114
Greenways		13 / 99 / 51

## ***SIGNAGE***

In order to communicate what the receptacles are for, signage is needed. The Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project can include signage on a laminated 8.5 x 11 inch sheet of paper, or the community may print and utilize its own signage.

The sign supplied by The Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project is mounted to the receptacles with carpentry staples, and contains the following language:

*“This box is placed here by*

*The Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project*

*Please take a bag and use it in your boat for your litter. Do nature a favor and pick up any litter you find during your trip. When done, dispose of the litter in the proper receptacles and put the bag back in the box, or keep it in your boating equipment for next time you are out on the water.*

*Let’s keep Ohio’s waterways clean and free of litter.*

*Thank You Very Much!”*

The above message is preceded by The Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project’s logo and followed by a QR code, organization URL, and a warning to not leave trash if there is no trash receptacle present.

This message can also be modified for use on a community or organization provided sign. A modification used by the City of Columbus Department of Recreation and Parks was at the installation at Northmoor Park and reads:

*“This box is placed here by:*

*The Onion Bag Litter Prevention Project*

*Please take a bag and use it in your boat to collect and dispose of litter. Put the bag back in the box or keep it with you for next time.*

*Keep Ohio’s waterways clean and free of litter.”*

***Figure 5: Onion Bag Installation Signage***



# **INSTALLATION**

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

## *SITE PREPARATION*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

## *SPECIFICATIONS*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

DRAFT





## **MAINTENANCE**

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

### *RESTOCKING / SUPPLY*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

### *BAG DISPOSAL*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

### *STRUCTURAL REPAIRS*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

### *GRAFFITI*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

DRAFT





## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

### *LIABILITY*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

### *DISCLAIMER / WARNINGS*

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

DRAFT







# TIMELINE

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

DRAFT





# SUMMARY

[PLACEHOLDER TEXT]

DRAFT

