

OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION MEETING
Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge ~ Visitors Center, Oak Harbor, OH
March 19, 2008

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) meeting was called to order by the Commission Chairman, Sean Logan, Director; Ohio Department of Natural Resources, at 10:04 a.m.

Roll Call:

Sean Logan, Commission Chairman and Director; Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources (ODNR)
Tim Hill, Director's Designee; Ohio Dept. of Transportation (ODOT)
Chris Korleski, Director; Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)
Robert Boggs, Director; Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)
Brad Biggs, Director's Designee; Ohio Department of Development (ODOD)

Guests:

Vickie Askins, Citizen
Sandy Bihn, Western Lake Erie Water Keepers and Toledo Harbor Lighthouse
Doug Brewer, Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge
Earl W. Campbell, M.D.
Thured M. Campbell
Bill Carroll, Trust for Public Lands
Edith Chase, Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project
Dorothy Cibula, League of Women Voters (Cleveland area) – LEBC
Bob Chirdon, General Manager; WTOL-Channel 11 Television
Steve Davis, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service
Lynn Garrity, Trust for Public Lands
Bill Goodman, Grants Committee Chairman; Ohio Department of Agriculture
Gloria Green, League of Women Voters - LEBC
Edwin J. Hammett, Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office
Ed Hauser, Citizen – Cleveland, OH
Tom Henry, Reporter; The Toledo Blade
Tom Jackson, Reporter; Sandusky Register
Bill Libben, Ottawa County F.S.A.
Dr. Ken Krieger, National Center for Water Quality Research; Heidelberg College
Cathryn Loucas, Executive Committee Chairperson; ODNR
Duane Myers, Ottawa County Visitors Bureau
Bill Pfeiffer, Ottawa County F.S.A.
Chris Riddle, Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office
Bryon Ringley, STANTEC
Cathy Stahurski, Citizen – Cleveland, OH
John Watkins, ODNR – Office of Coastal Management
Jill Woodyard, Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office

BUSINESS MEETING

Chairman's Report

The chairman provided his report during the agency reports section of the meeting.

Minutes

Motion was made to accept the December 12, 2007 meeting minutes, as presented, with no changes. The Commission members voted all in favor and the motion carried to approve the December minutes.

Executive Committee Report

The Commission Chairman introduced Cathryn Loucas who will serve as the new executive committee chair replacing Vicki Deisner. Ms. Loucas is deputy director for ODNR's resource conservation efforts which includes the Office of Coastal Management, Division of Soil and Water, Division of Water, Mineral Resources Management and Geological Survey.

Revenue Programs

Ed Hammett, OLEC, presented the Executive Committee's quarterly report with good news from the Great Lakes Protection Fund that Ohio's state share earnings from year 2007 is expected to be \$624,650. The Fund, however, does warn that 2008 earnings will not be as good. A report on Lake Erie license plate sales shows that since inception of the program in 1993, over \$8.8 million has been raised allowing the Lake Erie Protection Fund to sponsor 266 research and improvement projects throughout the Lake Erie watershed, although sales have continued to decline 10% each year. Director Boggs, ODA, has offered his agency's Marketing Department to help revitalize the program with new ideas for promotion and marketing. Meetings with the Commission Office will be getting underway in April.

2008 LEPR (Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan)

A report was provided on the status of the 2008 LEPR in which the process is underway for the update. Some history and background was presented on the reports that have led to the development of the new LEPR. The first *Lake Erie Quality Index* (LEQI) released in 1998 (and updated in 2004) reported on the conditions of Lake Erie in relation to the quality of life enjoyed by Ohioans and included other components of the ecosystem that needed to be improved. A result of the LEQI was the development of the 2000 LEPR organized with the same 11 indicators that measured the environment, public use, land use and the economy. The 2000 LEPR served as Ohio's blueprint to improve the environmental, recreational, and economic resources in the Lake Erie watershed. It contained 84 strategic actions for water quality, pollution sources, habitat, biological, coastal recreation, boating, fishing, beaches, tourism and shipping. The LEQI reports and LEPR (and its progress reports) were the first such reports in the Great Lakes region and placed Ohio in the lead for planning and implementing programs for Lake Erie while measuring its impacts.

In December 2005, the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) issued a report on what needed to be done for restoring the Great Lakes. Ohio followed the GLRC with a series of actions (*Ohio's Lake Erie Action List*) including specific items to be accomplished during 2006 and 2007. This Action List continued Ohio's leadership in moving forward with the restoration of its Great Lake. After discussions with the Commission and Executive Committee members, a list of Ohio Priorities and Goals have been established to continue monitoring the progress of Lake Erie's restoration and will be reflected in the 2008 LEPR. Ohio's Priorities include: Aquatic Invasive Species; Habitat; Coastal Health; Areas of Concern/Sediments; Nonpoint Source; Toxic Pollutants; Indicators and Information; Sustainable Development; and Climate Change. Climate Change is a significant issue to be included as well as some missing issues such as wind power, ballast water, phosphorus reduction and others. Each Ohio Priority requires a 2008 Goal and 2014 Strategic Objectives. The agency tasks are: (1) March 28 – complete review of goals; (2) April 18 – agencies submit list of SFY 2009 & 2010/2011 immediate actions (distinguishing 2009 from the next biennium); and then (3) June 5 – bring a draft plan back to the Commission for action.

Grants Committee Report

Lake Erie Protection Fund (LEPF)

Bill Goodman, ODA and Grants Committee Chairman, reported that the majority of revenues generated for the LEPF come from sales of the Lake Erie license plates in which each plate sale includes a \$15.00 donation to the Fund. These donations are used to award grant projects. Mr. Goodman presented the Grants Committee funding recommendations for grant projects submitted for the Third Quarter FY 2008 in the total amount of \$57,872 and a Balanced Growth project in

in the amount of \$24,682. Motion was made by OEPA and seconded by ODOD to accept the

recommendations. The Commission voted all in favor and the motion carried to approve the following five grant projects:

- Case Western Reserve University for project entitled, *“Improved Estimates of Sediment Oxygen Demand”*, Gerald Matisoff, Project Director - \$14,992;
- Ashtabula Lighthouse Society for project entitled, *“Floating Access Ramp and Dock”*, Lloyd Bogue, Project Director - \$15,000;
- U.S. Geological Survey for project entitled, *“Turbidity and PAR Data for Refining the Nowcast”*, Donna Francy, Project Director - \$15,000;
- U.S. Geological Survey for project entitled, *“Turbidity Model at the Cuyahoga Valley N.P.”* Amie Brady, Project Director - \$12,880; and
- Balanced Growth Project to Cinecraft Productions, Inc. for project entitled, *“Best Local Land Use Practices DVD”*, Daniel Keckan, Project Director - \$24,682.

Future LEPF Program & Funding Priorities

The Grants Committee presented their proposal for the future LEPF program for SFY 2009. After analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Fund, the Grants Committee made the following recommendations for revisions to the program and were also supported by the Executive Committee members: (1) A portion of the grant funds should remain as is and available to fund a wide variety of projects addressing any issues identified in the updated LEPR. This would be a continuation of the small grants program up to \$15,000 per grant. Each year the Commission would determine the portion of dollars; (2) A portion of grant funding should be focused on specific Lake Erie program priorities. The Commission would determine specific priorities annually allowing the Commission to identify a larger priority goal and direct funds to achieve that goal; (3) An outreach component should be part of each project. This component would ensure that the results of the project are circulated through the proper agencies. The Commission agencies would play a role in passing information on to the general public; (4) An increased level of state agency involvement should be required for each project by designating an “agency advisor” to be responsible for working with the Commission staff and grantee in order to guide the project. The agency advisory would review the application, provide comments, review reports and provide guidance to the grantee. This will help to ensure the grant projects address state needs and the LEPR; and (5) Increased evaluation of the impact of projects should be required as part of each project. This includes requiring that each project provide qualitative or quantitative feedback on the project outcomes as part of the final report.

Finally, both the Grants Committee and Executive Committee recommended that funding allocation for SFY 2009 be determined at the June Commission meeting after the funding priorities are prepared in the 2008 Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan. Motion was made by OEPA to discuss the recommendations; seconded by ODNR.

Discussion: OEPA asked about the main recommendations being less of a “shot gun” approach and more of specific target approach while tracking the project. Tim Hill, ODOT, stated that this was an important component of the Executive Committee’s discussion, that the agencies would follow up and be on board throughout the project. ODOT thanked the Grants Committee for everyone’s willingness to come up with an excellent plan that gives flexibility and is a better way to market the program. The Commission members voted all in favor to accept the recommendations as presented and the motion carried.

Ohio Lake Erie Commission ~ Office Report

Balanced Growth Program – Implementation Update

Ed Hammett, OLEC, reported that it is a critical time for the pilot projects. Their PCA and PDA maps are being reviewed with local governments and the State Assistance Work Group members are waiting to meet with these watersheds. Two workshops were recently held in Findlay and Valley View for the Best Local Land Use Practices (BLLUP), and technical assistance has been applied for by two townships both with significant land use change areas. The 15-minute educational DVD is also underway for the Best Local Land Use Practices and will be completed by the end of June. Filming will take place as the weather breaks.

Coastweeks 2008 - Sept 12 – 21, 2008

Plans for Coastweeks 2008 are getting underway with event planning information going out later this month. The focus for this year's program will, again, be a strong emphasis on cleanup events along the Lake Erie shoreline, its rivers and streams. This public outreach program for Lake Erie emphasizes public awareness of the value and fragility of Ohio's Great Lake. Three major cleanups are among the annual events being planned: Clean Your Streams Day September 13; Dive! Put-in-Bay Harbor Cleanup September 15; and the International Coastal Cleanup on September 20.

2008 Ohio Lake Erie Awards

A call for nominations for the 2008 Ohio Lake Erie Awards will be released for this year's nominees. Application forms are available at the Commission web site. The awards were established in 1995 to honor Ohio's citizens and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to enhance our Great Lake. Since 1995, 13 individual and 13 organization awards have been presented.

2008 "Life on Lake Erie" Photo Contest

The Commission will conduct its annual "Life on Lake Erie" Photo Contest this year. We are seeking photos from along Ohio's Lake Erie shoreline and throughout its watershed taken during all the seasons between July 20, 2007 through July 8, 2008. There is no limitation to categories and deadline for entries is July 11, 2008. Contest flyers are available at the Commission web site or by calling the OLEC Office.

The next OLEC meeting will take place on June 5, 2008 and will be hosted by the Ohio Department of Agriculture at 8995 East Main Street in Reynoldsburg, OH.

Invited Report

EcoTrack 11 – Storm Center Project

Steve Davis, NRCS, introduced *EcoTrack 11*, a new collaborative project sponsored by the Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership, NRCS, The Andersons Market, Maumee Valley Growers, the University of Toledo and WTOL-Channel 11 Television. Mr. Bob Chirdon General Manager for WTOL – TV, presented an overview about this multi-media platform using the television station and WTOL.com to educate and inform viewers about how the quality of life and the environment are linked. Mr. Chirdon stated that WTOL is blazing a new path in northwest Ohio to keep viewers informed about important environmental issues that will broadcast during the weather reports. In September, the station will initiate a teachers program in which lessons can be downloaded for the week. Weather reporter, Chris Vickers, will be filming nature stories to give the viewers something compelling to see. Steve Davis reported that the EcoTrack 11 web site at WTOL.com will link to all the partner web sites and will be an opportunity for OLEC to feed stories through the content of the network to the station.

Agency Reports

Tim Hill, Director's Designee; ODOT, provided an update on the "Entering Lake Erie Watershed" signs to be placed on major routes identifying the watershed as you enter. Ten signs will be placed at routes with the highest traffic this spring including two additional signs at Routes 4 and 11.

Director Boggs, ODA, reported that the agency looks forward to hosting the next OLEC meeting in June. ODA will plan on setting up a tour of the laboratories following the meeting. The recent meeting with the Farmland Preservation Task Force and Advisory Committee resulted in making changes in the award of farmland monies. Balanced Growth PCAs will be get award points and in the next bond issue, the Governor is proposing to expand Farmland Preservation to be used for the Balanced Growth Initiative.

Director Logan, ODNR, reported that he was planning a field trip to Sheldon Marsh to view the American Chestnut that is a state champion with a 89 crown spread that has survived. Great Lakes Days at the end of February included meetings with Senators Brown, Voinovich, LaTourette and

Congresswoman Kaptur to discuss the Great Lakes Compact. On February 19, the Compact passed the Ohio House and is now pending in the Ohio Senate. It was also reported that the new Coastal

Atlas received the 2008 Environmental Education Award. Chief John Watkins, Office of Coastal Management, was thanked for his fine work.

Director Korleski, OEPA, reported that climate change is on everyone's mind and is becoming the environmental issue of our time. It was further reported that USEPA was ordered to promulgate the ballast water rules. A lot more work needs to be done this spring on phosphorus research to find out specifically where it is coming from. OEPA is the lead coordinating trustee with U.S. Fish & Wildlife on the Ottawa portion of the Maumee River. The area needs to be remediated and habitat restoration provided. He indicated that he would keep the Commission informed on this progress.

Brad Biggs, ODOD, reported that wind power manufacturing is a significant alternative energy sector with three potential clients looking at Ohio for a possible destination for manufacturing wind turbine equipment. ODOD is looking at solar power with Southern Ohio being in the solar panel business in a couple years. Ohio is doing as much as possible to create new jobs. A new high tech software solutions in Cincinnati will create 800 new jobs with 2000 being retained.

John Watkins, ODNR – Office of Coastal Management, provided copies of DVD's of the 2008 Coastal Atlas and reported that it is also available online.

Advisory Committee Reports

Edith Chase, OCRMP, stated appreciation for the support of the Great Lakes Compact. It was further reported that a PDA and PCA approach is needed regarding flooding with an important place to work on that in Findlay. Also, if there were stricter ozone limits, we would all benefit. A new report is out on the Great Lakes Cities Initiative that talks about measuring the local annual investment in protection and restoration. An executive summary was presented to OEPA stating that the federal government is spending \$650 million per year on the entire Great Lakes while local governments are spending \$15 billion a year. The federal government needs to step up its efforts compared to the states.

Steve Davis, NRCS, thanked the Commission staff for the work with the Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership (WLEB) and assisting with the recent meeting in Toledo with the Undersecretary of Agriculture and Chief of NRCS who were briefed on Lake Erie issues by Ed Hammett, Dr. Jeff Reutter, Dr. Pete Richards and the Port Authority. It was reported that NRCS would like to extend an additional year's work on the WLEB project. April 3 will be the next WLEB meeting hosted in Michigan and will announce the launching of a program to target conservation work in Michigan's portion of the Lake Erie watershed. The Water Withdrawal Atlas is established and online at the web site which reports how much water is withdrawn and used in Ohio, etc. The International Joint Commission Advisory Board is looking at the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. It is time to review the agreement and strengthen it and include those items not included previously such as nonpoint source control. This will be a long process and is being driven by the algae issues and resurgence.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Bill Carroll, Director; Trust for Public Lands, reported on Ohio Greenprint, a computer mapping service for conservation which is a key part of the Trust for Public Land's effort to help local communities develop a proactive conservation strategy. This GIS analysis gives communities the opportunity to look at specific properties, demographics, and will help envision practical solutions to conservation problems. Ohio Greenprint is available online (www.tpl.org) and recently was featured on WTOL-TV *EcoTrack 11*.

Sandy Bihn, Western Lake Erie Waterkeeper, thanked OLEC for funding the Toledo Harbor Lighthouse Project in which a dock and ramp will be installed this April providing the opportunity to promote tourism. A report was also presented on a form of algae (*Lyngbya Wollei*) being found in areas along the Lake Erie shoreline that threatens fish and habitat, and has been linked to fish kills. The algae changes the taste of the fish and covers the bottom of the Lake reducing important feeding stocks for fish while threatening water quality. Samples of the algae were distributed to the Commission members.

Vicki Askins, Citizen, provided comments on non-permitted animal feed lots (CAFOS) in Sandusky County and asked for attention to some of the troubling issues concerning monitoring of feed lots. It was stated that feed lots can pollute the lake, our prime source of drinking water. Ms. Askins offered her contact information if the OLEC members would like to call her or meet with her to talk more about the situation.

Ed Hauser, Citizen, provided a handout requesting ODNR to enforce the highest standards of the Ohio Coastal Management Program to the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority's proposals for expansion to the Whiskey Island Marina area and relocation to the East 55th Street Marina area. It was further stated there is a need for public hearings, a need to enforce the consistency requirements and that the property is held in trust for the people of Ohio for recreational activities.

Gloria Green, League of Women Voters – Lake Erie Basin Committee, thanked everyone for their efforts to resolve the problem on CAFOS and distributed a handout to the commissioners.

Dorothy Cibula, League of Women Voters – Lake Erie Basin Committee, asked Ohio to pass the Great Lakes Compact and stated a few people should not be allowed to contain the plan in committee. The Commission Chairman stated that four states have passed leaving Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ohio.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made to adjourn, all in favor, the motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 12:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*James Beasley, Commission Secretary and
Director; Ohio Department of Transportation
Prepared by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office
One Maritime Plaza, 4th Floor, Toledo, OH. 43604*