

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission  
Quarterly Meeting  
March 9, 2011  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

**Call to Order and Roll Call- David Mustine, Commission Chair**

Commission Chairman David Mustine, Director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)  
Scott Nally, Director, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)  
James J. Zehringer, Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA)  
William Murdock, Director's Designee, Ohio Department of Development (ODOD)  
Tim Hill, Director's Designee, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)  
Gene Phillips, Director's Designee, Ohio Department of Health (ODH)

**Staff Present**

Ed Hammett, Executive Director, Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC)  
Sandra Kosek-Sills, OLEC  
Kristin Gardner, OLEC  
Steve Holland, ODNR  
Liz Sands, ODNR

**Approval of the December 2010 Meeting Minutes, David Mustine, ODNR**

**A motion was made by ODOD and seconded by ODOT to approve the December 15, 2010 OLEC meeting minutes. The commission members voted all in favor and the motion carried.**

**Special Report: Lake Erie Issues, Dr. Jeff Reutter, OSU**

(available upon request)

**Special Report: Lake Erie Protections, Ed Hammett, Executive Director OLEC**

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission is made up of the Department of Agriculture, Department of Development, Department of Health, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. Its Mission is to Protect & Restore Lake Erie. The Lake Erie Commission was created to preserve Lake Erie's natural resources, protect the quality of its waters and ecosystem, and promote economic development within the region. The funding source for the operation is the Lake Erie Resources Fund, which is the return on investment from the Great Lakes Protection Fund. Grant funding comes from the sales of the Lake Erie license plate, the Lake Erie credit card and donations. OLEC also receives federal grant dollars (GLRI) and Ohio Coastal Management grant funds.

**Lake Erie Protection & Restoration**

The Lake Erie Quality Index is the State of the Lake report card on the quality of Lake Erie published in 1992, 1998 and 2004. The next report is scheduled for 2014. The index is organized into 11 indicators that measure environment, public use, land use and economy:

Ambient Water Quality (Fair); Human Exposure Risks (Good); Pollution Sources (Fair); Aquatic Habitat (Fair); Land Use (No Score); Biological (Fair); Coastal Recreation (Good); Boating (Good); Fishing (Good); Beaches (Good); Economy (Fair).

The Lake Erie Restoration Plan 2000 was the first of its kind in the Great Lakes Basin. It set the stage for the Balanced Growth program and provided strategic guidance. In 2006 the Lake Erie Action List was formed to organize the GLRC priorities. Then in 2008 the Lake Erie Restoration Plan and the Lake Erie Action List were

combined to form the 2008 Lake Erie Restoration Plan. The purpose of this *Plan* is solely to identify the strategic direction and the near term actions of the State of Ohio related to Lake Erie and its watershed. This *Plan* communicates what is being done and coordinates its action through the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. This *Plan* also provides a statement of what Ohio is doing to implement the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. A goal or goals have been established for each priority. Strategic Objectives which reflect those items to be accomplished through 2014 were then assigned to the goals and Actions toward these strategic Objectives for fiscal years 2009-2011 were established. Many of these actions will be dependent upon funding in the next Biennium Budget. This plan will help serve as direction for the state agencies as they prepare that budget request. Further action towards the Strategic Objectives in FY 2012-2013 will be determined through future updates the LEPR.

Ohio Priorities: Based on the GLRC priorities, added climate change, goals address long-term direction of our actions towards Lake Erie.

Strategic Objectives: Provide direction for actions through FY2014, state actions will make progress towards these, but will not get us there alone; funded projects should help us meet these objectives.

The Plan is organized into 10 Ohio priorities which includes the nine priorities established by the Great Lakes Governors plus the priority of "Climate Change" which was deemed of great significance to the Ohio Lake Erie Commission and worthy of being added.

GLRC and Ohio Action List Priorities: Invasive Species; Coastal Health; Areas of Concern; Toxic Pollutants; Habitat & Species; Non-point Sources; Indicators & Information; Sustainable Development.

Not in GLRC or Lake Erie Action List: Great Lakes Water Withdrawals; Climate Change.

A goal or goals have been established for each of the 10 priorities. 65 Strategic Objectives which reflect those items to be accomplished through 2014 were then developed for the goals. Actions toward these Strategic Objectives for fiscal years 2009-2011 were then identified.

We plan to do a review of the progress on the specific actions identified for 2009-2011 and report this to the Commission.

#### Example Project: Nonpoint Source Pollution

Goal(s): Reduce nonpoint source loadings to Lake Erie tributaries.

Strategic Objectives for 2014: Investigate approaches to remediation of harmful algal blooms (HAB's)

2009-2011 Actions: Develop an interagency effort to identify, track, and report on blue-green algal blooms and issues related to potential algal toxin releases. OEPA

#### Lake Erie Protection Fund

The LEPF focuses on projects which lead to better management decisions, both for environmental protection and economic development. Ideally, LEPF projects would serve to answer a management question, supplement a larger implementation project, or complete final evaluations of a process or concept prior to seeking larger funding awards.

Small Grants: Funding available varies each year, awards up to \$15,000, broad range of topics priorities, flexible, creative and pioneering, ideas research and demonstrations

Targeted Priority Grants: Funding available varies each year, FY 2009 Phosphorus Task Force, FY 2010 Two BG Watershed Plans, FY 2011 Tributary Monitoring and Toledo Harbor.

The bulk of \$1,560,568 awards (2007-2011) went to Nonpoint Source Pollution.

### Balanced Growth

Balanced Growth is linking land use and Lake Erie in the watersheds. The program is voluntary, led locally, incentive based and supported through the alignment of state policies and programs. Priority Development Areas are targeted for development and redevelopment to maximize development potential and efficient use of infrastructure and to promote revitalization of existing urban areas. Priority Conservation Areas are targeted for protection and restoration and identify critically important ecological, recreation, heritage, agricultural and public access areas. Priority Agricultural Areas are targeted for agriculture, to protect critical farmland and are optional based on local desire.

Four plans have been endorsed and 6 projects are underway.

The *Balanced Growth Strategy: Agency Action List* was adopted at the June 23, 2010 OLEC meeting. The state is actively working on maintaining and improving the program. The highest priority action is updating and enhancing the special incentives available to participating communities with state endorsed Watershed Balanced Growth Plans.

A review of the special incentives for the purpose of confirming the existing incentives and providing details on each one was completed in 2010. Details on the special incentives are on the individual program pages in appendix C of the draft Strategy and in a separate Special Incentives listing available on the website Strategy page.

The online version of the Inventory of State Programs was completed in 2010. The updated, detailed list of Special Incentives is available on line. Each category page lists 1-40 programs, with basic information about the program, a link to the program website, and a special incentive tag if appropriate. There are 150 programs listed in the Inventory; several of these are in multiple categories.

The second component of the Balanced Growth Program is the Best Local Land Use Practices. The creation and encouragement for use of these recommendations were identified as an action item in the LEPRP 2000, and this task was also undertaken by the Balanced Growth Task Force.

The review and update of these practices is a current action item and is already underway. The current revision will allow us to include recommendations for site redevelopment opportunities.

The Ohio Balanced Growth Program has been very active in the last quarter. A projects meeting was held in December. All projects have completed preliminary mapping and are moving into the local review and support phase. The next projects meeting will be held April 5, 2011 and we will discuss the Best Local Land Use Practices. A Best Practices workshop will be held in Claremont County March 10 to assist that Watershed planning partnership. The state agencies involved in the Ohio Balanced Growth Program are working on implementing the action items that were identified as part of the current Balanced Growth Strategy. The Ohio Lake Erie Commission and Ohio Water Resource Council have met with the state agencies and updated the Special Incentives list. The Inventory of State Programs is now available online. The Best Local Land Use Practices portion of the program is in a review and revision phase. Two meetings have been held with outside stakeholders/specialists. A plan and schedule of revisions has been developed. SAWG members will also meet in early 2011 as we expect to start the endorsement process for the Big Creek Watershed in the Cuyahoga River watershed.

Discussion: OEPA inquired if, since 1995, the Lake conditions have gotten worse are we effectively using the grants program to move forward on the problems?

Dr. Jeff Reutter noted the OLEC has supported two phosphorus research projects. The issue is trying to identify sources because they are mostly non-point verses in the 70's they when it was the point pollution sources. There

is a team of 25 scientists from 14 agencies presenting their research and results in March. The challenge is non point sources from agriculture and that farmers want to do what's right, but they need to know how. We suspect that fertilizer practices: how and where it's used has changed but we are still working on what can be done. Ed Hammett added that the state's Phosphorus Task Force evaluated the trends, identified additional research needs and the resulting recommendations should be announced this year. We should spend time on this issue at the June meeting.

ODA inquired if any sub-watersheds have been identified and is it livestock or grain? Significant contributions from the Maumee and Sandusky watersheds are the cause and it is probably a combination of both Livestock and Grain inputs. This contrasts with Grand Lakes St. Mary where animals are a primary source of nutrients.

**Executive Committee Report, Scott Zody, Assistant Director, ODNR**

The Executive Committee of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission consists of representatives from each of the Commission member agencies and serves as a guide for the work of the Commission staff.

The Executive Committee met on February 23 and discussed two actions taken at the December 2010 meeting and reviewed the two balanced Growth Grant proposals being brought to the Commission today.

Ohio RC Section 1506.21 requires the Ohio Lake Erie Commission to elect Chair and Secretary annually. This past December, the previous Commission designated a Chairperson and Secretary as required by ORC 1506.21. The Commission approved the ODNR Director as Chair and the ODOT Director as Secretary. While the 2011 Commission could change this action, the Executive Committee determined to leave these appointments as they were approved in December. No further action is needed as long as the Commission agrees to let this action stand as decided in December.

Again in December, the previous Commission established a meeting schedule for 2011 and identified locations for each meeting. March 9 ODNR (today's meeting), the June 15 meeting will be at the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge in Oak Harbor, the Sept. 21 will be at the Lake Erie Nature & Science Center in Bay Village and the Dec. 14 meeting will be back in Columbus at the Ohio EPA.

While the 2011 Commission could change this action, the Executive Committee determined to leave these dates and locations as they were approved in December. No further action is needed as long as the Commission agrees to let this action stand as decided in December. The Commission offered no changes.

The Executive Committee asked the Commission to approve two grants that support Balanced Growth implementation projects.

The first is for Griswold Creek which is a priority area in the Chagrin River Watershed Balanced Growth Plan. Currently, many areas of the creek exhibit channel instability. Russell Township and area residents determined that there is a need and interest in developing a strategic watershed approach to streambank erosion and flooding.

This project involves: developing hydraulic models for the Griswold Creek watershed to generate peak discharges based upon level of watershed development and land use; surveying stream cross sections to assess downcutting and bank erosion sites; conducting stakeholder meetings; and completing conceptual stream restoration designs that may include expanded floodplain storage and conveyance areas, or bank and channel stabilization measures.

This grant proposed to use \$30,000 matching funds from the ODNR Coastal Management Assistance Grant (currently pending). The OLEC will work with the applicant to ensure matching funds, should the applicant not receive the CMAG grant. This project implements the Chagrin River Watershed Balanced Growth Plan.

The second proposed project will augment the work completed in the Big Creek Watershed Balanced Growth Plan, which has recently received resolutions of support from each of the watershed communities and will soon be taken to the Ohio Lake Erie Commission for state endorsement.

The Big Creek Watershed Stormwater Retrofit Ranking project will utilize data gathered from the stormwater retrofits identified in the Balanced Growth Plan, which has identified 156 retrofit sites.

The project will evaluate the retrofits through desktop and field analyses using various criteria and constraints. Conceptual designs will be completed for the highest priority projects.

Big Creek has not yet been endorsed but is scheduled for endorsement in June and has been reviewed with no significant outstanding issues.

Discussion: Amy Brennen, Chagrin River Watershed, stated that the historic problems have not been stabilized and they need to take a comprehensive approach on this watershed.

Jim White, Big Creek Watershed, stated he is encouraged to seem then working on action items.

**The Executive Committee recommended the Commission approve both projects as presented. A motion was made by OEPA and seconded by ODOD to approve the projects. All voted in favor and the motion passed.**

#### **Lake Erie Protection Fund Grants Committee Report- Steve Holland, ODNR**

The Grants Committee is comprised of the following members and meets quarterly to review small grants applications for the LEPF:

Steve Holland, ODNR, Office of Coastal Management, Chair

Frank Lopez, ODNR Old Woman Creek

Jeff Reutter, Ohio Sea Grant

Erin Hazelton, ODOD, Urban Development Division

Jeff Kalbus, ODA, Fiscal

Kelvin Rodgers, OEPA-NEDO

Bill Cody, ODOT, Office of Environmental Services

Bob Frey, ODOH, Health Assessment Section

The committee has a wide diversity of skills and strengths which enables them to thoroughly review each application.

During the grants committee meeting, the members review and discuss the details and merits of each application in addition to the benefits the project will have on Lake Erie from a state perspective and how the project will implement the *Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan*.

Based on this discussion, the group decides which projects to recommend for funding. For applications not recommended for funding, the committee may develop suggestions for how applicants can improve their proposed project. These suggestions assist the applicant in future grant opportunities in addition to resubmitting the project to the LEPF in future quarters.

#### **LEPF Small Grant Proposals- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter**

##### **The Olander Park System- \$15,000**

Wet Meadow Restoration in a Floodplain in Sylvania

Project Director: Erika Buri

The proposed project will restore 18 acres of upland old field to tallgrass prairie and 53 acres of wet old field to wet meadow at Sylvan Prairie Park, which is part of the Maumee AOC. This will be accomplished through maintaining appropriate floodplain hydrology and planting suitable native plant species. Prior to planting, the wet old field will be treated with an aquatic safe herbicide.

Benefits of this project include the restoration of wetland in an area that has been significantly affected by development, addition of potential wildlife habitat, and educational outreach with nearby Timberstone Junior High School and park visitors.

The Ohio State University- \$14,973

Does enterococci qPCR predict pathogen levels?

Project Director: Dr. Jiyoung Lee

The proposed project has three objectives.

- 1) Investigate the significance of infectious enteric viruses as important emerging pathogens in Lake Erie beach water. Currently, the occurrence of these viruses in Lake Erie water has not been studied extensively but they are considered a source of water borne disease. This will be accomplished by developing and optimizing primers for better detection of enteric viruses. Samples from two Lake Erie beaches (Villa Angela and Euclid Beach) will be analyzed and compared to measurements of fecal indicators and other water quality parameters.
- 2) Determine whether the current fecal indicator (cultured E. coli) and the most likely new method (enterococci qPCR), which U.S. EPA will adopt in 2012, can predict the presence of human pathogens. It is thought that these methods may not predict the presence or level of enteric viruses sufficiently.
- 3) Finally, previously collected data will be used to develop models in order to determine whether environmental factors such as weather explain pathogen levels.

This project will aid in determining whether the proposed rapid risk method proposed by US EPA adequately assesses risk.

This project fits with other grant activities being performed using Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funds. This researcher is active in those projects and has previously performed well with Lake Erie Protection Fund grant awards. The ODH has expressed an interest in the results from this project as they are responsible for Ohio's Beach monitoring program.

The University of Toledo- \$12,940

Diversity of Microcystis across trophic gradients

Project Director: Dr. Thomas Bridgeman

The proposed project will compare the genetic diversity of Microcystis in different major tributaries of Lake Erie and Maumee Bay to determine whether river Microcystis is a source population to Lake Erie and how Microcystis diversity is related to nutrient supply. This will be accomplished through at least monthly sampling at different Lake Erie locations as well as 5 km upstream in various tributaries. Ohio EPA will assist in coordinating sampling locations, which can be modified as summer conditions dictate. Samples will be analyzed using denaturing gradient gel electrophoresis (DGGE), a molecular fingerprinting tool used to isolate populations based on slight differences among sequences. Toxin level will also be measured.

Dr. Bridgeman has performed well on previous grant activities involving the study of microcystis in Lake Erie. This project is being closely coordinated with Ohio EPA.

Crawford Soil & Water Conservation District- \$15,000

Sandusky River Headwaters Runoff Reduction

Project Director: Mike Hall

The goal of this project is to reduce the amount of sediment and phosphorous leaving the cropped fields of two sub-watersheds of the Sandusky River Headwaters, Paramour Creek and Loss Creek. This will be accomplished through cost sharing 500 acres of cover crops (radish, peas, rye, etc.) in the sub-watersheds.

Producers who want to participate will perform soil testing on their fields. Fields with the highest phosphorous will be given priority to participate in the project.

The Crawford Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD) will develop Resource Management Systems for each participant's entire farm field. These plans will include nutrient management, pest management, tillage, and BMP's. In addition to reducing phosphorus runoff, the project will educate landowners and producers on the importance of improved water quality in headwater streams.

Goals of the project include reducing phosphorous by 125 lbs and soil loss by 500 lbs/acre/year.

Discussion: OEPA inquired if OSU will look at other models. The project director stated that they will first develop their own models then compare with others.

**A motion was made by ODA and seconded by ODOT to approve all four projects. All voted in favor and the motion carried.**

The Lake Erie Protection Fund Grants Program budget for State Fiscal Year 2011 (which is for time period July 1, 2010 through year end June 30, 2011) was \$150,000 for Small Grant projects, \$50,000 for Balanced Growth projects and \$170,000 for Targeted Grant projects. After today's recommendations the Small Grants balance will be \$48,317, the Balanced Growth balance will be \$17.00 and the Targeted Priority balance will be \$10,000.

Proposals for the Lake Erie Protection Fund- Fiscal Year 2011 4<sup>th</sup> quarter Grant Cycle are due April 21, 2011 and will be considered at the June 15, 2011 meeting. Deadlines for applications are established to allow time for the grants committee to review the proposals and forward them to this Commission through their Executive Committee. These application dates allow for at least a six-week review period prior to each quarterly Commission.

The Fiscal Year 2012 Application Materials and Deadlines will be reviewed at the next Commission meeting. In addition, funding allocation for the different grants will be decided at the June meeting.

### **Ohio Lake Erie Office Report- Ed Hammett, Executive Director**

#### Western Lake Erie Basin Study

This issue includes articles on: the WLEB partnership and WGTE documentary on "A Watershed Mentality", Congresswoman Kaptur visit to Toledo announcing GLRI projects, St. Mary's funding from the Great Lakes Commission, new data services from the USGS, information regarding the Lake Erie Public Access Guidebook released by Ohio Coastal Management, and so much more. The six page newsletter is online at [wleb.org](http://wleb.org)

#### The 2011 "Life on Lake Erie" Photo Contest

Photos taken between July 9, 2010 and July 8, 2011 are eligible for entry. This year five photos per household can be entered. An individual can win up to two times and there is no limitation of categories.

The 2010 contest ends July 15, 2011 with the winners being announced and unveiled at the Commission's September 2011 meeting.

Flyers will be available shortly or you can fill out your mailing information after today's meeting and an entry form will be mailed directly to you.

Each year the winning photos tour the shoreline and Columbus and are featured in the Commission's Lake Erie Photo Gallery. The 2010 winning photos were at the Cleveland Boat show and are currently on display at the University of Toledo Lake Erie Center.

#### Ohio's Coastweeks

Coastweeks is part of an International celebration of our waters and shorelines held in the States and around the world. Ohio's theme, "I Can Help Lake Erie", encourages people to be part of the solution, not the pollution that finds its way into the lake. This year Ohio cleaned 13 sites, covering 72 miles with 945 volunteers. These volunteers picked up 25,830 pounds of trash.

#### Great Lakes Restoration Projects FY 2010

A total of \$419,352,014 was allocated in the following focus areas:

- Toxics & Areas of Concern: 4 projects (\$2,570,828)
- Invasive Species: 2 projects (\$1,341,183)
- Habitat & Wildlife Protection/Restoration: 9 projects (\$8,607,153)
- Nearshore Health & NPS Pollution: 13 projects (\$5,437,850)
- Accountability, Monitoring, Evaluation, Communication & Partnerships: 2 projects (\$1,395,000)

This data was compiled from the November 10, 2010 Synthesis Team Forum 1 (Ohio Funded Projects).

#### Great Lakes Restoration Projects FY 2011

USEPA Request for Applications, \$40 M total. Applications due: April 11, 2011. The focus areas are: Toxics & Areas of Concern; Invasive Species; Nearshore Health & NPS Pollution; Accountability, Monitoring, Evaluation, Communication & Partnerships.

#### Toledo Harbor GLRI Project

A sub grant to the Toledo Lucas County Port Authority has been signed and they in turn have selected a contractor to perform the work. Planning is underway for a forum/workshop to solicit ideas on potential dredged material reuse projects and the criteria that will be used to evaluate all beneficial reuse proposals.

#### Synthesis & Coordination GLRI Project

First Forum of all the Ohio grantees was held on Nov. 10. A fact sheet was developed and is available today. The purpose of the project is to monitor the efficiency of the implementation of GLRI projects.

#### **Ohio Department of Natural Resources**

**David Mustine, Director**

Recently attended and participated in the Great Lakes Days in DC. The Harbor Maintenance Fund is a priority issue and there seems to be a lot of support. Also, Asian carp legislation has a lot of bi-partisan support. Overall funding for the GLRI will be \$225 million from the continuing resolution.

#### **Ohio Department of Development**

**William Murdock (Director's Designee), Office of Urban Development**

The Department is focused on job development and will be working on implementing the recently created Jobs Ohio over the next few months. Existing programs will have no disruption. A joint session with US EPA on brownfield redevelopments is coming up and ODOD will the distribute information to the Commission and its

members. ODOT partnered with the OWDA for funding for alternative (5mil) stormwater mitigation projects. A lot of industrial sites have shown interest.

### **Ohio Department of Transportation**

#### **Tim Hill (Director's Designee), Office of Environmental Services**

The Cleveland Innerbelt Bridge project is the Design/Build status. The project will cost \$270 million. First the west bound bridge will be constructed then the east bound, the entire project will be complete in 2016. ODOT's annual construction kick off will be in April. An updated map will be distributed at the next commission meeting.

### **Ohio Department of Agriculture**

#### **James Zehringer, Director**

Governor Kasich has talked a lot about Agriculture and its role in leading Ohio out of the recession. Our mission is food safety first and then economic development. Ohio Agriculture Day was March 7 in Cleveland. Lt. Governor Mary Taylor attended and talked to agribusinesses that produce products beyond food production. One in particular uses soy beans to produce cleaners and other household products. ODA is looking forward to working with the Commission.

### **Ohio Environmental Protection Agency**

#### **Scott Nally, Director**

A trip to USEPA in Chicago tomorrow is to discuss long term control plans for Combined Sewer Overflow and Sanitary Sewer Overflow. OEPA is working with the US Department of Justice to expedite the caseload for these overflows. USACE/Dredging Issues- We must concentrate on short term solutions first, then long term. Brownfields- OEPA continues to work with ODOT. 319 Grant Program- Want to start seeing direct impacts and will swing towards funding projects that are measurable. Ohio Remedial Action Program – Ohio has 4 Areas of Concern: Ashtabula River, Black River, Cuyahoga River and the Maumee River. Looking to delist the Ashtabula River, the construction of fish shelves is the last step.

### **Ohio Department of Health**

#### **Gene Phillips (Director's Designee), Bureau of Environmental Health**

ODH is gearing up for the next beach monitoring season that will begin in May. A Facebook site for the program has been launched and the Department will be conducting a Beach Health Awareness Poster Contest for grades K-6. Home Sewage Treatment rules will go into effect next year. Discussions are on going.

### **Advisory Committee Updates**

#### **Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project (written report submitted by Lynn Garrity, President)**

The Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project welcomes the new Commission Members to the Ohio Lake Erie Commission and look forward to working with the Commission on the many issues and opportunities Lake Erie and its coast faces.

About us: The Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project is a nonprofit organization established in 1982 to promote shoreline conservation and state participation in the federal coastal program. The Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project continues to promote the implementation of Ohio's coastal management program through outreach and advocacy by keeping Ohio citizens informed of challenges and successes along the Lake Erie coastline. The Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project is an all-volunteer organization with a Board consisting of individuals with years of experience on Lake Erie issues, research and public participation, local businesses, and local governments. The Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project looks forward to continue to serve as an advisor to the Ohio Lake Erie Commission.

Newsletter: The Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project publishes four newsletters each year to keep Ohio citizen's informed on issues associated with our Lake Erie coast. The latest newsletter is being distributed in the coming weeks via email or through the mail. Attached is a copy for Commission members.

Beach Monitoring: While summer is still a few months away, now is the time to prepare for 2011 beach monitoring. Beach monitoring continues to grow through the work of the Alliance for Great Lakes monitoring program launched in 2009 here in Ohio and the work by many nonprofit, state and local agencies along Lake Erie beaches. At OLEC's December meeting, one of the items identified for 2011 progress is linking beach monitoring sites to the public access sites identified in the Office of Coastal Management's Public Access Guidebook. This would continue to add value to the work of all involved in providing information to the public on beach conditions and identifying priorities for restoration and management along our public beaches. The Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project hopes to hear progress on this initiative for the 2011 beach monitoring season.

Federal activities related to Asian Carp, Great Lakes Compact, Great Lakes Restoration Funding, and associated studies and policies continue the need for the Ohio Lake Erie Commission to actively be involved in these federal issues and how they affect the local watersheds and coastal areas in Ohio. Keeping the public informed on state participation on these issues is encouraged.

State of the Lake Report: Over the years, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission has been a leader in bringing together information on Lake Erie and its conditions. Its past work in publishing the State of the Lake Reports and progress report of the Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan's were valuable documents to determine progress and benchmarks for the success of Lake Erie as a healthy and productive resource, and a significant contributor to the economy of Ohio and the Great Lakes. The Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project requests a status of if and when these progress reports on the State of Lake Erie are in the Commission's work plan for 2011 or 2012.

#### **OSU Ohio Sea Grant- Dr. Jeff Reutter**

Annual legislative events will be combined and then occur every other year. This event will be held on August 4 & 5, 2011. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Millennium Meeting to Summarize Phosphorus Research will be March 28. Spring Work Weekend at Stone Lab will be April 15-17. Summer curriculum is set up and will be hiring another faculty member. Call for proposals issues later this month.

#### **National Resource Conservation Service**

NRCS works with private landowners on conservation efforts, participation is voluntary. Focus in Ohio has been on the western basin because of its agriculture roots. NRCS received 6.4 million in GLRI funding. All the dollars are obligated. Funding will be for private lands and some for outreach. In the coming year request anticipate reduction. NRCS uses a targeted approach in distributing dollars.

Western Lake Erie Partnership- In 2005 NRCS was asked to partner with the USACE and develop a partnership agreement to share resources and commit improve management and conservation through collaboration. It has no legal authority but is more of a cooperative arrangement. Outcome included a structure, strategic plan and priorities. The organizations meet periodically.

Rapid Watershed Assessments-In the Maumee Watershed NRCS did Rapid Watershed Assessments of for each 8 digit HUC unit. The Assessments included an analysis of nutrient production from the livestock in the watershed, versus then amount of land needed to utilize those nutrients based on average crop yields and average crop removal rates. Livestock numbers from the county ag statistics were used, and the manure production adjusted for storage and volatilization for the various storage losses typical for each type of livestock. On average each HUC unit needed 47-48 pounds per acre of P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> each year to fertilize the crops grown at a level that would replace P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> crop removal. On average, in 7 of the 8 HUC units, the livestock produced an average of 6-8 pounds P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> per each acre of cropland in the watershed. For 7 of the 8 HUC units livestock supplies approximately 16-17% of the nutrients needed. Thus on a large scale mass balance, the remaining 83-84 percent of the fertilizer needed comes from commercial fertilizer application. The one exception was the St Mary's HUC unit, where livestock supplied 36 pounds per acre of P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>, or 73% of the P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> fertilizer needed.

Sediment and Nutrient Reductions: Over the 30 plus years that Heidelberg College has monitored the Maumee, their data shows sediment delivery has consistently declined as more conservation has been applied to the watershed. The range of sediment decline has been an average of 10% per decade, or 10% decline per each 10 year period. During that same time period total phosphorous has declined as well. Soluble phosphorous had been declining as well until 1995, when it began trending back upward. Clearly the conservation work in the watershed has had a dramatic effect on delivery of non point pollutants to lake Erie and clearly not enough has yet been done, especially to unlock the puzzle of the recent increases in soluble phosphorous. Research is underway and more is still needed to determine precisely the cause of the upward turn in soluble phosphorous. It is likely a combination of factors in the way farmers manage their nutrients now versus what was done years ago – larger fields and more custom application, more winter application as farmers are farming more land, more surface application versus prior application by injection in the row on planting equipment, increased surface buildup with less tillage, increased soil compaction and increased surface runoff, and improved drainage with more direct connectivity of the drainage system. It is likely all of these factors interact. More research is needed to determine the contribution of each of these changes, and the most appropriate mix of Best Management Practices to that can be adopted to turn things around. At the same time continued vigilance is needed to move forward with those things we do know work and are needed – conservation tillage for erosion control and sediment reduction, conservation buffers, tree plantings, filter strips, CRP grass cover and wetland restorations, increased adoption of precision nutrient management systems, livestock waste utilization systems, and cover crops. These have been termed “No Regret Actions” by the Lake Erie Millennium Researchers.

The National Conservation Technology Information Center Summer Tour in Maumee Watershed will be held August 9, 2011. I will make sure the information is distributed to the Commission.

#### **Public Comment Period**

##### **Jim White, Cuyahoga River RAP**

Thanks to the service of the new administration.

The State of the River Symposium will be held on May 19, 2011 at the Happy Days Lodge, Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

Balanced Growth: Final paperwork for Big Creek Balanced Growth plan was submitted this week. Furnace Run will be submitted in June and Brandywine in September.

Working with American Forest Global ReLeaf Effort. We are losing a lot of canopy to invasive species. We need to take a proactive approach. Also working with “Rugs on Drugs” lawn care management program.

GLRI- Cuyahoga worked hard to not compete with each other for funds. Encouraged to see state’s leadership for GLRI, however feel the process should be improved. Concern is that the GLRI will get lost in the sub agencies and won’t get to the ground. Recently visited Senator Portman and discussed how the award should be given to each state and the state can then work on distributing. This is the process Canada follows.

Dredge Material Task Force- The USACE spends X amount dollars for each yard and they throw it away. We are working on a pilot project with new technology to move the material into the market place. This has enormous potential and should be a regional approach.

##### **Dave Spangler, Lake Erie Waterkeepers- President**

Thank you to the Commission for their efforts, a lot of good things are going on.

Toledo Harbor dredging is a big concern; we need to find a place to put this material.

Ohio Charter Boat Captains- Down to around 800. The fish population is declining, down to below 20 million.

**Dick Taylor, Beachaid East Harbor, Director**

(Available upon request)

**Other Discussion:**

Ed Hammett, Executive Director will resign effective end of June.

**A motion to adjourn was made by ODOB and seconded by ODH. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned.**

The next OLEC Meeting will be June 15, 2011.