

Sea Grant Leads Synthesis Team for Ohio's Great Lakes Research

by Matthew Forte, Ohio Sea Grant Communications

Ohio Sea Grant and the Lake Erie Commission are leading a team effort to make 30 federally funded research and conservation projects around Lake Erie more efficient and easier for the public, resource managers, and decision makers to understand. By working together, these projects can share resources, reduce costs, and make the projects more useful to both scientists and managers.

In late 2009, Ohio agency and university scientists made their proposals for Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding part of a collaborative effort called the Lake Erie Millennium Collaboration. This group approach, facilitated by Ohio Sea Grant, the Lake Erie Commission, and the University of Windsor, made each project stronger and made their overall impact greater than the sum of the parts.

"We know there is great value in linking managers with research scientists early in the process of developing proposals and throughout the projects," says Jeff Reutter, Ohio Sea Grant Director. "It allows research



scientists to influence management decisions and managers to influence research project design."

A crucial part of Ohio's collaborative effort is a synthesis team led by Ohio Sea Grant and the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. The team of 17 scientists and managers will produce annual synthesis reports to explain project results and what they mean for citizens. "We want to heighten people's understanding of the issues, not only the projects we're working on, but we want to explain why we're working on them," Reutter says.

Ohio's projects that are contributing to this synthesis effort received nearly \$19 million from the GLRI to restore habitats for native species, reduce pollution, control invasive plant species, replace forest habitat, make public beaches safer, and reduce soil loss through erosion.

For more information about Ohio's GLRI-funded projects, visit lakeerie.ohio.gov/GLRI.aspx. TL