

OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION MEETING
Lake Erie Nature and Science Center, Bay Village
September 15, 2011

Call to Order and Roll Call – Scott Zody, Interim Director, Commission Chair

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) meeting was called to order by the Commission Chairman, ODNR Interim Director Scott Zody, at 10:13 a.m.

Commission Members Present

Commission Chairman Scott Zody, Interim Director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)
Scott Nally, Director, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)
William Murdock, Director's Designee, Ohio Department of Development (ODOD)
Myron Pakush, Director's Designee, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Mary Clifton, representing Ohio Department of Health (ODH)
Rocky Black, representing Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), (10:35)

Staff Present

Gail Hesse, Executive Director, Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC)
Sandra Kosek-Sills, OLEC
Kristin Gardner, OLEC
Linda Zmudzinski, OLEC
Steve Holland, ODNR

Welcome and Agenda Overview: Scott Zody, Interim Director, Commission Chair

Interim Director Zody welcomed the attendees on behalf of the Commission. He thanked our host location at the Lake Erie Nature & Science Center. He then gave a quick review of the agenda.

The meeting will begin by announcing our Photo Contest Award winners and then we will convene our business meeting. Special welcome to the photo contest winners –there were many great entries.

Announcement of 2011 “Life on Lake Erie” Photo Contest Winners

The “Life on Lake Erie” Photo Contest has been held every year since 1992; this is the 19th annual awards event. The contest is held to showcase the talent of our citizens and also the many activities that occur along the lake. This year, in addition to their certificates, award winners will receive bags from ODH that contain various beach items with logos promoting the Healthy Beaches website (www.odh.ohio.gov/healthybeaches). The bags were assembled with funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Photo contest winners in attendance included Jeff Jelinger of Toledo; Martha Huepenbecker of Toledo; Michelle Guerra of Port Clinton; Jarrod Will of Westerville; and Patricia Healey of Toledo. Not able to attend were Judge's Overall Favorite winner Richard McBride of Conneaut; Julie Oglesbee of Marblehead; Rich Ruess of Norwalk; Hazel Bonnough of Curtice; and Lorie Wilber of Oberlin. Congratulations to our winners!

BUSINESS MEETING

Chairman's Report and Approval of the June 2011 Meeting Minutes: Scott Zody

After Executive Director Ed Hammett retired in June, the Commission underwent a comprehensive interview process. However, the commission did not have to look far to find a new executive director. Gail Hesse will be coming to the position from OEPA, Division of Surface Water. The final step in the process is for formal Commission action to appoint her to the post.

A motion was made by ODOD and seconded by ODOT to appoint Gail Hesse as Executive Director of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. There was no discussion. The commission members voted all in favor and the motion carried.

The next item of business is the approval of the last meeting minutes. A request for changes was made but there were no changes offered.

A motion was made by ODOT and seconded by ODOD to approve the June 15, 2011 OLEC meeting minutes. No discussion was offered. The commission members voted all in favor and the motion carried.

Executive Committee Report: Interim Director Scott Zody

There are two items from the executive committee that require Commission action: the Individual and Organization Lake Erie Awards. Each year, the commission honors one person and one organization that have generously worked to protect and restore Lake Erie and its watershed. In today's busy society, it takes dedication to commit extra time towards helping a worthwhile cause and in this case, it is the wise environmental stewardship of Ohio's Great Lake. Ohio individuals and Ohio organizations that have shown exceptional dedication to preserving Lake Erie as the state's premier natural resource are eligible to receive the Ohio Lake Erie Award. This award recognition enhances public awareness and encourages our citizens to support the preservation and protection of Lake Erie. Each year the Commission chooses a qualified individual and organization based on name submissions from member agencies and collaborative partners. Nominees are reviewed by the Executive Committee and forwarded to the Commission for final approval.

(1) Individual Lake Erie Award: Tom Denbow

As Vice President of Water Resources at URS, Tom has applied his skills in solving watershed problems throughout the Lake Erie basin. Tom has been involved in projects as diverse as the dredging plan for Ashtabula Harbor, the ecological restoration plan for the Lower Black River and the major initiative to address flooding and restore water quality in the tributaries of the western basin of Lake Erie. He is currently involved in similar projects for the Blanchard and Little Cuyahoga Rivers. Tom's knowledge of the Lake combined with his relationships with the numerous public and private groups is instrumental in the success of his endeavors to restore and protect Lake Erie.

Tom is currently Vice Chair of the Coastal Resources Advisory Council. He is the former executive director of the Chagrin River Watershed Partners and a current member of the Chagrin River Watershed Partners Board of Trustees. He is the former Chairman of the Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization Board of Trustees and the Cuyahoga RAP Coordinating Committee. Tom also served as a

member of the Lake Erie Balanced Growth Task Force, one of the original architects of the design of the program now being implemented statewide.

Tom makes time out of his busy schedule to enjoy recreating on the Lake as an avid sailor.

A motion was made by OEPA and seconded by ODOT to approve the 2011 Ohio Lake Erie Individual Award to Tom Denbow. No discussion was offered. The commission members voted all in favor and the motion carried.

Scott Zody presented the Award to Tom Denbow and thanked him for his service. Mr. Denbow remarked that he was humbled by the award. He wished to recognize his parents who were able to be here and thank you very much to the Commission.

(2) Organization Lake Erie Award: University of Toledo Lake Erie Center – Carol Stepien, director of the Center, was present to accept the organization award.

The University of Toledo Lake Erie Center has produced state of the art research and provided exceptional educational opportunities for students and the public on issues facing Lake Erie and the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Researchers, educators and staff at the UT Lake Erie Center have made important contributions in such areas as aquatic conservation, invasive species, water quality, limnology, fishery genetics, ecology and ecosystem management. The Center's personnel are strongly committed to engaging the public through the Summer Naturalist Series, art and photo contests and a public lecture series on lake and ecosystem issues.

The Lake Erie Center administers an outstanding National Science Foundation K-12 program which partners advanced graduate students with high school teachers and students preparing them to be our next generation of environmental stewards.

A motion was made by ODOD and seconded by ODOT to approve the 2011 Ohio Lake Erie Organization Award to the University of Toledo Lake Erie Center. No discussion was offered. The commission members voted all in favor and the motion carried.

Scott Zody presented the award to Carol Stepien and thanked her for the center's efforts. Ms. Stepien then gave a short presentation about the center (slides attached) and thanked the Commission.

Grants Committee Report – Lake Erie Protection Fund (LEPF): Steve Holland, ODNR

Steve Holland, ODNR, Grants Committee Chairman, reported that the majority of revenue generated for the LEPF comes from the sales of Lake Erie License Plates. Next due date is November 3, 2011. There are two small grant awards under consideration for Commission action.

(1) Small Grants Program: Mr. Holland presented the Grants Committee funding recommendation for two small grant projects submitted during first quarter of State Fiscal Year 2012 in the total amount of \$30,000.

Scott Zody (ODNR) asked if there were any questions about the proposed projects. There were no questions.

A motion was made by ODOT and seconded by ODOD to approve the Grants Committee recommendation. There was no additional discussion. The commission members voted all in favor and motion carried to approve the following small grant projects:

- The Ohio State University Sea Grant College Program for project entitled, “Lake Erie Shoreline Creel Economic Impact Study”, Project Director: Joe Lucente in the amount of \$15,000; and
- The Bowling Green State University - Firelands for project entitled, “Flow Rating Curves for 3 Small Lake Erie Streams”, Project Director: Linda Cornell in the amount of \$15,000.

(2) LEPF - Current and Future Funding: Gail Hesse, Executive Director gave a brief presentation on the LEPF funding. All LEPF funds are turned around as grants, no funds are used for the commission office. Revenue from the main source of funds, which is from the license plate sales, is declining. Reductions in grant funds will need to follow. The office is suggesting two strategies: first, increased marketing for the plate; and second, solicit additional revenue sources. This is being offered to the commission for comment and discussion.

Discussion: Myron Pakush of ODOT suggested that their public info office could assist; ODOT is interested in engaging with this issue. Scott Nally of OEPA stated that he liked the direction and it could be fleshed out more.

Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office Report: Gail Hesse, Executive Director

Executive Director Gail Hesse presented the office report (see attached slides). Detailed information is in the briefing book and on the OLEC website.

Coastweeks: coastal cleanups will be occurring all month long. This is our local involvement with an international effort sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy. Linda Zmudzinski is the Ohio coordinator.

Balanced Growth: The updated Strategy document has been provided for SAWG review. Public review will be this fall and we intend to bring the revised document to the Commission for endorsement in December.

Rocky Black, ODA inquired about the best local land use practices, the source of information for these as well as how they compare nationally. Hesse responded that the best practices are in a variety of literature and document sources (development, engineering, etc.). These practices are increasing in use around the U.S. Two years ago Ohio received a technical assistance grant from the Smart Growth Leadership Institute to do an analysis of the Ohio Balanced Growth Program. That project provided benchmarking with approaches other states have taken.

Overview of 2011 Lake Erie “Algal Season”

Dr. Jeff Reutter of the Ohio Sea Grant College Program gave an overview of the algae/phosphorus conditions in the lake, including some recent graphs and photos showing that 2011 was an even worse year for the lake than 2010. Current conditions are that we have seen record phosphorus levels and a record algae bloom. There is a new USGS SPARROW model that has been published recently. The model can be compared to Heidelberg data (models are for predicting conditions when data are not present); in this case it is possible to add up the phosphorus amounts directly without the model and also can evaluate the model predictions based on empirical (sampling) data. There are some distinct lake specific differences between empirical data and the model; in particular, although the phosphorus load from the Detroit River is high the concentrations are low and it is easily seen in the images that the bloom originates in the lower total load but much higher concentration water coming from the Maumee River.

Mary Clifton (ODH) asked what happened in 1994 to cause the change. Dr. Reutter answered, many things, and there has been much discussion on that in other forums. It seems to be mostly from changes in agricultural practices. Recommended practices include: need to incorporate phosphorus into the soil; eliminate winter application of fertilizer. The idea is to keep production high but clean. Other issues include Water Treatment Plants adding orthophosphate to drinking water to prevent corrosion of pipes.

Rocky Black (ODA): what about CSO, illegal connections, and sewage? Dr. Reutter answered; some contribution is from those sources, yes. Also consider climate change effects: warmer, more frequent severe rain will tend to drive up the problem from overflows.

Scott Nally (OEPA): CSOs are a 20-30 year problem. We are also looking at phosphorus contributions from lawn care products (The Scotts Company, an Ohio-based fertilizer company, is reducing the phosphorus content in its turf management products). Rocky Black (ODA): are there penalties proposed? Scott Nally (OEPA): no.

Agency Reports

Myron Pakush, ODOT provided a written report. Among the items: ODOT is working with ODNR on stream mitigation rules related to dam removal; future focus on Lake Erie watershed soil & water runoff management practices; there will be new construction of a ferry terminal in Lorain to begin in 2012; Cuyahoga River green bulkheads with habitat pockets to be part of bridge projects; have been in discussions about repairs to the road slippage in the flats are of the Cuyahoga River; ferry boat program has awarded funds for repairs and enhancements to docks at Put-in-Bay, South Bass Island, and Kelleys Island; working on projects in 2012 to build revetments etc. to address State Rte 531 erosion threat.

Rocky Black, ODA: About 6 weeks ago ODA held a kick off meeting with around 65 people on the topic of environmental/algae problems looking at nutrient management issues & practices. There will be several site management seminars. ODA is working with the Farm Bureaus on this outreach. Directors of ODA, OEPA, and ODNR have a great working relationship.

Interim Director Scott Zody, ODNR: We are working with OEPA & The Nature Conservancy for remediation/wetland mitigation projects as a public-private partnership project. Shoreline court ruling is in and puts line at water edge. We are looking forward to implementing changes in the submerged land

lease rules etc. now that the case is finished. Fall trawl surveys starting soon, cautiously optimistic. Great Lakes Compact: we are working on legislation, hope to improve it.

Director Scott Nally, Ohio EPA: Congratulations and welcome to Scott Zody to fill in after Director Mustine's departure. We will be working in the next few months on the Harmful Algal Bloom protocol. The Agency is also reaching out to the agricultural community (w/ODA and ODNR). We have had a meeting with ODOT regarding phosphorus and runoff issues. Wetlands restoration projects: want to look for partnerships, work with ODNR to have a bigger impact on some watersheds not piecemeal. Looking to combine mitigation projects and make them bigger. This will need legislative changes.

William Murdock, ODOD: We appreciate the opportunity to work with Gail Hesse as Executive Director. This has been a busy month: the JobsOhio strategy is a big priority. Functions not directly related to job creation (business and community services) are staying but the department will be renamed. Restructuring is finished so we can now work on getting information out. Big program that remains is Clean Ohio; this is a big partnership with OEPA. Vacant buildings and industries are a big issue in the state but the biggest cleanup program is here in Ohio. We have tools for business that need to clean up brownfields and put in green roofs etc.

Mary Clifton, ODH: ODH has wrapped up bathing beach monitoring for the 2011 season; worked with UT and Ottawa Co Departments of Public Health. The federal Clean Water Act is under review and limits on bacteria may be reduced. New website for beach monitoring was well received; we have had many more comments than prior efforts. We have provided the red beach bags for the photo contest winners: these were put together with a GLRI communications grant. Second GLRI grant for surveys: data are coming; we will enter this month & next month & synthesize results.

Advisory Committee Reports

Ohio Coastal Resources Management Project: No representative was present but written comments were provided (attached). Gail Hesse (OLEC) gave an overview of the comments for the Commission.

Dr. Jeff Reutter, Ohio Sea Grant College Program: The summer program has been completed at Stone Lab; fall programs have started; a lot of construction is underway of badly needed improvements at the lab. OSG is currently evaluating research proposals for funding. Thanks to partners who help with reviews (including OLEC office). That kind of partnership maximizes impact and reduces overlap. Long term lab manager John Hageman has retired. New hires will be advertised for research coordinator at the lab and assistant director (Eugene Braig will be moving on to another position at Ohio State University).

Cheryl Rice, NRCS: 1) Program roll out for FY 2012 has not been announced but typically happens shortly after the new FY (October 1). Rice encouraged everyone to keep an eye out for press releases.

2) The next WLEB Leadership meeting is scheduled for December 12th. We do not have a solid location yet but, it will be in the Toledo area.

3) USDA has published with other federal and NGO partners many CEAP reports in other areas of the country identifying conservation priorities based on GIS data collected in the NRI as well as monitoring data. We are close to releasing the CEAP report for the Great Lakes Basin.

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/?ss=16&navtype=SubNavigation&cid=nrcs143_01

[4135&navid=120110110000000&pnavid=120110000000000&position=Not%20Yet%20Determined.Html&ttype=detailfull&pname=About%20CEAP%20|%20NRCS](#)

Expect to see more details at the next OLEC meeting describing what the modeling found and the impacts this study will have on conservation efforts.

4) Rice highlighted one of the efforts in the WLEB watershed. US ACE has supported a modeling effort in the Tiffin River watershed. This modeling will not only model sediment transport but also nutrient movement in this watershed. Initial stakeholder meetings will be held shortly.

Also – thanks to Director Nally for his assistance with GLSM.

Ann-Drea Hensley, TMACOG: We are working on the scrap yard GLRI project. There will be recognition at the end of the project for scrap yards that have installed best management practices. The Portage River Watershed Action Plan is underway; we are fortunate to have the TMDL report. Swan Creek urban retrofit project (funded by LEPP) has started and is ongoing. We are working with students at Penta Career Center on a parking lots project.

NOACA: No report.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Dick Bartz, USGS: I would like to offer some SPARROW context: this was a project of the national water quality assessment program. A recent journal issue was dedicated to the project. One of the models included Great Lakes systems . USGS is hoping to get interaction between model scientists and people working on this in Ohio re: improving communication about the model.

Carol Stepien, UT-Lake Erie Center: please visit the LEC, there are many educational opportunities for the public and others.

Written comments were received from the following individuals: Lynn and David Hand, summer home owners on middle Bass Island who write to express their concern with the algae in Lake Erie and the effect it has on their enjoyment of the lake; and Josph Barrett of North Tonawanda, New York who wrote to express his concern about the ice booms at the Lake Erie outlet. See attached for complete written comments.

Dr. Jeff Reutter, OSG: I would like to add that there will be a GLRI/Lake Erie Synthesis Team forum November 29 to pull together GLRI projects and summarize results to date and another meeting in Jan to prepare for next round.

Adjourn 12:05