

WESTERN LAKE ERIE BASIN BULLETIN

May 2009

Healthy Land ~ Healthy Lake

Volume 2 Issue 1



Western Lake Erie Conference

In early March, at scenic Maumee Bay Resort and Conference Center in Oregon, Ohio, the Western Lake Erie Basin Partners met to discuss the resource protection of the Western Basin of Lake Erie. The WLEB partnership seeks to employ a watershed approach to resource management and this conference was a chance to share vital information from the partners. With the bay just outside the window, the program presented a holistic vision of the state of the basin and lake resources we seek to protect.

The 2009 Western Lake Erie Basin Conference covered topics from dredging to drainage, algae, and erosion. Over a series of six sessions, partners were presented with the latest research and information regarding the key areas of concern for the health of the Western Basin. Experts who work and research in the basin reported on numerous issues, including water quality, aquatic habitats, urban storm water run-off, fisheries, recreation, tourism, and watershed management. *cont. on pg. 2*

Funding For Lake Erie Research

Funding for research on phosphorus and algal bloom issues in Lake Erie has been awarded by two funding sources over the winter months. The following projects have received funding from either the US EPA Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) or the Ohio Lake Erie Commission's Lake Erie Protection Fund (LEPF).

- Lake Erie Algal Source Tracking - University of Toledo - Dr. Thomas Bridgeman (GLNPO).
- Linking Soil Test Phosphorus with Agricultural Runoff Phosphorus - The Ohio State University - Dr. Robert Mullen (GLNPO).
- The Nearshore and Offshore Lake Erie Nutrient Study - Buffalo State College - Dr. Christopher Pennuto (GLNPO).
- BMPs for Mitigating Phosphorus Movement from Agricultural Lands - The Ohio State University - Dr. Robert Mullen (GLNPO). *cont. on pg. 5*

WLEB Management Plan

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) final report is scheduled for release in 2009. The USACE would like to thank all who submitted comments on the draft report. The draft report identifies a list of nearly 800 projects within the study area, totaling over \$2.3 billion in public funding needs. The potential project list can be used for watershed management

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Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership

Mission Statement

The *WLEB Partnership* is a tri-state partnership dedicated to enhancing multi-purpose projects that improve land and water resource management in the basin and promote a healthy, productive watershed.

Partners:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, NRCS
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Geological Survey,
Ohio Water Science Center
Governor of Indiana
Governor of Michigan
Governor of Ohio
Indiana State Technical Committee
Michigan State Technical Committee
Ohio Department of Natural Resources,
Division of SWCD
National Association of
Conservation Districts
Maumee River Basin Partnership of
Local Governments
Ohio State Technical Committee

Western Lake Erie Basin Partners
are equal opportunity
employers and providers.

Contributing Writers:

Sandy Bihn, Robert McCall, Cheryl
Rice, Chris Riddle, & Byron Rupp.

Graphics & Layout:
Chris Riddle

www.wleb.org

wlebhlp@wleb.org

Western Lake Erie Conference (cont.)

At the end of each session, conference participants contributed by helping define areas of consensus and recognizing needs for more information. Action items were developed from these discussions to help guide the partnership's strategic plan and future projects. This information is being developed into a conference synopsis and will also be included in the USACE Western Lake Erie Basin Study that will be transmitted to the U. S. Congress.

Important resource concerns identified included:

- Reduction in watershed erosion and sediment delivery and reduction in impacts of dredging
- Reduction in nutrient loading to the basin and finding solutions to harmful algal blooms
- Reduction of flooding problems and improved water management in the watershed
- Protection from introductions of invasive species
- Protection and restoration of habitat in the basin and nearshore area, including wetlands, riparian corridors, and the stream system of the basin.

Miss the Western Lake Erie Conference?

Don't worry, all the presentations are on the WLEB website.

Just visit www.wleb.org.



**Want your story or event on TV? Submit it to EcoTrack 11.
Contact Holly Thebaud at holly@stormcenter.com**

WLEB Management Plan (cont.)

by Federal, State, local agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

The USACE is also pleased to announce initiation of the first spin-off project from the WLEB study. The USACE has partnered with Hancock County, Ohio to conduct a feasibility study analyzing flood risk management and ecosystem restoration projects within the Blanchard River watershed.

The USACE continues to provide support to assist with flood related issues, navigation, water quality, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat projects within the WLEB watershed. Please contact Craig Forgetting, USACE Project Manager at 716-879-4187 regarding WLEB matters.

Building Momentum for Rehabilitation

The WLEB Outreach committee has recently expanded from its original members by developing eight working teams on issues pulled from the strategic plan. Those teams include Local Watershed Group Development, Sustainable and Coastal Community Development, Clean Marina's, Nutrient Impacts to Lake Erie and WLEB Water Quality, Climate Change Effects in the WLEB, Aquatic and Invasive Species, Eco-Tourism and Recreation, and Erosion, Sediment Transport and Dredging. Each team has a Team Leader to convene meetings and work on issues important to the WLEB Mission.

Work teams consist of 5 to 10 members led by a Team Leader. Team leaders will be responsible for calling meetings, leading the group, and representing the team on the overarching outreach committee. The purpose of the teams is to bring together information relevant to their area of focus, provide materials for development of tools for WLEB public outreach, education and as feasible, integrate the use of existing agency materials, activities and programs into WLEB promotional efforts. Teams for the most part will operate autonomously holding work team meetings and reporting separately to the Outreach Committee for updates.

As teams do their work they will be building a host of tools for watershed groups, conservation groups, local governments and the general public to use in their efforts to rehabilitate the Western Lake Erie Basin. Look for updates on the Outreach page on the WLEB web site in the near future. If you are interested in participating on any of these working teams, please contact Robert McCall at mccall.57@cfaes.osu.edu.

Swan Creek Balanced Growth Plan

The Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) received funding in 2006 to develop a Balanced Growth Watershed Action Plan for Swan Creek, a subwatershed of the Maumee River on the southwest side of Toledo. TMACOG has secured the support of more than 90% of the local communities in the watershed for the effort so far. The plan, which identifies Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) and Priority Development Areas (PDAs), represents a regional approach to making local decisions on desired future land use in the watershed. Funding for the project was provided by the Ohio Water Development Authority. The Balanced Growth Program is managed by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission.

The plan is available online at <http://www.tmacog.org/Environment/swanpilot.htm>.

Lake Erie Coastweeks 2009

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission has developed an effective Coastweeks cleanup program which has been growing strong for over 17 years and continues to be the largest volunteer cleanup effort in Ohio to restore our Lake Erie watershed.

It's all about doing something responsible for the environment and finding solutions for the litter which can kill wildlife and fish each year and pollute our beaches, streams and tributaries. It's a way to get involved locally with an international effort, in which thousands of individuals are working together to clean up their shores – and have fun in the process.

Last year over 31 miles of shoreline were cleaned and 13,448 pounds of trash were removed from Ohio's beaches, shoreline, riverbanks and streams. Some of the most unusual items found in years gone by ... a toilet seat, horseshoes, false teeth, wedding bands, lottery tickets, frying pans, fly swatters, binoculars, cameras, just to name a few.

It's easy to coordinate a cleanup and Green Your Stream. The OLEC will promote your event via their web site, send out press releases, produce a poster & brochure to be distributed along the Lake Erie shoreline, provide you with a "toolkit" of information, trash bags, data cards and pencils; provide support and event assistance. Contact the OLEC at 419-245-2514 for an event form. Deadline is July 9, 2009!

2009 Cleanup Events (Currently Scheduled)

Maumee Bay State Park - 9/12

Magee Marsh Beach - 9/12

Euclid Creek - 9/12

East Harbor State Park - 9/19

Sheldon Marsh State Nature
Preserve - 9/19

Old Woman Creek - 9/19

Mentor Lagoon & Preserve -
9/19

Website Update: Research Committee

The new WLEB.org website launched in January 2009. The new site features additional content pages for the WLEB study area subwatersheds and the WLEB Partnership Committees. Among the features on the WLEB study area subwatershed pages are links to local watershed groups and reports on the various subwatersheds. If we have missed a local group or an important report, please contact us at wlebhhelp@wleb.org and we will be sure to add the missing information.

The Research Committee has provided a number of important links on its page, organizing them into categories such as; Research, Data, and Great Lakes Policy and Direction on Research and Data. These links provide a gateway to valuable information on the WLEB. To visit the page, go to www.wleb.org then click on Committees at the top then Research on the left hand side.

2009 Ohio Lake Erie Awards

Each year the Ohio Lake Erie Commission recognizes one individual and one organization for their contribution to the protection and restoration of Lake Erie. If you have someone you would like to nominate, the deadline is July 9, 2009. Forms are available at lakeerie.ohio.gov, just click on "Lake Erie Awards" in the left-hand column.

Funding for Lake Erie (cont.)

- Sources and Transport of Bioavailable Phosphorus to Lake Erie - Heidelberg University - Dr. Gary Winston (GLNPO).
- Connecting Phosphorus Load, Transport, and Biological Use - The Ohio State University - Dr. David Culver (LEPF).
- Analysis of Soil Testing Laboratories and Data Mining - The Ohio State University - Dr. Robert Mullen (LEPF).

Managers from the Ohio Lake Erie Commission and Great Lakes National Program Office coordinated the release and focus of their funding opportunities in an attempt to leverage the greatest possible benefit to Lake Erie. The funded projects represent more than a \$630,000 investment in Lake Erie Research over the next two years - with most of the work expected to be complete by spring 2010.



Life on Lake Erie Photo Contest

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission is looking for camera buffs who want to capture the essence of Lake Erie Life and enter its 2009 photo contest. The photo contest is an opportunity for amateur photographers, age 18 and older, to reveal their passion for one of Ohio's most valuable and dynamic natural features, Lake Erie.

Photographs taken between July 9, 2008 and July 12, 2009 in and around the Lake Erie watershed can be submitted to the OLEC through July 16, 2009. Entries (up to five) must be the original work of the photographer and can portray sustainable use, development or protection of Ohio's Lake Erie coastal resource. They can incorporate shoreline landscapes, wildlife, plants or people enjoying various coastal activities. All submissions become the property of the OLEC.

Winning photographs will be featured on the Commission website and will be part of a traveling photo gallery. The inspiring art display will appear at prime Ohio shoreline locations throughout the year.

Complete contest rules available at: <http://lakeerie.ohio.gov>, or call 419-245-2514.

*Photo Credit: Julie Oglesbee,
2008 Judges' Favorite*



Local Focus - Toledo Harbor Lighthouse

The one of a kind Toledo Lighthouse marks the Toledo shipping channel where Lake Erie and Maumee Bay meet. The lighthouse is about five miles off shore and is visible from Maumee Bay State Park. The original Toledo Lighthouse fresnel lens is located in the lobby of the Maumee Bay State Park Resort.

The Toledo Lighthouse was dedicated in 1904 and sits on a crib which replaced the old Turtle Island lighthouse and crib lights. The Toledo light was automated in 1965. In 1989 the federal government shored up the crib and placed boulders on three sides, limiting access.

People are attracted to the Toledo Lighthouse because of its unique features: buff brick and a rolled steel roof that looks like the upside down hull of a ship. The view from the top, about sixty four feet out of the water, is spectacular – on a clear day the Veteran’s Memorial Bridge is in full sight, and with binoculars, the Ambassador Bridge can be seen. In 2003 a group of volunteers formed the Toledo Lighthouse Society, a nonprofit, that now has nearly 400 members from all over the country.

Awards from the Lake Erie Protection Fund and the Coastal Management Assistance Grants Program

are being used to fund the development of restoration plans for the lighthouse. In early April the Society’s efforts were handed a setback when the floating dock and ramp they installed in 2008 to improve access were stolen. The Society is working to overcome this hurdle and celebrate the lighthouse, with a waterfront festival July 11 and 12 at Maumee Bay State Park featuring nautical arts and crafts, steel drums and island music, fireworks, clam chowder, photo and sand lighthouse contests, and a silent auction, Parking and admission are free.

For more information visit toledolighthouse.org



Photo: Thomas Liskai, 2007 Life on Lake Erie Photo Contest

CALENDAR

5/18-22 - International Association of Great Lakes Researchers - Annual Conference - U. of Toledo

6/3 - Ohio Lake Erie Commission Meeting - Leonard Krieger Canalway Center, 10am

6/5-6/7 - 5th Annual South Bass Island Kayak Rendezvous - www.southbassrendezvous.com

7/11-12 - Toledo Harbor Light Festival - Maumee Bay State Park - www.toledolighthouse.org

7/29-8/1 - Midwest Oak Savanna & Woodland Conference-Lourdes College, Sylvania, OH.

9/19 - International Coastal Cleanup Day - lakeerie.ohio.gov/Coastweeks.aspx for events.

Have an event? Submit it to wlebhlp@wleb.org

View 50+ new events on our online calendar: www.wleb.org/publicoutreach/calendarofevents.html