

WESTERN LAKE ERIE BASIN BULLETIN

March 2011

Healthy Land ~ Healthy Lake

Ottawa River Watershed Area Receives Grant to Restore Habitat

Partners for Clean Streams (PCS), the Maumee RAP's non-profit, was awarded a \$1.36 million Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant to restore stream habitat, reduce erosion, enhance wetlands, and to improve upland habitat along the upper Ottawa River. The project at Camp Miakonda will restore at least 10 acres of wetland, 30 acres of upland habitat, and 1200 linear feet of bank stabilization along the Ottawa River, directly improving Lake Erie's Western Basin. Along with the Boy Scouts of America, PCS has partnered with the Army Corps of Engineers on a Habitat Restoration Master Plan. Concept plans are complete with the surveying and final designs to be completed by the winter 2010. This accelerates the planning and positions the project for timely implementation in the fall of 2011.

The 157-acre Boy Scout Camp is situated in the Oak Openings Region of the Maumee Area of Concern directly along one of the major waterways to enter North Maumee Bay. It is a green gem nestled within a rapidly developing urban and suburban community. It is not often that a willing landowner with a sizable historic property steps forward to protect and restore that property to enhance wildlife habitat and water quality of the region.

When implemented PCS expects this restoration project, that is on and adjacent to the Ottawa River, to result in long-term outcomes that will bring the Maumee AOC closer to delisting the Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat BUI (BUI #14), and to a lesser extent improve the Degradation of Benthos (BUI #6), and Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations (BUI #3) in the Ottawa River.

Specifically, moving these restoration plans from planning to on-the-ground-projects will:

- Significantly reduce sediment loading from eroding stream banks;
- Maximize the diversity of plant communities, both wetland and upland;
- Improve habitat for migrating waterfowl, songbirds and other wildlife;
- Benefit Ottawa River water quality by utilizing wetlands to capture sediments; and,
- Create more flood storage and nutrient retention capacity.

“Not only is this a rare opportunity for restoration work but this property is also an amazing outdoor classroom to hundreds of youth who could actively engage in restoring, protecting, enhancing, and learning from this restoration opportunity,” said Kris Patterson, Executive Director for Partners for Clean Streams.

If you would like to learn more about this project, the volunteer opportunities available, or to schedule a presentation for your organization, please visit: www.PartnersForCleanStreams.org or call PCS at 419-874-0727. This information was taken from the Partners for Clean Streams Fact Sheet on Restoring Ottawa River Wetlands and In-stream Habitat at Camp Miakonda.



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.

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wleb.org



Welcome New Team Members

Give a big welcome to **Kristin Gardner** who joined the Ohio Lake Erie Commission in January 2011. Kristin is an Environmental Specialist and grants manager for the Lake Erie Protection Fund. She is also involved in the Toledo Harbor Sediment Management and Reuse, GLRI grant.

Previously, Kristin worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Analysis Section, based in Buffalo, New York. She received a BS in Environmental Science from the University of Toledo and a MS in Environmental Science from Indiana University. Her Master's thesis research involved studying the effects of road salt on chloride concentrations in streams in a south-central Indiana watershed. Kristin was born and raised in the Toledo area.

Kristin will be giving the WLEB team support with the Public Outreach Committee, writing and editing articles for the WLEB newsletter and editing the website. She can be reached at 419-245-2514 or via email: kristingardner@ameritech.net

Michael Pniewski, P.E., P.S. is a Program Manager for the Buffalo District of Army Corps of Engineers based in Toledo, Ohio and is responsible for management of water resources projects in the Western Lake Erie Basin. He is well acquainted with the issues facing Lake Erie and the Great Lakes, having grown up in the Detroit area and spending time at his cottage on the northern shore of Lake Erie. Prior to working for the Corps, Mike spent the past 15 years at several consulting engineering firms in the Detroit and Phoenix areas designing, managing, and implementing water resources and civil works projects.

Mike has a B.S. and M.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Michigan and a B.S. in Land Surveying from Michigan Technological University. He is a Registered Professional Engineer in nine states and a Registered Professional Surveyor in five states.

Mike will be helping us out in the Leadership Committee. He can be reached at 419-726-9121 or via email: michael.d.pniewski@usace.army.mil

News from the Outreach Committee

Katie Swartz and Cheryl Rice have been busy on the Outreach Committee! One of the many items they are tackling is getting the word out about the WLEB. They visited with BGSU students and their advisor to generate ideas for a Public Service Announcement for the WLEB.

They have set up a contest for students with a \$50 cash prize. The contest is for a 15 second radio PSA to get some ideas generated for us. The students will only be provided with the WLEB website and the WGTE watershed website for reference. The contest will run until April 21st. We will then have a week to "judge" the PSAs and pick a winner. The winner will be announced shortly thereafter.

Ohio Governor Kasich and Agency Directors Announce Efforts to Address Water Quality Issues in Grand Lake St. Mary's

In late January, Governor Kasich and the directors of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and Ohio Department of Agriculture announced first steps in addressing the long standing water quality problems in Grand Lake St. Mary's. These efforts include testing new treatment methods, increasing the scope and duration of dredging, and providing monthly public updates.



In addition, the state will spend \$5 million to buy aluminum sulfate, a chemical that binds with phosphorous in water, preventing algae from using the phosphorus as food. While this funding will not be able to treat the entire lake, managers are hoping that they can target specific problem areas.

Grand Lake St. Mary's is the largest lake in Ohio and has been considered on the most polluted water bodies in the state, mainly attributed to manure runoff from nearby farms.

In February, the state removed the "do not eat" advisory for fish in Grand Lake St. Mary's. The analysis showed no microcystin in fish sampled last fall.

For more information: http://www.epa.state.oh.us/pic/gism_algae.aspx

New Interactive Map Viewer Showcases Favorability Data for Offshore Wind Turbine Placement in Lake Erie

A new interactive map viewer showcasing the resources that may play a role in where offshore wind turbines might be placed in Lake Erie has been launched by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Office of Coastal Management.



The Wind Turbine Placement Favorability Map Viewer is the latest step by the office to provide information that allows communities and businesses to balance the use and preservation of Ohio's coastal resources while benefiting Ohio's economy.

The Map Viewer is the first application of the Ohio Coastal Atlas Use Case Toolbox. This toolbox allows users to select and view all or some of the thematic map layers that were used to develop the Wind Turbine Placement Favorability Analysis Map. Map layers include bird habitat, fish habitat, commercial and sport fishery efforts, lakebed sediments, distance from shore, land transportation, harbor navigation, shipping and ferry routes, shipwrecks, restricted areas, industries and utilities.

In addition to viewing resource layers on an index grid system, Ohio's Wind Turbine Placement Favorability Map Viewer provides a variety of custom tools allowing users to gather comprehensive attribute information including lake depth, lakebed sediment, fish habitat and limiting factor weight values. The Map Viewer can be accessed by visiting the Office of Coastal Management website: www.ohiodnr.com/coastal and selecting the "Coastal Wind" logo.

For questions regarding the use of the Interactive Map Viewer contact Brian George, Office of Coastal Management at 419-626-7980.

Healthy Land - Healthy Lake

Native Plants on your Land will make it Healthy

What is "healthy" soil? Answer: Healthy soil is filled with microorganisms that filter and replenish the nutrients in the soil in a continuous cycle. This cycle also filters harmful pollutants out of the soil by processing the waste. Healthy soil is pesticide-free, so when rain or snow falls and flows into rivers and lakes, water supplies remain clean.

Here are a few helpful ideas for your land:

RAIN BARRELS: A rain barrel is a container used to collect and store rain-water from your roof that would otherwise be lost to runoff and diverted to a storm drain or out onto your property. The water in the rain barrel can then be used for watering your landscape. Rain barrels work day in and day out to keep rainwater out of storm drains and sewers, which keeps pollutants out of our waterways.



WINDBREAKS: They provide many benefits to soil, water, plants, animals and people. They are an important part of the modern day agricultural landscape. Windbreaks come in many different sizes and shapes to serve many different conservation purposes. A windbreak guide book is available to you on the web: www.dnr.state.oh.us

NATIVE PLANTS: Native plants have a better root system, help runoff, and are good for habitat. These plants are not only attractive but they attract a lot of attention from butterflies, hummingbirds, shorebirds, turtles and frogs. A variety is available to you locally.

Take action now! Seedlings are now on sale at the Lucas Soil & Water Conservation District. You can also purchase native rain garden plants, composters, rain barrels and much more. Order deadline is April 29. Pick up date is May 6. Contact Lucas SWCD *today* at 419-893-1966 or visit: <http://co.lucas.oh.us/index.aspx?nid=458>

For information on Ohio's Windbreak Program contact Gregg Maxfield, ODNR, Division of Forestry at 419-424-5004 or visit ODNR website at http://www.ohiodnr.com/portals/18/landowner/pdf/windbreaks_guide.pdf

Phosphorus Information

SERA-17 is an organization of research scientists, policy makers, extension personnel, and educators. The mission is to develop and promote innovative solutions to minimize phosphorus losses from agriculture by supporting: 1) information exchange between research, extension, and regulatory communities, 2) recommendations for phosphorus management and research, and 3) initiatives that address phosphorus loss in agriculture.

The link below contains proceedings from their 2009 Great Lakes Phosphorus forum. For those of you working on this issue, the meeting presentations are online. There are some excellent background technical presentations as well as speaker PowerPoints that might be useful as you give or prepare presentations. There are some excellent Lake Erie photos also posted.

visit: <http://www.sera17.ext.vt.edu/Meetings/greatlakesforum/agenda.shtml>

This link is to their home page which gives information on their work and the upcoming 2011 annual meeting. visit: <http://www.sera17.ext.vt.edu/>

Upper Maumee Watershed Coordinator

By Nicole Grindley

Just as rivers begin as small headwater streams, we here at Defiance Soil & Water Conservation District are in the beginning stages of developing a comprehensive management plan for the Upper Maumee Watershed. The Defiance SWCD was recently awarded a four-year ODNR grant that allowed this program to become fully established. This grant will allow the organizing and development of a watershed action plan, educational outreach and implementation of protection and restoration activities within the Upper Maumee River Watershed. Defiance SWCD is very excited about this opportunity and the grant will be a huge asset to our goal of protecting and improving the Upper Maumee Watershed. That is where I come in.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Nicole Grindley, and I am the new Upper Maumee Watershed Coordinator. I was born and raised in Alliance, Ohio which is located in Northeast Ohio. I obtained a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Findlay in Findlay, Ohio. After college, I made Defiance my home, and where I still reside today.

As watershed coordinator, I will be responsible for orchestrating watershed planning and activities for the Upper Maumee Watershed Partnership (UMWP), which was started in December of 2009. The group was spearheaded by the Defiance SWCD after receiving a grant from the Maumee Valley RC&D/NRCS for the formation of a community based watershed group. The UMWP has continued to host steering committee meetings to further guide the planning and direction of the group. Indiana Department of Environmental Management, the Ohio State University Extension, Ohio EPA, ODNR, local municipalities, and businesses have all continued to provide guidance. Stakeholders who regularly attend the meetings represent agriculture, business, construction, conservation, government, education, and residents. The group continues to host diverse interests from agriculture to urban issues. The partnership has chosen two permanent locations for meetings, one in Woodburn, IN and one in Antwerp, OH. The group continues to have regular meetings alternating between sites every month.



In January 2010, the Partnership enacted its bylaws and finalized its name as the Upper Maumee Watershed Partnership. The vision and mission statement were approved and are as follows:

Vision Statement: To promote conservation, restoration and appreciation of the natural resources of the Upper Maumee River Watershed.

Mission Statement: To protect and restore the Upper Maumee River Watershed through public education and participation via planning and implementation of best management practices with the goal of improving local and regional water quality, increasing habitat quality, promoting sustainable land use practices and providing ecological and recreational opportunities.

I can be reached via email: ngrindley@defiance-county.com or on my office phone: 419-782-8751.

The Nature Conservancy expands to all of the Western Lake Erie Basin

By Carrie Vollmer-Sanders

Angola, IN – Due to growing concerns for the water quality in the Western Lake Erie Basin, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is expanding its scope of work to include the entire basin. The Conservancy has appointed Carrie Vollmer-Sanders to the new position of Western Lake Erie Basin Project Director. Vollmer-Sanders will be responsible for developing and directing the Conservancy's outreach programs to promote conservation, hydrologic improvements and nutrient stewardship within the basin. She will coordinate Michigan, Indiana and Ohio conservation efforts within the basin.

Vollmer-Sanders comes to TNC with a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture and biology education and Masters of Science degree in agricultural economics from Michigan State University in East Lansing. Prior to joining TNC, Vollmer-Sanders served as the agricultural ecology specialist at the Michigan Farm Bureau.

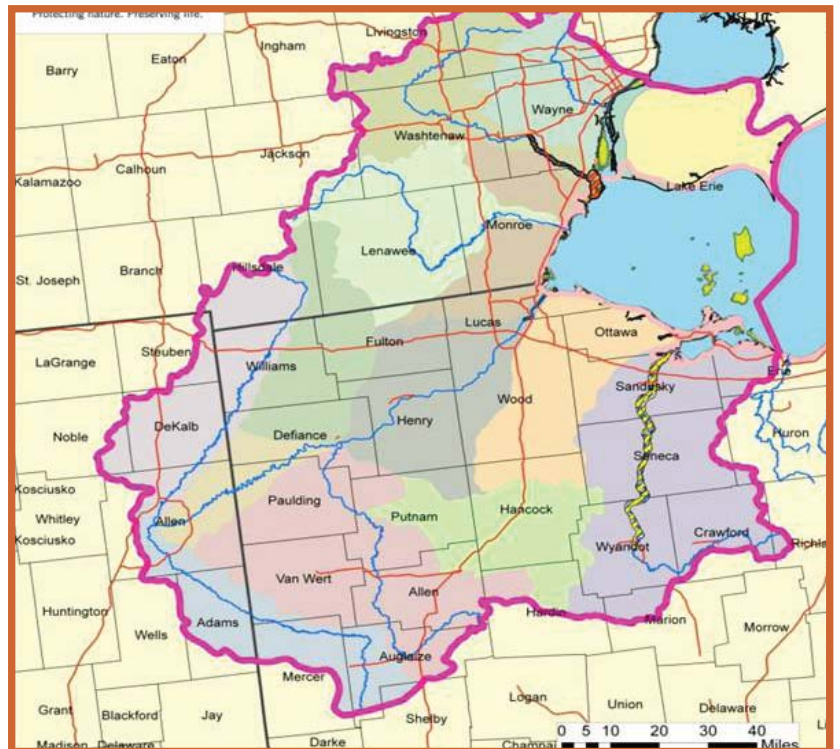
TNC has been working in the St. Joseph River for the past 18 years and with the WLEB Partnership since its inception. As more was learned about the basin and its tributaries, TNC developed new strategies to help increase water quality within streams and within Lake Erie itself. TNC works with partners such as the NRCS, Conservation Districts and Environmental Defense Fund to address resource concerns in the basin and supports ongoing educational, research and conservation efforts of the WLEB Partnership.

Vollmer-Sanders joins TNC's Western Lake Erie Basin team, including Joe Draper, Conservation Director WLEB Program; Anthony Sasson, Ohio Freshwater Conservation Coordinator; Rich Bowman, Michigan Director of Government Relations; and Larry Clemens, Indiana Assistant State Director for Conservation Programs among others. The WLEB Program will take initiative, think broadly, and ensure science is central to the actions taken to address hydrology and nutrient concerns in the WLEB thus increasing water quality.

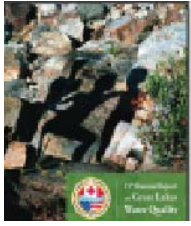


Above: The Nature Conservancy WLEB staff: Carrie Vollmer-Sanders, Beth Warner, Joe Draper

Right: The Nature Conservancy WLEB Project Map



15th Biennial Report Great Lakes Water Quality Released



The International Joint Commission recently released its 15th Biennial Report on Great Lakes Water Quality. The IJC provided 32 recommendations for action at the federal, state, provincial and local levels of government. In particular, the recommendations focus on the need for the

U.S. and Canada to approve a revised Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement that addresses threats to water quality to prevent or reduce their impact on human and ecological health.

There are several recommendations on better implementation of the existing agreement. The recommendations in the nearshore framework and eutrophication sections are particularly pertinent to the harmful algal bloom in the Western Lake Erie Basin.

The full report may be accessed at: <http://ijc.org/en/publications/rpts.htm>

Reach Out Across the Western Basin

Have a project or story you wish to share? The WLEB Bulletin and wleb.org are two great ways to get your word out across the basin. We are always looking for articles, photos, web features, web links, and events for our calendar. To get in touch just contact us at: webmaster@wleb.org

April 15 - Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion & Sediment Control 2011 RFP deadline.
Visit: www.glc/basin/funding.html

April 21 - Lake Erie Protection Fund grant proposals due. Visit: www.lakeerie.ohio.gov

May 12 & 13 - Ohio Stormwater Conference in Columbus OH Visit: http://ohioswa.com/conf_home.php

May 30 - June 3, 2011 - IAGLR, 54th International Conference on Great Lakes Research in Duluth, MN
Visit: <http://iaglr.org>

June 3 - 6 - 2011 National River Rally in North Charleston, South Carolina.
Visit: <http://www.rivernet.org/programs/national-river-rally>

June 15 - Lake Erie Commission Meeting in Oak Harbor OH Visit: www.lakeerie.ohio.gov

June 15 - Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Annual Meeting & Conference 2011 Visit: glsclcities.org

July 17-21 - Coastal Zone 2011 in Chicago IL. Visit: <http://www.doi.gov/initiatives/cz11/index.htm>

August 9 - CTIC 2011 tour will be held in Northwest Ohio and will focus on agriculture's influence on the environmental and economic health of Maumee River and Bay, as well as Lake Erie. The WLEB is a tour planning partner. Get involved! Visit: <http://www.ctic.org/CIATours>

October 12-14 - Great Lakes Biennial Meeting at Wayne State University. Visit: ijc.org

October 12-14 - Healing Our Waters - 7th Annual Great Lakes Restoration Conference, Detroit, MI Visit: <http://www.healthylakes.org>

Lake Erie Focus of Photo Contest



To celebrate the diversity of life found within the boundaries of our Great Lake's watershed, amateur photographers are invited to submit entries for the Lake Erie Commission's 2011 photo contest. The 2011 "Life on Lake Erie" photo contest is an opportunity for amateur photographers, age 16 and older, to share their talent in capturing the best that the Lake Erie region has to offer. Digital images taken between July 9, 2010 and July 8, 2011 in and around the Lake Erie watershed may be submitted to the Lake Erie Commission through July 14, 2011. For complete rules visit: www.lakeerie.ohio.gov

