

WESTERN LAKE ERIE BASIN BULLETIN

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Healthy Land ~ Healthy Lake

Volume 1 Issue 3



Watershed Projects Funded

Six proposals submitted by local watershed stakeholder groups in the 28 county Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) were funded by \$51,000 in grants from the Maumee Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D), based in Defiance, Ohio.

The grants focus on encouraging the formation of new watershed partnerships or building the capacity of existing watershed groups. These watershed groups work to improve water quality and implement conservation in the Western Lake Erie Basin.

The six grants include:

- 1) \$10,000 to the Defiance Soil and Water Conservation District for the establishment and organization of a new watershed group on the Upper Maumee River.

cont. on pg. 3

Leadership Meeting Held Sept. 22

On September 22 the Leadership Committee held a meeting at the Oak Openings Lodge in Whitehouse, Ohio. The meeting was important on many fronts.

Organizationally, reports were provided by the working committees on their progress since the last meeting. The Operations Committee reported on the progress of the NRCS Rapid Watershed Assessments and the USACE WLEB Study. Steve Davis walked the group through the development and use of a new matrix tool, which will help decision makers understand the impact of implementing management practices within watersheds. The tool is in the final stages of development, and will be used to help inform the watershed assessment process going forward.

The Outreach Committee is working on revising the website to create a more user-friendly format. Watch for these updates to go live over the winter. They are also developing an inventory of watershed groups within the basin to

cont. pg. 2

Strategic Plan Updates Go High-Tech

The WLEB Strategic Plan was created as a framework for the objectives, goals, and actions that are supported by the WLEB Partnership.

Updating the plan on a regular basis and tracking progress towards the implementation of goals is obviously important. Maintaining funding for planning and implementation into the future will depend on

cont. pg. 2

In This Issue:

Tony Friona Moves On.....	2
Watershed Assessment Comments.....	3
Rain Garden Initiative.....	4
Partners for Clean Streams.....	5
Calendar of Events.....	5
Next Issue Preview.....	5

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:

**Chris Riddle, Chris Coulon, &
Craig Forget**

Graphics & Layout:

Linda Zmudzinski
www.wleb.org

wlebh@wleb.org

Leadership Meeting (cont.)

helping improve communication and outreach to the local level. The Research Committee has begun an effort to inventory research needs within the watershed. Once the inventory is complete, they will be able to determine what is needed, and how best to go about collecting that data. The Funding Committee will be working with the Research Committee to determine how the data needs can be filled once they are identified.

Several other items were discussed, including the funding of watershed groups, the strategic plan update, and planning for a 2-day workshop in Toledo in early 2009. Details on many of these items can be found throughout this newsletter.

Two key personnel issues were also discussed at the meeting. Tony Friona is leaving the Buffalo District of the WLEB. Details on his departure are below. Lieutenant Colonel Daniel B. Snead attended his first WLEB meeting as the District Commander in Buffalo. LTC Snead has served the military around the world, including assignments in North Carolina, South Korea, Kentucky, Kuwait, Texas, Oklahoma, Germany, Iraq. LTC Snead has a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and a Master of Science in Environmental Engineering. He is a licensed Professional Engineer, and is a Ranger, Sapper, Senior Parachutist, and Jumpmaster qualified. His wife Melinda is a Warren, Ohio native.

Tony Friona Moving On

Congratulations to Tony Friona who has been promoted within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Great Lakes and Ohio River Division as the Lead Program Manager for Program Development in the Civil Works Programs Integration Division.



At the USACE – Buffalo District he helped build strong diverse regional teams as a Program Manager and Plan Formulator. He helped to develop the Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership, worked on the Lake Erie Lakewide Management Plan (LaMP) and was the

cont on pg. 4

<p>Website ftp://ftp.urscorp.com</p> <p>User Name Cleveland</p> <p>Password lce_2169 (first letter is a lower case L)</p> <p>The reports are in the WLEB folder.</p>
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Watershed Assessment Comment Period

The development of accurate and complete Watershed Assessments is not possible without the input of local organizations and citizens. Opportunities for providing input on the Watershed Assessments have been provided in several formats, including an online comment form. Currently the assessments for the St. Mary's, St. Joseph's, Upper Maumee, and Maumee Bay basins are available online for review.

Instructions for how to obtain the plans and provide review comments are provided at the left. The current review period ends on November 10, 2008. Future review opportunities will be announced at www.wleb.org.

Strategic Plan Update (cont.)

our success, and our ability to track our success, today.

To help make it easier to track progress made by the many members of the partnership, a process for updating the plan is being developed. In short, the plan will be placed on the WLEB FTP site in the coming months. The document will be editable by the members of the partnership. A "progress" column will added to the plan where partners can input updates as necessary. Additional details on this process will be made available once the file is online.

Watershed Projects Funded (cont.)

- 2) \$10,000 to the St. Marys River Watershed Project of the Allen Soil and Water Conservation District for developing a Watershed Management Plan (WMP) to address water quality impairments identified in the TMDL for *E. Coli* in the St. Marys River Watershed.
- 3) \$10,000 to the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative (SJRIW) to build long-term capacity of the organization, to expand partnerships in the Middle St. Joseph sub-watershed, and to support the Cedar Creek sub-watershed steering committee.
- 4) \$6,500 to the Blanchard River Watershed Partnership for the establishment of a part-time staff position that will prepare a database for the writing of the action plan for the Riley Creek and /or the Cranberry Creek sub-watershed and to building support for the Blanchard River Watershed Partnership mission in Allen and Putnam counties.
- 5) \$4,700 to OSU Extension in Van Wert County for the development of a community-based watershed group for improving negative impacts to the Town Creek sub-watershed.

cont. on pg. 5



Rain Garden Initiative

A rain garden is a garden in a low spot that catches and slows storm water from downspouts, driveways, parking lots, and roads and allows it to infiltrate into the soil with the help of deep-rooted plants that like water. The garden is planted in a shallow basin as part of an area's landscaping plan and will actually filter pollutants from the runoff that it captures and absorbs. Rain gardens can be designed in all shapes and sizes and may include formally arranged plants, fields of wildflowers, stone culverts and paths, and other beautiful features.

In the summer of 2006, citizens in Toledo and Lucas County sustained heavy flooding from a series of rainstorms. The rainwater from these storms exceeded the capacity of the ditches and storm sewers on which the area depends to collect storm water and transport it safely to our rivers and lakes. The volume of storm water is increased in urban areas like Toledo because we have impervious surfaces like parking lots, roads and buildings that cause the water to run off instead of being absorbed into the ground. In response, our Congresswoman, Marcy Kaptur, suggested that we need to find ways to encourage the infiltration of storm water into the ground instead of trying to build bigger and better ditches and sewers in Toledo and Lucas County. She was inspired by an effort to build 10,000 rain gardens in Kansas City, Missouri.

The Toledo-Lucas County (TLC) Rain Garden Initiative has introduced the idea of rain gardens to homeowners, developers, nurseries and landscapers, business owners, and governmental agencies and assisted them in constructing rain gardens as a way to manage storm water by providing demonstration gardens, technical training and public information and involvement.¹

The WLEB Partnership has provided funding to the Rain Garden Initiative to allow them to expand the training sessions, demonstration projects, and educational materials they offer. For more on the Rain Garden Initiative visit www.raingardeninitiative.org.

Rain Garden Initiative Partners: Congresswomen Marcy Kaptur, USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service, American Rivers, City of Toledo, Lucas Soil & Water Conservation District, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments, OSU Extension-Lucas County, OSU Extension-Master Gardeners, Lucas County, Toledo Botanical Gardens, Ohio Dept. Natural Resources, Toledo Grows, Toledo Zoo, & Toledo Metroparks.

1 - Text from www.raingardeninitiative.org. Image Great Blue Lobelia from www.delawarewildflowers.org

Friona (cont.)

Districts Program Manager for the Great Lakes Tributary Modeling Program and the Great Lakes Areas of Concern Remedial Action Plan Program. He graduated from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo with Bachelors degrees in Economics, Environmental Science, and Urban-Regional Analysis & Planning and is a graduate of the Corps coveted Planning Associates Program. He is also completing work on a Master of Science degree on a regionally unique program in Great Lakes Inter-Disciplinary Studies. The WLEB Partnership will miss the energy and drive he brought to the group.

Watershed Projects Funded (cont.)

6) \$9,800 to Partners for Clean Streams, Inc. (PCS) to support the part time Executive Director over a one-year period from October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009. PCS is committed to delivering the wide range of programs, projects, and community outreach efforts associated with water quality improvements that have been of long standing interest to the Maumee RAP community which encompasses Fulton, Lucas, Ottawa, and Wood counties.

The Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership provided the funds to the Maumee Valley RC&D for these grants. The WLEB Partnerships a tri-state partnership (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana) dedicated to enhancing multi-purpose projects that improve land and water resource management in the basin and promote a healthy, productive watershed. The grants support the Western Lake Erie Basin Strategic Plan. (article from Maumee Valley RC&D)

VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.WLEB.ORG



A September 19, 2008 photo of the algal bloom in Maumee Bay. The Ohio Lake Erie Phosphorus Task Force, organized by Ohio EPA, is currently working to draft recommendations on how to address dissolved reactive phosphorus loading to Lake Erie. An update on their work will be included in the next issue of the Western Lake Erie Basin Bulletin.

Watershed Focus - Partners for Clean Streams

The Lower Maumee River Watershed is one of eight subwatersheds within the Maumee River Watershed and comprises 16% of the Maumee. Agriculture is the predominant activity, although the watershed features heavily urbanized areas as well, especially in Lucas County.

The Maumee River is relatively flat, with an average drop of 1.3 feet per mile.¹

Partners for Clean Streams, Inc. (PCS) was formed in early 2007 as a 501(c)3 non-profit community organization with an interest in supporting local and regional water quality improvements in the metro-Toledo area. Partners for Clean Streams is striving for abundant open space and a high quality natural environment; adequate floodwater storage capacities and flourishing wildlife; stakeholders who take local ownership in their resources; and rivers, streams, and lakes that are clean, clear and safe.

VITAL STATS¹

HUC: 04100006

Size: 692,000 acres

Land Use: 85% crop, 9% woodland, 3% urban, 1% pasture, 2% other.

Streams: 2,150 miles

Population: 295,700

Impaired Streams: 859 miles (41%)

The Maumee RAP Committee now sits nested in the Partners for Clean Streams organizational structure and still serves the same great mission of “fishable and swimmable” waters. The Maumee RAP Advisory Committee (RAC) and Development Advisory Committee (DAC) serve to assist the PCS Board of Directors to deliver a wide range of programs, projects, and community outreach efforts associated with restoring healthy and safe streams to the Maumee Area of Concern.²



¹WLEB Study - Watershed Executive Summary
² www.PartnersForCleanStreams.org

In Our Next Issue

Our next issue is scheduled to be released February 2009. Articles we are working on include: an update on the Ohio Phosphorus Task Force; a recap of the upcoming Toledo workshop; a Strategic Plan Update, information on the revision of the WLEB website; and a report from the Research Committee.

CALENDAR

Watershed Assessment Comments - Nov 10

WMAO Conference - November 12 - 13

Lake Erie Commission Meeting - Dec 17

Toledo Workshop - TBA