

OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION MEETING
Ohio Department of Agriculture ~ Bromfield Administration Building
Reynoldsburg, Ohio
March 15, 2006

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (LEC) meeting was called to order by the Commission Chairman's Designee, Deputy Director Scott Zody, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, at 10:11 a.m.

Roll Call:

Deputy Director Scott Zody, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)
Deputy Director Patricia Madigan, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)
Emily Miller, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Scott Golden, Ohio Department of Health (ODH)
Michael Bailey, Designee for Ohio Dept. of Agriculture (ODA)

Guests:

Steve Carter, Citizen
Edith Chase, Ohio Coastal Resource Management Project
Bill Goodman, Ohio Department of Agriculture
Edwin J. Hammett, Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office
Gary Isbell, Ohio DNR – Division of Wildlife
David Mackey, Ohio DNR – Office of Coastal Management
Dr. Jeffrey M. Reutter, Ohio Sea Grant College Program
John Wilson, USDA – NRCS
Jill Woodyard, Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Chairman's Report

Minutes

Motion was made by ODH and seconded by OEPA to accept the December 21, 2005 meeting minutes as presented with no changes. The Commission voted all in favor and the motion carried.

Fiscal Agency Designee

Deputy Director Scott Zody reported that Ohio EPA currently administers the fiscal responsibilities of the Lake Erie Commission office and Lake Erie Protection Fund. The agency has agreed to continue in that capacity. Motion was made by ODH, seconded by OEPA that the agency remain as designee for fiscal administration of the Lake Erie Commission. The Commission voted all in favor and the motion carried.

Executive Committee Report

Scott Zody, Executive Committee Chairman; ODNR, reported that the Commission recently received a letter of approval from the Great Lakes Protection Fund (GLPF) for payment of Ohio's state share for calendar year 2005. GLPF revenues have increased and Ohio's state share will be received this spring in the amount of \$280,698, an increase of over \$95,000 from the projected amount. Continuing with the revenue report, a summary was presented on the Lake Erie License Plate Sales Program. It was reported that continuing marketing efforts have helped to stop the erosion of license plate sales and there has not been a significant decrease during this time period.

Grants Committee Lake Erie Protection Fund (LEPF) Report

Small Grants Program

Bill Goodman, Grants Committee Chairman; ODA, presented an overview on the Small Grants Program and Lake Erie Protection Fund (LEPF) including the committee's funding recommendations for small grant applications received for Third Quarter FY 2006.

Mr. Goodman reported that the LEPF is currently conducting a quarterly Small Grants Program with a maximum grant award of \$10,000 per project. Small grant projects are to address the strategic actions of the *Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan*, projects would also be considered if they address the recent Near Term Actions of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. In FY 2006, an amount of \$127,798 was available for funding, \$67,384 currently remains. The Grants Committee recommended funding four small grant projects, with specific conditions, in the total amount of \$39,576. Motion was made by ODH, seconded by ODOT to accept the committee's recommendations with conditions; all in favor, the motion carried to approve the following small grant projects:

- The University of Toledo for project entitled, "*Survey fish Diversity: Testing the Impact of Vegetative Encroachment*", Dr. Johan Gottgens and Todd Crail, Project Directors - \$9,576;
- U.S. Geological Survey for project entitled, "*Rapid Method for E. Coli in the Cuyahoga River*", Rebecca Bushon, Project Director - \$10,000 with Condition that the project director works in cooperation with Ohio's state agencies – OEPA and ODH, and local health departments.
- U.S. Geological Survey for project entitled, "*E. Coli and Suspended Sediment in Berger Ditch*", Amie Brady, Project Director - \$10,000 with Condition the project director collaborates with TMACOG and the Maumee Bay Task Force that are already working on this issue in the area.
- Toledo Harbor Lighthouse Preservation Society for project entitled, "*Toledo Harbor Lighthouse Access Dock & Ramp*", Sandy Bihn, Project Director - \$10,000 with Condition of ownership being approved and the understanding that LEPF monies will be spent to construct the ramp and dock; any additional monetary needs would be the responsibility of the grantee.

Lake Erie Commission (LEC) Office Report

Lake Erie Balanced Growth (BG) Program

Ed Hammett, LEC, provided a quarterly update on the implementation progress of the Balanced Growth Program which included: (1) Watershed Pilot Projects – all three (Chagrin, Swan Creek and Rocky River) got underway in January 2006, managers and staff have been meeting monthly and are currently reviewing the suitability analysis strategies and criteria. Timeline for the three pilots: Year 2006 – develop GIS and data needs; 2007 – begin putting PCAs and PDAs on maps and get consensus; and 2008 – wrap up the pilots and implementation; (2) State Incentives – committee met in February and members are preparing a final review of their state agency's inventory of programs which will be part of the State Incentives Strategy Document to be brought before the LEC on June 7, 2006 for approval; (3) State Endorsement Process – process is also being prepared along with the Strategy Document which will determine whether a watershed plan meets basic criteria to become eligible for state incentives; (4) Monitoring Progress - will be accomplished by Indicators that were developed to measure the progress of the program; (5) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) – met in March and will assist in reviewing and advising on the State Incentives Strategy Document; (6) Public Outreach & Education – will help educate what is balanced growth with ODNRs Division of Wildlife Coastal Training Program providing assistance with a Balanced Growth Awareness and Training Program – a handbook will be prepared this summer; (7) Best Local Land Use Practices – CSU in conjunction with the LEC Office will develop technical assistance/outreach training program for local government officials; (8) Colored Infrared Images – \$50,000 of LEPF Balanced Growth funds will assist in developing a complete/detailed wetlands inventory in Ohio.

Ohio Lake Erie Awards

Ed Hammett, LEC, reported that nominations are currently being accepted for the 2006 Ohio Lake Erie Awards both for an individual and organization. Deadline for nominations is July 20, 2006 and forms are available online at the LEC web site <http://www.epa.state.oh.us/oleo>

Coastweeks (CW) 2006 (Sept 7 -22, 2006)

Mr. Hammett further reported that "a call for events" is underway for the 2006 program. This year's program date has been set earlier with kickoff taking place on September 7 at the Lake Erie Conference. The focus this year will be on cleanups which have been the most popular and well-attended events. International Coastal Cleanup Day will take place on Saturday, September 16 followed by the Put-In-Bay Underwater Cleanup on Monday, September 18. A planning toolkit is available online at the LEC web site for those planning an event; deadline to submit information is June 30, 2006. Although cleanups will have a special emphasis this year, the LEC office will continue to list other Coastweeks events at the web site such as Maumee Bay Nature Center's family evening activities and campout following their cleanup at Maumee Bay State Park.

Ohio Lake Erie Conference – Sept 7, 2006

The Commission will present a conference this fall that will highlight what Ohio has achieved for restoration and protection of Lake Erie in the past four-plus years. Among the items of interest to be presented at the conference are: a) Next Progress Report for the *Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan*; b) Near Term Actions of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration; c) Great Lakes Annex 2001; d) 2006 Ohio Lake Erie Awards; and e) 2006 "Life on Lake Erie" Photo Contest winners. The day before, LEC will hold their quarterly meeting.

2006 "Life on Lake Erie" Photo Contest

The LEC office is accepting entries for the 2006 contest. Deadline is July 20, 2006. The contest is open to photos taken in the Lake Erie watershed between August 3, 2005 and July 10, 2006. Brochures are available online at the LEC web site or by calling the LEC office.

Next LEC Quarterly Meeting will be held June 7, 2006 at the City of Mentor's Mentor Beach Park Pavilion in Mentor-on-the Lake, Ohio.

Invited Report

Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Update

Gary Isbell, Executive Administrator for ODNR's Fish Management Section, provided an update on ANS. Mr. Isbell reported the problem with aquatic invasive species remains one of the most critical issues in the Great Lakes. There has been an invasive species problem since 1990 and the proliferation has caused damaging impacts to Ohio's fisheries each year. Two ways invasive species have established themselves in this area are through ballast water from ships and accidental releases from aquaculture. Invasive species, also known as aquatic nuisance species (ANS), include zebra and quagga mussels, round gobies, sea lamprey, and the fishhook water flea.

Invasive species are disrupting the basic links in the food chain. Zebra mussels concentrate contaminants such as PCBs as they filter water. They also recycle nutrients such as phosphorus creating concentrations of nutrients which stimulate algae growth. These algae die and their decomposition utilizes oxygen which in turn creates oxygen depleted dead zones in the lake.

ANS will continue to be introduced unless prevention-oriented solutions are put into place. Federal leadership and federal efforts are needed to develop a new national comprehensive plan for ANS control and to fully implement solutions such as ballast water management. Anglers and boaters can help prevent the spread of ANS by: (1) Removing all aquatic plants and animals from their boat, motor, trailer, and accessories before leaving any water area; (2) Draining live and transom wells thoroughly before leaving the water area; and (3) DO NOT DUMP live bait or fish into any water area.

Agency Reports

Scott Zody, ODNR, presented an update on the Great Lakes Charter Annex 2001. The compact needs to be passed by the individual eight Great Lakes states, they need to enact legislation and make the compact enforceable. Ohio hopes to enact legislation this year. Other Great Lakes states are looking to Ohio and Wisconsin for their leadership in this effort. Presently, the Commission Chairman, Director Speck, is in Washington D.C. along with Governor Taft, Director Koncelik, OEPA, and others for Great Lakes Congressional Day and will be speaking on many Great Lakes issues and concerns.

Patricia Madigan, OEPA, provided an update on the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration since its release this past December. Ohio and Wisconsin are working on a list of actions on what the Great Lakes states will do. On March 16, 2006, Great Lakes Congressional Day, Governor Taft will go before the Senate Energy Committee to give testimony about important Great Lakes issues. The testimony will include such issues as: (1) Funding the carp barrier – need \$6.0 million to complete the second one and its operation; (2) \$28.5 million is needed for wetland restoration; (3) Eliminate open-lake disposal from Toledo Harbor – need funding from Congress; and (4) Need \$1.2 million for a feasibility study.

Scott Golden, ODH, reported on pending legislation for the new Sewage Treatment System Rules expected to be passed this coming May. It has taken 15 years to get new legislation, rules have not changed since 1977. Passage of the Rules will give the agency oversight of local sewage treatment systems throughout Ohio and will provide a means for compliance with the Clean Water Act bringing homeowners and communities together to manage their wastewater systems.

Advisory Committee Reports

Edith Chase, OCRMP, reported on a recent article addressing coastal sprawl by the Pew Oceans Commission entitled, *The Effects of Urban Design on Aquatic Ecosystems in the United States*. It was quoted that “runaway land consumption, dysfunctional suburban development patterns, and exponential growth in automobile use are the real engines of pollution and habitat degradation on the coast.”

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Steve Carter, citizen and former ODNR civil engineer, briefed the commission on the City of Port Clinton's Transient Marina Project and the issue of the city's shortage of dock space. Mr. Carter asked LEC for their support in this project that could help make the City of Port Clinton a tourist destination. Deputy Director Scott Zody stated Ohio is developing a vision and marketing strategy for the Lake Erie Islands and Port Clinton to compliment one another. David Mackey, Chief of ODNR's Office of Coastal Management, also reported they are working on these issues and are concerned about the economic vitality of the lake.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by OEPA, seconded by ODH, all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Ohio Lake Erie Commission Office
One Maritime Plaza, 4th Floor,
Toledo, OH. 43604*