



# U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) Significant Activities Report

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April 2009

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Western Lake Erie from TerraMODIS Satellite  
(Image courtesy of NASA)

### *LAKEWIDE MANAGEMENT PLANS*

#### **Western Lake Erie Basin Conference and Draft Management Plan**

GLNPO Director Gary Gulezian and Lake Erie LaMP Manager Dan O’Riordan participated in a three-day Western Lake Erie Basin Conference (March 10-12, 2009) at Maumee State Park in Oregon, Ohio. The session was sponsored by the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) consortium of Federal, State, and local agencies under the leadership of the Buffalo District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with additional support from the International Joint Commission’s Water Quality Board. The WLEB initiative itself sprang from a 1999 Water Resources Development Act add-on directing the Corps to, among other things, develop a flood-control strategy for Western Basin of Lake Erie. The Western Basin is comprised of the Maumee, Ottawa, and Portage River watersheds of Northwest Ohio, Southeast Michigan, and Northeast Indiana. Other goals of the funding

include: improving water quality, navigation, recreation, and fish and wildlife habitat.

The Western Lake Erie Basin is also the key area for future Lake Erie Lakewide Management Plan action to reduce nutrients (particularly soluble-reactive phosphorus) to Lake Erie via the Maumee River. In addition, a number of soon-to-be announced GLNPO research-related and on-farm demonstration grants are designed to gain a better understanding of the Western Basin's phosphorus nearshore dynamics (including the land-to-lake linkage) and agricultural practices to determine management actions to further reduce phosphorus loading to the lake.

The three-day conference focused on finalizing a draft Management Plan for the area, which is to be presented to Congress in the coming months. GLNPO's specific contribution at this time is to the \$43 million (50/50 cost share) Legacy Act sediment remediation project in the Ottawa River. U.S. EPA Region 5's Water Division is identified as a partner in a number of efforts related to stormwater management.

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### ***CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS***

#### **Buffalo River Feasibility Study Update**

On March 3-4, 2009, GLNPO's Marc Tuchman, Scott Cieniawski, and Mary Beth Ross attended a Great Lakes Legacy Act project team meeting in Buffalo, New York. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the draft Buffalo River contaminated sediment feasibility study with representatives from the non-federal sponsors, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and Honeywell, along with the New York State Department of Environ-



A Buffalo River Scene

mental Conservation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo District. The group discussed the remedial action objectives and remedial targets for the project, Honeywell's approach to screening and evaluating various remedial alternatives, and potential ecosystem restoration opportunities that could be carried out in conjunction with the remediation project. Honeywell submitted the Draft Feasibility Study on March 16th and the project team is currently reviewing the document.

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#### **Kinnickinnic River Project Progress**

*\* CDF Offloading Platform Complete:* As of the end of March 2009, the construction of the Sediment Offloading Platform for Kinnickinnic River sediments at the Milwaukee Area Confined Disposal Facility is substantially complete. The construction contractor (Gillen Company) is expected to demobilize from the site by the middle of April.

*\* Dredging Subcontract Awarded:* On March 31, 2009, EPA's contractor CH2M-Hill issued a Notice of Award for Kinnickinnic River dredging and disposal activities to Ryba Marine of Cheboygan, Michigan. It is anticipated that Ryba will mobilize to the site in April and begin sediment remediation activities in May 2009.

\* *Coordination Meetings:* On March 26, GLNPO project leader Ajit Vaidya attended a meeting at the Port of Milwaukee between the Business Improvement District #35 and representatives from U.S. EPA-GLNPO, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Port of Milwaukee. The purpose of the meeting was to solicit concerns and feedback from the property owners regarding the upcoming dredging activities, including the coordination of spring boat launch activities with the dredging and bridge opening schedules on the Kinnickinnic River.

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### **Lincoln Park/Milwaukee River Sediment Sampling**

During the week of March 2, 2009 approximately 30 sediment samples were collected from the Lincoln Park site for total PCB analysis. In addition, sediment thickness was measured in approximately 205 locations. This data collection effort focused on Lincoln Creek (7 transects) and the west oxbow of the Milwaukee River (23 transects) to fill in data gaps from the 2008 sampling event. Lincoln Creek feeds into the west oxbow and is believed to be the primary source of PCBs to the River in this area. Previous sampling has shown PCB concentrations as high as 850 ppm in the area. Validated data from the 2009 sampling are expected sometime in April. The 2009 results will be used, in conjunction with previous sampling data, to determine the full extent of PCB contamination in Lincoln Creek and west oxbow of the River (considered Phase I of the project) and to develop a feasibility study to determine the best remedial options for the area. GLNPO is closely coordinating with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Milwaukee County to move the project forward.



West Oxbow of the Milwaukee River, Wisconsin

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### **Ottawa River Sediment Cleanup Progress**

On March 19, 2009, the Ottawa River Group held a mandatory site walk for contractors interested in bidding on the sediment processing operations for the Great Lakes Legacy Act sediment remediation project on the Ottawa River. The Ottawa River Group, a consortium of private industries and the City of Toledo, is EPA's non-federal partner for the project and will be providing the majority of their 50% project contribution in the form of in-kind services. The winning contractor will be completing detailed design plans for the dewatering and water treatment operations, overseeing construction of required infrastructure, and managing the sediment dewatering and water treatment operations during the dredging project. Representatives from six contractor teams attended the bid walk. Bids are due by April 16, 2009.

On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, GLNPO organized a public information meeting in Toledo, Ohio to update the community on the status of the Ottawa River Great Lakes Legacy Act Sediment Remediation Project. Marc Tuchman gave a

brief introduction about the Legacy Act and Scott Cieniawski described the project components, the schedule and the next steps for implementing the remediation plan. Approximately 50 community members were in attendance, including two local television stations (FOX Toledo and NBC 24 Toledo) and the Toledo Blade newspaper. Representatives from the City of Toledo, the Ottawa River Group, Partners for Clean Streams, the Ohio EPA, and the Maumee RAP were also present. The final, detailed design plans for the project are expected to be complete by July 2009, with initial dredging getting underway in October 2009.

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## **RESEARCH AND MONITORING**

### **Spring Water Quality Survey**

Originally scheduled to begin on April 1, 2009, ice in the Straits of Mackinac, followed by spring storms delayed the start of the spring water quality survey until April 8<sup>th</sup>. At that time, scientists from GLNPO began sampling the waters of the Great Lakes to assess their water quality and biological community composition. GLNPO's 180-foot research vessel, the *R/V Lake Guardian*, will visit each of the Great Lakes in a continuation of the annual surveys begun in 1983. The data from these surveys has been important in identifying the changing nutrient (phosphorus) levels in Lake Erie, and in tracking the changing biology and chemistry of the lakes. In this twenty-seventh year of the survey, we will sample many of the same stations, using similar techniques to those of 1983. Additional time will be spent collecting the amphipod, *Diporeia*, for research into its decline, and towing the real-time sampling Triaxus towfish in open waters. In the weeks before the survey, GLNPO personnel participating in the survey, were trained in analytical and sampling methods, health and safety, and for some, emergency medical training.



Launching the Rosette Water Sampler from the *R/V Lake Guardian*

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### **Lake Michigan Intensive Monitoring Preparations**

The Nearshore Monitoring Workgroup of the Lake Michigan Monitoring Coordination Council held its second meeting on April 20, 2009. The workgroup is a network of government, university and Sea Grant scientists and managers engaged in monitoring the Lake Michigan nearshore. The goal of the workgroup is to coordinate and plan monitoring efforts for the 2010 Lake Michigan Intensive Year effort and the 2010 Coastal Condition Report activities. The workgroup includes members from the federal and state agencies, and academics who monitor the nearshore of Lake Michigan.

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### ***POLLUTION PREVENTION***

#### **Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products in Fish Tissue**

Two journal articles and several press releases have recently been released presenting the conclusion of EPA's Office of Water's Pilot Study of Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products in Fish Tissue. The journal articles outline the screening methods used during the study and interpretation of occurrence data. One of the national sites chosen for the study includes the North Branch of the Chicago River. GLNPO conducted a supplemental study as a collaborative partnership between GLNPO, U.S. EPA Region 5 and its Chicago Regional Laboratory (CRL), U.S. EPA's Office of Water, the U.S. Geological Survey, The U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. The four main objectives of the supplemental study were to: (1) determine if there is reproductive impairment to resident fish; (2) estimate whole fish and fillet concentrations of pharmaceuticals and personal care products, alkylphenol surfactants, and hormones; (3) estimate the effluent and stream concentrations of these substances; and (4) document seasonal differences in concentrations of these compounds in effluent, stream, and fish. Links to the journal articles from the national pilot study are listed below:

- [Occurrence of pharmaceuticals and personal care products \(PPCPs\) in fish: Results of a national pilot study in the U.S](#)
- [Gas chromatography–mass spectrometry screening methods for select UV filters, synthetic musks, alkylphenols, an antimicrobial agent, and an insect repellent in fish](#)



Unwanted Medicines Turned In at Collection Event

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#### **Pharmaceutical and E-Waste Education and Outreach Activities**

GLNPO and Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant (IISG) continue to support efforts to properly dispose of unwanted medicine and e-waste throughout the Great Lakes region and beyond. Recent activities included:

##### *Sangamon County Illinois 2009 Unwanted Medicine Collection Event support*

IISG provided pillbox giveaways and advertising funds to support the 2009 Sangamon County, Illinois Unwanted Medicine Collection Event that will be held Saturday, April 25, 2009, at the Illinois State Fairgrounds from 8am-1pm. This event is a prelude to establishing a permanent collection program with the pharmacies located within Sangamon County. Event organizers are also utilizing a flier that was created from a template provided in the IISG *Disposal of Unwanted Medicines: A Resource for Action in Your Community* toolkit.

*University of Dallas Unwanted Medicine take back pilot program support*

On March 17, 2009, IISG's Susan Boehme and Elizabeth Hinchey Malloy and ORISE's Shelley Cabrera participated in a conference call to advise University of Dallas MBA students who are members of a UD MBA Capstone group working with EPA Region 6 to establish a pharmaceutical mail-back and take-back program on the university campus.

*[ecyclingtools.com](http://ecyclingtools.com) is Featured Product on Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant's homepage*

The [ecyclingtools.com](http://ecyclingtools.com) website is this month's "featured product" on Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant's homepage <http://www.iiseagrant.org>. The link includes a feature story "New Website Kicks Off eCycling Campaign" (<http://www.iiseagrant.org/newsroom/helm/ecycling.pdf>) that quotes IISG's Susan Boehme and Region 5's Chris Newman.

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### **GLBTS Substances/Sectors Workgroup Meets**

A Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy (GLBTS) Substances and Sectors Workgroup Meeting was held on March 31, 2009 in Toronto, Canada. Approximately 35 stakeholders from industry and non-governmental organizations, as well as U.S. and Canadian government staff were in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to review the process for developing a list of approximately thirty chemicals of potential concern to both the U.S. and Canada in the Great Lakes basin. This list was devised by overlaying Canadian "Priority Chemicals" listed through the Canadian Chemical Management Plan categorization process, with the list of U.S. High and Moderate production volume chemicals, and with chemicals that have been detected in the Great Lakes environment over the past ten years. Next steps will be to further assess



Electronic Waste Turned in at Collection Center

these chemicals with respect to use, release, hazard, exposure and current management disposition on both sides of the border. The ultimate goal of the workgroup and the GLBTS Forum is to find solutions to chemical toxicant stress using both voluntary pollution prevention measure and by enlisting U.S. and Canadian regulatory programs when warranted. Presentations from this meeting are available online at: <http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/bns/index.html>.

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### ***INVASIVE SPECIES***

#### **Rapid Response to Invasive Species Presentation**

GLNPO's Bill Bolen gave a presentation about utilizing Incident Command System Concepts and Principles to provide for a rapid response to Invasive Species at the 7th Annual Western Great Lakes Research Conference. This annual conference held in Ashland,

Wisconsin on April 1-2, 2009 was attended by a variety of federal, state, academia, and non-governmental organizations throughout the Great Lakes Basin. The presentation introduced the audience to the basic framework of the Incident Command System and provided further detail on the functional roles of the command and general staff positions inherent to this structure. Special emphasis was given on the operational, planning, logistics, and administrative support functions that can provide scientists, researchers, and land management officials the capability to detect, assess, and provide management recommendations for response to newly discovered invasive species. Contact. Bill. Bolen. 312 353 6316 or [bolen.bill@epa.gov](mailto:bolen.bill@epa.gov)

### ***HABITAT RESTORATION***

#### **Black River Ecological Restoration Master Plan**

GLNPO staff attended the April 7, 2009 Black River Advisory Group meeting in Lorain, Ohio. The overall goal for the project is to develop an Ecological Restoration Master Plan for the lower Black River that improves, preserves and restores fishery health, aquatic and riparian habitat and adjacent terrestrial habitats in a way that is consistent with the community's vision for the area, including social and cultural interaction, recreational access and use, development and public infrastructure. Improved aquatic habitat in the Black River will contribute to delisting the Black River as an Area of Concern. The advisory group consists of representatives from Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and Ohio Department of Natural Resources, City of Lorain, Lorain Port Authority, Ohio Sea Grant, Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, Midwest Biodiversity Institute, and Cleveland State University.

During the meeting URS, the contractor assembling the draft Master Plan, presented



Waterfall on Black River Near Elyria, Ohio

early action opportunities which will be incorporated into the first draft of the Black River Ecological Restoration Master Plan. The final plan is expected to be finished during the summer of 2009.

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#### **Habitat/Wetlands Initiative Wisconsin Workshop**

GLNPO's John Perrecone and Judy Beck participated in the March 17, 2009 workshop on the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Habitat/Wetlands Initiative in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. The workshop was one of a series that are being held throughout the Great Lakes basin. Over 30 people attended and included representatives from State, Federal and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, industry and the general public. As in the other meetings, members of the Great Lakes Commission (contractors supporting the workshops) discussed the Great Lakes Habitat Initiative (GLHI) data base developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and provided an internet tour on how it works and can be used to identify and track habitat projects. Representatives from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Wisconsin Lake Michigan stakeholders outlined the

State's habitat restoration strategies, initiatives and priorities as well as outlining current successful restoration projects in the state. John Perrecone, Judy Beck, and other federal agency representatives discussed grant opportunities for the group. The participants felt that the GLHI data base was a useful tool but did not offer to actively input projects into it at this point—perhaps at a future date they may find it of more use. The workshop brought together Wisconsin restoration practitioners with federal partners to develop better working relationships.

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We welcome your questions, comments or suggestions about this month's Significant Activities Report. To be added to or removed from the Email distribution of the Significant Activities Report, please contact Tony Kizlauskas, 312-353-8773, [kizlauskas.anthony@epa.gov](mailto:kizlauskas.anthony@epa.gov).