

**Remarks from Dan O’Riordan
at the
Lake Erie Areas of Concern Summit**

*July 11-12, 2006
Tom Ridge Environmental Center
Erie, PA*

The Lake Erie LaMP was put into motion as a result of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1978, later amended in 1987, and now under, again, under review by the nation parties of the United States and Canada. Under the agreement, the nations agreed that, in consultation with State and Provincial governments, to develop and implement Lakewide Management Plans for the 5 Great Lakes and Remedial Action Plans for designated Areas of Concern.

The LaMPs should identify critical pollutants that impair beneficial uses at the lake scale and to propose ways to restore these beneficial uses, where impaired. The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement suggest that the LaMPs develop "ecosystem" objectives for the lakes using an adaptive management approach, based on knowledge as it exists.

Annex 2 of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement states that the LaMPs and RAPS , "shall embody a systematic and comprehensive ecosystem approach to restoring and protecting beneficial uses...they are to serve as an important step toward virtual elimination of persistent toxic substances..."

So from the outset, the LaMPS and RAPs were considered to be integrally entwined, a matter of scale difference between them. The LaMP is lakewide, the RAP, AOC-wide.

The LaMPs and the RAPs converge. They feed into one another and, though they have distinct needs, are cut from similar cloth. Some AOC folks may be reluctant to progress through the remedial process because they think that at some finite point the resources will go away, but that's not true. That's where the LaMP comes in. The metaphor I consider when thinking about the Lake Erie LaMP in relation to its AOC's is by looking at the challenges of scale that LaMP implementation now faces. We have a nice plan. It looks really nice. It's a lovely document, really. But what do we do now? How best to move from thought to action? How do we convert our ecosystem management objectives to a viable action plan? What is the best governance model? Is that model vertical and horizontal, providing the full resonance of local, State, provincial and Federal governments? Is there meaningful accountability? Are there adequate resources? Does the LaMP work group and management committee have the right members? Do we need to add more and whom? We don't want to have too onerous a structure. We don't want to feed a hitherto unimagined bureaucracy in perpetuity at the expense of progress.

Composing the LaMP document takes an huge effort from a lot of people , and the LaMP document's principle audience is government-type resource managers. The LaMP is designed to inform those managers on how best to focus sometimes dwindling financial and human resources on priority problems. We don't want to feed process, however, to starve progress.

It seems to me that the future of LaMP implementation rests with watershed LaMP implementation acts. Some of us envision a watershed congress or network the comprises the Lake Erie basin. Getting back to the metaphor, I look at the AOC's as watersheds in "intensive care," while the other Lake Erie watersheds are in general hospital. Once the AOC's are stabilized, they won't be discharged, but elevated to the general care needed to restore and maintain the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of Lake Erie. In that regard, the LaMP will always be vigilant, always care for the health and well being of its watersheds.

The Binational Executive Committee, the consortium that governs the LaMPs, required that a tangible LaMP document be produced by 2000, with updates every two years after. I encourage you all to access the Lake Erie LaMP on line at www.epa.gov/glnpo/ scroll down to "current material" then access the Lake Erie LaMP

2006. Take the time to look over this document. It even has a lengthy chapter on the AOC's which you represent. Over the next day or so, and from now on, think of ways on which your goals converge with the goals of the LaMPs and how each program is interdependent on the other. And please share with all of us your thoughts on how best to implement actions that get us all close to our common goal of fishable, drinkable, and swimmable Lake Erie waters.

Know, too, that whatever struggles and frustrations you may now be undergoing are, perhaps, growth struggles. We have had successes, but how to we improve the process. How can we develop the necessary economies of scale to maximize all of our efforts from the sediments of any given of any given the AOC to the middle of Lake Erie to the outermost tributary.