

Ohio Public Meeting Concerning Great Lakes Restoration Priorities

Proceedings

Parma, Ohio
February 24, 2004



Preface

This proceedings document presents the outcome of a public meeting held in Parma, Ohio on February 24, 2004. This meeting was a cooperative effort of the Great Lakes Commission, Ohio Sea Grant College Program and the Council of Great Lakes Governors. The National Sea Grant College Program provided funding for this event. The meeting brought together a range of participants from various Great Lakes constituencies to provide feedback on the Great Lakes Governors' priorities for restoration of the Great Lakes ecosystem and on the coordinative processes needed to achieve these priorities.

This meeting is part of a series of similar events that are being conducted throughout the Great Lakes region. The Council of Great Lakes Governors has assembled a number of priorities for restoring and protecting the Great Lakes. The workshop series, supported by the National Sea Grant College Program, provides an opportunity for Great Lakes constituents to review these priorities and inform their further development and implementation. Workshop outcomes will be shared with the region's Governors, Premiers, other public officials, workshop participants and the larger Great Lakes community. A primary objective is to inform and advance the restoration efforts of the region's leadership.

Acknowledgements

The Great Lakes Commission recognizes the outstanding work of its several partners in the design and conduct of the workshop. Special thanks are in order to Dr. Jeff Reutter of the Ohio Sea Grant College Program and Lisa Morris, Julie Letterhos, Pat Madigan and Susan Willeke of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for their valued role as partners in the design and conduct of this restoration priorities workshop. Their sound advice and leadership helped ensure a successful event. David Naftzger, Council of Great Lakes Governors, is acknowledged for his support as well, and for ensuring that the workshop series is of maximum relevance to the Council's needs. Recognition is also extended to the many individuals who assisted by serving as breakout group facilitators and recorders (See Appendix A), and Jon Dettling of the Great Lakes Commission staff who assisted in the compilation of these proceedings.

Dr. Ron Baird, director of the National Sea Grant College Program, warrants special recognition for his personal support of this initiative and for facilitating his office's financial support for the workshop series.

Finally, thanks to all the dedicated individuals that joined us for a day of creative thinking and strategizing as we work to restore and protect the Great Lakes- the greatest system of freshwater on the face of the earth!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Donahue". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Michael J. Donahue, Ph.D.
President/Chief Executive Officer
Great Lakes Commission

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I) Background

This workshop was the second in a series of similar events to be held throughout the Great Lakes basin as part of a collaborative project between the Great Lakes Commission, the Council of Great Lakes Governors and the Sea Grant Programs in the Great Lakes region. Funded by the National Sea Grant College Program, the project is directed at advancing Great Lakes ecosystem restoration and protection efforts through the development of action items and ideas on how to implement them through a regional process.

Project collaborators recognize that development of a Great Lakes protection and restoration strategy must be based upon sound science, and proceed with a clear understanding of ecosystem conditions and objectives, relevant research activity, and the science/policy/management linkages needed to achieve the strategy's vision. This workshop, along with upcoming workshops in other Great Lakes jurisdictions, will provide input from the broader Great Lakes Community into this process.

The Ohio public meeting was designed to maximize the opportunity for the public to give input into the process of implementing basin-wide protection and restoration strategies for achieving the Governors' priorities. The meeting used the list of nine priorities released by the Great Lakes Governors on October 1, 2003 as a starting point for discussion. Participants moved among nine stations that were set up to receive comment, answer questions and create discussion concerning each of the nine identified priorities. State agency and Ohio Sea Grant personnel knowledgeable in the particular area staffed each station. In addition, a tenth station was available to receive comments not directly related to the nine identified priorities. Ohio Sea Grant created an online forum for the public to submit comments. As of June 2nd, 143 respondents had completed the survey. Results can be viewed at:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/Report.asp?U=35038722246>

Written and verbal comments were recorded at each of the ten stations during the meeting. These records are the basis of the material presented in Section II. Section III contains a summary statement and some concluding remarks. A list of meeting attendees is provided in Appendix A. The press release presenting the Governors' restoration priorities is provided in Appendix B. Original transcripts of participant comments are included in Appendix C.

II) Public Input on the Governors' Restoration Priorities

A. Ensure the sustainable use of our water resources while confirming that the States retain authority over water use and diversions of Great Lakes waters

There was considerable interest in protecting the Great Lakes basin's water resources as a component of an overall regional restoration initiative. Support was given for developing a regional water resource management program based on the principles outlined in the Great Lakes Charter Annex 2001 that would govern withdrawals from both within and outside of the basin. There was interest in making such standards legally binding and open to citizen suits that could ensure implementation. As a component of a regional water resource management program, a need was cited for an official process for approval of any diversions. A sentiment was expressed that "major" diversions should be disallowed entirely, while "minor" diversions should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Additional considerations included the impacts of groundwater withdrawals, impacts on water quality that may result from altered flow regimes, and variations in withdrawal permitting that reflect lake levels. It was also suggested that local planning documents, such as 208 plans, should note any diversions that might be proposed.

It was recognized that the ability to restore and protect the region's water resources depends largely on building a management strategy, similar to that described above, in a timely fashion. These mechanisms will be most effective if they are in place and operating in a preventive capacity rather than as a response to specific situations. It was further noted that restored and protected water resources would be a major regional economic development stimulus.

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, "ensuring sustainable use of our water resources" was rated at 5.99 by 141 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Fifty-one percent (72) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

B. Promote programs to protect human health against adverse effects of pollution in the Great Lakes ecosystem

The importance of restoration efforts to protect the health of the region's populations was widely recognized. Support was expressed for a regional restoration strategy to adequately address the strong linkages that human activities have to water quality and the consequent impact on human health.

Among major pollution sources mentioned were sewer overflow systems (CSOs and SSOs) and non-point sources. Further, public awareness campaigns explaining the part each person plays in contributing to nonpoint sources were encouraged.

Bathing beaches were mentioned a number of times. It is important to maintain good quality public beaches, as they are often the only access a local community has to the lakes. A need was cited for reducing bacterial levels at beaches, as well as for improved programs to detect and communicate bacteria levels to provide a better indication of what is normal and what is high (such as by a color-coded warning system). More federal funding to remediate or eliminate CSOs was identified as a necessary step to improve benefits downstream (i.e., at beaches). Seeking volunteer community involvement in beach cleanup programs to pick up trash, especially for scouts, was encouraged.

Achieving safe consumption of the basin's fish was seen as an important goal. A number of comments submitted under the Persistent Bioaccumulative Toxics Priority also focused on the issuance of fish consumption advisories. These included providing more printed information on fish advisories, providing a better description of risk, and ensuring that advisories are based on new data. There was also a suggestion to revisit the protocol used for analyzing and assessing fish tissue information.

Safely managing dredged material is another important factor in protecting water quality and human health. Assessments of health impacts were encouraged to consider cumulative impacts of exposure to multiple chemicals, the possible absence of toxicity thresholds and the impacts of endocrine disrupting chemicals. There may also be a need to expand the list of toxic contaminants that are currently analyzed. Existing plans, such as the Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan, were cited as valuable guidance in many of these areas.

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, "protecting human health" was rated at 6.00 by 143 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Forty-seven percent (67) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

C. Control pollution from diffuse sources into water, land and air

This priority received considerable attention from the meeting participants. There were numerous suggestions for efforts that are needed to reduce pollution from nonpoint sources. The value of basin-wide efforts to control these sources was recognized. The dependence of the water quality of the lower lakes on pollution problems in the upper lakes, such as the impact of Lake St. Clair on Lake Erie, was noted.

Implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) was recommended to reduce nutrient loadings. Several participants also mentioned prevention of sediment loadings. The need for improved maintenance and damage-reporting for silt fences was noted. Providing assistance to lakefront property owners for erosion control was mentioned as a valuable incentive.

Improved regulation of thermal pollution from power plants is another need. Consideration was also given to land use planning and other strategies to reduce the impacts of development on water quality.

The funding of BMPs to address storm water management and to aid in upgrading aging infrastructure was a major concern. A need was seen for a balance between support for regional efforts and support for local efforts. The basin-wide strategy should recognize the importance of local projects in restoring and maintaining the basin's water quality. It was mentioned that financial support is needed to make upgrades to sewerage system and other infrastructure viable. A need was mentioned for local projects to prevent runoff from contaminated sites.

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, "controlling pollution" was rated at 6.57 by 143 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Sixty-nine percent (99) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

D. Continue to reduce the introduction of persistent bioaccumulative toxics into the Great Lakes ecosystem

Persistent bioaccumulative toxics (PBTs) were an important priority for many of the meeting attendees. Pollution prevention was recognized as an essential strategy in addition to remediation of contaminated sites. The importance of atmospheric deposition as a source of many PBTs was recognized.

Several participants specifically mentioned mercury. The need for improved controls on industrial mercury sources, including coal-fired power plants and chlor-alkali plants, was mentioned. Other pollutants, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE), were also mentioned. In addition, a need was cited to update lists of contaminants of concern to include additional compounds not currently covered by many programs.

Fish contaminant testing and fish consumption advisories were the focus of a large number of comments. Improved fish testing programs, including tests with better spatial and temporal resolution, are desired. In addition to testing, improved means of communicating test results and consumption advisories to the public are needed. Participants suggested a need for improved communication tools for the public on these topics that would do a better job of explaining the risks from eating fish and clearly explaining scientific topics, such as bioaccumulation. Current outreach efforts on these topics are not seen as adequate. These comments are also presented under the Human Health Priority (section 2B above).

Achieving decreased emissions from major sources, including coal and diesel fuel burning, throughout the region was mentioned as a high priority. Increased authority for regulatory agencies was cited as an important means of controlling emissions from these and other

sources. Some concern was also expressed over managing toxics that have settled into sediments. Preventing re-suspension of these, such as during dredging activities, was mentioned as a priority.

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “reducing the introduction of toxics” was rated at 6.35 by 142 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Sixty-one percent (87) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

E. Stop the introduction and spread of non-native aquatic invasive species

Meeting participants expressed concern over non-native aquatic invasive species, which they characterized as a problem in need of immediate, heightened attention and definite inclusion in any restoration strategy. The most prominent issue discussed was the need for increased control technologies and regulations for ballast water. Many participants noted that ballast water research and regulation have seemingly been priorities for many years, yet a truly effective program of stopping ballast water introductions has not been designed and implemented. There was also concern about entry of species to the basin from other means, including through the Mississippi and Illinois rivers and through the trade in live aquatic invasives. The continued development of an infrastructure for preventing and responding to invasive species was a widely mentioned need.

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “stopping the **introduction** of non-native aquatic invasive species” was rated at 6.27 by 143 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Sixty-three percent (90) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “stopping the **spread** of non-native aquatic invasive species” was rated at 5.99 by 14 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Fifty percent (72) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

F. Enhance fish and wildlife by restoring and protecting coastal wetlands, fish and wildlife habitats

Habitat protection was a priority for a large number of participants. There were strong links made with this and others of the nine priorities. In particular, prevention of nonpoint source pollution and aquatic invasive species were regarded as important to habitat protection efforts. Regional approaches to habitat protection were seen as critical. Development of a regional habitat restoration plan was suggested for both terrestrial and aquatic habitats.

Control of non-native invasive species such as *Phragmites*, and nuisance species such as cormorants, which have adverse effects on habitat for other species, were cited as priorities.

Protection and restoration of both wetlands and coastal habitats were encouraged by many participants. Creating buffer zones around these areas and restoring natural vegetative cover were some suggested actions. Assessing and mitigating impacts of upstream activities on downstream habitat is an additional topic of concern. It was also noted that the amount of natural areas should be increased and development in these areas decreased.

Mitigating the impacts of development and property ownership issues were also raised, as was requiring mitigation to occur within the project watershed. Growth strategies that preserve and protect habitat were encouraged. Public ownership of critical habitat areas was seen as an important step toward their protection. Placing priority on the protection of existing habitat will help prevent the need for restoration in the future.

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “enhancing wildlife by **restoring** wetlands” and habitat was rated at 5.89 by 143 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Forty-three percent (62) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “enhancing wildlife by **protecting** wetlands and habitat” was rated at 6.21 by 141 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Fifty-nine percent (83) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

G. Restore to environmental health the Areas of Concern identified by the International Joint Commission as needing remediation

Participants stressed the importance of continuing to clean up the Areas of Concern (AOCs). The benefits of cleaning up these areas far outweigh the costs in terms of jobs, tourism and quality of life. However, there needs to be a strong public education outreach effort to link the importance of economic development with environmental restoration and protection. To make a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) successful, it is important to achieve an effective balance between funding RAP administration, additional studies and on the ground implementation.

An interest was expressed in reviewing the criteria for AOCs. Some participants expressed support for potentially adding additional areas, such as Maumee Bay, to the list. There was also a suggestion to consider emerging chemicals, synergistic effects and additive effects as part of the AOC criteria. There is a need to look beyond the usual chemicals associated with fishable, swimmable and drinkable. Several people stressed the importance of preventing recurrence of the causes of AOCs, including severely limiting industrial and development activities near the region’s waterways.

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “restoring Areas of Concern” was rated at 5.81 by 143 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Thirty-seven percent (53) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

H. Standardize and enhance the methods by which information is collected, recorded and shared within the region

Meeting porkshop participants noted that enhancing the region’s information management capabilities was central to a successful basin-wide restoration strategy. Maintaining data in a centralized and easily accessible location was highly encouraged. Additionally, providing the public with access to high quality and easily understandable data is a high priority. Standardizing collection and reporting methods was seen as an important step in making data from disparate sources comparable. A large repository of comparable data from around the basin is essential for identifying and addressing the interactions and cumulative impacts of the multiple stressors on the basin, including habitat loss, pollution, water withdrawals and more.

Participants emphasized the importance of including a wide range of audiences in data dissemination and communication efforts. In addition to researchers and resource managers, a need to provide reliable information to civic leaders and the general public was expressed. One method mentioned for doing this is to improve the quality and quantity of media coverage on Great Lakes restoration issues. Educational programs for youth were also mentioned as an important outreach effort.

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “standardizing information **collection**” was rated at 5.19 by 142 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Twenty-two percent (31) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “standardizing information **sharing**” was rated at 5.20 by 143 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Forty-one percent (58) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

I. Adopt sustainable use practices that protect environmental resources and may enhance the recreational and commercial value of our Great Lakes

There was substantial interest in this priority action as part of a regional restoration strategy. An improved interaction of human and natural systems was the focus of many comments. One major theme that was voiced was the need for improved land use planning and restrictions on use of sensitive areas, especially the Lake Erie coastline. Promoting model zoning ordinances and encouraging redevelopment of brownfields were among the recommended actions in this

area. Planning should be done on a watershed scale. Involving and educating the public was mentioned as an important step in sustainable land use. Increased funding for local governments to make better land use decisions is an important need. Public ownership of the shoreline and other sensitive areas is seen as an essential part of their restoration and preservation. Shoreline ownership was also mentioned in the context of public access for recreation. Drawing on examples from other regions was mentioned as a source of ideas for sustainable use practices as well as funding structures.

Several comments focused on the need to find methods of using the region's water resources as an economic driver that also preserves the resource. Supporting businesses that have practices compatible with this goal was encouraged. Public sector resources, such as community infrastructure, should also be an area of focus for implementing sustainable use. Many participants commented on methods for advancing the recreational value of the Great Lakes through increasing public access, promoting recreational tourism, and encouraging recreational uses that have minimal impacts.

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “adopting sustainable use to **protect environmental resources**” was rated at 6.14 by 142 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Forty-nine percent (69) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “adopting sustainable use to **enhance recreational values**” was rated at 5.74 by 143 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Thirty-four percent (48) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “adopting sustainable use to **enhance commercial values**” was rated at 4.87 by 143 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Twenty-one percent (30) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

J. Additional topics

There were a number of additional comments received concerning participants' views on restoration priorities. Participants noted that the importance of sediment loading management and erosion control, management of dredged material, and storm water management were not clearly articulated under any of the more broadly stated priorities. Public education was an important topic that should be considered as a component under all the priorities. Increasing the communication capacity among interested parties was also mentioned as an important step toward a successful restoration effort. Inclusion of point source controls and permitting was mentioned. Current restoration plans, such as the Ohio Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan, were recommended as guidance for additional planning both within the Lake Erie basin and around the region.

In the Ohio Sea Grant on-line forum, “enhancing science education in our schools” was rated at 5.71 by 14 respondents on a seven point scale with 1 = lowest importance to 7 = highest importance. Forty-one percent (58) of the respondents rated this item at 7 (highest importance).

III) Conclusions and Discussion

The importance of generating and addressing public comments in the development of plans to protect and restore the Great Lakes cannot be understated. The interest of the public in this process was reflected by the attendance and the number of comments submitted. There appeared to be acceptance of these nine priorities as the ones important to the Great Lakes, although some commenters suggested that certain issues needed to be more strongly addressed under the more broadly stated priorities. These issues included: BMPs for storm water management in urban areas; disposal of dredged materials; erosion control and prevention; and more financial support to improve/update sewage treatment infrastructure and CSOs. In future references to the Governors' priorities it should be clearly stated that all of these issues fall under the Diffuse Sources and/or Reduction of Persistent Bioaccumulative Toxics priorities.

The need for more public education/awareness for Lake Erie/Great Lakes issues was submitted as a topic to be emphasized under all priorities or perhaps be made a priority on its own. The Ohio Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan was recommended as an existing document that each state should adopt as their own, and perhaps use as a model for a combined Great Lakes plan.

A number of comments were submitted that addressed more localized issues. Several of these comments included: expanding the Maumee Area of Concern to include Maumee Bay; concerns about saltwater intrusion from an old salt tailings site into Mentor Marsh; impacts of dredging in the Cuyahoga River, and local beach closing and fish consumption advisories. These comments will be taken into consideration by State of Ohio agencies.

Appendix A: Participants

- Matt Adkins, Ohio DNR* (3)
- Harry Allente
- Robert Baisch
- Dick Bartz, Ohio DNR*(1)
- Mark Bergman, Ohio EPA* (3)
- Sandy Bihn, Maumee Bay Association
- Lynn Boydelatour, Ohio DNR* (9)
- Jim Boddy, Lorain County Board of Health
- Randy Bournique, Ohio EPA* (6)
- Kathleen Bradley
- Tyrone Butler, Cleveland Division of Water
- Edith Chase, OCRMP
- Ted Conlin, Ohio EPA* (7)
- J.W. Cowden, Cuyahoga RAP
- Dave Covell, Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- Jim Daniek, Cuyahoga County Planning Agency
- Tom Denbow, Cuyahoga RAP
- Jeff DeShon, Ohio EPA* (2)
- Albert Dispenza
- Mike Donahue, Great Lakes Commission
- Michael Eggert, Ohio EPA* (2)
- Molly Flanagan, Ohio Environmental Council
- John Flower
- Nick Gattozzi, Senator Voinovich's Office
- John Gomolka
- Brian Hall, Ohio EPA* (8)
- Robin Halperin, Cleveland Division of Water
- Ed Hammett, Ohio EPA/Ohio Lake Erie Commission
- Dave Hanselmann, Ohio DNR* (3)
- Ed Hauser
- Tom Henry, Toledo Blade
- Steve Holland, Ohio DNR* (10)
- Gary Isbel, Ohio DNR* (9)
- Ronald Janke, Jones Day
- Jim Kastelic, Cleveland Metroparks
- Hourtis Kaufman
- David Kelch, Ohio Sea Grant* (4)
- Don Killinger, Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- Roger Knight, Ohio DNR* (6)
- Kurt Kraus, City of Mentor, Parks
- Stephanie Kutsko, Black River Watershed Project

- Julie Letterhos, Ohio EPA* (7)
- Frank Lichtkoppler, Ohio Sea Grant* (7)
- Maude Linden, West Creek Preservation
- Frank Lopez, Old Woman Creek
- John Loftus, City of Toledo
- Ted Lozier, Ohio DNR* (1)
- Joe Lucente, Ohio Sea Grant* (10)
- Pat Madigan, Ohio EPA*
- Rick Magni, Ohio EPA* (8)
- Elaine Marsh, Ohio Greenways
- Barbara Martin, League of Women Voters
- Tom Mayher
- Mary McCaron, Ohio EPA*
- Erin McDonough, National Wildlife Federation
- John McLeod, Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- Phil Miller, Ohio DNR* (9)
- Joe Mion, Ohio DNR* (5)
- Lisa Morris, Ohio EPA*
- Eric Nygaard, Ohio EPA* (4)
- D.C. Olenhew
- Rolfe Porte, Cleveland Division of Water
- Jeff Reutter, Ohio Sea Grant * (10)
- John Rhoades, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
- Randy Sanders, Ohio DNR* (5)
- Mylynda Shaskus, Ohio EPA* (2)
- Mike Shelton, The Nature Conservancy
- Fred Snyder, Ohio Sea Grant* (5)
- Roger Thoma, Ohio EPA* (6)
- Dave Ullrich, Great Lakes Cities Initiative
- Chris Vild
- Audrey Wahl
- Jim White, Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization
- Susan Willeke, Ohio EPA*
- Tom Zablotsky, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
- David Zeber
- Susan Zurovchak, West Creek Preservation

* Resource person, (#) Priority Station

Appendix B: Governors' Restoration Priorities Press Release

GREAT LAKES GOVERNORS RELEASE PRIORITIES FOR PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF THE GREAT LAKES

October 1, 2003

Contact: David Naftzger or Peter Johnson
312-407-0177

The Council of Great Lakes Governors today released nine priorities for the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes ecosystem is critically important to the quality of life for our citizens and to the economic vitality of region," said Ohio Governor Bob Taft, Council chairman. "In endorsing these priorities, the Great Lakes Governors affirm our commitment to protecting and restoring the natural habitat and water quality of the Great Lakes Basin, preserving diverse and thriving plant and animal communities, protecting the water supply, and safeguarding human health."

The priorities were included in a letter to the sponsors of S. 1398, the Great Lakes Environmental Restoration Act, and H.R. 2720, the Great Lakes Restoration Financing Act. The Great Lakes Governors praised Congressional sponsors and cosponsors for introducing legislation to address ongoing threats to the Great Lakes by providing substantial federal financial support to complement extensive state and local spending on protection and restoration projects.

"We applaud the strong bi-partisan commitment in Congress to restore and protect the Great Lakes," said Governor Taft. "The Great Lakes Governors look forward to partnering with Congress to secure the future of this irreplaceable national treasure."

The Council of Great Lakes Governors agreed that these priorities should guide Great Lakes restoration and protection efforts:

- Ensure the sustainable use of our water resources while confirming that the States retain authority over water use and diversions of Great Lakes waters.
- Promote programs to protect human health against adverse effects of pollution in the Great Lakes ecosystem.
- Control pollution from diffuse sources into water, land and air.
- Continue to reduce the introduction of persistent bioaccumulative toxics into the Great Lakes ecosystem.
- Stop the introduction and spread of non-native aquatic invasive species.

- Enhance fish and wildlife by restoring and protecting coastal wetlands, fish and wildlife habitats.
- Restore to environmental health the Areas of Concern identified by the International Joint Commission as needing remediation.
- Standardize and enhance the methods by which information is collected, recorded and shared within the region.
- Adopt sustainable use practices that protect environmental resources and may enhance the recreational and commercial value of our Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes Governors also committed to working with local governments, Canadian provinces, and other stakeholder organizations on a coordinated approach to safeguarding the Great Lakes, which are the largest source of fresh surface water in the world.

Appendix C: Original Transcripts of Comments

Below are transcripts of the notes taken at each of the ten booths at the meeting. Some minor editing has been done to correct spelling and grammatical errors. Changes have not altered the meaning or intent of any comments.

Priority #1 - Water Use and Diversions

- No “major” diversions. “Minor” diversions on a case-by-case (lake-by-lake) basis. Not all uses and lakes are equal.
- Need a process for approving diversions
- Important to weigh all options before it becomes a full blown crisis; “ounce of prevention vs. pound of cure”
- Implement legally binding standards based on the principles outlined in Annex 2001 to regulate out-of-basin diversions of Great Lakes water as well as in-basin water withdrawals
 - Allow citizen suits to ensure implementation of the laws under this new set of legally binding standards
- Any “no net loss” policy should include “no lowering of water quality” in the stream (of water that is both the diverted from and diverted to sub-watersheds)
- 208 should note any diversions which might be proposed
- Remember groundwater withdrawals when considering diversion and “no net loss”!
- Consider flow regime impact on returning water.
- Consider diversions as it relates to lake levels:
 - high levels - allow more diversion
 - low levels - no diversions
- Capture the potential for water resources to be an economic development stimulus for the region

Priority #2 - Human Health

- Recreation use-status
- Cuyahoga fish consumption
- Cleveland area bathing beaches
- More funding for sewer projects/source identification
- Everything that hits the ground anywhere in Ohio becomes part of our drinking water. Gas stations, Jiffy Lubes, parking lots, drives, animal waste (even dog droppings) and chemical fertilizers all become part of the “soup” that makes up the Great Lakes. Public awareness campaigns of what part each person plays in this scenario are desperately needed. All these things (anti-freeze, salt) affect us through our water.
- Involve volunteer groups like the Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts to help clean up Ohio beaches and keep them clean
- More research is needed in “Dead Zone” characterization and algal toxicity as these pertain to drinking water
- More federal funding for CSO/SSOs in CVAP and all metropolitan areas
- Beach advisories
- Educate public by posting actual bacteria levels to give an idea of “normal” vs. “high”
- Red, orange, yellow, green indication levels of bacteria
- Stop ignoring impact of multiple exposures and lack of thresholds
- Assume endocrine disrupters are drugs and regulate them
- Bacteria levels on private beaches and public beaches
- Important resource for large metro areas where public beach may be only lake access/contact for many in the community. Need for more attention, especially with regard to safety issues (i.e. bacteria).
- Effects of open lake dredge material disposal and Confined Disposal Facilities on fish populations and water quality (Maumee Bay).
- Follow the Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan (2000) to achieve human health wildlife health priority.
- Get signatures from all Great Lakes states and provinces to advance the strategies and goals of the LEPR Plan:
 - Chapter: Water Quality pp. 12-16
 - Chapter: Pollution pp. 17-22
 - Chapter: Habitat pp. 23-28
 - Biological pp. 29-32
 - Beaches pp. 42-43
 - Tourism pp. 44-45

Priority #3 - Nonpoint Source Pollution

- Control pollution from diffuse sources into water, land and air.
- Organic pollution (nutrients) need more best management practice use to reduce organic pollutants.
- Will their be clean up of Lake St. Clair because of its impact on other Great Lakes?
- Lake St. Clair should be taken into consideration for projects/programs; without Lake St. Clair there is limited good for Lake Erie projects.
- Consideration should be given to provide financial assistance to lakefront property owners, or groups of them to prevent further shoreline recession.
- What are the most effective ways to reduce sedimentation in tributaries of the Great Lakes?
- Model ordinances for low impact development needed for communities and education of local officials to understand why new zoning is needed.
- Regional planning is needed to enforce and encourage communities to work on non-point solutions.
- Coal power plant intakes need to be regulated for cooling towers - stop fish kills - water heated to 94° at discharge.
- Better incentives to stop sediments from entering the Maumee River/Bay basin
- NPDES permits need to be collectively considered on the impacts to segments of the Great Lakes.
- Priorities # 2 and #3 need to be rewritten: Eliminate all pollution to protect human health and to protect the health of our ecosystem for wildlife & people.
- Regional plan should duplicate Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan (2000):
 - Chapter “Water Quality” pp. 12-16
 - Chapter “Pollution Sources” pp. 17-22
- Reduce the size of cargo vessels that use the Great Lakes and that enter the rivers of concern to eliminate the need for deep dredging of rivers for harbors.
- Engineering Best Management Practices - devices to retrofit stormwater basins
- Need underground solutions which would be reasonably priced.
- Must be able to incorporate existing properties and tie into stormwater drainage.
- Must be affordable to implement.
- Bring in speakers from Center for Watershed Protection to promote new ideas.
- Aging infrastructure (i.e. stormwater, sanitary sewers, failing systems). Could some of this be used to help fund sanitary sewers or upgrades small plants? If residents have to pay for the entire sewer cost, they claim it is too expensive and fight the process. Consider best management practices that retain stormwater in urban areas, even if have to knock down old structures
- Concerned about the cap covering the salt tailings at the Osborne site. It appears to be leaking and saltwater intrusion is a concern to the wetlands at Mentor March. The Morton Salt Company is not interested in helping since they no longer own the property. A 400 acre development near Route 2 and Route 44 will be 90% impervious surface will flow into a creek that flows over the cap area. This should be a priority issue for the MARC.
- Money for restoration needs to go 100% to the projects with none taken out for operation. This money should be matched and needs to be in perpetuity.
- Process is too focused on watershed plans and not getting other worthy projects funded.
- Buffer material areas that drain into the lake.
- Watershed coordinators are doing a good job. However, do not use this funding to pay them.
- Need to stop having a distinction between stormwater and non-point source.
- Prevent privatization of the Lake Erie shoreline.
- Concerned about sedimentation from construction sites and farm fields. Silt fences are rarely maintained so they become ineffective. Tired of sloppy fishermen who leave garbage (e.g., cups, bait containers, beer cans) along the shoreline.

- Construction runoff 1-800 number or contact for reporting of malfunctioning silt fences and runoff control measures for development sites is needed. Weather and timing for runoff prevention as it pertains to silt.

Priority #4 - Persistent Bioaccumulative Toxics

- Mercury - Industrial Sources
- MTBE - New 303d list Problems in Ohio?
- Better printed info on fish consumption advisories for public knowledge
- More thorough testing of Great Lakes fish
- Get the tuna lobby funding out of the monies designated for FDA research. Also, use the higher mercury standards established by EPA for public safety.
- Restrict emissions of utilities - give EPA back their power.
- Increase EPA enforcement with respect to industrial waste permit dumping (tributary streams/rivers).
- More EPA authority to fine pollution violation
- Education - oriented to long-term advisory. Pregnant women should not eat Great Lakes fish.
- Understanding of consequences of persistent pollution from multiple perspectives needed to change attitudes.
- All Chlor-alkali production should be converted from mercury or eliminated.
- Coal power plants should pay a fee to communities for health costs.
- More attention to atmospheric deposition (e.g. mercury and PCBs)
- More attention to pollution prevention and source reduction
- More research on effects of BCCs on women as mothers (real or potential) (body-burdens carried generation to generation)
- Annual testing of Great Lakes fish for accumulated toxics at multiple locations and covering all popular species
- Annual fish consumption advisories based on current data and not data from 2-3 years or before
- Annual publication for fish consumption advisory that fully explains 'risk' - what it is, how to think about risk
- Revisit test protocol for fish tissue.
- Expand list of toxic contaminants; current listing is not adequate.
- Better/more thorough technical information regarding toxics and bioaccumulation for the lay person. (i.e. written publications explaining bioaccumulation in a way non-scientific individuals can understand)
- Clamp down on toxic emissions in air to streams and lakes from coal burning and diesel.
- Cuyahoga Channel (harbor) - Increased ore boat traffic/suspension of sediment problem - Environmental Assessment - Toxics more available and widespread (Ohio Coastal Management Program - Coastal Consistency Review)
- Dredged material / open lake disposal and Confined Disposal Facilities (long-term impact on water quality?) Maumee River /Bay
- Reconfigure hierarchy of decision making
 - EPA's #1: End Pollution
 - Human health - health of wildlife
 - Commercial interests are last

Priority #5 - Aquatic Invasive Species

- We know what the problem is - foreign ships with ballast water and the solution is available. What's taking so long? (Many people with this perspective)
- Remember the back door, from the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers, for Asian carp, plus the live trade in ANS
- This issue does not seem to receive the attention it deserves.
- Serious development of invasion pathway controls for ANS, especially ballast water.
- Reference and implement the Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan; ask for all Great Lakes states and provinces to sign on to this plan.

Priority #6 - Habitat

- Kill the cormorants (non-native species)
 - Killing old growth trees at a rapid rate
 - Hurting small mouth bass population
 - Introduce predators
 - Cormorant bounty
- Phragmites elimination
- Prevent privatizing of Lake Erie shoreline
- Restoration of coastal wetlands
- Control nutrient, sediment and pesticide runoff
- Honor existing Lake Erie shoreline deeds
- Protection and restoration of upland and shoreline wetlands
- Control populations of alien species, plants and animals (ANS) dead zone
- Buffer all natural wetlands (coastal)
- Restore natural vegetative cover, especially to protect water resources - streams, wetland, lakes, ditches
- Fund genetic research into control of alien species
- Increase the amount of natural areas to improve source water supplies
- Regional coordination of government to address basin wide issues
- Have the state of Ohio take over more land to make available to all the public
- Stop making so much land available to private investors and builders
- Start limiting property size for homes (for example, from 50' x 75' to 1/4 , 1/2 or more acreage)
- Make all areas around the circumference of all the Great Lakes into public parks accessible to everyone
- House Bill 218, if passed, will lead to more habitat destruction
- Facility #3 (Maumee) develop master plan for habitat: terrestrial and aquatic
- Bayshore cooling water in Maumee Bay (thermal habitat)
- Develop and utilize “green bulkheads” to provide aquatic habitat.
- Protect and preserve headwater habitats to protect downstream uses
- Use regional approach, using existing agency and organization plans
- Prioritize protection before restoration is necessary
- Keep mitigation within the watershed where impacts take place
- Reference, utilize and implement the Habitat chapter (pp. 23-28) and the Biological chapter (pp.24-32) of the Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan. Get all Great Lakes states to sign on to this already existing plan.

Priority #7 – Areas of Concern

- Ensure funds are available for core support of Remedial Action Plans and Lake Erie programs.
- Any natural areas designated as part of the “Public Trust” should never by law be leased to corporations.
- Never allow developers to develop land near or within two miles of Lakes Erie.
- The benefits of cleaning up our Areas of Concern will far outweigh the costs, in terms of jobs, tourism, and quality of life.
- Money for support of the Remedial Action Plans should go to projects, not to general operating.
- No studies - Projects
- Public education to link the importance of economic development with environmental restoration
- Education in relation to our cultural usage; water is not to use, it is here to relate to. Water is intrinsic to life. Water flows like blood and sap in trees. If not flowing correctly there is no life.
- Maumee Bay should be part of the Maumee Remedial Action Plan.
- Impacts of coal burning power plants on the Great Lakes - temperature and fish kills and mercury
- Need to consider emerging chemicals, synergistic effects and additive effects. Need to look beyond just the usual chemicals associated with fishable, swimmable, and drinkable.

Priority #8 – Data and Information

- Public and recreational access to beach water quality data
- Standardization of data and information
- Incorporate appropriate volunteer data
- Central repository(ies)
- Timely data and information sharing between federal, state, local, international, private, and university institutions
- Focus group to determine what data is important
- More information (press and media coverage) should be available on all environmental and water quality issues. No more tabloid coverage on the news. Our health and public trust are much more important.
- Keep lobbyists and big business out of any involvement in Lake Erie development. Have more strict laws on what can and cannot be done in and on and around Lake Erie.
- Resources are not being effectively used.
- We cannot identify and address the cumulative effects of wetlands destruction, water quality discharges, air emissions, and habitat loss until we have a basin-wide system of information collection and dissemination that is readily accessible to the public and decision makers.
- Importance of maintaining Lake Erie water quality data for making management decisions over many years
- It is important for Ohio to keep and maintain water quality database for Lake Erie tributaries – current and historical data that can be readily accessed by public.
- Have another session – more available to public – outside at the source – Lake Erie.
- More programs for youth
- No money should be spent for information management. It should go toward restoration projects.
- Target public officials and civic leaders for education on the value of Lake Erie for quality of life.
- Concentrate environmental education on health effects – BCCs – target civic leaders.

Priority #9 – Sustainable Use Practices

- Prevent privatization of Lake Erie shoreline.
- Public ownership of national coastline should be a priority.
- Model zoning ordinances needed for all Lake Erie counties.
- Projects within counties that have model zoning ordinances should get priority consideration.
- No mitigation of coastal wetlands should be approved for any reason.
- Public access to shoreline should be expanded, especially in areas with recreational potential (beaches, fishing areas, shoreline)
- Foster locating businesses which are compatible with Lake Erie along the lake.
- Shoreline - public access preserved
- Zoning ordinances between communities coordinated/compatible/consistency for addressing resource issues - preservation protection
- Encourage low impact development.
- Encourage the use of existing property (brownfields). Redevelop first, before new impacts.
- A Governor with leadership and a vision to protect and restore the natural areas of Ohio
- Watershed stewardship is an emerging requirement of local governments – needs to be a local funding mechanism – strategic plan with a 10-year vision (funds, rules, resources to implement plan)
- Look to Chesapeake Bay for example of “Watershed Utility” to manage watershed issues at level of tributaries within watershed regions. Funding for improvements would come from some kind of “utility charge,” not property tax, assessed to owners within the watershed. This localizes the decision making and funding to the regional level where individuals are directly impacted by those decisions. Decreases reliance on state/federal grant funding.
- Improve access at the western end for Lake Erie (Maumee Bay area).
- Sustainable, but with the ability to generate economic benefit from the resource/location and growth (perhaps not dominated by too much open space)
- Learn how to work with the water, not simply use it. Be concerned with quality, not just quantity.
- We all need to understand and address the connections between land use and water quality. Each of us has the responsibility for stewardship of our natural resources – as individuals and collectively.
- Invest in the community infrastructures that improve water quality allowing sustainable public use: recreation and swimming.
- Parks with public access to the lake for public interaction with the water: fishing, wading, swimming.
- More funding for land acquisition – island open space and mainland areas, with endangered species (Lake Erie water snake, etc.)
- Increase ecotourism opportunities (marketing, public private partnerships – targeted audiences (birding).
- Encourage regional tourism (for example, Coastal Lake Erie – Lake Erie Circle Tour).
- Use watersheds as the geographic area for land use planning and create policies and incentives for local municipalities to participate together.
- Educate public to overall needs and purpose of plans and planning.

#10 - General Comments

- Grant money for erosion control to private individuals
- Erosion control and prevention is missing from the nine priorities.
- Educate the public more about Lake Erie issues.
- Easier access is needed to the Ohio EPA interested parties list (for example, a 1-800 number).
- Lake Erie taxing district should be established throughout the eight Lake Erie counties.
- Support for sewage treatment infrastructure, including Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs)
- Development of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for storm water management in urban areas
- Disposal of dredged material
- Regional plan should reference, utilize and implement all aspects of the Lake Erie Protection and Restoration Plan (2000).
- Advocate for signatures from all Great Lakes states and provinces to adopt this plan for all of the Great Lakes. Don't reinvent the wheel.