

Brief Note

Date: December 8, 2006

To: WQB Members and Adherents

From: John E. Gannon

Subject: Lake Erie Adaptive Management Case Study

1. The WQB, as a key part of 03-05 Priorities, has been exploring the ways and means to better link jurisdictional watershed planning and LaMPs. This activity was begun to provide advice to the IJC on Agreement Review. The WQB sponsored the Watershed Approaches Workshop in March, 2005 that provided a broad-brush overview of jurisdictional watershed planning throughout the Great Lakes basin and identified some possible ways of improving linkages with LaMPs. A summary of the workshop is in the Water Quality Board's section of the IJC 2003-05 Priorities Report.
2. As a follow-up activity, the WQB sponsored the Lake Erie Critical Leaders Dialogue in March, 2006 with the objective of further exploring watershed planning LaMPs linkages using the Lake Erie LaMP as a case history. Complementary to this workshop, WQB member, Lori Boughton, was key organizer of the Lake Erie Areas of Concern Summit in July, 2006 that addressed improving communication and linkages between Lake Erie AOC's and the Lake Erie LaMP.
3. These workshops have provided important information but "loose ends" remain and the WQB still is not in a position to provide sound advice to the IJC and ongoing government's Agreement Review on the watersheds – LaMPs linkage issue. In the meantime, Lake Erie has been the focus of intensive research in recent years on perplexing and co-occurring issues, including the dead zone, reappearance of nuisance algal blooms offshore and rotting algal mats on shore, nutrient loading uncertainties, impacts of invasive species die-offs of fish and fish-eating birds from botulism toxicity near-shore and offshore differences in water quality and fisheries conditions.
4. A conference call was held on November 29, 2006 with Lake Erie LaMP, Lake Erie Millenium Network and WQB representatives, Gary Gulezian, Lori Boughton and I were on the call from WQB. Nutrients (especially phosphorus) were discussed as the foremost issue that requires a comprehensive and integrated lake watershed approach. What is known? What needs to be known? What steps could be taken by governments now in "no regrets" mode to address the issue in spite of uncertainties, and apply adaptive management based on monitoring and research results.
5. A small scoping committee was formed as an outcome of the conference call to scope a workshop on a Lake Erie adaptive management case study with Lori

Boughton the WQB representative. The committee will develop a workshop scoping brief prior to the Lake Erie LaMP executive meeting in mid-January, 2007 with plans for an adaptive management workshop in March, 2007 co-sponsored by the Lake Erie LaMP and WQB.

6. The SAB and Council may also be interested in collaborating with the WQB on this initiative. The SAB especially may be interested in providing scientific approaches to decision-making in an adaptive management context and in the face of uncertainties. The SAB perhaps also may want to revisit their previous work on institutional arrangements and apply it to the Lake Erie watershed. The Council is engaged in research coordination in conjunction with ongoing binational, cooperative monitoring activities in the Great Lakes and could assist the workshop on research and monitoring issues in an adaptive management context.
7. WQB member's advice to Lori and the scoping committee is invited to assure a fruitful outcome of the workshop and subsequent WQB advice to IJC on sound approaches to adaptive management and watershed-LaMP linkages throughout the Great Lakes.