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Mary Taylor, Lt. Governor
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Ohio Environmental Protection Agency – Lake Erie Program Maumee Area of Concern

Project Title: Maumee AOC Habitat Restoration Initiative

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Type of Organization: State Agency

GLRI Federal Funding Requested: \$400,000

Project Duration Period: October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2018

Project Summary: This collaborative project among Ohio EPA, the Maumee AOC Advisory Committee and AOC watershed stakeholders will enhance strategic planning, project implementation and contribute to habitat related BUI removal within predominately agricultural areas of the Maumee River Area of Concern (AOC). The Maumee AOC Habitat Restoration Initiative is designed to provide a coordinated effort to better identify and organize habitat restoration watershed planning that will result in the restoration of habitat impaired subwatersheds (HUC-12) within the Maumee AOC boundaries.

Ohio EPA is requesting \$400,000 from US EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) to implement the Maumee AOC Habitat Restoration initiative. Ohio EPA will implement this initiative by issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) soliciting project proposals from local groups such as Soil and Water Conservation Districts, watershed groups, local governments, conservation organizations and other watershed stakeholders within the Maumee AOC. Local subgrants will be awarded following a competitive review process using criteria developed by Ohio EPA that focus on developing Habitat Restoration Watershed Plans at the HUC-12 scale with emphasis on agricultural areas of the AOC. It is anticipated that these habitat restoration plans will meet various requirements so that groups within

the AOC may use these plans to apply for GLRI and other grants to successfully implement habitat projects that are identified within the Plans. All habitat restoration projects identified within the developed Plans will be directly linked to the updated state and local BUI restoration targets and will contain preliminary cost estimates, potential implementing parties and tools for measuring anticipated environmental improvements.

Project Priorities and AOC Alignment: The objective of this project is to accelerate the implementation of habitat restoration projects within AOC subwatersheds that contribute to BUI removal and ultimately AOC delisting. The frameworks guiding this project are the state of Ohio's Delisting Guidance and Restoration Targets for Ohio's Areas of Concern (Delisting Guidance), 9-element watershed action planning guidance, and TMDL's and/or watershed plans that have been previously completed and are readily available. Components of the Habitat Restoration Plans will also be completed consistent with Ohio's NPS recommendations in the state of Ohio's Nonpoint Source Management Plan (2012) and conditionally approved Ohio Coastal Nonpoint Source Management Plan. Insuring connections with these plans will help to enhance funding eligibility and integration with other water quality programs within the AOC.

Project Location(s): The Maumee AOC is comprised of six (6) HUC-10 subwatersheds. In and around the city of Toledo and Lucas County, land use within the AOC is largely urban, residential and developed. However, each of the HUC-10 subwatersheds also contains a considerable amount of agricultural land use. This becomes more evident when we begin to reduce our scope of inquiry from the larger HUC-10 watersheds down to the smaller subwatershed HUC-12 units. This project is designed to focus on developing habitat restoration plans for those smaller HUC-12 subwatersheds throughout the AOC that are characterized by predominately agricultural land use. Following is a list of those subwatershed units that will be targeted by this initiative:

Priority HUC-12's within the Ottawa River-Frontal Lake Erie (Tenmile Creek) watershed unit:

- Headwaters Tenmile Creek
- Prairie Ditch

Priority HUC-12's within the Upper Swan Creek watershed unit:

- Al Creek
- Fewless Creek

Priority HUC-12's within the Lower Swan Creek watershed unit:

- Lower Blue Creek

Priority HUC-12's within the Grassy Creek-Maumee River watershed unit

- Grassy Creek Diversion

Priority HUC-12's within the Cedar Creek-Frontal Lake Erie watershed unit

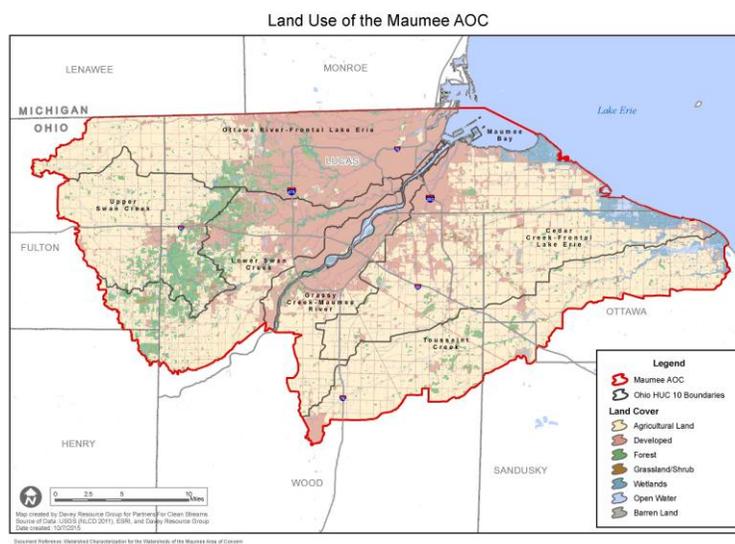
- Wolf Creek
- Cedar Creek
- Crane Creek
- Turtle Creek

Priority HUC-12's within the Toussaint Creek watershed unit

- Packer Creek
- Upper Toussaint Creek
- Lower Toussaint Creek

The following is a map and overview of the Maumee AOC's HUC-10 watershed units and their current land use within the proposed project area(s) of the Maumee AOC.

Map 1-1
Maumee Area of Concern HUC-10 Watershed Map
Land Uses within the Project Area



Timeline: Within 45 days of receiving notification from US EPA of the grant award, Ohio EPA will issue an AOC-specific Request for Proposals to solicit subgrant participants within the watershed. Following submittal of applications 45 days later to Ohio EPA, technical and grant staff from the NPS and Lake Erie Programs will review applications and recommend projects for funding. Once applicants are recommended for funding, Ohio EPA will prepare, execute and administer subgrant agreements with each of the local participants. Subgrant funding will be effective for 18 months. Subgrants awarded under this initiative will be administered by Ohio EPA using the same subgrant delivery and management processes as are currently used for Section 319 grants and others. Implementation and successful completion of the initiative will commence upon notification of funding to Ohio EPA and all activity will conclude and the overall grant closed out with 45 days of its termination date of September 30, 2018.

Deliverables: Ohio EPA uses a standardized “universe of deliverables” to ensure consistent project reporting, tracking and enhanced sub-grantee accountability. Subgrants made under this project will be administered and executed using the procedures and processes that Ohio EPA employs to make subgrants under the section 319(h) program and those that have successfully been used managing previous GLRI grants. These processes insure consistent project focus, subgrantee reporting, financial management and progress reporting.

For purposes of this initiative, all watershed specific habitat restoration plans will be collated by a Coordinating group under subgrant agreement with Ohio EPA and prepared at the HUC-12 scale. Planning at this smaller scale insures that critical areas contributing to habitat impairments are identified and their impacts mitigated. Following is a brief summation of deliverables that are anticipated being completed under this initiative:

Maumee AOC Habitat Restoration Initiative Planning Participant Deliverables:

1. Identification of areas critical to habitat impairments within agricultural subwatersheds throughout the Maumee AOC.
2. Identification of causes and sources of habitat and water quality related impairments.
3. Estimated pollutant load reductions (where applicable).
4. Habitat restoration and/or nutrient reduction measures needed to facilitate BUI removal.
5. Calculation of expected environmental and habitat improvement from each recommended action.
6. Preliminary estimates of the amount of technical and financial assistance will be needed -
 - a. Identification of local implementers who can be linked to needed management actions.
 - b. Potential funding sources for each recommended action.
7. A plan for informing and engaging the public in the restoration process.
8. Estimated timeline and schedule for implementing identified management actions.
9. Interim measures and milestones for determining when progress toward BUI removal is being made.
10. Criteria for determining when BUI removal may be recommended.
11. Monitoring plan for evaluating management action effectiveness and BUI attainment.
12. Comprehensive HUC-12 habitat restoration plans for each participating subwatershed.

Maumee AOC Habitat Restoration Initiative Coordinating Group Deliverables:

The designated AOC Coordinating Group¹ will play a prominent role in this initiative by serving as the clearinghouse for information and assistance to the local watershed groups and other planning participants. This group will also be responsible for compiling individual plans created under this initiative and preparing a Master Maumee AOC Habitat Restoration Plan for progressing towards BUI removal within the Maumee AOC. Consistent with discussions with GLNPO task force lead, the completion of these plans is identified as one of the final management actions with the AOC for BUI-14 Loss of Wildlife Habitat. Following is a summary of expected deliverables that will be completed by the AOC:

1. Working in conjunction with Ohio EPA, review and vet local habitat restoration plans.
2. Compile subwatershed habitat restoration based plans into a draft Master AOC Habitat Restoration Plan for BUI removal within the AOC.

¹ The AOC Coordinating Group under this initiative may be a nonprofit conservation organization operating under subgrant from Ohio EPA or a for-profit consulting firm working under contract to Ohio EPA. This group will be selected once the grant is awarded and selected using a competitive process or with an authorized Ohio state-term contractor.

3. Provide GIS support such as mapping, high level graphics support, draft habitat restoration plan preparation and publishing, and assisting subgrant planning participants with helping to identify habitat restoration projects at the HUC-12 scale and other technical assistance as needed.
4. Produce and print a final Maumee AOC Habitat Restoration Master Plan that will assist local implementers seeing financial assistance for recommended projects.
5. Prepare and submit all required financial and performance status report to Ohio EPA.

Collaborations, Partnerships and Overarching Plans: This project will be a fully collaborative effort between Ohio EPA, the Maumee AOC Advisory Committee, Partners for Clean Streams and local soil and water districts, local governments and other AOC watershed stakeholders. Ohio EPA will work closely with whoever is selected as the project Coordinating Group to ensure that all planning activities are completed so that final habitat restoration plans successfully provide access to multiple sources of project funding for local implementers such as GLRI competition grants, Section 319 grants and others. Ohio EPA will also work closely with GLNPO throughout this process.

Activities and Timeline: Ohio EPA will prepare and execute subgrant agreements with project collaborators immediately upon notification of successful GLRI funding for this project by US EPA. Activities will occur in the general sequence listed below:

- Months 1 through 12 of the project:
 - Ohio EPA will release a Request for Proposals – October – December 2016
 - Ohio EPA will review and select planning participants for funding – Jan – March 2017
 - Ohio EPA will select a Coordinating group for this project – Jan – Mar 2017
 - Subgrant agreements prepared and executed Jan- March 2017
 - Ohio EPA and Coordinating group coordination meeting – April – June 2017
 - Ohio EPA in partnership with Coordinating group will host a kick-off meeting – April – June 2017
 - First annual site visits will be completed by Ohio EPA – July – Sept 2017
 - First semi-annual reports submitted and processed (Ohio EPA) – July – Sept 2017
 - Two semi-annual project-specific progress reports prepared and submitted (Ohio EPA) – July – Sept 2017
 - Project Coordinating group assists planning participants with maps and GIS support
 - Planning subgrantees complete draft habitat restoration plans – October – December 2017
 - Subgrantees submit four quarterly fiscal reports and two semi-annual progress reports – October 2017-December 2017
- Months 12 through 18 of the project:
 - Ohio EPA conducts second annual site visit with subgrantees – Jan – March 2018
 - Planning subgrantees complete final habitat restoration plans - Jan – March 2018
 - Coordinating group compiles and submits draft Master Plan to Ohio EPA – April – June 2018
 - Ohio EPA reviews, requests revisions as needed of draft Master Plan – April – June 2018
 - Final master habitat restoration plan presented to Maumee AOC Advisory Group
 - Subgrants are completed and closed out – April – June 2018

Project Effectiveness Monitoring and Federal Grants Compliance: Project effectiveness monitoring will be conducted through face-to-face visits and delivery of technical assistance (as needed) by members of Ohio EPA’s Lake Erie Program and Northwest District Office staff. All sub-grantees will be required by executed grant agreements to comply with all state and federal grant requirements. Non-compliance will result in refunding any inappropriately managed federal grant funds and/or termination of the subgrant agreement when necessary.

Programmatic Capability and Past Performance: Ohio EPA routinely receives four to eight federally funded assistance agreements each year from US EPA. These agreements help support Ohio’s water pollution control, nonpoint source, and water quality monitoring and assessment programs. This proposal is similar in size and scope to several of the assistance grants that Ohio has administered recently. We have a history of successfully completing projects on time, on budget and meeting all reporting requirements. US EPA’s annual evaluations of Ohio EPA’s water programs are consistently very positive.

This particular project will be managed by Ohio EPA’s Lake Erie Program and is administered by the Ohio EPA-Division of Surface Water. Since FFY2001, we have successfully administered sub grants for more than 145 locally implemented watershed projects totaling more than \$35 million in federal section 319 funding and more than \$6.5 million in state Surface Water Improvement funds. We have also received nearly \$10 million in competitive GLRI grant funds. We maintain a vigorous subgrant oversight protocol resulting in an exceptional level of accountability, efficiency and accomplishment. Ohio EPA contracting methods were improved in 2005 with the development and implementation of a standardized universe of “grant” deliverables. This system has resulted in much improved communication of expectations and greatly enhanced project reporting.

Principal Program Staff and Qualifications: Ohio EPA’s Nonpoint Source and Lake Erie Program staff will be managing the Maumee AOC Habitat Restoration Initiative Project. Principal program personnel responsible for implementing this project include:

- **Russell Gibson, NPS Program Manager**—Mr. Gibson has managed Ohio EPA’s NPS and Section 319 Programs since 2005. Previously, he worked for more than 20 years with Ohio’s Department of Natural Resources in a variety of positions including manager of permitting, hydrology & bonding for Mineral resources; northwest Ohio scenic rivers coordinator; community grants administrator for the Division of Recycling and as a preserve manager and park ranger. Mr. Gibson has a bachelor’s degree in Natural Resources Management from Ohio State University as well as extensive graduate coursework in Public Administration. He has extensive experience in program development and evaluation, strategic planning and organizational design and has completed three federal grants training courses offered by Management Concepts, Inc., including “Awarding & Monitoring Sub-awards under Federal Grants” and “Federal Cost Principles”.
- **Martha Spurbeck, Grants Administrator**—Ms. Spurbeck is the grants administrator for Ohio’s NPS and Section 319 programs since 2000 and will be the primary responsible party for administering SWIF/GLRI subgrants. She has a bachelor’s degree in Business Management from Ohio University and has completed three federal grants training courses offered through Management Concepts, including “Awarding & Monitoring Sub-awards under Federal Grants” and “Federal Cost Principles”.
- **Cherie Blair, Environmental Specialist**—Cherie is technical lead and Ohio EPA District AOC Coordinator within the Division of Surface Water. Ms. Blair possesses a degree from Adrian College with dual majors in Biology and Earth Science. She also has taken training and/or coursework in

public relations, environmental studies, law and has completed the federal grants training course offered through Management Concepts for “Federal Cost Principles”. Cherie works with local governments, nonprofit organizations, businesses and citizens throughout the Maumee AOC. She assists the Maumee AOC Advisory Committee with projects that help with the removal of BUI’s and ultimately delisting of the AOC.

Funding and Project Budget: We have a goal of completing habitat restoration plans for at least eight (8) HUC-12 predominately agricultural subwatersheds within the Maumee AOC. All federal funding will be used only for costs that are allowable, allocable and reasonable as defined in federal grant guidelines.

For additional budget detail, please see the project budget included below and materials such as Budget Object Class Categories descriptions that are included with our SF424 and the grant application package.

Project Expenditures: Expenditures incurred under this grant will be reviewed by Ohio EPA fiscal and grant staff prior to being reimbursed to sub-grantees and/or Ohio EPA. Subgrant costs will be scrutinized to minimize overhead and other administrative costs while still maintaining sufficient amounts to insure successful completion.

For additional budget detail and information, please refer to the following tables as well as the attached 424A and Object Class Budget Detail.