

Ohio Lake Erie Phosphorus Task Force Meeting
October 5, 2009
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

Attendance: Gail Hesse, Jack Kramer, Pete Richards, Jeff Reutter, Dave Baker, Libby Dayton, Robert Mullen, Norm Fausey, Roger Knight, Rick Wilson, Kevin Elder, Chris Riddle, Julie Weatherington-Rice, Julie Letterhos, Joe Logan, Ron Wyss

Updates: Jeff Reutter announced they were planning a meeting to discuss the results of the phosphorus related projects currently be funded by USEPA/GLNPO and the Ohio Lake Erie Protection Fund. The meeting will likely be in Cleveland in February.

Joe Logan announced there would be a Lake Erie LaMP Public Forum meeting in Erie, PA on November 6 and 7. All are invited.

Discussion of Draft Recommendations Report

Need to add a reference to the NRCS rapid assessments done under the Western Lake Erie Basin program.

In the report, remove reference to people/discussions at Task Force meetings.

What should be included in the Channelized Streams and Ditches Section?

- Generally support poor water quality
- How do ditches rank as water bodies
- Total miles that have been channelized
- Basically, describe what they are and what they do

Need to move the conclusions section from the internal loading piece to the Discussion Section.

90% of water entering the lake is oligotrophic which helps to dilute and wash P added loading away. Need to manage external loads.

Always use DRP after it is first identified (listed). This is not consistent throughout report.

Move Section 3 regarding types of phosphorus closer to the beginning, or perhaps add a brief sidebar.

Don't state that P reduction will eliminate anoxia in the central basin. It might help reduce it, but it won't eliminate it as the occurrence of anoxia is also related the morphology and shallowness of the basin.

In the Agriculture Section

- Add soil test information and criteria
- How does soil test P relate to runoff P?
- What is the relationship between soil test P, stratification and the impact on runoff?
- Overall, the Ag section is still too choppy

Should we add a section on current regulations and what impacts P loading? Use the results of the report on “An Urgent Call To Action” written by the Nutrient Innovation Task Force.

Need to add a reference to the potential impacts from climate change.

Discussion and Conclusions Section

- Lake Erie can respond to change in external load
- Discharge/flow is increasing, particularly in winter
- Focus on the Maumee and Sandusky load reductions to control HABs. We should be able to see an immediate response to load reductions in the western basin and the nearshore of the central basin.
- Agriculture nutrient applications are the most significant source of phosphorus
- Focus on upland management

Agriculture BMP Discussion

- Still don't include timing and incorporation of fertilizer/manure application
- Emphasize that there has been an array of changes to the system
- Promote the use of bundled practices
- Leave the current list of conservation management practices as they are
- Penalties may perhaps be used as an incentive
- Define a set of priority practices
- How do we develop recommendations concerning timing and incorporation? How much incorporation is necessary?
- What can be recommended that will make a measurable impact?
- CNMPs don't discuss timing and incorporation. In general, farmers are not equipped to deal with timing. The best case scenario is to apply fertilizer in the spring and incorporate it with planting. However, we don't have many machines that do that anymore. The first decision should be – do you need P? Fertilize with strip till in the fall and come back with a seeder to plant in the same areas in the spring
- We can make the recommendations to consider timing, amount and incorporation, but we can't just expect them to happen.

How can we support Education and Outreach?

- Ohio Sea Grant, OSU Extension, Ohio Lake Erie Office and ODNR Coastal Office and others are involved in a coastal training partnership and have developed Lake Erie literacy principles. These are the basics of what everyone

should know to understand the lake. P Task Force recommendations can be included or mentioned under their efforts.

- Should we look at Balanced Growth or Watershed Action Plans? Watershed Action Plans are better designed to address P control measures.
- TMDLs need to be a lot more focused and specific on agricultural recommendations
- NRCs is open to recommendations to make better conservation decisions. They need to have the infrastructure to implement the programs (i.e. they need more staff to administer programs.)

Discussion of analytical/sample collection methods for DRP

- Heidelberg has 1000s of paired samples showing that SRP is very stable. USEPA has approved their methods, but Ohio EPA has not (under Credible Data program).

Research Discussion

- Need to address the land to lake continuum
- Research is short term and we are being pushed that way by the GLRI. But we should not forget the need for long term monitoring
- What is the need for monitoring microcystin and fish or fish larvae?
- Need to add a Research Agenda Section

Next Steps

- Rick will revise language to better address channelization and its impacts
- Libby will draft soil test P and runoff P comparison/discussion
- Jeff will draft a section on the importance of focusing on and reducing the P load from the Maumee and Sandusky watersheds
- Dave will draft an approach to the research agenda, perhaps presenting Lake Erie as a test case for implementing practices to reduce nutrient loads.