Ohio Lake Erie Phosphorus Task Force Meeting Minutes
February 29, 2008
ODNR, Assembly Center, Columbus, OH

Meeting Objectives: *Continue to work through the matrix and hear update on the status of the development of nutrient standards for Ohio.*

Attendance: Gail Hesse, Seth Hothem, Libbey Dayton, Steve Davis, Roger Knight, Dave Culver, John Crummrine, Dave Baker, Chris Riddle, Robert Mullen, Rick Wilson, Jack Kramer, Julie Letterhos, Paul Bertram, Norm Fausey, Julie Weatherington-Rice, John Kessler, Dan Button, Pete Richards, Larry Brown, Kevin Elder, Eric Partee (observer), Bob Miltner (OEPA-presenter).

Work continued on revising the recommendations' matrix. As observations from the matrix compiled at the last task force meeting, Gail noted that some clarification would be needed on the difference between a screening tool, P index and soil test risk assessment procedure. We would also need to discuss the need for or definition of "pilot watershed", fill in the implementation column, and identify any new recommendations that we might want to add.

Discussion began on the specific items in the latest draft of the matrix. Main points are presented as follows.

Is soil test use inadequate or are we uncertain of where and how it is used? Its use is limited for environmental purposes and there is a lack of widespread use for agronomic purposes. Some farmers sample only one plot on land, while others sample almost all of the plots. It is uncertain as to how much soil testing is actually being done. Once a soil test is taken, how are the results applied to the Tri-State fertility guidance? The Tri-State guidance is 150 Bray and use of the P Index allows a higher than 150 Bray. Need to promote the consistency of how the soil P test results are used to soil labs, crop advisors and producers. Note that the soil test is only one part of the P index. Currently, the P Index is only being used for manure application scenarios, although it can be used for fertilizer application as well. We need to better understand how soil labs and CCAs come up with their recommendations for P application.

NAPT offers a service to help labs test their capabilities, but there is no requirement/regulation that soil labs be certified. If the there was certification program what would the process to get certified be? Who would be the certifying body? How would we encourage labs to become certified? What would the incentive be? One option would be to require in permits (i.e. CAFOs, etc.) that soil tests must be done by a certified lab.

There was some discussion of the development of a screening tool. This would be done somewhere between a soil test and the P Index to determine if a P Index analysis must be done. It would include identification of primary and

secondary transport mechanisms, but it shouldn't be so complicated that it becomes the P Index, which is a risk assessment tool.

Bob Miltner of Ohio EPA gave a presentation on the development of nutrient standards for Ohio. Paired samplings were/are done to measure levels of nutrients in rivers and streams to compare to benthic Chl (chlorophyll) levels and land use. Benthic Chl is used as a measure of productivity and considered a standard variable in measuring change. Canopy cover is a controlling factor. A matrix is being developed to compare thresholds of where a response is seen between nutrient levels and Chl, Chl and DO, and DO and biological response. There is a commitment to U.S. EPA to have nutrient standards for small streams developed by 2008. Standards for inland lakes are also under development. The overall goal is to determine when impairment is caused by nutrient levels. The N:P ratio in most large rivers is typically 1000:1. The approach is to look at a tributary for its quality as a tributary rather than as a conduit or transport mechanism to the carrying nutrients to Lake Erie.

The next meeting was scheduled for March 27 and the topics would be: home sewage treatment, storm water, industrial point sources and orthophosphate in drinking water.