



## FACT SHEET

September 2020

### WESTERN LAKE ERIE BASIN - OHIO, INDIANA, MICHIGAN

Section 441 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999

General Investigations

#### Location

- The Western Lake Erie Basin includes the watersheds of the Maumee, Portage, and Ottawa Rivers, in northwest Ohio, northeastern Indiana, and southeast Michigan. These are major tributaries to the Western Lake Erie Basin.

#### Project Description

- Comprehensive investigation of measures to improve fish and wildlife habitat, navigation, flood damage reduction, recreation, and water quality in the Western Lake Erie Basin, including the Maumee, Ottawa, and Portage River watersheds.
- The combined watersheds have a drainage area of approximately 7,200 square miles, with the Maumee River contributing about 24 percent of the surface water flow into Lake Erie.
- A primary issue is flood damage reduction and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat.
- Equally important is pollution from nonpoint source discharges, particularly agricultural runoff. Nonpoint source pollutants and suspended sediments degrade water quality and contribute to the approximately 800,000 cubic yards (CY) of sediment dredged annually from the Maumee River navigation channel.

- The feasibility phase is cost shared 50 percent federal and 50 percent nonfederal for Section 441 of Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

#### Importance

- The watershed management plan will provide a framework for sustainable development in the watershed. It will examine the comprehensive ecosystem restoration opportunities. These include habitat and wetland restoration, prevention of future environmental losses, elimination of bacterial loadings and pollutants of concern, improvements to navigation channels, and analysis of flood control operations to ensure they are meeting evolving conditions.

#### Consequences

- Western Lake Erie Basin stakeholders will continue to work in the watershed on a project-by-project basis without the benefit of a watershed plan that can be relied on for comprehensive and multipurpose solutions to their complex water resource problems.

Project Phase	Est. Fed. Cost of Phase	Federal Funding Thru FY18	FY19 Requirement	FY19 Budget	FY20 Requirement	FY20 Budget
Flood Risk Feasibility	\$15,000K	\$6,893K	\$0	NA	\$0	NA
WS Assessment	\$2,000K	\$0	\$200K	\$0	\$100K	TBD

#### Project Sponsor/Customer

- Customers include numerous state agencies, nongovernmental organizations and local municipalities in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. Federal partners include NRCS, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey.

- Lucas County, Ohio, would be the likely nonfederal Sponsor for the watershed assessment.

### **Congressional Interests**

- Representative Marcy Kaptur D OH-09
- Representative Robert Latta R OH-05
- Representative Jim Jordan R OH-04
  
- Senator Robert Portman R OH
- Senator Sherrod Brown, D OH
  
- Representative Marlin Stutzman R IN-3
- Representative Luke Messer R IN-6
  
- Senator Joe Donnelly D IN
- Senator Dan Coats R IN
  
- Representative Debbie Dingell D MI-12
- Representative Timothy Walberg R MI-7
  
- Senator Gary Peters D MI
- Senator Debbie Stabenow D MI

### **Current Status**

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is involved with the Western Lake Erie Partnership, including federal, state, and local agencies, which works to coordinate efforts to improve the watershed. In addition, the partnership is also involved in the new Urban Waters Partnership, looking for opportunities to improve water quality and reconnect urban areas with their water bodies.
- In support of the Urban Waters Partnership, Corps of Engineers is preparing a feasibility study for a stormwater treatment wetland along

the Ottawa River at the site of the former Jeep Assembly Plant.

- The Blanchard River flood risk management phase of the study was completed and work products were turned over to the Hancock County Commissioners. They decided to move forward with a nonfederal project. The Corps of Engineers regulatory office is prepared to work with local officials in a possible upcoming Section 404 permit action.
- Work toward defining existing conditions in Maumee Bay and initial development of habitat restoration unit alternatives to improve terrestrial and aquatic habitat in Maumee Bay through the beneficial use of dredged material has been completed. Identification of a project sponsor, which has the ability and desire to construct a project, is required for the feasibility study to progress further.
- FY10 GLRI funding was used to develop a priority list of wetland and aquatic restoration projects. The study also included implementation of innovative technologies to quantify and assess sediment and nutrient concentrations associated with Blanchard River flood events in waters discharging through the Maumee River to Lake Erie. A portion of future funds could be used to commence a Section 729 Watershed Assessment of the Lower Maumee Watershed.

### **Issues**

- Lack of funding limits resources available to support Partnership and related efforts.





**Figure 1: Satellite Photo of Lake Erie on June 11, 2011, Showing Harmful Algal Bloom in Western Basin.**



**Figure 1: Photo Showing Water Sample of Harmful Algal Bloom in Front of Toledo Water Intake.**

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