Grand Lake St Marys Progress Report Highlights

The "Grand Lake St. Marys & Its Watershed: Water Quality Improvement Initiatives" was announced in November. Since this time progress has been made by the community, landowners in the watershed, agricultural businesses, and by local, state, and federal agencies on implementing these strategies with the goal of improving Grand Lake and its watershed. Below are a list of items which highlight some of the progress made towards improving the lake and its watershed.

- Approximately 23% of the cropland acreage in the watershed is currently covered by an approved Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP). Ten new CNMPs have been developed since July 2009.
- Two successful nutrient management educational workshops were held this winter. Over 110 agricultural producers attended these two events. These training sessions provide further opportunities for development of nutrient management plans and provide a format to discuss important topics like soil nutrient recycling using cover crops and topdressing wheat with manure.
- Each year progress is made to reduce the dependency on applying liquid manure on frozen and snow covered ground as more manure storage and management practices are built in the watershed. Local sources report less manure being applied during the winter-time than in previous years.
- Local and state partners are working with USDA NRCS to secure additional $1,000,000 in EQIP funding for 2010. These additional funds will allow for more land management practices, CNMPs, and manure storage and management structures to be installed and applied in the watershed.
- During the last EQIP sign-up, Mercer County received 86 applications from farmers in the county wanting to apply conservation practices. A significant portion of these applications involved landowners in the Grand Lake St. Marys Watershed.
- In 2009 five dry stack manure storage structures were built in the watershed and two feedlots were covered as runoff control measures. Also in 2009, an additional two dry stack manure storage structures, one compost facility, one anaerobic lagoon, and five drainage water management control structures were approved for EQIP funding. Designs and plans are being completed for these practices with plans to install in 2010.
- Ohio EPA using U.S. EPA Clean Water Act §319 funding is providing $500,000 to Ohio-NRCS to hire three new employees (1 supervisor & 2 staff) to perform conservation planning in the aforementioned watersheds.
- EPA Clean Water Act §319 funding has been made available to the GLSM watershed. Funding is available for septic system improvements, elimination of dairy milking parlor discharges, and installation of subsurface tile control structures.
- The lake management and implementation strategy is underway. By the end of the month, demonstration project alternatives will be identified. In May, the long-term adaptive lake management plan and demonstration project recommendations will be developed.
- The Grand Lake St. Marys community is currently raising funds to implement a pilot project this year that includes lake aeration and stream sediment collection. The project will consist of of two large aeration systems and three stream sediment collectors in key lake tributaries.
- ODNR-Parks continue construction of an in lake dredge material relocation area that will protect approximately 2,000 feet of shoreline and create a 23.5 acre wetland.

- **Ohio EPA Baseline GLSM Monitoring**: Ohio EPA's Northwest District Office submitted a plan for monitoring water quality in GLSM this summer. The primary emphasis will be to establish a baseline measurement so that future improvements resulting from BMP installation etc, may be effectively measured and/or compared. This activity will commence during the 2010 monitoring season.
- **USDA-NRCS Chickasaw Creek Monitoring**: In association with USDA-NRCS Special EQIP Initiative in Chickasaw Creek, the National Center for Water Quality Research (NCWQR) at Heidelberg University is continuing daily monitoring of water quality within the Chickasaw Creek.
- **Beach Area Mycrocystin Monitoring**: ODNR Division of Parks will once again monitor for microcystin levels in and around the state park beaches. This monitoring will be ongoing throughout the recreational season.