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Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership

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Abstract Text:

The Maumee Basin Watershed encompasses Ohio, Michigan and Indiana which drains to Lake Erie, the most biologically productive of the Great Lakes. The Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) Partnership began in 2005 with collaborations between USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) with the signing of a partnership agreement. The agreement states the two agencies will collaborate on watershed planning and implementation; wetland creation, restoration, and enhancement; and natural disaster recovery. In Ohio, the NRCS and USACE signed a regional agreement supporting the activities outlined in the national agreement, focusing on the Western Lake Erie Basin. In March 2006, a WLEB Partnership charter was signed by fourteen agencies and organizations and partnership bylaws were adopted.

NRCS roles and responsibilities include performing rapid assessments for each 8-digit sub-watershed of the Maumee Basin Watershed to identify current resource conditions on private lands, recommend systems to solve identified problems, and estimate (quantitative and/or qualitative) on-farm effects. Farm Bill land treatments have also been implemented in collaboration with Environmental Defense, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, the Conservation Action Project, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts, including special farmer-focused initiatives under Environmental Quality Incentives Program to improve water quality in the WLEB. Farmers in the St. Mary, Tiffin, Grand Lake St. Mary, and Blanchard River Watersheds can participate.

USACE roles and responsibilities include a comprehensive WLEB Study to investigate measures to improve fish and wildlife habitat, navigation, flood damage reduction, recreation, and water quality in the Maumee, Ottawa and Portage River watersheds. Continuing Authorities Projects (CAP's) will allow for the planning, design and construction of relatively small projects. The CAP programs have two phases: feasibility, and design and implementation.

This poster identifies Water Quality accomplishments in the Western Lake Erie Basin through NRCS, USACE and the WLEB Partnership efforts.

Impact Statement:

With the development of NRCS' Rapid Assessment tool, USACE Comprehensive WLEB study, and collaborating partners, the WLEB Partnership is improving water quality utilizing communities and watershed groups in eight sub-watersheds in the Western Lake Erie Basin. In collaboration with NRCS, USACE, Environmental Defense, and other partners, improvements include a data profile that contains various maps and GIS layers with explanatory text and tables including digital elevation, land cover, land use trends, riparian zone analysis, soils information, agricultural statistics, conservation practice improvements, local watershed group activities, and various other sets of water resource data. For additional information, visit www.wleb.org