



Black River Remedial Action Plan Coordinating Committee

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I. Boat Ride Tour of Black River Mainstem Compliments of Lorain County Port Authority

The Black River RAP Coordinating Committee Annual Picnic and Meeting began with a picnic lunch followed by a tour of the Black River Mainstem on one of the Lorain County Port Authority Tour Boats. Over the last several years, the Lorain Port Authority has provided boat tours of the inner harbor area and the Mainstem of the Black River. The tours are wildly popular and sell out quickly during the summer season. The tour for the RAP provided an opportunity to see first hand the progress being made by the City of Lorain to remove slag piles from a substantial length of shoreline along the Black River. The slag removal is part of a large site remediation and habitat restoration on a parcel long associated with the local steel mill, which the city is preparing for the future construction of a new waste water treatment plant. Several king fishers and dozens of great blue herons were spotted during the course of the boat ride.

II. Lorain County Watershed Coordinator Update

Christina Znidarsic, the newest Black River Watershed Coordinator for the county development office, provided an update on the status of the watershed action plan (WAP). The WAP will include more detailed information on the French Creek Subwatershed and the West Branch Subwatershed with general information being provided on the remaining subwatersheds which make up the Black River Watershed. Ms. Znidarsic asked the RAP members to help identify problem places within these two subwatersheds so that specific problem statements can be included into the WAP. The WAP is on schedule to be completed by December 2010.

III. Update on the City of Lorain's Remediation and Restoration Work Under Way along the Black River

According to Andy Vidra of the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), the City of Lorain has received a grant to build 3 fish shelves along the Black River based on the recommendations in the *Lower Black River Ecological Restoration Master Plan*. The City has also been moving steel plant slag piles away from the edge of the western shoreline of the Black River in anticipation of shoreline remediation work in the future by the City. According to Mr. Vidra, the City of Lorain has received substantial ARRA funding for the slag removal and restoration work on this same parcel of land. It is also his understanding that the City of Lorain has been working with a property owner to gain ownership of the Henderson Wetland. This wetland is identified in the *Master Plan* as a 12 acre wetland located at the Henderson Road Bridge. After securing ownership, the wetland will still require invasive species removal and some restoration/enhancement activities according to the *Master Plan*.

Ted Conlin, Ohio EPA RAP Coordinator for the Black River AOC, inquired whether City Council for the City of Lorain had adopted the *Master Plan* yet. Mr. Vidra explained that City Council was to go over the Master Plan at the June Council meeting.

IV. Stage 2 Update

Ted Conlin, Ohio EPA, advised the RAP Coordinating Committee that there is a need to update the Stage 2 Document for the RAP. An August subcommittee meeting will be called to start the process of updating the document. The *Master Plan* could cover the Stage 2 for the Mainstem portion of the river, but the rest of the entire watershed would need to be addressed also.

V. Restrictions on Dredging BUI Redesignation Draft Application

GLNPO currently has a copy of the draft application for redesignation of the Restrictions on Dredging BUI to "In Recovery". The latest status report is that GLNPO will look over the draft in July and August to determine if more information is needed or if the application is ready to be submitted as a final application for redesignation.

VI. Fish Study Needed – May Be Closer to Delisting Fish Tumor BUI

Ted Conlin, Ohio EPA, provided a brief summary of a recent Paul Baumann study on fish tumors. Mr. Baumann has been under contract with Environment Canada to determine a fish tumor BUI criterion for the Canadian AOCs. In an e-mail from Mr. Baumann, he states "The white sucker locations in the upper lakes were compared to references on a site specific basis. However the Canadians had sampled more than 700 brown bullhead from reference locations and another 250+ from "far field" sites, urban areas but not near the point source. This allowed a determination of a background liver neoplasm prevalence or criteria for the lower Great Lakes (2%). Statistically this means a liver neoplasm prevalence of 4% or less is not statistically different from background but 5% or above is. The result was a restoration to Not Impaired for the fish tumor BUI at all Canadian lower lake AOCs except for Hamilton Harbour (and the Detroit River for which sampling is not complete)." According to Mr. Conlin, the Black River tumor prevalence was just below 7% in 1998; and therefore, only 2% away from being able to completely delist the fish tumor BUI based on the most recent Baumann findings. His suggestion was to find the funding and resources to restudy the fish tumors which would require funding for physically catching the necessary fish as well as the laboratory analysis. The RAP Coordinating Committee discussed the

possibility of amending the *Master Plan* to include a discussion on the need to restudy the fish tumor prevalence. A meeting of the *Master Plan* committee may be called to discuss this potential amendment to the plan.

VII. Time Deadline for the SEP and a Master Plan Project

The Black River RAP is quickly running out of time, with only about one year left to utilize the SEP funds that had been set aside by the State (Ohio EPA) to fund a project from the Master Plan.

VIII. 2009 Annual Report

The 2009 Black River Annual Report is complete. The report will be posted on the website for the Black River RAP. A digital copy will be forwarded to GLNPO also.