

Evaluation Findings

Ohio Coastal Management Program

May 2015 to October 2022

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Summary of Findings

The Coastal Zone Management Act requires the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to conduct periodic evaluations of the performance of states and territories with federally approved coastal management programs. This evaluation examined the operation and management of the Ohio Coastal Management Program administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the designated lead agency, for the period from May 2015 to October 2022. The evaluation focused on three target areas: program administration, shoreline management, and coastal partnerships.

The findings in this evaluation document will be considered by NOAA in making future financial award decisions concerning the Ohio Coastal Management Program. The evaluation came to these conclusions:

Accomplishment: The Ohio Department of Natural Resources successfully transferred the administration of the Old Woman Creek Reserve to the Ohio Office of Coastal Management, strengthening both programs.

Accomplishment: The Ohio Coastal Management Program successfully digitized a paper-based filing system related to permitting and leasing activity, streamlining processes for staff responsible for ensuring compliance.

Accomplishment: The Ohio Coastal Management Program quickly designed and implemented new permitting and funding programs to provide emergency erosion relief to coastal communities.

Accomplishment: The Ohio Coastal Management Program has been very successful in providing leadership to partnerships that are making significant progress in improving water quality and improving the resilience of diverse communities.

Accomplishment: The Ohio Coastal Management Program continues to make water quality improvements through a variety of programs, including the voluntary participation of boaters and marina operators in the Clean Marina Program.

Recommendation: The Ohio Coastal Management Program is encouraged to work with the Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve to develop plans for facilities expansion at the Research Reserve property to meet the needs of both programs and that could include both state and federal procurement, acquisition, and construction funding.

Recommendation: The Ohio Department of Natural Resources is encouraged to examine new methods to attract and hire professional engineers and surveyors, including fellowship and internship opportunities with local and regional academic institutions.

Recommendation: The Office of Coastal Management is encouraged to examine methods for ensuring that job succession and office integration occur smoothly.

This evaluation concludes that the Ohio Department of Natural Resources is successfully implementing and enforcing its federally approved coastal management program, adhering to the terms of the federal financial assistance awards, and addressing coastal management needs identified in section 303(2)(A) through (K) of the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Program Review Procedures

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) evaluated the Ohio Coastal Management Program in fiscal year 2022. Section 312 (16 U.S.C. 1458) of the CZMA and implementing regulations at 15 C.F.R. 923, Subpart L, require that state coastal management programs be evaluated concerning the extent to which the state has 1) implemented and enforced the program approved by the secretary; 2) addressed the coastal management needs identified in CZMA sections 303(2)(A) through (K) (16 U.S.C. 1452(2)(A) through (K)); and 3) adhered to the terms of any grant, loan, or cooperative agreement funded under the Coastal Zone Management Act.

The evaluation team consisted of Ralph Cantral, evaluation team lead; Diana Olinger, site liaison; Nelle D’Aversa, coastal management specialist—all from NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management; and Matt Walderon, coastal resources program specialist, Pennsylvania Coastal Management Program. The support of Ohio Office of Coastal Management staff members was crucial in conducting the evaluation, and their support is most gratefully acknowledged.

NOAA sent a notification of the scheduled evaluation to Mary Mertz, director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, on July 13, 2022, published a notice of “Intent to Evaluate” in the *Federal Register* on September 29, 2022, and notified members of the Ohio congressional delegation. The Ohio Office of Coastal Management posted a notice of the public meeting and opportunity to comment on September 20, 2022.

The evaluation process included a review of relevant documents and a survey of stakeholders, which helped identify three target areas for the evaluation: program administration, shoreline management, and coastal partnerships. A site visit was conducted and the evaluation team held meetings with staff members and group discussions with stakeholders and program staff members about the target areas. In addition, a virtual public meeting was held on Wednesday, October 19, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. to provide an opportunity for members of the public to express their opinions about the implementation of the program. Stakeholders and members of the public were also given the opportunity to provide written comments. A summary of the written comments received and the NOAA Office for Coastal Management’s responses are included in Appendix A. NOAA then developed draft evaluation findings, which were provided to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for review, and the department’s comments were considered in drafting the final evaluation findings.

Final evaluation findings for all coastal management programs highlight the program’s accomplishments in the target areas and include two types of findings that may require action by the program.

Necessary Actions address programmatic requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act or its implementing regulations at 15 C.F.R., Part 923, the state coastal management program

approved by NOAA, and the terms of any grant or cooperative agreement funded under the Coastal Zone Management Act. Necessary actions must be carried out by the date specified. Failure to address necessary actions may result in a future finding of non-adherence and the invoking of interim sanctions, as specified in the Coastal Zone Management Act, §312(c).

Recommendations are actions that the office believes would improve the program but which are not mandatory. The state is expected to have considered the recommendations by the time of the next evaluation or dates specified.

Evaluation Findings

The Ohio Coastal Management Program is a networked program administered by the Ohio Office of Coastal Management in the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The program was approved in 1997 and its statutes and regulations affect portions of the nine counties eight of which are situated along the Lake Erie shoreline.

Findings for Program Administration

The Ohio Office of Coastal Management assumed management of the Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Wildlife in November 2018. The change in management of the research reserve was in response to a necessary action in the reserve's 2018 evaluation findings related to the lack of sufficient state budget authority. This lack of authority had resulted in the inability to expend significant portions of the reserve's grant awards. The Ohio Office of Coastal Management has not had similar restrictions, and thus can enable the reserve to fully expend funds received through its annual cooperative agreement with NOAA.

Transferring the reserve to the Office of Coastal Management has been an important change for both the coastal management program and the research reserve, as it has provided the management program with direct access to education, training, and research capabilities, while giving the reserve more visibility and financial capabilities by aligning with an organization focused exclusively on Ohio's coastal area.

The Ohio Coastal Management Program and the reserve have partnered on a number of projects over the years, including the creation and administration of outreach and education efforts such as the Nature-Based Shoreline Certification Program. The coastal program and reserve have also been jointly involved in helping to implement the Sandusky Bay Initiative and H2Ohio, the state's major initiative to address water quality through phosphorous reduction and wetlands construction.

Accomplishment: The Ohio Department of Natural Resources successfully transferred the administration of the Old Woman Creek Reserve to the Ohio Office of Coastal Management, strengthening both programs.

During the evaluation period, the Ohio Coastal Management Program moved out of its longtime waterfront location in Sandusky. Subsequently, during the COVID 19 pandemic, all state employees were forced to work from home. As no reduction in work quality or quantity was noted during the pandemic, the Department of Natural Resources then approved the office moving to fully remote status. This move has given the staff greater flexibility to conduct their duties, which require contact with coastal communities and constituents across the coastal area.

Moving to a remote work setting has not totally eliminated the need for occasional face to face meetings, nor has it done away with the need to have a location for “hard copy” files as well as a physical footprint for information technology. The facilities at the Old Woman Creek Reserve provide an opportunity to meet these needs. The need to collocate two programs within a single facility resulted in the need to expand the reserve’s facilities. The Old Woman Creek facility has limited space that includes a visitor’s center and space designed primarily for research and education. The Ohio Office of Coastal Management had previously worked with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ Division of Engineering to develop plans for how the facilities at the reserve might be expanded to meet the needs of both programs. During the evaluation site visit, the office expressed an interest in restarting the process.

Recommendation: The Ohio Coastal Management Program is encouraged to work with the Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve to develop plans for facilities expansion at the Research Reserve property to meet the needs of both programs. Funding for the facility expansion could include both state and federal procurement, acquisition, and construction funds.

The Ohio Coastal Management Program has had difficulties hiring professional engineers and surveyors necessary to implement its programs during this evaluation period. Part of this problem has been related to pay disparities between the private sector and state government and part of the problem is a lack of qualified applicants in the region. Some positions have been filled with internal candidates, but this has just created additional positions that need to be backfilled. The office has tried a number of solutions, yet has seen limited results. As an example, the state’s Submerged Land Lease applications require a review by a licensed surveyor, but the office has been unable to fill a full-time surveyor position. The office has instead met this need by contracting with professional services companies. There remains a desire to have full-time staff with surveying credentials, as having employees with these skills would provide needed expertise that would be beneficial to many office activities, not just the ones that require state licensure.

One solution could be to work with trade schools to identify students who could work as interns or fellows. Exposing current students or recent graduates of these programs to the work of the office might inspire an interest in long-term employment with the agency. The program has tried this approach during this evaluation period, but unfortunately, the salary differential between public sector and private sector in these fields remains a problem.

Recommendation: The Ohio Department of Natural Resources is encouraged to examine new methods to attract and hire professional engineers and surveyors, including fellowship and internship opportunities with local and regional academic institutions.

As a result of the need to move out of their previous office space, Ohio Office of Coastal Management staff contracted for a digitization of some 374 file boxes of records related to more than 25 years of permitting and leasing activity. Many of these records need to be

retained and accessible as they have ties to regulatory work and will be needed for permit compliance. The reduction in the number of physical files has not only made the files more accessible to a remote work force, but was also necessary to not overwhelm the limited space at the Old Woman Creek Reserve when the programs merged.

Accomplishment: The Ohio Coastal Management Program successfully digitized a paper-based filing system related to permitting and leasing activity, streamlining processes for staff responsible for ensuring compliance.

The Ohio Coastal Management Program is currently operating very efficiently with the recent changes to shift to a nearly fully remote status and to combine many administrative tasks between the coastal program and the Old Woman Creek Reserve. Many of these efficiency achievements are due to the dedication of the core staff that have been working together for many years. Because many of the jobs within the office require the specific knowledge of a single individual, a plan for cross-training staff to learn different job duties may be appropriate. Cross-training might begin by the development of knowledge journals for each position, followed by some level of job shadowing until other employees feel comfortable assuming duties when other employees are unavailable or move on to other positions.

Cross-training can be especially useful when employees resign or retire. As the office chief is approaching retirement age, this could also point to the need for succession planning for this key leadership role. The current chief has developed a wealth of knowledge during his tenure. Perhaps equally important, the chief has also developed a number of relationships with key people in the community and within the Department of Natural Resources. As part of succession planning, senior staff should be encouraged to participate in meetings with agency leadership and other governmental leaders. Passing on these many relationships to senior staff members is not as easy as developing a knowledge journal, yet needs to be addressed prior to key retirements.

In an effort to fully align the research priorities at the reserve with those of the coastal management program and of the Department of Natural Resources, the coastal management program currently funds 50 percent of the Research Coordinator position at the reserve. This has been proving to be successful. Additional thought might be given to how to more fully incorporate the knowledge, skills, and abilities of other staff at Old Woman Creek in the service of both the coastal program and the research reserve. Creating a fully integrated approach with reserve leadership and staff could prove especially helpful in addressing emerging issues and new funding sources such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act.

Recommendation: The Office of Coastal Management is encouraged to examine methods for ensuring that job succession and office integration occur smoothly.

Findings for Shoreline Management

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources, through the Office of Coastal Management, has regulatory authority over construction in and adjacent to the waters of Lake Erie. Types of authorizations for development include shore structure permits, submerged lands leases, and coastal erosion area permits. In addition, placement of fill within the lake requires a water quality certification from the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

The administration of the shoreline program has been hampered by several factors, including lawsuits to clarify the definition of the “natural shoreline” for leasing purposes and the need for leases and permits for certain types of structures. During this evaluation period, the Ohio Coastal Management Program has worked to identify ways to clarify the process while still achieving the underlying goals of the permitting and leasing requirements. In 2022, Senate Bill 313 was introduced to codify amendments to the shore structure permit and submerged lands lease laws. To date this legislation has not been enacted.

The Office of Coastal Management collaborates with the Ohio Geological Survey to revise Ohio’s Coastal Erosion Area maps on a 10-year cycle. These maps serve as a primary resource for the state’s regulatory programs and also advise property owners of the risks inherent in their properties. The latest maps were approved in 2018. These updated maps were very timely, in that in 2017, 2019 and 2020, Lake Erie water levels rose to record heights, causing serious erosion problems in many areas.

In May 2018 the Ohio Office of Coastal Management implemented a Temporary Shore Structure Permit program to provide for the authorization of the construction of emergency erosion control measures in response to the record high water levels on Lake Erie. These temporary permits allowed property owners to avoid the lengthy process for permanent erosion control measures and quickly address severe erosion. The temporary permits were designed to last for two years to allow the property owners to either go through the standard process to seek authorization for a permanent structure through the shore structure permit and submerged lands lease processes or to remove the temporary structure if the lake levels had receded and the increased threat of erosion had subsided.

In 2021 the Ohio Coastal Management Program administered the inaugural round of Erosion Emergency Assistance Grants, which were provided through the annual state capital funding appropriation. Five million dollars was allocated for this effort to assist local governments facing accelerated erosion. Grant proposals were solicited and administered under procedures developed by the Ohio Coastal Management Program in a very short time frame. Seventeen jurisdictions applied for the funding, and 11 projects in nine jurisdictions received funding.

Accomplishment: The Ohio Coastal Management Program quickly designed and implemented new permitting and funding programs to provide emergency erosion relief to coastal communities.

Findings for Coastal Partnerships

The Ohio Office of Coastal Management focuses on larger projects that make significant improvements to natural resources and the quality of life in the coastal area. The program has invested in a number of large-scale projects spread across the state's Lake Erie shoreline. Many of the projects are part of or in support of efforts that receive significant funding from other entities, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and H2Ohio, a water quality initiative funded by the Ohio General Assembly that is focused on reducing algal blooms in Lake Erie. Implementation of these large-scale projects requires engagement with multiple partners.

The Ohio Office of Coastal Management also manages the Coastal Management Assistance Grant program to help local communities and other governmental entities address coastal issues. The CMAG program provides federal pass-through funds that are matched 1:1 (50% federal: 50% non-federal) with non-federal funds. Several major projects that the Ohio Coastal Management Program supports in the City of Euclid, Cleveland Harbor, and along the Gold Coast in Lakewood all focus on multiple benefits: environmental and community resilience, access, beneficial use of dredge disposal, and the creation of habitat and natural areas. Implementing these projects can be challenging, as the majority of lakefront land in Ohio is privately owned. For example, the Gold Coast project in western Cuyahoga County is designed to protect nearly three-quarters of a mile of eroding cliff that is endangering large multi-unit structures. Gaining public access involved negotiating with 13 homeowners' associations, and Ohio Coastal Management Program involvement has helped to ensure that issues such as public access are a key element of a project that received FEMA funding for shoreline protection. Similarly, the Euclid Waterfront project was also very complex, as along-shore access easements needed to be obtained from more than 100 property owners.

In 2015, the Ohio legislature enacted a ban on open water dredged material disposal in Lake Erie. This law, which took effect July 1, 2020, has provided an opportunity for increasing the amount of material available for beneficial reuse projects. To further encourage the beneficial reuse of dredged materials, the legislature assigned two programs to the Ohio Office of Coastal Management: The Healthy Lake Erie Initiative and the Ohio Dredge Material Management Program. The Healthy Lake Erie Program initially provided \$10 million for projects, but, over the course of this evaluation period, the Office of Coastal Management has managed allocated a total of \$43 million in State of Ohio capital funds for beneficial use and habitat restoration/enhancement projects. A key feature of this funding is that all projects are required to have a local partner who will manage the projects in the future. These partners included Port Authorities and Municipalities who manage the eight Federal commercial harbors and navigation channels along the Ohio Lake Erie coastline. These include the Port of Toledo, City of Sandusky, City of Lorain, Port of Cleveland, Lake County Economic Development Authority, Ashtabula Port Authority, and the City of Conneaut.

Since the inception of the Ohio H2Ohio program in 2019, the Ohio Coastal Management Program has managed more than \$15 million in H2Ohio project funds to implement

engineering and design, permitting, and construction work for coastal wetland restoration and water quality improvement projects along the Ohio Lake Erie coastline. Project partners include the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Divisions of Water Resources (H2Ohio Program), Division of Wildlife, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves; Ohio Environmental Protection Agency; Ohio Department of Agriculture; The Nature Conservancy (Sandusky Bay and Coastal Western Basin Projects); City of Toledo (Maumee River Projects); Toledo Lucas County Port Authority (Maumee River Projects); Metroparks Toledo (Maumee River Projects); and U.S. EPA/Maumee Area of Concern (Maumee River Projects).

The Ohio Office of Coastal Management has provided leadership and assisted with the funding and development of several major projects in and around Sandusky Bay as part of the Sandusky Bay Initiative intended to improve water quality through the construction of wetlands. Partners in these projects have included The Nature Conservancy, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, other federal agencies, academic institutions, and the City of Sandusky. The Ohio Coastal Management Program has played a key role in these efforts by helping to identify the overall vision for the projects, supporting research that provided a better knowledge on where to focus remedial actions, and in helping to secure permits.

The Ohio Coastal Management Program has also forged long-lasting partnerships with a number of organizations in the Cleveland area through the Cleveland Harbor Eastern Embayment Resilience Strategy (CHEERS). This effort, located along the Lake Erie waterfront to the east of downtown Cleveland, is an attempt to revitalize lands that were developed for heavy industrial uses many years ago. Now that the industry has moved away from the lakefront, the area is seen as an opportunity to address environmental quality, natural resources, and community resiliency as well as providing for the beneficial use of material dredged from Cleveland Harbor. The residents of traditionally underserved neighborhoods surrounding the project have had limited access to the lakefront and have also not been part of the decision-making process in their communities. These communities are also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, so the CHEERS project incorporates design elements that reconnect these communities to Lake Erie to make them more economically and environmentally resilient.

The CHEERS project was led by Cleveland Metroparks, the City of Cleveland, the Port of Cleveland, Ohio Department of Transportation, and the Department of Natural Resources through the Ohio Coastal Management Program. The project had the direct involvement of more than 60 public and private organizations in preparing the plan. The final report of the project was released in May 2021, and the project continues to move forward with continued engagement with the neighboring communities in partnership with Black Environmental Leaders, a group working to empower residents of northeastern Ohio to better understand issues related to the natural and built environment.

Accomplishment: The Ohio Coastal Management Program has been very successful in providing leadership to partnerships that are making significant progress in improving water quality and improving the resilience of diverse communities.

General Program Implementation

In the previous findings in 2016, the Ohio Coastal Management Program received a necessary action related to the conditional approval of the Ohio Coastal Nonpoint Program. During this evaluation period, the State of Ohio has taken actions to address each of the conditions of the program approval issued in June 2002. In January 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and NOAA informed the state that all of these conditions had been met. In addition to meeting these requirements, the program continues to address water quality issues through programs such as the Healthy Lake Erie Initiative, the H2Ohio Initiative, and the Sandusky Bay Initiative, as described in the “Coastal Partnerships” section above.

In addition to these grant programs, the Ohio Office of Coastal Management has provided leadership and financial assistance to the Ohio Clean Marinas Program since its inception. In the Lake Erie watershed, the program is administered through a partnership with Ohio Sea Grant. The program focuses on 40 criteria related to marina management, water management and resiliency, ecological considerations, boater education, and employee training and community outreach. In 2015, the program was expanded to include all of the waterways in Ohio. In 2018, the program established a tiered approach to encourage marinas to not only meet minimum criteria, but to focus on continuing improvement. There are currently 65 marinas participating in the program within the Lake Erie watershed.

Accomplishment: The Ohio Coastal Management Program continues to make water quality improvements through a variety of programs, including the voluntary participation of boaters and marina operators in the Ohio Clean Marinas Program.

Evaluation Metrics

Beginning in 2012, state coastal management programs began tracking their success in addressing three evaluation metrics specific to their programs. The evaluation metrics include a five-year target and provide a quantitative reference for each program about how well it is meeting the goals and objectives it has identified as important to the program. In 2018, coastal programs began a new five-year period and set targets specific to their programs for two performance measures from the existing Coastal Zone Management Performance Measurement System and the coastal hazards performance measure.

Evaluation Metrics: 2012-2017

These goals and objectives contain elements from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Office of Coastal Management's Strategic Plan but have been largely developed by the Ohio Coastal Management Program specifically for the Section 312 Evaluation Program.

METRIC 1

Goal: Provide information to coastal communities and decision-makers regarding Lake Erie, coastal resources, the Ohio Coastal Management Program, and sustainability of the Great Lakes ecosystems.

Objective: Increase training and outreach activities as identified with our coastal constituents.

Strategy: The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Office of Coastal Management is the primary administrator of the Ohio Coastal Management Program and has a number of technical staff members who provide various outreach activities independently and in partnership with the Ohio Coastal Training Program, which is primarily administered by the Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve. The Office of Coastal Management places a high priority on providing technical assistance through hands-on activities aimed at local decision makers, property owners or managers, and other stakeholders so that they may become more effective stewards of coastal resources while also realizing financial or other benefits by applying this knowledge. In fiscal years 2010 and 2011, the total number of such events was 22, for an average of 11 events per year. It is our intent to increase the average number of such activities by one event annually for a total of 70 during the five-year Section 312 review period. The activities measured include the number of Government Coordination events counted in Performance Measure #3 and the numbers of education and training events counted in Performance Measure #4 as required by the April 2011 *Coastal Zone Management Act Performance Measurement System – Coastal Management Program Guidance*.

Performance Measure: Number of coordination, training, or education events provided to other governmental agencies regarding coastal management tools, resources, and issues by the Ohio Coastal Management Program or in partnership with the Ohio Coastal Training Program.

Target: Between 2012-2017, 70 coordination, training, or education events provided to other

governmental agencies regarding coastal management tools, resources, and issues by the Ohio Coastal Management Program or in partnership with the Ohio Coastal Training Program.

Results:

Year 1 = 63
Year 2 = 26
Year 3 = 7
Year 4 = 0
Year 5 = 1
Total: = 97

Discussion: The target was exceeded.

[Note: Although it appears that the work dropped off considerably in the later years, it is actually due to changes in reporting and tracking in the national system.]

METRIC 2

Goal: Provide information to coastal communities and decision-makers regarding Lake Erie, coastal resources, the Ohio Coastal Management Program, and sustainability of the Great Lakes ecosystems.

Objective: Provide technical and financial resources for the improvement of Lake Erie water quality.

Strategy: The Ohio Coastal Management Program partners with the Ohio Sea Grant College Program in its implementation of the Ohio Clean Marinas Program. An important component of the Ohio Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program, the Ohio Clean Marinas Program provides a number of water quality benefits to Lake Erie by certifying that marina operators follow a variety of best management practices. As of July 1, 2012, there were 39 certified Clean Marinas in Ohio. Through an increased number of certified Clean Marinas in Ohio, it is expected that Lake Erie water quality will continue to improve.

Performance Measure: Percentage increase in the total numbers of certified Clean Marinas.

Target: Fifty percent increase in the total number of certified Clean Marinas over the five-year period. (+20 marinas).

Results:

Year 1 = 0
Year 2 = 5
Year 3 = Not reported
Year 4 = Not reported
Year 5 = Not reported

Total: 5

Discussion: There is a distinct lack of data for this measure. [Note: as of the date of the site visit for this evaluation, there were 65 marinas in the Lake Erie watershed that were designated as Clean Marinas.]

METRIC 3

Goal: Provide information to coastal communities and decision-makers regarding Lake Erie, coastal resources, the Ohio Coastal Management Program, and sustainability of the Great Lakes ecosystems.

Objective: Provide technical and financial resources for the improvement of Lake Erie water quality.

Strategy: Water quality in the western basin of Lake Erie continues to be negatively impacted by runoff of sediments and nutrients from the watersheds of rivers flowing into the western basin of Lake Erie. The Office of Coastal Management partners with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Soil and Water Resources to employ a staff member dedicated to working with the agricultural community in Lake Erie's western basin watersheds to implement voluntary best management practices aimed at reducing nonpoint source pollution. It is anticipated that the adoption of such practices will have direct positive impacts on the water quality of Lake Erie.

Performance Measure: Acreage of agricultural land in the Lake Erie watershed where a new voluntary best management practice has been implemented for at least one year as a result of technical and financial assistance through the Ohio Coastal Management Program in partnership with the Ohio Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program.

Target: Between 2012 and 2017, 25,000 acres of agricultural land in the Lake Erie watershed where new voluntary best management practices have been implemented for at least one year as a result of technical and financial assistance through the Ohio Coastal Management Program in partnership with the Ohio Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program.

Results:

Year 1	= 35,519
Year 2	= Project ended
Year 3	= Project ended
Year 4	= Project ended
Year 5	= Project ended

Total: = 35,519

Discussion: The target for this measure was greatly exceeded before the project ended.

Evaluation Metrics: 2018-2023

METRIC 1

Goal

Improve Ohio’s coastal economy through the enhancement of public access amenities in the coastal area.

Objective

From 2018 to 2023, provide technical and financial assistance to bolster the efforts of local communities to enhance their public access sites.

Strategy

Ohio implements the Coastal Management Assistance Grants program to provide financial assistance through competitive grants applied for by a variety of entities, including local communities. As part of this program, Ohio offers two grant workshops annually. These workshops provide information about the Coastal Management Assistance Grants as well as additional grant programs relevant to coastal communities offered by other governmental and nongovernmental organizations. In the past, communities have from time to time applied for funds to enhance existing public access sites. It is Ohio’s expectation that this trend will continue in the future.

Ohio also provides technical mapping and GIS assistance, both through direct development of mapping products and through technical guidance provided by GIS staff. Projects at the local level have benefitted from this assistance in the past, and it is Ohio’s expectation that this trend will continue.

Performance Measure (CZMAPMS 5b)

From 2018 to 2023, the number of existing public access sites enhanced with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Target

From 2018 to 2023, five existing public access sites will be enhanced with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Results: Year 1 = 0
 Year 2 = 3
 Year 3 = 2
 Year 4 = 3
 Year 5 = NA
 Total: = 8

Discussion: The program’s local beach access enhancement target was attained prior to the fifth year.

METRIC 2

Goal

Improve Ohio's coastal economy through the reduction of damage to coastal communities and property caused by erosion and coastal storms.

Objective

From 2018 to 2023, provide technical and financial assistance to bolster the efforts of local communities to become more resilient against erosion and coastal storms by integrating nature-based shorelines and other innovative measures.

Strategy

Ohio provides technical assistance through its coastal engineers and other technical staff, who meet with property owners, consultants, and other stakeholders at the local level to discuss erosion management possibilities, including traditional as well as nature-based shoreline approaches, and resilience against coastal storms. In addition to onsite, solution-based discussions regarding these issues, written assistance is provided through the Lake Erie Shore Erosion Management Plan and the Ohio Coastal Design Manual. In addition to technical assistance, Ohio offers financial assistance to support coastal resilience efforts. The Coastal Management Assistance Grant program provides opportunities for communities to apply for funding that would be used to develop waterfront resilience plans and assessments. Projects at the local level have benefitted from this assistance in the past, and it is Ohio's expectation that this trend will continue. The coastal program's efforts in this area will be increasing.

Ohio anticipates (a) one state-level policy or plan completed, (b) two local-level policies or plans completed, (c) one project completed at the state level, and (d) two projects completed at the local level will be implemented with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Performance Measure (CZMAPMS 11a-d)

From 2018 to 2023, the number of (a) state-level policies and plans completed, (b) local-level policies and plans completed, (c) projects completed at the state level, and (d) projects completed at the local level to reduce future damage from coastal hazards with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Target

From 2018 to 2023, six (a) state-level policies and plans completed, (b) local-level policies or plans completed, (c) projects completed at the state level, and (d) projects completed at the local level will be implemented with assistance from CZM funding or staff.

Results:

Year 1	= 2
Year 2	= 0
Year 3	= 0
Year 4	= 4
Year 5	= NA
Total:	6

Discussion: The program has been successful in addressing resilience at the state and local level and met the target by the end of year 4.

METRIC 3

Goal

Improve Ohio’s coastal economy through the implementation of projects that implement a sustainable development plan.

Objective

From 2018 to 2023, provide financial and staff assistance to local communities in their efforts to implement on-the-ground and in-water efforts to sustainably manage coastal resources.

Strategy

Ohio provides financial assistance through the Coastal Management Assistance Grants program to communities for the development and implementation of sustainable development policies and plans. Many of these efforts deal with the management of stormwater in an effort to reduce flooding while also reducing nonpoint source pollution to Lake Erie. Additionally, Ohio implements the Healthy Lake Erie Initiative that provides millions of dollars in capital funds for efforts aimed at eliminating open lake placement of dredged sediments and instead beneficially using those sediments for habitat creation and as a commodity to be used in various industries. The coastal program’s efforts in this area will be increasing.

Performance Measure (CZMAPMS 13b)

From 2018 to 2023, the number of coastal communities that complete a project to implement a sustainable development plan with assistance from Ohio Coastal Management Program funding or staff.

Target

From 2018 to 2023, six coastal communities complete a project that implements a sustainable development plan with assistance from Ohio Coastal Management Program funding or staff.

Results:

Year 1	= 0
Year 2	= 0
Year 3	= 0
Year 4	= 0
Year 5	= NA
Total:	= 0

Discussion: Although local governments have not implemented sustainable development plans during the first four years of the target period, work continues, and plans will be adopted as local authorities finalize their plans.

Conclusion

This evaluation concludes that the Ohio Department of Natural Resources is successfully implementing and enforcing its federally approved coastal management program, adhering to the terms of the federal financial assistance awards, and addressing coastal management needs identified in section 303(2)(A) through (K) of the Coastal Zone Management Act.

These evaluation findings contain three recommendations that must be considered before the next regularly scheduled program evaluation but that are not mandatory at this time. Recommendations that must be repeated in subsequent evaluations may be elevated to necessary actions.

This is a programmatic evaluation of the Ohio Coastal Management Program, which may have implications regarding the state's financial assistance awards. However, it does not make any judgment about or replace any financial audits.

Jeffrey L. Payne, Ph.D.
Director, NOAA Office for Coastal Management

Date

Appendix A: Response to Written Comments

No written comments were received.