

Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail Update

Covering activities January 2008 thru June 2009

The Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail and Ohio Sea Grant Program are partners in creating a sustainable tourism industry. Goals and strategies are defined by integrating those established by the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail and the Ohio Sea Grant Program strategic plans.

1. Goals and Accomplishments

GOAL:

Connect resources to encourage economic improvements due to visitor spending through developing at least two regional tourism itineraries and projects.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:



Visitors and residents now have access to a directory of Lake Erie beaches due to a **"Lake Erie Beach Guide"** publication developed in partnership with Cuyahoga Board of Health, Ohio State Parks, and Cleveland Metroparks. 2008

Visitors and residents can find diving opportunities and maritime heritage sites with the **"Shipwrecks & Maritime Tales of the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail"** publication. 2008

Visitors and residents can find diving opportunities through a web site **"Shipwrecks & Maritime Tales of the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail"**, 2009. <http://www.obioshipwrecks.org/> Site developed by Joe Lucente and Dave Kelch, 2008.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife is partnering with the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail and Ohio Sea Grant to develop a **birding trail** along Lake Erie connecting more than 70 birding sites, 2009.

CSI: Lake Erie tours explores a new way of telling the "Lake Erie story" by linking three historic sites on Put-in-Bay in a thematic "who-done-it" experiential tour. This tour will be evaluated and may be able to be similarly implemented at other locations. Content includes tips for keeping Lake Erie clean, the potential impacts of water diversion, how Lake Erie is managed by both the U.S. and Canada, etc., 2009.



A new product highlighting **railroad heritage** along the lakeshore may one day be developed. The Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail and Ohio Sea Grant assisted BGSU Hospitality and Tourism professor with development of a grant request for creating a brochure and conducting research highlighting railroad heritage along the lakeshore, 2009.

GOAL:

Increase awareness of Lake Erie and its historical, natural and cultural resources through assisting regional visitors bureaus and businesses with no fewer than five project requests and innovations.

ACCOMPLISHMENT:

A new online resource (<http://ohiotourism.osu.edu/>) for educating the tourism industry on how to start, build, or finance a tourism-related business in Ohio is now available through a partnership with Lake Erie Coastal Ohio, Ohio Sea Grant, the Ohio Department of Development, and OSU Extension. The **Ohio Tourism Toolbox** links to existing and new material for learning how to develop nature-based tourism, heritage tourism, culinary tourism, and other niche markets, as well as how to develop a community tourism plan. This web site was launched at town hall meetings throughout the state with the Ohio Tourism Division, 2009.



Solicited input and photographs from bureaus to develop **Make a Splash on the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail** feature on the America's Byways web site.

<http://www.byways.org/explore/activities/water/stories/74415>, 2008.

Solicited input and photographs from bureaus to develop **Outdoor Fountains** feature on the America's Byways web site. <http://www.byways.org/stories/74838>, 2008.

Solicited input and developed information for **Sunken Treasures of America's Byways** web site. <http://www.byways.org/stories/73917>

Negative media attention regarding Lake Erie will hopefully be minimized due to an effort by Lake Erie Coastal Ohio/Ohio Sea Grant to work with the Ohio Environmental Council on balancing messages distributed through press releases.

In the future, an **image library** may be available for visitors bureaus to access. Letters of support and an analysis of their image needs were solicited and conducted, and a grant application will soon be written to contract with photographers.

Online driving directions and visitation details to Lake Erie Lighthouses and Maritime Heritage Museums are now available on the America's Byways web site. **Lake Erie Lighthouses and Maritime Lore** can be found at <http://byways.org/explore/byways/59836/itinerary/61821>, 2008.

Visitors bureaus had an opportunity to gain additional exposure of local images through a request for images to use in publications and exhibits by the Ohio Sea Grant Program.

Attended meeting to identify opportunities for **culinary tourism** in the Lake Erie Shores and Islands region. Sent organizers information about statewide initiative and connected them to additional resources.

Wrote a grant for a local visitors bureau seeking additional funding for a project, 2009.

Met a group of visitors bureaus and birding experts to discuss strategy to **promote birding**.

Provided sponsorship contacts and field trip ideas for participants in the September 2009 **Midwest Birding Symposium** being held in Ottawa County.

Provided **media training** to business owner at Put-in-Bay who was being interviewed by the *New York Times* on a story of summer real estate trends.

GOAL:

Educate no fewer than 500 business leaders, decision makers, coastal residents, policymakers and other stakeholders about the importance of tourism and resource conservation to the economic potential of Ohio and of the Lake Erie region.

ACCOMPLISHMENT:

More than 2,000 business leaders, decision makers, coastal residents, policymakers and other stakeholders **learned about the importance of tourism and resource conservation to the economic potential of Ohio and the Lake Erie region** during presentations and/or workshops to the following:

- Toledo Area Small Business Association (90)
- College of Oberlin President and Executive-Level Staff (15)
- Wooster Area Rotary Club (requested by Ohio Tourism Division Director to represent the Ohio Tourism division when scheduling conflicts arose) (150)
- Biodiversity Project (25)
- Beach Managers Forum (84)
- Holden Arboretum (13)
- Lake Erie Western Basin Conference (50)
- Toledo Chamber of Commerce (30)
- Main Street Program Directors (12)
- NOAA Science Advisory Members (40)
- Erie County MetroParks Staff meeting (55)
- Ohio Sea Grant Congressional Day (25)
- Mayors and Local Officials Day (10)
- Lakewood Main Street Association (62)
- Main Street Sandusky (55)
- Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers (65)
- Cleveland Bioneers Conference (25)
- Cleveland Boat Show (11)
- Friends of Stone Laboratory (75)
- Ohio Wildlife Diversity Conference (987)
- Western Lake Erie Basin Partnership (45)
- Heritage Ohio Annual Conference (25)
- Fairport Harbor Planning Commission (40)

GOAL:

Support research, education, and outreach efforts that enhance our understanding and ability to implement resource-based sustainable tourism strategies.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Developed a program proposal to **re-establish an Ohio Heritage Areas Program**. This draft proposal was developed through a collaboration of existing national and state heritage areas, visitors bureaus, the Ohio Historical Society, the Ohio Humanities Council and others interested in heritage preservation and promotion. Due to the economic uncertainty of the State of Ohio's budget, introduction of the draft proposal to legislators has been delayed.

In addition to learning how communities can be involved in developing tourism, participants in a series of five **Civic Tourism Workshops** sponsored by the Ohio Humanities Council also learned about the goals and needs of the tourism industry. Served as workshop coordinator for Ohio Humanities Council series of training programs throughout the State of Ohio (172)

Served as facilitator at Great Lakes Climate Change Workshop coordinated by NOAA Center of Excellence for Great Lakes and Human Health to **identify potential opportunities and challenges climate change poses for the tourism community and to the economy**, as well as recommendations for tourism mitigation and adaptation (45)

ODNR information and communications staff **better understand the tourism industry and how to approach potential tourism partners with projects that meet their needs**. Thirteen (13) Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife public information and communications staff members received training on effective partnership strategies with the tourism industry, as well as promoting outdoor recreation, during a full-day workshop.

ODNR Ohio Division of Wildlife management **better understand the tourism industry and how to approach potential tourism partners with projects that meet their needs**. Seventy-five (75) Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife staff learned more about the importance of outdoor recreation and tourism during a presentation at their annual retreat.

Environmental efforts that focus on the positive are more effective than those that focus only on the negative. This was the basic premise of a summary created to environmental groups and other communicators in an effort to curb negativity when it comes to talking about Lake Erie restoration. Negative comments are not only damaging to the economic potential of the region, but they appear they are not as effective either.

GOAL:

Provide resource-based support, education, and guidance in the preservation and conservation of Lake Erie's resources by assisting no fewer than five projects.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

The regulation and prevention of large-scale water diversion from the Great Lakes moved forward with the legislative approval of the **Great Lakes Water Compact** in all states, including Ohio. Met with 15 key legislators during legislative discussion period to provide information on Lake Erie tourism and the

importance of clean water to its future. Trained environmental advocates and other stakeholders who were active in this effort on integrating tourism issues into their discussions to policymakers, 2008.

Ensured that tourism issues, needs, and potential opportunities were communicated during the development of "**Water Resource Management in Northeast Ohio: Opportunities for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Economic Growth**" by Kent State University by providing information and guidance, 2009.

Beach managers (84) along Lake Erie learned more about how to keep their beaches clean, how to get involved in beach monitoring, and the importance of their beaches to Lake Erie tourism through a **Beach Managers Forum** developed by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health with assistance by Lake Erie Coastal Ohio, 2008.

Assisted **Natural Resources Defense Council** with information and contacts of key beaches for water evaluation study.

Provided assistance to National Park Service and Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur in preparing the **Maumee Valley Heritage Corridor** for pending designation as a national heritage area.

Provided information and contact information in support of an **Erie MetroParks grant** application for resource conservation projects.

Assisted **Firelands Watershed Coordinator** with information related to outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism for her watershed action plan.

Provided assistance to National Park Service for developing approach at conducting a feasibility study of an 11-county national heritage designation of the Western Reserve. Upon request, submitted an MOU that will be developed into a consulting contract with the National Park Service for coordinating the public input process of the **Western Reserve Heritage Area**.

Provided interview and information for **East Harbor State Park** restoration project.

Providing information and assistance to **Lake MetroParks** for acquisition of lakefront property.

Provided information and support for the acquisition of the **Kelleys Island Monagan Road Reserve** by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy.

Provided information and support for the acquisition of the **Woischke Property** by the Put-in-Bay Township Park District.

Provided information and support for the acquisition of the **Middle Bass Island Wildlife Area Property** by the Trust for Public Lands.

Provided contacts and assistance to **Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial** to review options for re-invigorating public beach portion of the site.

Assisted Trust for Public Lands by providing beach visitation and economic impact figures regarding potential new **Cleveland lakefront property**.

GOAL:

Provide guidance, education, and support in developing new experiences for the resource-based traveler by working with at least 10 partners.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Coordinated tour of eastern Ohio for JET EXPRESS in order to develop a **ferryboat excursion linking lighthouses and maritime museums in Fairport Harbor, Cleveland and Sandusky area.**

Assisted **City of Lakewood** with ideas for increasing public access at lakefront public property. This involved touring the property, meeting with key officials, connecting these officials with Office of Coastal Management individuals who could provide assistance, and presenting to group of stakeholders.

Provided guidance and visitor survey recommendations for development of the **Aquatic Visitors Center** at Put-in-Bay.

Assisting **City of Willowick** with ideas for increasing public access and enhancing visitor and resident opportunities.

Assisted **City of Sheffield Lake** with ideas and information related to development of interpretive outdoor kiosks to direct marina visitors to resources.

Serving as the committee chairman for the nature-based tourism component of the **Western Lake Erie Basin** partnership project.

Attended a meeting of **War of 1812 historical site managers** linking experiences at these sites for the tourism industry. <http://www.1812heritagetrail.org/> Submitted proposal to these managers on how to better connect to the tourism industry.

Provided guidance and information to a group of arts advocates from the Put-in-Bay and nearshore areas regarding **regional arts promotion.**

Provided guidance and information to the Toledo Arts Commission regarding a vision of **regional arts promotion.**

Holden Arboretum staff and management have a better idea of **how to market to and service the nature-based traveler** following training provided to all staff members, including gift shop management, interpretive staff, grounds keeping, etc.

GOAL:

Provide leadership for statewide and national tourism initiatives.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Future leaders of the tourism industry are better prepared to address issues, challenges, and opportunities. Participants in the inaugural **Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy** developed and facilitated by Ohio Sea Grant/Lake Erie Coastal Ohio increased knowledge 35%. One hundred



percent (100%) of students say they intend to increase their communications with local officials because of what they learned and plan to apply for a statewide leadership position within the next two years.

Keep Ohio Beautiful board members now have a strategic plan to follow as they move forward with initiatives in beautification, waste reduction, and litter prevention thanks to the facilitation and development of a **Keep Ohio Beautiful Strategic Plan** by Ohio Sea Grant/Lake Erie Coastal Ohio. This was the first-ever strategic plan developed for Keep Ohio Beautiful.

GOAL:

Pursue development of a Great Lakes tourism initiative that promotes sustainable tourism in the Great Lakes and enhances the Great Lakes image.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Presented to Great Lakes Sea Grant Community Development Network (12)

Developing a guide to maritime heritage for national scenic byways in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York.

GOAL:

Develop a list of potential research projects for Ohio.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Assisted BGSU professor in development of a grant application for evaluating the economic impact of birding along lake Erie.

Assisted BGSU professor in development of a grant application for evaluating the economic impact of linking railroad heritage sites along Lake Erie.

Students at OSU School of Natural Resources learned more about nature-based tourism through a presentation, 2008.

2. Project Development

Curriculum Development

Lake Erie Literacy Principles, Jentes-Banicki, J.; Culler, B. Huntley, M.; Riddle, C.; and Manzo, L., 2009. *Lake Erie Literacy Principles* will soon be available for educators in the informal place-based and formal learning environments. Huntley worked with partners at the Ohio Lake Erie Commission, Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve, and ODNR Office of Coastal Management to draft these principles which are currently open for public input.

Professional Presentations

From the Ocean to the Lake: Introducing the Lake Erie Literacy Principles. International Association for Great Lakes Research, Toledo, Ohio. Poster presentation by Culler, B.M.; Huntley, M.; Elmer, H.; Riddle, C.; Jentes-Banicki, J.; Lichtkoppler, F.; VanZoest, P. and Manzo, L., 2009

Lake Erie Literacy Principles: How PIs Can Incorporate Literacy Principles and Outreach Components to Enhance Research Proposals. International Association for Great Lakes Research, Toledo, Ohio. Presentation for Center of Science Education Excellence School for Scientists by Culler, B.M.; Huntley, M.; Elmer, H.; Riddle, C.; Jentes-Banicki, J.; Lichtkoppler, F.; VanZoest, P. and Manzo, L., 2009

Fact Sheets and Publications

Huntley, M.A. 2008, "The Nature of Nature-based Tourism: Exploring Benefits and Costs." Peer Review in process.

Huntley, M.A. 2008, "The Nature of Nature-based Tourism: All Birders, Bicyclists, and Bee-Seekers are Not the Same. Differentiating Nature-based Tourists." Peer Review in process.

Huntley, M.A. 2008, "The Nature of Nature-based Tourism: Defining Nature-based Tourism and its Activities." Peer Review in process.

Huntley, M.A.; Chrystenson, J.; Lisa, J., Brolis, I. "Lake Erie Beaches," 2008.

Huntley, M. A. 2008. *Maumee Bay Dredging and Implications on Tourism.*
Developed information bulletin to present the facts concerning choices of sediment control of the Maumee River/Toledo Harbor, as well as the implications to tourism.

Huntley, M. A. 2008. *Great Lakes Compact and Implications on Tourism.*
Developed overall synopsis of Great Lakes Compact legislation and potential implications on Great Lakes tourism.

Kelch, D. O., Lucente, J. E., and Huntley, M. A. 2008. *Lake Erie Shipwrecks and Maritime Tales of the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail.*

Huntley wrote copy and managed design process of this publication that highlights shipwreck opportunities, lighthouses, and maritime museums. Research compiled by OSU Sea Grant Extension Agents Dave Kelch and Joe Lucente.

Video Training Program

Huntley, M.A. 2009, "Nature-based Tourism." Ohio Sea Grant and OSU Extension.

Web Sites

Fox, J., Huntley, M.A. Ohio Tourism Toolbox www.ohiotourism.osu.edu

New byway maps created for America's Byways feature of the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail
<http://www.byways.org/explore/byways/59836/index.html>

Mass Media

Home and Away magazine, feature article highlighting the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail national scenic byway, 2009. Circulation 1,300,000.

Group Travel Leader, feature article highlighting the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail as a regional promotional effort, 2008. Circulation: 32,420.

"Erie Maps Share Lore of Lakeshore," *Columbus Dispatch*, 2008. Article regarding Lake Erie Coastal Ohio and Ohio Sea Grant's efforts to create regional travel itineraries to boost economic impact of tourism. Circulation 246,000

Plain Dealer feature highlighting Lake Erie beaches, 2009. Circulation: 1,028,900.

"Lake Erie Tourism and its Importance," WTOL-TV 11, 2008. Viewers: 77,000

"National Scenic Byway Receives Grant," *Sandusky Register*, 2008.

"Great Lakes Compact," *Mansfield News Journal*, interview with M. Huntley, 2008

"Great Lakes Compact," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, interview with M. Huntley, 2008

"Lake Erie Beaches," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, interview with M. Huntley, 2008

"Ohio Sea Grant Publishes Lake Erie Shipwrecks Brochure," *The Beacon*, 2008.

"Tourism Toolbox Unveiled at Town Hall Meetings," *Mount Vernon News*, 2009

Harley Davidson 2009 Calendar features the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail, 2009

"Sustainable Tourism: Increasing the Economic Impact While Preserving the Environment in Ohio," *Coastal Services* magazine, 2009.

"Protecting the Lakes," *Port Clinton News Herald*, interview regarding tourism and preservation, 2008.

Student Advising

Coordinated internship for undergraduate student from BGSU. Coordinated practicum experience for undergraduate student from BGSU. Student graduated August 2008 and entered master's program in public policy at BGSU

Assisted undergraduate student at BGSU with developing a program summary for creating a countywide student leadership program.

Research Contributions:

Served as chairman of the national scenic byway steering committee formed by the America's Byways Resource Center to **develop a tool for identifying economic impact of byway designation**. Committee was re-activated in early 2009 and has drafted a preliminary tool. Five national scenic byways (including the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail) will serve as beta-testers of this tool in August-September.

Through Ohio Sea Grant, developed an updated **economic impact of Lake Erie beaches** by acquiring new visitation figures.

3. Honors and Awards:

National Environmental Excellence Award of Education Excellence, National Association of Environmental Professionals, 2008.

Epsilon Sigma Phi Tool for Teaching Honorable Mention, Lake Erie Shipwrecks and Maritime Trails brochure.

4. Service and Leadership:

Ohio Tourism Leadership Academy Chairman, Ohio Travel Association, 2008-09

Keep Ohio Beautiful, Vice President, 2009

Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve/ODNR Division of Wildlife Advisory Committee, Vice President, 2008-09

National Scenic Byway Foundation Board of Trustees, 2009

Great Lakes Compact Advisory Board, 2009

5. Proposed Goals for the period July, 2009 through April 30, 2010

These goals and strategies are consistent with the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio and Ohio Sea Grant Program strategic plans.

1. Connect resources to encourage economic improvements due to visitor spending through developing at least two regional tourism itineraries and projects.
2. Increase awareness of Lake Erie and its historical, natural and cultural resources through assisting regional visitors bureaus and tourism businesses with no fewer than five project requests and innovations.
3. Educate no fewer than 500 business leaders, decision makers, coastal residents, policymakers, and other stakeholders about the importance of tourism and resource conservation to the economic potential of Ohio and of the Lake Erie region.
4. Support research, education, and outreach efforts that enhance our understanding and ability to implement resource-based sustainable tourism strategies.
5. Provide resource-based support, education, and guidance in the preservation and conservation of Lake Erie's resources by assisting no fewer than five projects.
6. Provide guidance, education, and support in developing new experiences for the resource-based traveler by working with at least 10 partners.
7. Provide leadership for statewide and national tourism initiatives.
8. Pursue development of a Great Lakes tourism initiative that promotes sustainable tourism in the Great Lakes and enhances the Great Lakes image.

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