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Ohio 2012 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report



Final Report
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Photo caption: Tributary to the Olentangy River near Delaware, Ohio.

Table of Contents

Section A: An Overview of Water Quality in Ohio..... A-1

Section B: Ohio's Water Resources

B1: Facts and Figures.....	B-1
B2: 2020 Water Quality Goals	B-9

Section C: Managing Water Quality

C1: Program Summary – Surface Water	C-1
C2: Program Summary – Environmental and Financial Assistance.....	C-18
C3: Program Summary – Drinking and Ground Waters.....	C-19
C4: Program Summary – Environmental Services	C-20
C5: Cooperation among State Agencies and Departments	C-21
C6: Funding Sources for Pollution Controls	C-21

Section D: Framework for Reporting and Evaluation

D1: Assessment Units.....	D-1
D2: Ohio's Water Quality Standards Use Designations	D-4
D3: Sources of Existing and Readily Available Data	D-6
D4: Evaluation of the Ohio River.....	D-9
D5: Public Involvement in Compiling Ohio's Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters	D-10
D5.1: Solicitation for External Water Quality Data, 2012 Integrated Report Project (June 6, 2011).....	D-11
D5.2: Web Page Announcing 2012 Integrated Report Preparation	D-19
D5.3: Notice of Availability and Request for Comments FWPCA Section 303(d) TMDL Priority List for 2012.....	D-20
D6: Public Comments and Responses to Comments on Draft Report	D-21

Section E: Evaluating Beneficial Use: Human Health (Fish Contaminants)

E1: Background	E-1
E2: Rationale and Evaluation Method.....	E-1
E3: Results.....	E-8
E4: Supplemental Information.....	E-24
E4.1: Calculation of Fish Concentrations from Water Quality Standards Inputs.....	E-24
E4.2: What's the Difference between the Fish Consumption Advisory Decision and the Impairment Decision?	E-28

Section F: Evaluating Beneficial Use: Recreation

F1: Background.....	F-1
F2: Evaluation Method	F-2
F3: Results.....	F-8
F3.1: Lake Erie Public Beaches	F-8
F3.2: Rivers and Streams	F-16
F3.3: Inland Lakes.....	F-21

Section G: Evaluating Beneficial Use: Aquatic Life

G1: Background and Rationale.....	G-1
G1.1: Background	G-1
G1.2: General Determination of Attainment Status.....	G-2
G2: Evaluation Method	G-3

G2.1: Rivers and Streams: Large River Assessment Units (LRAUs).....	G-3
G2.2: Rivers and Streams: Watershed Assessment Units (WAUs)	G-3
G2.3: Lake Erie Nearshore, Islands, and Lacustuaries.....	G-5
G3: Results	G-7
G3.1: Large River Units.....	G-8
G3.2: Watershed Units.....	G-8
G3.3: Lake Erie Units.....	G-9

Section H: Evaluating Beneficial Use: Public Drinking Water Supply

H1: Background	H-1
H2: Evaluation Method.....	H-3
H3: Results	H-5
H4: Supplemental Information	H-10

Section I: Considerations for Future Lists

I1: Wetlands	I-1
I2: Inland Lakes and Reservoirs	I-2
I2.1: Background of Ohio’s Inland Lake Water Quality Monitoring Program.....	I-3
I2.2: Status of Inland Lake Program.....	I-3
I2.3: Preview of Future Listings.....	I-5
I3: Mercury Reduction at Ohio EPA	I-9
I3.1: Ohio Law	I-9
I3.2: Ohio Projects.....	I-9
I3.3: Interagency Groups.....	I-11
I3.4: Ohio Resources	I-12
I4: Harmful Algal Blooms	I-12
I4.1: Response to Harmful Algal Blooms	I-13
I4.2: HAB Advisories and HAB-related Human Illness Reports	I-14
I4.3: Algal Toxin Monitoring.....	I-14
I4.4: HABs in Grand Lake St. Marys	I-16
I4.5: Addressing HABs at the Source.....	I-17

Section J: Addressing Waters Not Meeting Water Quality Goals

J1: Ohio’s 303(d) Listing Framework	J-1
J2: Prioritizing the Impaired Waters: the 303(d) List	J-3
J3: Summary of Results.....	J-5
J4: Changes to the 2012 303(d) List.....	J-10
J5: Schedule for TMDL Work.....	J-23
J5.1: Ohio TMDL Status.....	J-24
J5.2: Long-Term Schedules for Monitoring and TMDLs	J-24
J5.3: Short-Term Schedule for TMDL Development.....	J-25

Section K: Maps

- Ohio 8-Digit Hydrologic Units
- Section 303(d) Human Health (Fish Tissue) Use Categories: Watershed Assessment Units
- Section 303(d) Human Health (Fish Tissue) Use Categories: Large River Assessment Units
- Section 303(d) Recreation Use Categories: Watershed Assessment Units
- Recreation Use Index Scores: Watershed Assessment Units
- Section 303(d) Recreation Use Categories Large River Assessment Units
- Recreation Use Index Scores: Large River Assessment Units
- Section 303(d) Aquatic Life Use Categories: Watershed Assessment Units

Aquatic Life Use Index Scores: Watershed Assessment Units
 Section 303(d) Aquatic Life Use Categories Large River Assessment Units
 Aquatic Life Use Index Scores: Large River Assessment Units
 Section 303(d) Public Drinking Water Supply Use Categories: Watershed Assessment Units
 Section 303(d) Public Drinking Water Supply Use Categories: Large River Assessment Units
 Long-Term Monitoring Schedule
 Ohio Total Maximum Daily Load Program Progress

Section L: Summary Tables of Waterbody Conditions, List of Prioritized Impaired Waters, and Monitoring and TMDL Schedules

L1: Status of Watershed Assessment Units..... L1-1
 L2: Status of Large River Assessment Units L2-1
 L3: Status of Lake Erie Assessment Units..... L3-1
 L4: Section 303(d) List of Prioritized Impaired Waters (Category 5)..... L4-1
 L5: Monitoring and TMDL Schedules for Ohio’s Watershed and Large River
 Assessment Units L5-1
 L6: Category 4B Demonstrations Contained in Approved Ohio TMDLs to Date..... L6-1
 L6.1: Projects included in the 2010 Integrated Report L6-1
 L6.2: Projects included in the 2012 Integrated Report L6-6

Section M: An Overview of Ground Water Quality in Ohio

M1: Introduction M-1
 M2: Ohio’s Ground Water Programs..... M-2
 M3: Ohio’s Major Aquifers..... M-5
 M4: Facility Specific Ground Water Contamination Summary M-7
 M5: Major Sources of Ground Water Contamination M-11
 M6: Summary of Ground Water Quality by Aquifer..... M-15
 M7: Ground Water-Surface Water Interaction M-31
 M8: Conclusions and Future Directions for Ground Water Protection M-32

Section N: References

N1: References N-1

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

B-1. Ohio's water resource statistics.....	B-2
B-2. List of Ohio's principal streams and large rivers.....	B-3
B-3. 2020 goals for four beneficial uses.....	B-10
D-1. Ohio water quality standards in the 2012 Integrated Report.....	D-5
D-2. Data types used in the 2012 Integrated Report.	D-7
D-3. Description of data used in the 2012 Integrated Report from sources other than Ohio EPA.	D-8
E-1. Comparison between fish concentration values and FCA program values.....	E-3
E-2. Example data for calculating a weighted average fish tissue value.	E-5
E-3. Aggregate state statistics for fish contaminant data compared to human health criteria.	E-8
E-4. Waters not supporting the human health use because levels of PCBs or mercury in fish tissue exceed the threshold level upon which the WQS criterion is based.	E-9
E-5. Waters fully supporting the human health use because fish tissue levels of PCBs or mercury are below the threshold level upon which the WQS criterion is based.	E-13
E-6. Waters fully supporting the human health use because fish tissue levels of PCBs or mercury are below the threshold level upon which the WQS criterion is based, and which were categorized as impaired in the 2010 Integrated Report.	E-14
E-7. Waters with contaminants that affect fish tissue, not included in Table E-2 for these pollutants (included on the 303(d) list).	E-16
E-8. Waters for which the existing impaired status cannot be confirmed because data have become historical and not enough new data are available.	E-16
E-9. Waters with current fish tissue data where inadequate samples exist to determine impairment status.....	E-18
E-10. Inland lakes and their impairment status.....	E-20
F-1. Summary of the recreation use assessment methods.	F-1
F-2. Determining assessment status of Lake Erie shoreline AUs.....	F-4
F-3. Determining assessment status of WAUs and LRAUs.....	F-7
F-4. Recreation index score matrix.	F-8
F-5. Seasonal geometric mean <i>E. coli</i> levels and advisory postings at public Lake Erie shoreline beaches in the western basin.	F-10
F-6. Seasonal geometric mean <i>E. coli</i> levels and advisory postings at public Lake Erie shoreline beaches in the central basin.....	F-11
F-7. The number of days per season (and the percentage for all years) when Ohio Lake Erie public beaches exceeded Ohio's single sample maximum <i>E. coli</i> criterion compared to the total number of days in the sampling period, 2006 – 2010, for the Central Basin AU.....	F-13
F-8. The number of days per season (and the percentage for all years) when Ohio Lake Erie public beaches exceeded Ohio's single sample maximum <i>E. coli</i> criterion compared to the total number of days in the sampling period, 2006 – 2010, for the Islands AU.....	F-14
F-9. The number of days per season (and the percentage for all years) when Ohio Lake Erie public beaches exceeded Ohio's single sample maximum <i>E. coli</i> criterion compared to the total number of days in the sampling period, 2006 – 2010, for the Western Basin AU.	F-14

F-10. Bathing water geometric mean <i>E. coli</i> exceedance frequency at 63 Lake Erie public beaches from 2006-2010 (pooled by Lake Erie assessment unit to report use support).....	F-16
F-11. Annual Ohio EPA <i>E. coli</i> sampling effort and recreation use assessment (using Ohio EPA data) in Ohio streams, rivers, and inland lakes, 2006-2010 recreation seasons...	F-16
F-12. Overall differences in the assessment of recreation use attainment, 2010-2012.....	F-17
F-13. Attainment of <i>E. coli</i> geometric mean criteria by site.....	F-17
F-14. Summary assessment status of the recreation use in Ohio's WAUs.	F-19
F-15. Summary assessment status of the recreation use in Ohio's LRAUs.	F-20
F-16. Summary assessment status of the recreation use for inland lakes, 2006-2010.	F-22
F-17. Swimming advisory postings at Ohio's inland lake public beaches (2006-2010).	F-24
G-1. Summary of aquatic life use assessment for Ohio's watershed, large river, and Lake Erie assessment units: 2002-2012 Integrated Report cycles.	G-11
G-2. Breakdown by size category of sites in full attainment in monitored watershed assessment units (908 HUC12s) based on data collected from 2001-2010.	G-11
G-3. Prevalence of the top five causes of aquatic life impairment in HUC12 watershed and large river assessment units based on biological and water quality survey data collected from 2001 - 2010.....	G-12
H-1. Public drinking water supply impairment determination.	H-4
H-2. Waters designated as impaired for (not supporting) the PDWS beneficial use.....	H-9
H-3. Summary of public drinking water supply assessment results for the nitrate and pesticide indicators.....	H-11
I-1. Proposed lake habitat use criteria.	I-5
I-2. Summary of the lake habitat use assessment for lakes sampled in 2008-2010 using the draft assessment methodology described in this section.	I-7
J-1. Category definitions for the 2012 Integrated Report and 303(d) list.	J-2
J-2. Potential listing opportunities in Ohio's listing framework.	J-3
J-3. Priority points for impaired assessment units.	J-5
J-4. Summary of results for each beneficial use.	J-6
J-5. Number of assessment units removed from or added to the 303(d) list.	J-10
J-6. Summary of reasons for changes to the 2012 303(d) list.	J-10
J-7. Removals from 303(d) list because of change in methodology (2010 AU size).....	J-11
J-8. Removals from the 303(d) list because of a flaw in the original listing analysis.....	J-13
J-9. Removals from the 303(d) list because of new data.....	J-13
J-10. Removals from the 303(d) list because of TMDLs approved.	J-15
J-11. Additions to the 303(d) list because of change in methodology (2010 AU size).	J-18
J-12. Additions to the 303(d) list because of a flaw in the original listing analysis.	J-18
J-13. Additions to the 303(d) list because of new data.	J-18
J-14. Ohio TMDLs approved by U.S. EPA at the 11-digit hydrologic unit scale.	J-25
J-15. Ohio TMDLs approved by U.S. EPA at the 12-digit hydrologic unit scale.	J-29
J-16. Short-term schedule for TMDL development.	J-31
M-1. Summary of State ground water protection programs.	M-3
M-2. Ground water contamination summary.....	M-8
M-3. Major sources of ground water contamination.....	M-12
M-4A. Counts of PWSs where 2001-2010 decadal mean values of compliance data occur in the Watch List and Impaired Category.	M-17

M-4B. Counts of wells where 2001-2010 decadal mean values of AGWQMP data occur in the Watch List and Impaired Category (maximum values used for nitrate).....	M-28
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Figures

B-1. Map of Ohio's principal streams and large rivers.	B-8
B-2. Ohio Scenic River System (Ohio DNR 2011).....	B-9
C-1. Lake Erie areas of concern and major Lake Erie tributaries.	C-7
D-1. Ohio's large rivers (rivers with drainages greater than 500 mi ²) and their watersheds. ...	D-3
D-2. Ohio's 12-digit watershed assessment units (gray lines) and 8-digit hydrologic units (heavy black lines).	D-4
E-1. Illustration of the relationship among the WQS values, the values that trigger issuance of fish consumption advisories (FCAs) and the resulting decision regarding waterbody impairment associated with an FCA.....	E-2
E-2. Flowchart for the categorization of fish tissue data for the Integrated Report.	E-7
F-1. Lake Erie public beaches sampled under Ohio's bathing beach monitoring program.....	F-2
F-2. Erie County public beaches sampled under Ohio's bathing beach monitoring program. ...	F-3
F-3. Cuyahoga County public beaches sampled under Ohio's bathing beach monitoring program.....	F-4
F-4. Example of bacteria sampling locations, upper Walhonding River study area (2010).....	F-6
F-5. Seasonal frequency of advisory postings at Ohio's Lake Erie public beaches.	F-15
F-6. Histogram of recreation use index scores for Ohio's WAUs.....	F-18
G-1. Flowchart for determining if headwater assessment score can be derived based on available headwater sampling locations.....	G-6
G-2. Percent attainment status and goal progress ("100% by 2020") for assessed miles of Ohio's large river assessment units (23 rivers/38 AUs/1227.14 miles total).	G-12
G-3. Average full attainment watershed score for Ohio's HUC11 watershed assessment units (IR cycles 2002-2010) and HUC12 watershed assessment units (IR cycles 2010-2012).....	G-13
G-4. Status and trend of aquatic life use "80% by 2020" goal for wading and principal stream and river sites in Ohio based on the last two Integrated Report cycles.	G-14
H-1. Ohio WAUs and LRAUs that contain at least one active surface water drinking water intake.....	H-2
H-2. Assessment units with nitrate indicator results.	H-7
H-3. Assessment units with pesticide indicator results.	H-8
J-1. Listing by smaller assessment units and individual beneficial uses.....	J-3
J-2. Priority points assigned based on use impairment or other factors (extra points).	J-4
J-3. Summary of 2012 IR results for watershed assessment units by beneficial use.	J-7
J-4. Summary of 2012 IR results for large river assessment units by beneficial use.....	J-8
J-5. Summary of 2012 results by assessment unit type.	J-9
J-6. Summary of reasons for changes to the 2012 303(d) list.	J-11
M-1. Aquifer Types in Ohio modified from ODNR glacial and bedrock Aquifer Maps (ODNR, 2000).	M-5
M-2. Locations of sites with documented ground water impacts in Ohio.	M-10

M-3. Distribution of PWSs with treated water where arsenic is > 50% MCL.....M-23
M-4. Distribution of PWSs with treated water where iron and/or manganese are > 50%
MCL.....M-24
M-5. Distribution of PWSs with maximum nitrate in treated water > 50 % MCL.M-25

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AmphIBI	amphibian index of biotic integrity
AOC	Area of Concern (as identified under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement)
AU	assessment unit
BEACH	Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (Act)
BMP	best management practice
BUI	Beneficial Use Impairment (as described in Annex 2 of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement)
CABB	Center for Applied Bioassessment and Biocriteria
CAFO	Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations
Corps	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
CSO	combined sewer overflow
CSP	Conservation Security Program
CWH	coldwater habitat
CWA	Clean Water Act
DDAGW	Division of Drinking and Ground Waters
DDT	dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane
DEFA	Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance
DES	Division of Environmental Services
DLG	Digital Line Graph
DSW	Division of Surface Water
EAG	External Advisory Group
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
EWH	exceptional warmwater habitat
FCA	fish consumption advisory
FFY	federal fiscal year
FWPCA	Federal Water Pollution Control Act
GLRI	Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
GRP	Grassland Reserve Program
HAB	harmful algal bloom
HUC	hydrologic unit code
IR	Integrated Report
kg	kilogram
L	liter
LA	load allocation
LaMP	Lakewide Management Plan
LCI	Lake Condition Index
LEC	(Ohio) Lake Erie Commission
LEPF	(Ohio) Lake Erie Protection Fund
LRAU	large river assessment unit
LRW	limited resource water
LTCP	long-term control plan
MBI	Midwest Biodiversity Institute
MF	membrane filter
mg	milligram
mi ²	square miles
MOR	monthly operating data

MPN	most probable number
MS4	municipal separate storm sewer systems
MWH	modified warmwater habitat
NEORS	Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
ng	nanogram
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOI	notice of intent
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NPS	nonpoint source
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NSSP	National Shellfish Sanitation Program
OAC	Ohio Administrative Code
ODH	Ohio Department of Health
ODNR	Ohio Department of Natural Resources
ORC	Ohio Revised Code
ORSANCO	Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission
OTMP	Ohio Tributary Monitoring Program
OWDA	Ohio Water Development Authority
OWRC	Ohio Water Resources Council
PAHs	polyaromatic hydrocarbons
ppb	parts per billion
PCB	polychlorinated biphenyls
PDWS	public drinking water supply
PS	point source
PTI	permit to install
PTO	permit to operate
PWS	public water supply
QA	quality assurance
QC	quality control
RF3	Reach File Version 3
RM	river mile
SDWA	Safe Drinking Water Act
SDWIS	Safe Drinking Water Information System
SFY	state fiscal year (July 1 to June 30)
sq mi	square miles
SSM	single-sample maximum
STORET	STOrage and RETrieval (a U.S. EPA water quality database)
SWIMS	Surface Water Information Management System
TMDL	total maximum daily load
TOC	total organic carbon
U.S. EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
µg	microgram
USC	United States Code
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VIBI	vegetation index of biotic integrity
WAUs	watershed assessment unit
WHIP	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
WLA	wasteload allocation
WPCLF	Water Pollution Control Loan Fund
WQ	water quality

WQC	Water Quality Certification (Section 401)
WQMP	Water Quality Management Plan
WQPSD	Water Quality Permit Support Document
WQS	water quality standards
WRP	Wetlands Reserve Program
WRRSP	Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program
WSRLA	Water Supply Revolving Loan Account
WWH	warmwater habitat
WWTP	wastewater treatment plant

Executive Summary

The *Ohio 2012 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report* summarizes water quality conditions in the State of Ohio. The report satisfies Ohio's water quality reporting requirements under Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 of the Clean Water Act. The report was last updated in 2010.

Using methods devised to determine the suitability of waters for four specific uses—aquatic life (fish and aquatic insects), recreation such as boating and swimming, human health impacts related to fish tissue contamination, and public drinking water supplies—available data were compared with water quality goals. The results indicate which waters are meeting goals and which are not. Waters not meeting the goals for one or more of the four types of uses are referred to as *impaired*. The waters found to be impaired are prioritized and scheduled for further study and restoration. The report also includes the monitoring schedule that Ohio EPA plans to follow for the next several years.

The report describes the methods used to judge impairment of each type of use. The methods have evolved in each reporting cycle as the Agency gains access to more data and develops better ways to interpret them.

Results are reported for 1,538 watershed units, 38 large river units (in Ohio's 23 rivers that drain more than 500 square miles), and 3 Lake Erie nearshore units. Additional information on streams draining between 50 and 500 square miles is presented. General information on Ohio's water quality is also reported in the form of statistics and progress toward Ohio's "2020 goals."

Ohio's large rivers continue to show improvement as tracked over the last 20 years. The "100% full attainment by 2020" aquatic life goal statistic now stands at 89% full attainment. This statistic is down slightly from 2010 largely because of new assessments in four large rivers, three of which flow through highly urbanized areas and receive large quantities of flow from wastewater treatment facilities. All four of the large rivers have improved dramatically since first sampled in the early- to mid-1980s, attesting to the value of agricultural best management practices and upgraded wastewater treatment plants.

For the human health use (fish tissue), about 17% of units assessed are in attainment. PCB contamination in fish is the cause of most of the human health impairments in Ohio. Mercury is the second leading cause.

The chemicals of concern causing impairment of the public drinking water supply use include nitrate and atrazine. The primary source of both chemicals is nonpoint source runoff from agricultural land use. Additional major sources for nitrate include home and commercial fertilizer application, failing septic systems, unsewered areas and wastewater plant discharges.

The recreation use analysis focuses on the amount of bacteria in the water. For Lake Erie public beaches, the frequency of swimming advisories varies widely, ranging from 0% to nearly 50%. Generally, beaches located near population centers have the most problems. Results are also reported for inland streams and lakes.

Of the 6,316 possible category assignments, the 2012 303(d) list includes changes in 504, with 260 delistings and 244 new listings. Most 303(d) removals are due to TMDL approvals; most new listings are due to new data.

Changes since the 2010 Integrated Report

Changes made between the 2010 Integrated Report and the 2012 Integrated Report are as follows:

- Analysis and listings are based on recent data (collected over the past two years).
- Forty beaches along Lake Erie's shoreline were added to the beach analysis in Section F.
- For the aquatic life use, the transition that began in 2010 of translating data evaluated at the 11-digit hydrologic unit (HU) size to the smaller 12-digit HU size continued. The few remaining relic categories will be dealt with as those areas are monitored again.
- Approximately two years of *E. coli* data from facilities are available for the recreation use evaluation (no facility data were available in 2010 because of the WQS change from fecal coliform to *E. coli*). More data will be available in future IR cycles.
- A new subcategory "t" was defined to indicate those areas where a TMDL has been completed and new information suggests that the 4A category may not tell the whole story.
- New 2020 water quality goals are established for all four beneficial uses included in the IR.