

Chapter 12

Conclusions

This CNPCP document describes Ohio's efforts to control the impact of nonpoint pollution affecting Lake Erie's coastal waters. Implementation of the management measures described herein should enable Ohio to meet the goal of restoring and protecting the quality of coastal waters; however, timely and effective implementation of this program will require a substantial commitment from all agencies involved. The long-term success of this program will depend greatly upon the amount of federal funding made available to the state to carry out the initiatives set forth in this plan.

Water quality conditions in Lake Erie have improved considerably in most areas since the mid-1970s. Major water quality initiatives such as point source controls and the institution of conservation tillage and soil conservation techniques have done much to improve the quality of Ohio's coastal waters. Although conditions have improved, water quality problems and impairments remain, primarily from nonpoint sources. Present-day intensive agricultural activities continue to alter habitat and contribute sediment, phosphorus, and nitrates to coastal waters. Urban sources of nonpoint pollutants, such as combined sewer overflows, stream channel modification, and stormwater runoff are having a growing impact on water quality conditions. Dam construction, shoreline modification, marina development, diking, and other activities that alter the natural structure of the lake shore, river mouths, and associated wetlands continue to occur. The presence of contaminated sediments from past industrial activities continues to contribute to the impairment of some watersheds.

Five of the six categories of nonpoint sources identified for inclusion into the coastal nonpoint program are addressed in this plan: agriculture, urban areas, marinas and recreational boating, hydromodification, and wetlands. Forestry-related activities in the Lake Erie watershed do not and are not reasonably expected to present significant adverse effects to Ohio's coastal waters; therefore, Ohio has requested an exclusion for the forestry sources category.

Ohio's coastal nonpoint program will be integrated with the statewide Section 319 NPSMP developed by ODNR and Ohio EPA. Support for the development and implementation of this program is provided through the coordination of various state, regional, and local agencies that play a role in Ohio's existing networked OCMP.