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## Status Report

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### March-May 2009

#### CEO Luncheon

On March 27, Gary Heminger and Roy Armes hosted a luncheon for approximately 50 members of the business community. Welcome and opening comments were made by Gary Heminger followed by comments from Phil Berkeley, USACE, project update by Tony Iriti and Brian Hurt, and closing message by Roy Armes. This luncheon was the latest effort to keep the public informed of the progress made by the Partnership.

#### Leisure Living Show

The weekend of April 3, 4, and 5 was the WFIN Leisure Living Show at the Cube. We set up our display booth and were available to answer questions posed by attendees. Several hundred people stopped by the booth and were given information about the Partnership, Conservancy Districts, and Urban Conservation Best Management Practices (rain gardens, rain barrels, etc.). Tom Cooper of Findlay won a drawing held for a rain barrel. The 2010 Show will be especially helpful in providing a forum to communicate the proposed flood damage reduction plan.

#### General Peabody Visit

On May 8, we were fortunate to have a visit from Brigadier General John Peabody, Commander of the Cincinnati Division of the Army Corps of Engineers. The Cincinnati Division includes seven districts representing 17 states. Also in attendance were Mike White, top civilian; LTC Snead, commander of the Buffalo District; Traci Clever, top civilian Buffalo District; and several other USACE staff. The main purpose of the visit was to update General Peabody and his staff on our project's progress. He assured us that the Division was well aware of our project and supportive of our efforts. We ended the visit with a walking tour of Main Street to the river.

#### Tax Exempt Status

On May 15, we received our 501 (C) (4) tax exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. Much thanks goes to Attorney Amy Zeuch from Marathon Petroleum Company for her hard work and due diligence in helping us attain this status. We also thank Senator Sherrrod Brown and his staff for helping to speed up the determination process.

#### State Capital Improvement Funds

In 2008, Representatives Hite and Wachtmann, and State Senator Buehrer were instrumental in having \$3 million set aside in the State Capital budget for non-federal costs associated with our flood damage reduction project. On May 26, 2009, the Partnership signed the agreement, which started the process for the release of

these funds. On June 9, we received a letter from the Department of Natural Resources stating that the Office of Budget and Management approved the request. Within 45 days we should receive \$2 million of the total. Once we have need for the remainder, we need only to request it. We have a June 30, 2010 deadline to spend the funds unless an extension is granted. Our intent is to request another \$3 million from the state in each of the next two biennium budgets.

### **Conservancy District**

We have begun the next phase of creating a stand-alone conservancy district to assume management of the project when the Partnership reaches its logical conclusion. This next phase includes holding public meetings to better inform residents of the watershed about conservancy districts. Meetings are scheduled for June 2 in Ottawa, June 4 at Riverdale High School, June 11 at Bluffton, and June 15 at the Agency on Aging in Findlay. Formation of a Conservancy District has become an issue of concern with the local agricultural community. We will continue our meetings to provide the public with accurate information about the conservancy district.

### **Joint Councils to Meet**

On June 29, Findlay City Council and Ottawa Village Council will meet jointly at the Putnam County Educational Service Center to review the progress of the flood damage reduction project. This meeting demonstrates the cooperation between the two communities.

### **USGS Flood Inundation Mapping**

On April 23, the United States Geological Survey, the National Weather Service, and the City of Findlay unveiled the new Inundation mapping section of the Weather Service website. This is the first of its kind in Ohio. This was made possible by the City of Findlay's installation of stream gauges in the southern portion of the watershed in 2007. [See the attached news release.](#) The Village of Ottawa is preparing to enter into a similar contract with USGS.

### **Buffalo Trip**

Jeff Loehrke and Jason Phillips, representing the Village of Ottawa, Brian Hurt, representing the City of Findlay, Randy Lohoff and I traveled to Buffalo to meet with LTC Snead and others. In addition, we toured several projects in the Buffalo area, where we observed alternatives such as diversion channels, bike and walking paths incorporated into projects, and detention ponds. We also were able to see the extent of land needed to retain water. For example, to drain a seven square mile watershed, 30 acres of land 20 feet deep is necessary to hold the runoff. That equates to 600 acre-feet of water storage. In our watershed, we need to store approximately 45,000 acre-feet of water. That equates to 9,000 acres 20 feet deep. This illustration helps to provide a perspective.

### **Indiana Republic Newspaper**

On May 5 and 6, we hosted a reporter and photographer from the Indiana Republic paper located in Columbus, Indiana. They were gearing up from the first anniversary of the 2008 flood that caused \$250 million dollars in damage. The flood was not as wide-spread as our August, 2007 flood, but their hospital and Cummins Engine Headquarters were severely impacted. Columbus is much like Findlay, so the reporter wanted to compare and contrast recovery efforts. The edition should be coming out shortly.

**Western Lake Erie Basin**

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The Putnam County Commissioners have signed a Federal Cost Share Agreement to be the local sponsor for the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) authority. Non-federal costs associated with water and storm sewer projects within the basin will be used as “match” for the agreement. The WLEB is the continuing authority under which our General Investigation study resides. The Hancock County Commissioners are the local sponsor of the General Investigation study.