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**OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION UNVEILS
2008 PLAN TO PROTECT LAKE ERIE**
Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan 2008

TOLEDO, OH – The Ohio Lake Erie Commission today released its *Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan 2008* (LEPR) that outlines actions the Ohio Lake Erie Commission and its member agencies will take towards restoration of Lake Erie and its watershed. The Plan was presented as part of the Commission's annual meeting held at the Lake Erie Nature & Science Center in Bay Village, OH.

The Commission previously spelled out what needed to be done in the *Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan* released in 2000. This *Plan* identified 84 action steps that the Ohio Lake Erie Commission would take to protect and restore Lake Erie. After eight years, the 2000 *Plan* needed to be significantly updated to reflect newly emerging issues, the changing Lake Erie ecosystem, as well as the unified Great Lakes approach embodied in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration.

The *LEPR 2008* communicates what is being done and coordinates its action through the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. The *LEPR 2008* is organized into 10 Ohio priorities which include the nine priorities established by the Great Lakes Governors plus the priority of "Climate Change" which was deemed of great significance to the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. Goals have been established for each priority. Strategic Objectives which reflect those items to be accomplished through 2014 have been assigned to the goals and Actions toward these strategic Objectives for fiscal years 2009-2011 have also been established. Further action towards the Strategic Objectives in FY 2012-2013 will be determined through future updates of the LEPR.

The *Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan 2008* should provide a road map for Ohio's efforts related to Lake Erie until 2014. Periodic updates will be included along with the *Plan* at the Ohio Lake Erie Commission website: <http://lakeerie.ohio.gov>.

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The Ohio Lake Erie Commission was established for the purpose of preserving Lake Erie's natural resources, protecting the quality of its waters and ecosystem, and promoting economic development in the region. The director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources serves as the commission's chairman. Additional members include the directors of the state departments of Transportation, Health, Development, Agriculture and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

The Commission also oversees the Ohio Lake Erie Protection Fund, which is the source of grant money for projects that benefit the Lake Erie watershed economically and environmentally. This fund is supported by Ohioans who purchase a Lake Erie license plate displaying the Marblehead Lighthouse or Toledo Harbor Lighthouse designed by Ohio artist Ben Richmond.

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