



RESEARCH NEEDS WORKSHOP 3.11

**Planning for an Integrated Habitat Classification System  
and Map for the Lake Erie Basin**

June 6-7, 2005  
F.T. Stone Lab  
Ohio State University  
Gibraltar Island, OH

**Preliminary Announcement**

**Project Overview:** In December 2002, participants at a workshop convened by the Lake Erie Millennium Network (LEMN) identified topics for future habitat-related research and development needs. The first of these needs was to develop a unified habitat classification and integrated map of the Lake Erie basin. A binationally integrated and consensus-based habitat classification would be used to track progress toward achieving ecosystem objectives and would facilitate habitat management and restoration in the Lake Erie Basin in the US and Canada. LEMN researchers received a US EPA - GLNPO grant to carry out this work

UPCOMING EXPERTS' WORKSHOP

**Workshop Objectives:** Bring together and convene a team of habitat experts to integrate existing habitat classification schemes for 5 natural habitat zones in the Lake Erie basin with the goal of developing a unified, integrated, consensus-based classification system for Lake Erie habitats, both terrestrial and aquatic. Specifically, workshop participants will:

- Review and evaluate existing habitat classification schemes for five major habitat zones - terrestrial, inland lakes and rivers, wetland, coastal margin (nearshore), and open lake environments;
- Form subgroups to achieve consensus as to protocols for a new unified habitat classification scheme. This will include evaluation of existing classification protocols and ways to harmonize (cross-walk) these protocols across the five major habitat zones. We propose to use a hierarchical approach to build a scheme that is applicable across habitat zones at multiple spatial and temporal scales.
- Identify regional geospatial datasets that can be incorporated and used to classify habitats based on the newly developed unified habitat classification protocols, including definition and collection of geospatial data for the project.

A second Experts' Workshop will be held in autumn 2005 to integrate the work of the subgroups into a unified, integrated, consensus-based classification system for Lake Erie habitats.

The project team, guided by the results of these workshops, will apply and test the integrated habitat classification system in two Lake Erie watersheds using existing geographic information system (GIS) coverages and databases. The pilot watersheds are the Maumee River watershed in Ohio and the Grand River watershed in Ontario.

Ultimately, these data and coverages will be used to compile and produce a basinwide habitat map based on the unified, integrated classification system that will detail a complete mosaic of Lake Erie habitats in a common format for both the United States and Canada.

**Location:** The workshop is being hosted by Dr. Jeff Reutter, Director of the Ohio Sea Grant and LEMN codirector at Ohio State University's F.T. Stone Lab on Gibraltar Island near Put In Bay, OH.

Franz Theodore Stone Laboratory is the nation's oldest freshwater biological field station and the Island Campus of the Ohio State University. Located on Lake Erie's Gibraltar Island, the Lab provides summer college courses, science workshops, and a year-round research facility. For more details please visit the web site at <http://www.sg.ohio-state.edu/slab/about/>

**Travel:** South Bass Island is accessible by ferry from Catawba Point or by Jet Express from Port Clinton (60 miles east of Toledo). A water taxi provides transport from Put-In-Bay on South Bass Island to Gibraltar Island. Travel instructions, maps, and accommodation information are available at the Stone Lab web site.

**Accommodations and Meals:** Jeff has been able to arrange for dormitory accommodations to be available for workshop participants on the island. Three cottages have well-appointed single (shared bathroom) and double rooms. Housing on the island will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Accommodation costs on Gibraltar Island will be paid for, but people may be housed with a room-mate, if necessary. Participants who definitely want to be assured of a single room should plan on staying at a hotel (at your own expense). Hotel rooms in Put In Bay will likely be in the \$100/night range (details to follow). Meals will be provided at the lab during the workshop.

Space to attend this workshop is limited and there may be a waiting list of participants. Please reply to confirm or decline this information at your earliest convenience. For more information, please contact one of the conveners.

We look forward to seeing you at the workshop.

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Conveners