Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

State Fiscal Year 2017

July 1, 2016 — June 30, 2017

Annual Report

July 2017

Message from the Director

Since 2011, under the leadership of Governor John R. Kasich, the State of Ohio has invested more than $5 billion to improve water quality throughout the state by addressing nutrient runoff. These funds have been directed toward improving drinking water and wastewater facilities, monitoring water quality, planting cover crops, recycling dredge material, installing controlled drainage systems on fields and fixing faulty septic systems.

This year, Ohio created the implementation framework for the Western Basin of Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement. Working together with our state partners at the Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Department of Health and Ohio Department of Natural Resources, we will use the framework's Adaptive Management Process to address nutrients. This means that water quality monitoring, sampling and nutrient management practices will be developed, evaluated and adjusted as circumstances change in order to meet the state's goals.

At Ohio EPA, we focus on protecting public health and the environment. We spend a great deal of time monitoring our air, land and water to ensure environmental standards are met. In addition, we process high-priority, complex permits for new facilities or major expansions to retain and support Ohio businesses.

Ohio EPA continues to provide our customers with access to technical and financial resources that will help them achieve and maintain compliance and create new jobs and economic growth opportunities for Ohioans. We are always looking for ways to improve internally, work more efficiently and effectively. Building on the achievements described in this annual report, we will continue to look for creative solutions to the challenges on the horizon.

Craig W. Butler
Director

Legislation and Policy Initiatives

Senate Bill 2 (passed by the General Assembly in June 2017; anticipated effective date Oct. 2017)

Senate Bill 2 prioritizes improving water quality in Ohio and addresses other environmental issues by streamlining burdensome rules while protecting public health and the environment. Some of the outlined reforms include:

- Updates the Lake Erie Commission's existing statutes to help reduce phosphorus in Lake Erie's Western Basin 40 percent by 2025.
- Provides a regulatory framework for the safe and beneficial reuse of material dredged from federal navigation channels.
- Requires financial assurance from new or modified private water systems that ensures they can make needed repairs to ensure safe and reliable drinking water.
- Requires public water systems to demonstrate ongoing technical, financial and managerial capability by implementing an asset management program.
- Establishes regulatory oversight of construction and demolition debris processing facilities (C&DD) to ensure proper management and disposal of C&DD materials.
- Strengthens Ohio EPA's ability to evaluate and clean up abandoned landfills including gaining site access, conducting investigations and taking samples at these sites.

House Bill 49 – 2018-19 Biennial Budget (anticipated effective date Oct. 2017)

House Bill 49 includes the following policy initiatives:

- Consolidating existing technical, compliance and financial assistance programs within Ohio EPA.
- Transfers asbestos certification from Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to Ohio EPA.
- Continues the Diesel Emission Reduction Grant program.
- Streamlines the State Toxic Release Inventory Reporting requirements.
- Updates the local air agency statute.
- Provides a process to outline, review and approve current and future Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). TMDLs are required by federal law to address waters not meeting water quality standards.

Identifying and Addressing Potential Vapor Intrusion of Trichloroethylene

Recognizing that previously closed facilities may still pose some threat to nearby residents and businesses, Ohio EPA initiated a new process to identify and address areas that may be subject to vapor intrusion of trichloroethylene (TCE).

As part of this initiative, Ohio EPA developed new guidance outlining response action levels and timeframes for common contaminants of concern at vapor intrusion sites across the state. This guidance is used at residential and commercial sites that have the potential for vapor intrusion from contaminated soil and ground water.

Preventing and Addressing Lead in Drinking Water

Ohio EPA implemented new public notification requirements that were enacted in legislation passed in SFY16 to ensure that Ohio drinking water consumers have information about lead concentrations much faster than the current federal reporting rules.

This year, water systems required to monitor for lead were additionally required to submit a map of their system and identify potential sources where lead could be introduced into drinking water. These maps will allow the public water system and Ohio EPA to quickly identify and notify consumers who would be most at risk for lead exposure if a lead action level exceedance were to occur for the system. All of the public water systems complied with this requirement and the maps and relevant contact information are now available online for consumers.

Another provision of this statute is ensuring that school facilities can identify and address potential lead exposure risks. Ohio EPA, in partnership with the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) and the Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA), created the Lead Plumbing Fixture Replacement Assistance Grant Program to provide $12 million for eligible schools to pay for sampling and replacement of lead-containing drinking fountains, water coolers, plumbing fixtures and limited connected piping. More than $2.5 million have been requested by nearly 800 schools.

Ohio's Western Lake Erie Basin Collaborative Implementation Framework

In June 2015, Lt. Governor Mary Taylor signed a new collaborative agreement with Michigan and Ontario to achieve a 40 percent reduction in the amount of phosphorus entering Lake Erie's western basin by 2025. In February 2017, Ohio released its final implementation framework that will serve as the basis for Ohio's Domestic Action Plan under the binational water quality agreement.

The framework is designed for the Adaptive Management Process so it will change as circumstances and information change. This is the Administration's framework, which will be carried out by ODA, ODH, ODNR and Ohio EPA in cooperation with our federal and local government partners and the NGO community to allow the entire state to focus resources, verify effective actions and document resulting improvement in the quality of water entering Lake Erie.

Mass Balance Study

To help with Agency decision-making, nutrient loads (total phosphorus and total nitrogen) and their major sources were computed for water years 2013 and 2014 for the seven largest watersheds in Ohio. Four watersheds enter the Lake Erie system (Maumee, Portage, Sandusky and Cuyahoga) and three watersheds enter the Ohio River system (Great Miami, Scioto and Muskingum) which encompasses approximately 63 percent of Ohio's land area. The Nutrient Mass Balance Study was released in December 2016 and several presentations and webinars were provided to share results.

Expedited Evaluation of Human Health Risks Due to Perfluorinated Chemicals

During SFY17, in coordination with the Ohio Air National Guard (OANG), the U.S. Air Force, the Ohio Department of Health, and local health departments, Ohio EPA sampled ground water at or near five air bases for perfluorooctonoic acid (PFOAA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). These chemicals are known to have been in foams used to fight fires at the bases and are subject to a 2016 U.S. EPA drinking water health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion (ppt). The adverse health effects caused by these chemicals include developmental effects to fetuses during pregnancy or to breast-fed infants, cancer, liver damage, immune system effects and other issues. While the National Guard Bureau and the U.S. Air Force had scheduled PFOA/PFOS testing of the OANG sites in federal fiscal years 2017 and 2018, Ohio EPA believed that the testing should be done sooner to ensure safe drinking water.

The sampling identified no impacts to private drinking water supplies at the Springfield, Rickenbacker, Mansfield and Warren-Youngstown bases. However, water in one of 16 wells sampled near the Toledo base was found to contain PFOA above the 70 ppt health advisory level. Upon Ohio EPA's receipt of this result, the OANG immediately provided an alternative drinking water supply to the affected residents.

Ohio EPA will continue to evaluate potential human health drinking water risks due to PFOA and PFOS during SFY18. The new health advisory level, combined with the relative lack of ground water data for these chemicals, suggests a need for proactive sampling.

Innovation, Development, Training, Safety and Assistance

Promoting Beneficial Use and Diversion of Materials from Landfills

On March 31, 2017, Ohio EPA enacted new rules under Chapter 3745-599 of the Ohio Administrative Code to promote the legitimate and responsible beneficial use of foundry sands, drinking water treatment residuals, wastes used as a fuel, material excavated or dredged from a federal channel during harbor or navigational maintenance activities, and sewage sludge incinerator ash. The rules also eliminate the need for multiple regulatory authorizations and streamline the process to obtain authorization through general and individual beneficial use permits.

The first associated general permits were issued concurrently with the rules. The general permits allow foundry sand to be used as road construction sub-base, structural fill, pipe bedding, soil blends, soil-less potting media and in bioretention soils.

Environmental Career Ambassadors

The Office of Environmental Education (OEE) collaborates with The Ohio State University School of Environment and Natural Resources and the Environmental Education Council of Ohio to support a network of 500 environmental professionals statewide to introduce middle and high school students to real world careers in environmental science and engineering. This year, these volunteer career ambassadors provided classroom presentations, career fair exhibits and shadowing opportunities that reached more than 14,000 students. OEE has been working with the City of Dayton Water Department and the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District to showcase in-demand careers as certified operators at drinking water and wastewater treatment plants. A video about Dayton's High School Water Career Conference is posted at ***https://youtu.be/SJoysEgWhCw***.

Ohio EPA hazardous waste inspector Dan DiMeo talks about his career with students at Licking County's career fair for high school sophomores, at Denison University.

Building Ohio's Economy — Sofidel America

Ohio EPA's Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention uses an innovative approach to encourage economic development by serving as the liaison with all Agency programs for a company.

Sofidel is the second largest producer of tissue paper products (toilet paper, paper towels, napkins and tissues) in Europe and sixth largest producer of these products in the world. With four existing facilties, the Sofidel America was seeking a place to build its first new plant and chose Circleville, in Pickaway County.

In order to construct and operate the new facility, the company needed complex wastewater and air permits from Ohio EPA. Early in the planning process, the Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention (OCAPP) facilitated interaction between Sofidel and key Agency staff members. This early interaction and regular, open communication were essential in enabling Sofidel to submit complete, accurate and approvable applications to the Agency. As a result, both the wastewater and air permits were issued in time for the company to officially break ground in summer of 2016. The company is now hiring employees and plans to begin manufacturing operations in March 2018. The project cost is estimated at $300 million dollars and will create approximately 300 new permanent jobs for the area.

Voluntary Action Program Centralization

In April, Ohio EPA convened the Voluntary Action Program (VAP) Advisory Group. Comprised of certified professionals, labs, financial institutions and educators, the group will explore what works well within the VAP as well as areas for improvement. The overall goal is to modernize VAP and be responsive to the public while remaining protective of public health and the environment. The initial meetings have been well-received and will continue throughout the year.

The VAP centralization will transfer completion of No Further Action (NFA) reviews from the districts to the Agency's Central Office. This will result in a more streamlined, consistent and timely review and issuance of Covenants Not to Sue (CNS). Centralized NFA reviews will enable more direct interaction between legal and risk assessment support staff while allowing the district offices to devote more resources toward technical assistance, five-year inspections and audits of NFA letters.

Harmful Algal Bloom Detection and Response

Ohio EPA established a new HAB section in 2016 with dedicated staff to implement new rules (effective 6/1/17), provide technical assistance to public water systems for prevention and response, and provide assistance responding to HABs in recreational waters.

In 2016, Ohio EPA and Ohio public water systems (PWS) analyzed more than 5,800 samples for total microcystins, many of which were emergency samples analyzed outside of normal business hours in response to suspected toxin presence in finished drinking water and source water.

Ohio EPA's lab analyzed nearly 2,000 cyanobacteria screening samples to predict potential toxin production in finished drinking water. 98 percent of the samples analyzed showed the potential for toxin production and as a result, 33 systems optimized treatment before there was a danger of toxin release. Real-time analysis of treatment optimization efforts at many of these systems was possible thanks to Ohio EPA's mobile HAB lab.

Based on the screening results from the cyanobacteria samples, Ohio EPA conducted follow up sampling for saxitoxins on more than 550 samples from 40 systems. Saxitoxins were detected in raw water at 15 systems (12 percent). More than 50 water systems were required to develop a Treatment Optimization Protocol — a thorough evaluation of existing cyanotoxin treatment capabilities, determination of steps for optimization, and response and preparedness for future HAB events. Ohio EPA developed guidance documents to help water systems evaluate and improve treatment effectiveness and strengthen the multiple barriers for safe water.

Funds Awarded to Address Harmful Algal Blooms at Drinking and Wastewater Treatment Plants

Program	Amount Offered	Amount Awarded
Grants to water systems to purchase cyanotoxin analytical equipment	$1.5 million	$1.2 million
No-interest loans for drinking and wastewater treatment plant upgrades	$150 million	$156 million

Employee Development and Training

Lean Six Sigma

Ohio EPA continues to use the principles of Lean Six Sigma as a model for continuous process improvement. During SFY17, the Agency conducted six process improvement initiatives. The Agency Lean Six Sigma Blackbelt continues to work with senior management to evaluate core processes to identify opportunities throughout the Agency to utilize LEAN Six Sigma principles and techniques.

Developing Excellent Agency Leaders

A six-month leadership development program called Developing Excellent Agency Leaders was introduced to Ohio EPA employees. This program was designed to help managers and staff cultivate their leadership and management abilities. Training topics, which were identified from an Agency-wide needs assessment, focus on communications, including: listening skills, interpersonal communication, coaching and holding difficult conversations; building trust; managing generational differences; team building; conducting effective meetings; change management; and project management. During SFY17, two cohorts of approximately 30 people each completed the training program.

Inspector Training Academy

Ohio EPA created the Inspector Training Academy to ensure that all our present and future inspectors have the knowledge, skills and resources they need to be successful in the field. The Academy included a comprehensive training curriculum that provided Agency inspectors with the confidence and fundamentals they need to conduct a routine compliance evaluation inspection and ensured that all Agency inspectors, regardless of their division or service time, have a clear understanding of their inspection authority and are adequately and appropriately communicating with regulated entities during and after the inspection process. This includes being able to clearly articulate expectations with respect to immediate actions that need to be taken during the inspection as well as developing follow-up correspondence that is comprehensive, yet easy to understand and clear on actions needed to abate violations and associated timelines.

In all, there were 62 training sessions conducted from January 17 – March 31, 2017. The average session was six hours for a total of 372 hours. Almost 500 people completed all six modules for a total of almost 17,750 hours of training.

It took an extensive team of volunteers from across the Agency to build the ITA from what was just an idea to the development and delivery of a high-quality training program for our current and future inspectors. Subject matter experts and volunteers from across the Agency spent countless hours developing the curriculum and training materials, conducting training, compiling handouts/resources, helping with scheduling/logistics, organizing our printing, moderating and facilitating training sessions, and providing overall direction and guidance to the teams. All while continuing to perform their regular duties.

Although the training sessions are completed, the work is far from finished. The Steering Committee has already begun discussing how to provide training to future inspectors. They are reviewing the comments and evaluations gathered from participants and are developing actions items identified during the training for things such as SOPs, additional tools and resources.

Employee Health and Safety

The Agency's continued emphasis on safety and accident prevention led to a significant reduction in the number and severity of on-the-job accidents. As a result, Ohio EPA's worker's compensation premium rates are among the lowest in state agencies of all sizes. Ongoing efforts include comprehensive training for all new employees, periodic refresher training, and actively promoting the top-of-the-line safety culture within our organization.

Promoting Environmental Compliance and Sustainable Practices

Through the Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention, Ohio EPA helped 4,200 businesses and other external customers with compliance, pollution prevention and funding resources, conducted more than 230 site visits, distributed more than 3,200 publications and developed 15 new publications to help companies identify ways to prevent pollution and comply with environmental requirements. Employees conducted 67 presentations and training events and nine webinars, reaching almost 3,500 individuals. Monthly eBlasts reach an audience of more than 14,000 and the quarterly newsletter reaches more than 7,000 subscribers.

Wastewater Package Plant Operator Training

In partnership with the Ohio Water Development Authority, Ohio EPA launched a statewide training program for small wastewater package plant operators. The Agency's Compliance Assistance Unit (CAU) conducted 99 site visits at small wastewater treatment plants to help them address compliance issues and identify best management practices to improve performance and save money.

Encouraging Environmental Excellence

Ohio EPA's Encouraging Environmental Excellence (E3) Program recognizes exceptional achievements in environmental stewardship by Ohio businesses, communities and organizations. In SFY17, the program gained nine Gold Level, one Silver Level and 22 Achievement Level awardees, and received nine applications for the newly instituted E3 Platinum Level.

Connecting Customers to Resources

Ohio EPA's Office of Outreach and Customer Support (OCS) focuses on proactive outreach to ensure that stakeholders are aware of the resources available to help meet their compliance and sustainability-related goals. During SFY17, OCS met with more than 380 people representing communities, businesses, trade associations, economic development agencies and local governments. The office helped organize Ohio EPA open house events in the Columbus and Greater Cincinnati areas, attended by 46 and 50 businesses respectively. OCS also represented the Agency through presentations or exhibits at 11 conferences, reaching an audience of more than 1,000 people and making more than 100 referrals to our technical and financial assistance programs.

In April 2017, Ohio EPA launched the Ohio Materials Marketplace (OMM), an online tool that facilitates recycling in Ohio. OMM aims to create a closed-loop, collaborative network of businesses, organizations and entrepreneurs where one organization's wastes and by-products become another organization's raw material. OMM now has more than 200 member organizations.

Air

Ohio EPA regulates more than 15,000 facilities and 74,000 air pollution sources. During SFY17 the Division of Air Pollution Control (DAPC) issued more than 1,910 permitting actions and 888 permit-by-rule authorizations.

Ohio EPA continues to support job growth by joining JobsOhio's meetings with proposed new facilities so the new facilities can understand Ohio EPA requirements. At the same time, technical specialists continue to process complex permits for new and expanding facilities that retain and support Ohio businesses that include conditions that are protective of human health.

Southeast District Office Oil and Gas Specialty Permitting Group

In response to Ohio's oil and gas industry expansion, Ohio EPA created an Oil and Gas Unit in the Division of Air Pollution Control at the Southeast District Office in Logan. The purpose of the unit is to create a centralized team of staff to address air pollution-related issues associated with well sites, midstream activities (compressor stations), and oil and gas processing (fractionation plants). The Oil and Gas Unit will allow a core team of staff to focus on oil- and gas-related compliance, permitting and enforcement-related issues, while increasing consistency, efficiency and expertise in the area.

Across the state during SFY17, Ohio EPA issued air permits for 123 well sites, 73 compressor stations or similar facilities and six gas processing-type facilities (fractionation facilities, condensate stabilization facilities and cryogenic gas processing facilities). The Agency finalized 22 general permits for equipment located at natural gas compressor stations providing clarity and predictability to entities seeking permits.

Attaining the 2008 Ozone Air Quality Standard

Ohio EPA operates one of the country's most extensive air pollution monitoring networks, comprised of more than 250 ambient air monitors, including 48 ozone monitors. Based on air quality data collected through 2015, the state has met the 2008 ozone standard in the three urban areas of Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland metro areas. U.S. EPA officially recognized the maintenance plans and compliance for these areas in 2016/early 2017.

Removal of Low Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) Fuel Program in the Cincinnati and Dayton Area

Ohio EPA received approval on April 7, 2017, from U.S. EPA to remove Ohio's low RVP fuel requirements in the Cincinnati and Dayton areas.

Low RVP fuel became part of Ohio EPA's air quality State Implementation Plan (SIP) a decade ago to reduce nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds emissions from vehicles in an effort to meet national ambient air quality standards for ozone. Low RVP fuel requirements were in effect in Butler, Clermont, Hamilton and Warren counties in the Cincinnati area, and Clark, Greene, Miami and Montgomery counties in the Dayton area.

Ohio EPA proposed to remove the low RVP fuel requirements because they are no longer the cost-effective approach for reducing ozone that they were when the program was initiated to replace the E-Check program. Using low RVP fuel was estimated to cost consumers $44 million per year based on 2016 gas prices.

The state demonstrated to U.S. EPA that reduced emissions from MillerCoors Brewing in Cincinnati and Wright Patterson AFB in Dayton (which have recently completed environmentally beneficial projects converting from coal to natural gas) will more than offset the increased emissions of removing the low RVP fuel requirement.

Land

Hazardous Waste Site Closure and Cleanup

Hazardous waste sites may require closure through a requirement of the facility's operating permit, but in most cases, closure is required due to unpermitted storage and treatment of hazardous waste. During SFY17, Ohio EPA received nine initial closure plans and completed seven final closure certifications. To ensure proper operation of existing hazardous waste sites, Agency staff conducted 555 inspections/investigations and 96 financial record reviews. Approximately 85 permits or modifications were approved or renewed for permitted facilities.

The remedial program continued work on numerous sites, resulting in the conservation or purchase of approximately 743 acres; completion of salamander restoration work and creation or restoration of 10 acres of wetland at or around the Fernald Preserve property related to the U.S. Department of Energy's Fernald site settlement. More than $1.4 million was recovered from responsible parties for remedial response costs incurred by the Agency.

Ohio EPA is assisting with the closure of the U.S. Department of Energy's Portsmouth Uranium Enrichment Facility. During SFY17, Agency staff reviewed and commented on the design of the On-Site Waste Disposal Cell, designed to hold and provide containment for more than 3 million cubic yards of decontamination and decommissioning waste over a period of 1,000 years.

Addressing Illegal Scrap Tire Dumps — Crossridge Scrap Tire Remediation Project

Improperly managed scrap tires can become a nuisance and public safety concern, and provide a breeding ground for disease-carrying mosquitos. A scrap tire fire can generate toxic smoke and oil that can contaminate surface water and ground water resources.

One of the most significant scrap tire remediation projects taken this past year was the Crossridge Scrap Tire Remediation Project in Wintersville (Jefferson County).

On May 12, 2016, Jefferson County Court of Common Pleas signed an order including interim measures to address scrap tires and other environmental concerns at the site. The court granted Ohio EPA access to the property for the tire removal project beginning July 6. Ohio EPA contracted with Liberty Tire Services (LTS) to remove the estimated 1.1 million open-dumped tires which were stored in 28 piles divided by fire lanes.

LTS finished the project on Oct. 12, 2016 — a month ahead of schedule. In all, more than 10,282 tons of scrap tires (1,028,242 passenger tire equivalents) were removed at a cost of nearly $2 million.

SFY17 Scrap Tire Removals

No-fault

Sites where scrap tire dumping occurred on private and public property by someone other than the owner.

- 96,118 PTEs
- 77 projects
- $464,128

Enforcement

Sites that do not qualify for the no-fault removal, and have been through escalated enforcement. May require court-approved access for scrap tire removal.

- 1,055,525 PTEs
- Four projects
- $2,119,272

Recycling and Litter Prevention

Each year, Ohio EPA's Recycling and Litter Prevention (R&LP) Program awards grant funding to support communities, local governments, businesses and non-profit organizations implement recycling, litter prevention and scrap tire programs. During SFY17, the program awarded nearly $4.6 million in grants to support 57 projects throughout the state.

The City of Upper Sandusky received a 2017 Market Development Grant for Dlubak Glass Ohio to purchase equipment necessary to increase capacity, efficiency and recycling of the company's glass recycling facility located in Upper Sandusky.

Water

Addressing Nutrients in Ohio's Lakes and Rivers

Ohio EPA continued to collaborate with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and the National Center for Water Quality Research at Heidelberg to provide improved measurement of phosphorus loads into Lake Erie watersheds at 12 sites within five targeted watersheds within the Maumee and Sandusky basins. New funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the Ohio Department of Higher Education will be used to provide frequent monitoring at sites chosen to monitor and track progress toward the phosphorus reduction goals recommended by the binational Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Annex 4 Subcommittee and included in Ohio's Western Lake Erie Basin Collaborative Implementation Framework. There are now 21 sites in the Maumee basin where monitoring frequency is considered sufficient to calculate accurate phosphorus loads, representing a variety of drainage area sizes.

Biological Monitoring Shows Improved Water Quality

Do Not Eat Fish Advisory Lifted for Ottawa River, Reduced for Others

Fish can be part of a healthy diet and evaluations of fish tissue are showing some places where anglers can eat all of certain varieties of fish that they can legally catch. Ohio EPA partners with ODH and Ohio Department of Natural Resources to develop the Sport Fish Consumption Advisory. Unless otherwise noted, a general advisory is in place that recommends limiting one meal each week of Ohio-caught fish. Some areas in this year's Ohio fish study were evaluated for the first time, and the general advisory was applied as a baseline.

Among the notable improvements from fish data collected last summer: do not eat advisories were removed for the Ottawa River (Toledo) for all species and replaced with less strict recommendations – a sign of improved conditions.

Other waterbodies recognized as improved or less restrictive than the one fish per week recommendation for certain species include: Atwood, Belmont and Loramie lakes, as well as the Huron and Walhonding rivers.

> ***"The types of fish you find in a river are great indicators of the health of the water and the Ottawa River in Toledo represents one of Ohio's great ongoing success stories. Through state and local cleanup efforts, and with help from federal funding through programs like the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, we are now able to remove the comprehensive do not eat fish advisory for the Ottawa River that was put in place in 1991. As we know, however, there is still more work to do to improve water quality throughout Lake Erie and Ohio River watersheds."***
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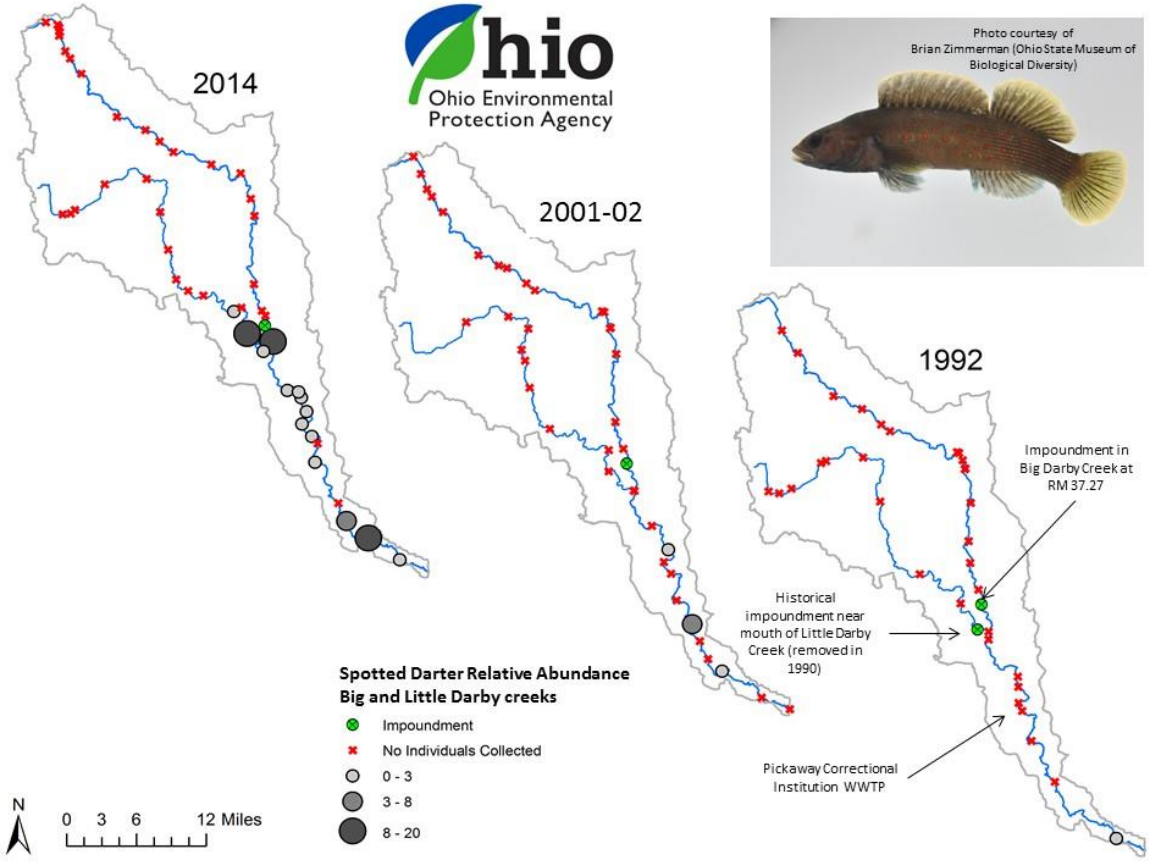
> **— Director Craig W. Butler**

Return of the Spotted Darter — Darby Watershed

The spotted darter is endangered in Ohio and is one of the most rare and sensitive darter species in the state. Historically, this species has been limited to only the very lowermost reaches of Big Darby Creek. The 2014 watershed survey indicated that spotted darter abundance increased dramatically compared to historical surveys and they are now found as far as eight river miles into Little Darby Creek. The dramatic increase in spotted darter abundance exemplifies the improved fish community performance throughout the watershed documented during the 2014 survey. This graphic displays spotted darter relative abundance at sampling locations in Big and Little Darby creeks in 2014, 2001-02 and 1992-93.



Ensuring Safe and Affordable Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment

Ohio EPA awarded Water Pollution Control Loan Funds (WPCLF) totaling almost $567 million to help Ohio communities address wastewater infrastructure needs. In addition, more than $3.8 million in principle forgiveness funding helped provide collection capacity in unsewered areas and assist economically disadvantaged and small communities with infrastructure.

Ohio EPA awarded Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) funding totaling almost $75 million to help communities address drinking water infrastructure needs. Approximately $4.9 million in principle forgiveness funding was made available to help small, disadvantaged communities.

One priority for the Agency during SFY17 was to find ways to leverage our State Revolving Fund loan and grant programs to address some of the state's most significant water quality challenges. Through the WPCLF program, more than $13 million in principal forgiveness funding was made available to homeowners through local health departments to help repair or replace failing home sewage treatment systems.

Ohio EPA revised its WPCLF financing terms to provide communities more flexibility to possibly extend and tailor their loan repayments to better match the useful life of the wastewater facilities they construct. Ohio EPA has committed to provide $300 million in WPCLF loan funding over the next three years at zero percent interest to help communities address aging and failing storm water and sewer infrastructure.

Blueprint to Prosperity Water Line Initiative

Ohio EPA worked with Trumbull County Sanitary Engineers, Trumbull County Commissioners and the Village of West Farmington to develop a regional solution to several drinking water-related issues in the Trumbull County area. West Farmington's small surface water treatment plant struggled to meet drinking water standards for disinfection byproducts (DBPs) and Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs). Additionally, the village was not able to find a certified drinking water operator to oversee the operations of the water plant. Nearby, Southington was in need of safe and reliable quantities of drinking water and the area of Braceville also had difficulty meeting DBP standards.

The estimated $12 million project, expected to be complete in 2019, will eliminate the surface water treatment plant, deal with water quality issues and provide needed water to the Southington area. The Agency is offering 75 percent principal forgiveness for this regional project that will ultimately provide safe and reliable drinking water to the area.

Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP)

The WRRSP uses interest monies from WPCLF loan sponsor projects to fund preservation and restoration projects. As of 2016, more than $141 million has been awarded for 125 projects in 69 Ohio watershed areas, protecting and preserving some of Ohio's highest water quality resources. During SFY17, Ohio EPA awarded funds to seven WRRSP projects totaling more than $12.6 million.