



Ottawa River Habitat Restoration

Through the Maumee RAP, many partners including governmental agencies, businesses, and the public have worked to improve the water quality of the Ottawa River. Where the river runs through industrial areas, the most significant environmental issue is sediment contaminated with PCBs, PAHs, and heavy metals. Many partners are focusing on remediating those sediments. The lower portion of the Ottawa River in Toledo and Washington Township is a low-gradient stream with historical marshy areas along its banks. Parts of this lower river have been channelized or relocated over the years and many wetlands filled in. A new project, funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, aims to restore environmental habitat and riparian wetlands.

The first step is identification of areas that have a potential for good habitat restoration. A project team for the Ottawa River Habitat Restoration Inventory met for the first time in January to begin work. The team's mission is to identify three sites with good potential for wetland restoration. To identify areas with the best potential, team members will evaluate the ultimate ecological value of a site and habitat function especially in terms of connecting habitat areas to establish corridors.

Maumee Bay State Park Shoreline and Wetland Restoration Plan

A TMACOG project team recently evaluated proposals for developing a restoration plan for the shoreline and wetlands near Maumee Bay State Park beaches. Hull & Associates was the firm selected. After confirmation of contract details, the firm will develop a plan to restore shoreline habitat, and incorporate treatment wetlands that would capture bacteria before it reaches the lake and its beaches. The design plan will be complete by September, 2007.

ODOT Plans Public Meeting

The Ohio Department of Transportation has scheduled a public meeting for Wednesday, February 21, 4-7 p.m. at the Springfield Township Hall, 7617 Angola Rd., in Holland. The topic is future improvements to I-475/US23. This is an open house meeting with a brief presentation from the study team at 6 p.m.

On the Move: Public Meetings in March

After two years of research, analysis, and evaluation, the "On the Move: 2007-2035 Transportation Plan" task force is ready to present the draft transportation plan for public comment. There will be a series of public meetings and comment opportunities around the region the first two weeks of March.

The first public meeting is March 2, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Sky Bank Room of the downtown Toledo-Lucas County Public Library. The current draft plan is posted on the TMACOG website where additional meetings will also be announced. See "On the Move" on the homepage of www.tmacog.org for updated information.

I-75/I-475 Upgrades in West Toledo Presented at Public Hearing

At a public hearing December 6, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) received comments on the design alternative for highway upgrades. Improvements to the I-75/I-475 interchanges have attracted a lot of concern particularly in the west Toledo neighborhoods that will be affected by the changes. However, improvements to the system are necessary. Crash rates in the area are above statewide averages, and traffic is expected to increase by 52 percent in the next 20 years. The current alignment includes many elements considered unsafe and awkward, such as incomplete interchanges and left-hand entrances and exits.

The first phase of the improvements, which will begin in 2008, will be changes to the Auburn and Central Avenue bridges. The interchange at Upton, Oatis, and Central will be improved, and the ramps from I-475 to I-75 North will be widened to two lanes in 2010. The I-475 exit at Jackman will be eliminated for safety reasons; it is too close to I-75, causing drivers to merge across several lanes of traffic in a short distance. The I-75 improvements will follow in Phase 2 in 2014.

To see the complete plan including comprehensive maps, go to www.improvingyourride.



Lucas County Zoning Information Now Online

The Lucas County Auditor's Real Estate Information System (AREIS) now includes zoning data coverage. The Lucas County Auditor's office coordinated zoning data from 13 agencies to create one overall zoning layer. This new feature will display specific zoning codes for each property, and will enable the user to view a document detailing the uses for each code. The AREIS site includes information about more than 200,000 parcels. Steve Serchuk, chair of the Toledo-Lucas County Plan Commissions said, "Access to zoning information is vital to developers, homeowners, business persons and real estate firms looking to purchase, sell, develop, or invest in our community." He added, "having this information online will be an important development tool."

The county auditor's office coordinated with the Toledo-Lucas County Plan Commission, the villages of Berkey, Holland, Harbor View, Ottawa Hills, Swanton, Waterville, and Whitehouse; the cities of Maumee, Oregon, Toledo and Sylvania; and Sylvania Township to create the zoning layer. The AREIS site can be found at: <http://co.lucas.oh.us/AREIS>.

Get Onboard "Trip Chaining"

You might be surprised what you can save by combining errands into a single car trip. You can guess that you save time, but you also save gasoline, reduce traffic congestion, and cause a lot less air pollution.

A cold car, one that's been sitting for more than an hour, pollutes about five times more than a car with a warm engine. For example, starting a five-mile trip when the engine is cold generates about 17 percent more nitrogen oxides and 50 percent more volatile organic compounds than the same trip when the car is started warm.

Here are some trip-chaining facts to consider:

- Family and personal business—including shopping, going to the gym, picking up and dropping off kids—account for about 45 percent of all automobile trips.
- Combining three separate short trips into one trip every week could eliminate about 200 miles on your vehicle, and save 10 hours and 10 gallons of gas every year.

People are getting the word. Between 1995 and 2001, there was a 21 percent increase in the number of commuters who trip chained in the home-to-work direction and a 12 percent increase in commuters who trip chained in both directions. A little planning will pay off for the environment and give you more time at home and less on the road.

Statistics supplied by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Highway Administration. See www.italladdsup.gov.

Mark Your Calendar

Thursday, February 15, 4- 6 p.m.

TMACOG offices, 300 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive
Leadership Orientation

Saturday, March 17, 8:30 a.m.- noon

Owens Community College

Professional Development Day

New TMACOG Members

In January, the Oregon Economic Development Foundation became a new member and the Lake Local School District also rejoined TMACOG.