

Strategic Plan 2011-2020

Grand Lake St. Marys Restoration Commission

A Regional Initiative for the renewal and sustainability
of Grand Lake St. Marys

Our Mission is to serve as a regional agent, fostering the cooperation, planning, and resources required for the restoration and sustainability of Grand Lake St. Marys, and the benefits it brings environmentally, economically, and recreationally to the West-Central Ohio Region.

Members of the GLSM Restoration Commission 2009-2010

Auglaize County Commissioners
Celina Chamber of Commerce
City of Celina
City of St. Marys
Grand Lake St. Mary's State Parks – ODNR
Grand Lake Wabash Watershed Alliance
Lake Development Corporation
Lake Improvement Association
Mercer County Civic Foundation
Mercer County Commissioners
St. Marys Chamber of Commerce
St. Marys Civic Foundation
Wright State University

EXCERPT: Forward

The Call for Regional Cooperation

The science is clear. There is no doubt. Grand Lake St. Marys is in a state of environmental crisis.

It is not a disaster born out of natural causes, such as an earthquake or volcano. It is a crisis resulting from human actions; actions that unintentionally altered the lake's ecosystem and are now threatening its long-term existence.

What is the main cause of the environmental crisis? Numerous studies document three root causes: 1) phosphorus-charged sediment entering the lake from the watershed streams; 2) manure discharges also entering from watershed streams; and 3) phosphorus laded sediment beds building up at the bottom of the lake.

Fortunately, it is not too late to reverse the crisis. Science and technology offer proven strategies for the renewal and sustainability of the lake's ecosystem.

Unfortunately, for these strategies to succeed, additional safety precautions must be practiced in managing livestock, controlling runoff, and reducing nonpoint-source phosphorus loading. In addition, accountable, safety enforcement of these strategies is problematic for there is more than one entity responsible for the outcome.

The pollution flowing into the lake comes from over 59,000 acres of farmland and hundreds of nonpoint-sources located in the Grand Lake St. Marys Watershed – an area of 72,000 acres (or 112 square miles) spanning two major cities, four villages, and nine townships located in Auglaize and Mercer Counties.

As a result, stewardship and governance of the lake's watershed calls for the **regional cooperation** – the working together of all municipalities in establishing and enforcing ecologically-based land management practices.

In the past, regional support was missing, which mitigated or canceled the effects of previous environmental interventions. That is one reason why community leaders and volunteers came together in 2009 to form the Grand Lake St. Marys Restoration Commission. As a pioneering initiative, the commission is dedicated to fostering the regional cooperation and resources needed for the environmental renewal and sustainability to the lake.

Initially our efforts were focused on identifying the proven scientific strategies and technological solutions for solving the environmental crisis. The next step involved putting these strategies and solutions into the enclosed action plan. Our future steps, the most challenging yet, require raising the financial support and regional cooperation for implementing the strategies and solution of this plan.

In order to succeed, we are asking **everyone** to do their part.
For:

- Landowners – both residential and rural – to choose fertilizers and pesticides without phosphorous
- Farmers to incorporate environmental precautions in livestock management
- Teachers to help our children understand the science of environmental sustainability
- Volunteers to be spokes-persons and to help with fund raising
- Government officials to stand up for what is right in the long-term
- Citizens to vote for legislation that will fund long-term environmental sustainability

And ultimately, we are asking community leaders to expand their local identity and embrace a regional mindset; a mindset that can bring the necessary courage for addressing big issues and creating meaningful change in West-Central Ohio.

We know this is a tall order. But we also know that we no longer have a choice. The future of Grand Lake St. Marys hangs in the balance, along with the economic sustainability she has provided to the region for decades.

Our strategic plan is not a “silver bullet,” nor a short-term fix for saving the lake. Rather, it addresses the big picture for the long-term.

Many small steps are required. Patience and perseverance are also essential. But with regional cooperation, environmental renewal is possible. And by working together, the benefits of regional growth – economically and recreationally – will be our reward.

Please join us. Let us work together to bring the greatness of our grand lake back again. Let us leave a legacy of environmental renewal and sustainability for our children and the generations to come.

–The Grand Lake Restoration Commission, 2010

WRITING SAMPLE: SOPHIAJOHN *Writes*
2011-2020 Strategic Plan GLSM RC (endorsed by Governor Kasich)
Excerpt from Forward

