**Ohio EPA Response to Comments**
**Draft Biological and Water Quality Report – Lake Erie Central Basin Tributaries**
**November 2020**

The Draft Lake Erie Central Basin Tributaries Biological and Water Quality Report was made available for stakeholder review and comment from September 11, 2020 to October 12, 2020. The Agency received comments from Midwest Biodiversity Institute (MBI).

**Overall/General Comments**

**Comment 1:** **Attainment Table 1 footnote "f" (page 8):**

**The footnote concerning sediment contamination directs readers to Table 15 but should include both sediment Tables 15 (metals) and 16 (organics).**

Response 1: Ohio EPA has made this correction.

**Comment 2:** **Sediment Table 15 (page 84) and Table 16 (page 89):**

**The initial Table numbers are labeled correctly as 15 and 16 but the 2nd pages of each say Tables 14 and 15, respectively. Table numbers should be corrected in each.**

Response 2: Ohio EPA has made this correction.

**Comment 3:** **Page 24, 4th paragraph re: Land use in Conneaut Creek:**

**Only 37 of the roughly 187 sq. miles of the watershed are located in Ohio. Given the exceptional quality of Conneaut Creek and the fact that biological communities, particularly macroinvertebrates, are among the best in the state, it seems some discussion should be made of land use characteristics and condition in the Pennsylvania watershed. During historical Conneaut Creek sampling, particularly near the Ohio/Pennsylvania state line, it is recalled that the almost complete absence of substrate embeddedness was unique compared to all other Ohio streams samples. This phenomenon would be related to conditions in the upper portion of the watershed but was not addressed because of the state boundary.**

Response 3: Ohio EPA has completed a GIS land use analysis for the portion of the watershed that lies in Pennsylvania and added discussion.

**Comment 4:** **Page 25, Lorain County discussion, 3rd sentence:**

**Macroinvertebrates are described as being "in attainment of WWH" but ALU attainment should only apply to the quality of both fish and macroinvertebrate communities. Perhaps the text should be changed to sites "met" or "exceeded" the ecoregional biocriteria instead of "attain".**

Response 4: Ohio EPA has modified this verbiage.

**Comment 5:** **Page 35, 2nd Paragraph re: Conneaut Creek:**

**We agree that the numbers of EPT and Sensitive Macroinvertebrate Taxa are exceptionally high throughout Conneaut Creek and among the highest, if not the highest, in the state. Is it possible to rank EPT, sensitive taxa, or total taxa richness at these sites compared to other Ohio EPA statewide collections? Also, regarding potential positive influences listed for the watershed, see comments above (Page 24, 4th paragraph re: Land use in Conneaut Creek) regarding substrate embeddedness and land use in the Pennsylvania portion of the watershed.**

Response 5: Ohio EPA is investigating the inclusion of these indicators in future reports. The land use in Pennsylvania has been included.

**Comment 6:** **Appendix. Re: Macroinvertebrate site taxa lists:**

**Some taxa lists, particularly from extremely diverse streams such as Conneaut Creek, are not in taxa code or phylogenetic order. As a result, species from large taxonomic groups such as mayflies and caddisflies are often scattered across several pages. Sorting these lists by species code would be helpful. Including summary statistics of EPT, Sensitive, Coldwater and Total Taxa, particularly for the qualitative sample, would also be beneficial.**

Response 6: Ohio EPA has updated the appendix.

**End of Response to Comments**