The Western Lake Huron Basin (WLHB) Watershed Reconnaissance Study

Saginaw Bay Watershed Conference
June 12, 2014
What We’ll Cover

- Overview of the WLHB Watershed Reconnaissance Study
  - Purpose
  - Study tasks and report contents
- How the process worked
- Projects and outcomes
WLHB Project Area

- 15 coastal counties
- Saginaw River/Bay AOC
- St. Marys River AOC
- Heavily forested
- Sparsely populated
WLHB Watershed Reconnaissance Study Purpose

- Create a “wish list” of water resources projects that would fix identified problems
- Determine interest (opportunities) in proceeding to Feasibility Studies with non-federal cost-share partners
Identified water resource problems;
Federal Interest Determination (FID)
Assess the level of interest and support from non-Federal entities; i.e. identify willing partners
Prepare Project Management Plan (PMP) and Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement (FCSA) if above is established
WLHB Watershed Recon Study Development

- General identification of watershed-scale problems/stakeholders/proposed projects
- Identify opportunities for multiple benefits
- Outline tasks for Feasibility Studies
- Estimated schedule of Feasibility Studies
- Project interest slowly picking up again.
What the Corps Needs to Conduct Water Resources Studies

- Authorization
- Appropriation
- Cost-share partner(s)
Authorization

- Legislation that enables an agency to perform a specific task (i.e. grants permission)
- Can be project-specific or a regional or national program
- May have limits on funding and cost-sharing, as well as schedule
Authorization for WLHB Study

Section 102 - 1966 River and Harbor Act

“Sec. 102 – The Secretary of the Army is hereby authorized and directed to cause (develop) surveys (studies) to be made at the following localities, and subject to all applicable provisions of Section 110 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1950:

Great Lakes, particularly Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, in connection with water supply, pollution abatement, navigation, flood control, hydroelectric power, and related water resources development and control.”
Appropriation

- Legislation that directs the levels of funds available to an agency for a fiscal year
- ~$500K was appropriated (GLRI funds) to develop the WLEB Reconnaissance Study
Appropriation Sources to Support Corps Participation

- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
  - through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
  - appropriations for fiscal year 2010 and 2011

- Great Lakes Fisheries and Ecosystem Restoration (GLFER)

- Energy and Water Appropriation Funds
Non-Federal Cost-Share Partners

- States
- Local governments
- Indian tribes
- Non-profit organizations (Sections 1135, 206, 204)
Non-Federal Sponsors Must Be Able To:

- Generate Revenue
- Acquire Real Estate
- Save and Hold the Government Harmless (from damages)
- Maintain Constructed Project with 100% local funds
Work Must Fit One of the Corps “Mission” Areas:

- Flood Risk (Damage) Reduction;
- Navigation;
- Storm Damage Reduction & Streambank Protection;
- Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration/Invasive Species;
- Hydropower
- Shoreline Protection/Beach Nourishment
Potential Projects

- Potential projects identified in the WLHB Study include those related to:
  - Navigation
  - Flood Damage Reduction
  - Ecosystem Restoration
  - Shoreline or Streambank Protection
  - Water Quality Enhancement
  - Local Action Plans (i.e. Rain Barrels, Rain Gardens, Ordinance Changes, etc.)
The watershed boundary, shown by the solid line, was determined by using all rivers, creeks, drains, and intermittent streams of the watershed.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census TIGER Line Files
WLHB Watershed Identified Projects

The projects listed below have been identified as potential project sites within and near the Saginaw Bay subwatershed:

- **Rifle River** Watershed Restoration, Arenac and Ogemaw Counties
- **Saganing River/Creek** Watershed (Arenac County) Ecosystem Restoration
- **Kawkawlin River** Watershed, Bay, Midland, and Gladwin Counties
- **Downtown Caseville** Ecosystem Restoration Project
- **Spaulding Drain** (Ambrose Road) Ecosystem Restoration, Saginaw County
Saginaw Bay (WLHB) Potential (Future) Projects

- Potential Future Projects Could Include:
  - Navigation improvements;
  - Flood Damage Reduction
  - Ecosystem Restoration
  - Shoreline or Streambank Protection
  - Water Quality Enhancement (non-Corps)
Saginaw Bay (WLHB) Potential (Future) Projects

- **Ongoing Improvements:**
  - Working with Dow and Saginaw County to continue remediating dioxins in Saginaw River and tributaries;
  - Continue assisting in addressing beach muck issues @ BC-SRA;
  - Feasibility study for deepening of the Saginaw River to improve commerce & allow cruise-ship access.
The Corps is always open to:

….investigating ongoing water resources problems;

….collaborating with local partners to identify innovative and low-cost remedies;

….partnering with other Federal agencies to combine resources for solving large problems.
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Questions?

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