

## **Great Lakes Dredging Team Held Its Annual Meeting in Erie, PA: A Collaborative Effort Among USACE Great Lakes Districts (Buffalo, Detroit, and Chicago and ERDC Environmental Laboratory Researchers**

*Impact Statement: The Great Lakes Dredging Team (GLDT) Annual Meeting hosted by the USACE Buffalo District (LRB) drew a record number of attendees in Erie, PA. ERDC Environmental Laboratory (EL) researchers together with USACE HQ provided leadership, presentations, and participation in a “PFAS (Pre- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances) and Dredged Material Management” roundtable discussion. The meeting provided a great opportunity to speak openly with partners and stakeholders to find common solutions for dredged material management challenges across the Great Lakes region.*

Over 100 people participated in the 2024 Great Lakes Dredging Team (GLDT) Annual Meeting, with approximately 90 people in-person (Figure 1) (nearly 2 times the historical average of in-person meeting attendance). Participants included representatives from USACE (HQ, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division [LRD], USACE Districts Buffalo [LRB], Detroit [LRE], Chicago [LRC], and ERDC), the 8 Great Lakes States (IL, IN, MI, MN, NY, OH, PA, WI), the Great Lakes Commission, other federal agencies (US Environmental Protection Agency [USEPA], US Geological Survey [USGS], US Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS]), industry (shippers, dredgers, etc.), and Port Authorities. The GLDT provides a forum for the exchange of information regarding best practices, lessons learned, innovative solutions, and sustainable approaches to dredging and dredge material management throughout the Great Lakes region. (<https://www.lrd.usace.army.mil/Water-Information/Navigation/Great-Lakes-Dredging-Team/>)



Figure 1. Approximately 90 people attended the GLDT meeting at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in Presque Isle State Park, Erie, PA.

The first day provided an opportunity for each of the federal and state agencies to provide an update regarding their sediment management issues and projects (one example in Figure 2).



Figure 2. Scott Cieniawski, USEPA Great Lakes National Program Office, explains the opportunity for beneficially using dredged material for remediation and restoration of Great Lakes Areas of Concern.

Day one concluded with a 3.5 hour “PFAS and Dredged Material Management” roundtable discussion, facilitated by Dr. Karen Keil (ERDC Environmental Laboratory ([ERDC-EL])). Dr. David Moore (ERDC-EL) presented a scientific perspective on the topic (Figure 3) and presentations were also provided by USACE HQ (Nicole Toth), other federal agencies (USGS, USEPA), and representative from the 8 Great Lakes States (Michigan presenting in Figure 4). A wide variety of approaches to, and concerns regarding, the potential implications of PFAS in sediment (and dredged material) was evident from the state and federal agency presentations, generating a spirited discussion on this critical topic and establishing the need for ongoing dialogue.





Figure 3. Dr. David Moore, ERDC-EL, presenting on-going PFAS research as part of the Advanced Materials and Substances of Emerging Environmental Concern (AMSEEC) Program.



Figure 4. Mr. Lee Schoen (Michigan Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy Department) explaining Michigan's PFAS Action Response Team (MPART) efforts in their state.

The second day of the meeting included presentations from the Great Lakes Navigation System Program Manager (Nick Zagar, LRE) on maintenance budgets and forecasts, a USACE HQ

presentation (Dr. Katie Brutsche) promoting Beneficial Use of Dredged Material (BUDM), and an update on the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study by Madalyn Hensel (LRC) which involves a collaborative effort among the USACE Great Lakes Districts (LRC, LRE, LRB), ERDC, 8 Great Lakes States, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), USGS, and Tribal Nations in the Great Lakes. Two presentations on recent research tasks in the Great Lakes were also provided: Jim Selegean, Regional Technical Specialist (LRE) presented “Long Term Evaluation of Turbidity and Sediment Transport at the Fairport Harbor Nearshore Placement Site”, representing a USACE Dredging Operations and Environmental Research (DOER) Program research task co-authored with Jonathan Waddell (LRE), ERDC Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory (ERDC-CHL) colleagues Doug Krafft and Brian McFall, along with ERDC-EL colleagues Karen Keil and Brett Hayhurst. Jennifer Miller (ERDC-EL) and Scott Pickard (LRB) presented “Documenting the Environmental Improvements in Sediment Quality Due to Navigational Dredging in the Great Lakes”, a USACE Regional Sediment Management (RSM) study coauthored with Karen Keil (ERDC-EL), Dr. Richard Saichek (LRC), and Jason Miller (LRE).

The second day of the meeting concluded with a field trip to the nearby Conneaut Creek Dredge Reclamation Facility, an upland facility constructed to process clean sediments dredged from Conneaut Harbor for beneficial use (Figure 5). Alternative plans for Conneaut dredged material management were presented by Josh Unghire (LRB Regional Technical Specialist), including conceptual plans for beneficial use of dredged material to improve habitat along Ohio’s Lake Erie shoreline (Figure 6).



Figure 5. Conneaut Creek Dredge Reclamation Facility.



Figure 6. Josh Unghire (LRB) presents concepts for nearshore habitat creation. Adam Hamm (LRB Chief of Operations and meeting host) is at the podium.

Dr. Karen Keil, Dr. Jen Miller, and Mr. Jim Luke (all of ERDC-EL) have been providing leadership to the GLDT, along with State co-chairs Dan Breneman (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency), Dr. Scudder Mackey (Ohio Department of Natural Resources), and Mr. Jim Killian (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource). The three ERDC-EL personnel were recognized for their many years of leadership service to the GLDT (Figure 7), as they will be transitioning their leadership roles to USACE Great Lakes District (LRB, LRC, and LRE) team mates. Dr. Jen Miller will continue to represent ERDC on the GLDT organizing committee.





Figure 7. The outgoing GLDT leadership team is recognized for their contributions to the team. From left: Jim Luke (ERDC-EL), Dr. Scudder Mackay (Ohio Department of Natural Resources, retired), Dr. Karen Keil (ERDC-EL), and Dr. Jen Miller (ERDC-EL)

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