

COALITION TAKES ON ANOTHER FOCUS

Winter 2002, Vol. 8 No. 1

COASTAL MANAGEMENT CONCERNS BECOME AN ISSUE

For many years the only issue that concerned the Coalition was water levels in the Great Lakes because 30 years of a high water regime generated so much devastation. While this is still a strong focus, sand supply was added as the organization matured and our experts gained more knowledge on how to protect coastal properties.

Now the aspect of State Governments, further trying to protect shoreline property owners from *their own poor judgement*, makes it imperative to add another focus.

At a special meeting recently, The Directors of the Great Lakes Coalition voted unanimously to adopt a third focus. **Coastal Management Issues** will now become a central concern of the members.

A revue of the Coastal Zone Management Act reveals that it is intended to encourage individual States to exercise more ruthless controls. It is now 30 years since the act became law, and, even though big government moves slowly, the controls are gaining momentum.

Some language used in the Act is frightening and outlined here for perspective so that our readers may better understand why Coalition leadership is concerned.

- "Attaining increased opportunities for public access"
- "Coasts are extremely vulnerable to destruction by man's alterations"
- "Define what shall constitute permissible land and water uses within a specific coastal zone"
- "Special natural and scenic characteristics are being damaged by ill-planned development that threatens these values"
- "Identify means by which the State proposes to exert control over land and water uses"
- "The act is intended to encourage the States to exercise their full authority over lands and waters in the coastal zones"
- "Procedures to assess, consider, and control cumulative and secondary impacts of coastal growth and development, including the collective effect of various individual uses or activities on coastal resources"

In exercising their authority, the States usually restrict and limit the use of private property to the point where its value is decreased or use becomes impractical. For details in Ohio, please click on the Ohio Lake Front Group link at www.GLC.org.

Increasingly, coastal management decisions are becoming more oppressive and are aimed at eliminating development in high-hazard areas and managing development in other hazardous coastal areas.

The Great Lakes Coalition is committed to aggressively resist any attempt to enforce unreasonable control that threatens the full use of private property.

At his writing, all States within the Great Lakes basin except Illinois and Indiana have embraced the principles put forth by the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Illinois is so metropolitan and Indiana with its short coastline, probably do not think that they fit the pattern of the other Great Lakes States.

This emerging control deals with community planning and zoning which always comes down to "damned if you do and damned if you don't".

Carl Anderson, our resident expert on zoning, tells us that property owners want to do anything they desire with their own property, but no one wants a junk yard next door. It is sometimes difficult to be objective though.

The Coastal Zone Management Act is here to stay and after serious discussions, Coalition leadership has concluded that any effort to amend it would be delusional. Therefore, its potential threat to members is now considered on going and long term. Organization plans for monitoring and action are now in

process.

ENVIRONMENTALISTS TEND TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT CONTROLS

It is important to look at the big picture and there we see our members as a distinct minority. Environmentalists, who are in the majority, say there should be few or no limitations on the Government's ability to prevent destruction of land, water, wetlands, and wild life.

Usually, the Coalition runs on a similar track with environmentalists because of our love of nature. However it has to understand the paranoia emanating from this large segment of our society and must behave accordingly when extreme behavior is encountered.

"The system of State control of the coastal zone works reasonably well provided the bureaucracy is sensitive to concerns that result", according to Congressman Vern Ehlers, moderate Republican. This is not the usual case though, so we like the statement made some time ago by Representative Peter Hoekstra, R MI when he said "If we're doing something for the greater good, then the greater good ought to be able to pay the individual who is losing value."

CONCERNS WITH PROPOSED UPPER GREAT LAKES STUDY

The Coalition has serious concerns about the effectiveness of the proposed study of the Upper Great Lakes because neither inflow to Lake Superior at Long Lac and Ogoki nor the outlet from Lake Erie at the Niagara River are included.

We were shocked at the unresponsive attitude displayed by the Governments during several public hearings. Our verbal and written comments are being ignored and stonewalled since we took exception to important features of the plan of study.

It is true that the Coalition is less than pleased with the limitations on Superior outflow applied by the orders of approval enacted in 1977. However, the proposed study will cost \$20,000,000.00 and take 6 years to complete which is too much investment for the meager return of a better control between Lake Superior and Lake Michigan / Huron.

Without examining the outflow from all of the upper Great Lakes at the outlet of Lake Erie no real gain can be accomplished. Thus, the plan of study is doomed to be an exercise in futility similar to the infamous "levels reference study" completed in 1993.

SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF EFFECT OF NIAGARA STRUCTURES REQUESTED

The Coalition is skeptical when we hear that there are no flow controls at Niagara or that the effect upon the levels of the upper Great Lakes is negligible. The Long Lac, Ogoki inflows are not as significant, but we do believe that they must be considered for a complete examination of the system.

Therefore, the Coalition has requested a quantitative scientific analysis of the effect on the levels of the upper Great Lakes of **the structures at Long Lac, Ogoki, the International Control Dam, the Buckhorn Dikes with and without the sinking of the barge during winter, the Moses Saunders Intake Gates, the Chippewa Grass Island Pool, the Welland Canal, and the Black Rock Canal at Niagara.**

One does not understand how fluctuations of the levels of Lake Superior, Lake Michigan/Huron, and Lake Erie can be intelligently studied without including the above named structures and their full control capabilities in the study. Without a scientific analysis, there will always be a doubt in many minds about certain interests benefiting at the expense of others.

PEAKING AND PONDING IN ST. MARYS RIVER EXAMINED

Peaking and ponding operations are carried out by Edison Sault Electric Co. And Great Lakes Power, Ltd. to store water during times of off peak demand and to increase power generation during peak demand.

Navigational and environmental inquiries have caused the International Joint Commission to conduct public hearings in late January.

Control plan 1977-A does not authorize peaking and ponding operations, but the I J C has nevertheless allowed the power firms to continue until March 20, 2002.

Coalition Technical Director John Boyd opines that this practice should not change the 24 hour flow if done honestly.

NOVEL RETAINING WALL NOW AVAILABLE

Earth Anchor is an attractive, low cost wall system designed for difficult to reach areas that are under the threat of erosion or in need of retention. The patented lightweight interlocking 30 pound polyethylene block design makes installation quick and easy. No heavy equipment or road access to the site is necessary.

Earth Anchor is a system of reinforced, interlocking 3' x 2' x 2' "L" shaped polyethylene blocks that can be put together in a variety of patterns to conform to any terrain. The light weight blocks, once arranged and secured to the foundation, are filled with concrete creating a permanent structure.

Relative cost is 30% of stone construction and 50% of a gabion system.

It is mentioned here as a service to readers which does not mean that it is endorsed by the Coalition.

For more information, visit the Coalition web site at www.GLC.org or call 814 836 8700 in Erie, PA.

DAMAGE POTENTIAL STUDY RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT SAND SUPPLY

Many coastal geologists and engineers suffer from two maladies. They tend to ignore the effect of Federal navigation structures built perpendicular to the shoreline and bluff erosion is deemed the most important sediment source to the littoral system. These two faults are deeply ingrained in their writings and thoughts.

With this in mind, the Corps of Engineers is now reporting that the rivers and fillets are full. Is this a way to escape the responsibilities of the section 111 calculation?

The discovery research by attorney John Ehret reveals the fact that the mouths of all 15 rivers on the east coast of Lake Michigan were originally encroached upon by sediment [sand] that forced them to deliver it bedlong along the shore either north or south within the littoral zone. It was then forever trapped between the depth of closure and the shore.

The 15 pairs of Government piers eviscerate this natural system which creates a problem. The greatest source of sediment input to the beaches should be the rivers and not bluff erosion.

If the rivers and pier fillets are now full as determined by the Corps of Engineers, and the sand supply from the rivers is diverted by the piers straight out beyond the point of no return, it is forever lost to the beaches, dunes, and bluffs.

OHIO/LAKE ERIE CHAPTER LEADERSHIP CHANGED

Keith and Phyllis Rader decided to move south away from the Great Lakes and have thus withdrawn from leadership of the Ohio/Lake Erie Chapter. The Raders grew the chapter into a viable group and initiated Coalition emphasis on management issues in coastal zones.

We wish them well in North Carolina. Before they left, they introduced us to Homer Taft who is the new President of the chapter.

Mr. Taft has practiced law for 25 years and now manages a manufacturing plant in Cleveland. As a result of his long time legal work, he is well connected with the shakers and movers in Ohio.

More importantly, he brings an exceptional knowledge of how both Federal and State politics work and enthusiasm and energy to go with it.

IN CONCLUSION

There is so much activity as of this writing that affects our properties that it challenges our list of priorities constantly. There just is no time for apathy where coastal property on the Great Lakes is concerned. Increasing membership provides confirming evidence .

The items discussed in this issue of the NEWSLETTER only begin to scratch the surface of events that are occurring in our world. Fortunately, the cream of our membership is effectively emerging at this point in time when so many challenges are coming over the horizon.

The quality of the membership that is now appearing is one of our strongest attributes. This indeed makes the writer's job much easier.

Bill Andresen
Chairman