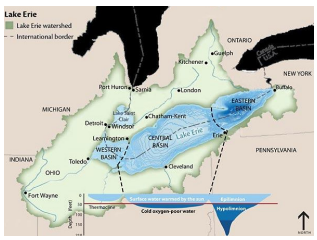
Blue Accounting ErieStat

TRACKING PROGRESS TOWARD A HEALTHIER LAKE ERIE

www.blueaccounting.org

PHOSPHORUS AND ITS IMPACT

Phosphorus and other nutrients enter Lake Erie through a range of sources, such as wastewater treatment plants and runoff from agricultural fields. In large amounts, phosphorus can fuel **harmful algal blooms** and contribute to low-oxygen "dead zones" and growth of cladophora, another type of nuisance algae. In the late 1990s excess nutrients began to negatively impact Lake Erie after a period of significant improvement in water quality throughout the 1980s. Today, poor Lake Erie water quality threatens drinking water for **11 million people,** impacts tourism, and alters the lake ecosystem. Algal blooms will cost the Lake Erie economy $272 million a year over a 30-year period if not addressed, according to a 2019 study from Environment and Climate Change Canada.



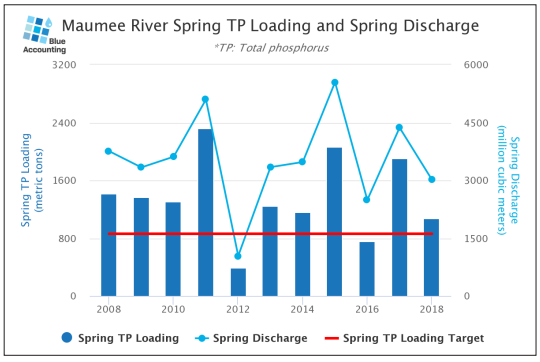
Lake Erie watershed boundary.

A BINATIONAL COMMITMENT

In 2016, the federal governments of Canada and the United States—along with the states of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania and province of Ontario—adopted a goal to reduce phosphorus loadings in the lake's western and central basins by 40 percent. This shared goal provides a foundation for coordinating binational actions to manage nutrients in Lake Erie, including phosphorus. Work continues to set reduction targets for the eastern basin, which also affects the state of New York. Achieving a 40 percent reduction requires a collaborative effort across five states, one province, two countries, and dozens of public and private stakeholders—**and a system to track progress toward this ambitious goal.**

TRACKING PROGRESS AND MEASURING SUCCESS

Through the Blue Accounting process, ErieStat tracks progress toward the shared 40 percent phosphorus reduction goal. In 2017, the ErieStat workgroup established a suite of water quality metrics to measure progress in select Lake Erie tributaries. In 2018, the ErieStat website was launched to provide information on current phosphorus levels in major tributaries and share government strategies for achieving needed reductions. ErieStat continues to track investments in each individual strategy, as well as develop additional metrics to track collective progress on the land and in the lake. This curated data will inform the public and allow decision-makers to evaluate the impact of current and potential strategies and investments—and ensure a safe and sustainable future for Lake Erie.



Maumee River spring loads of total phosphorus, available on Blue Accounting's ErieStat.

LEARN MORE

For more information on Blue Accounting's ErieStat, please contact Nicole Zacharda, Program Manager at the Great Lakes Commission, at **nzacharda@glc.org.**

If you are interested in learning more about other Blue Accounting projects, please visit **www.blueaccounting.org.**

WHO'S INVOLVED

State and Provincial Indiana Dept. of Agriculture • Indiana Dept. of Environmental Quality • Michigan Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy • Michigan Dept. of Agriculture and Rural Development • Ohio Environmental Protection Agency • Ohio Department of Agriculture • Ohio Lake Erie Commission • Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks • Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs • Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry **Federal** U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • U.S. Department of Agriculture • U.S. Geological Survey • National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration • Environment and Climate Change Canada • Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Great Lakes Commission des Grands Lacs

The Great Lakes Commission convenes Blue Accounting for the Great Lakes Basin, in partnership with federal, state, provincial, local and private sector organizations. Blue Accounting was initially co-led with The Nature Conservancy and receives funding support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, and the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation.

BLUE ACCOUNTING AND THE GREAT LAKES

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH FOR A COMPLEX SYSTEM

The Great Lakes provide **DRINKING WATER FOR 48 MILLION PEOPLE**, fuel a **$5 TRILLION REGIONAL ECONOMY**, and create **AN INVALUABLE SENSE OF HOME AND COMMUNITY** for the basin via their scenic beauty and recreation.

The government agencies of **TWO COUNTRIES, EIGHT STATES, TWO PROVINCES, AND 249 COUNTIES**, as well as hundreds of NGOs and private businesses, make decisions that affect the lakes. **WE MUST WORK TOGETHER TO SUCCEED.**

Blue Accounting

Blue Accounting, an initiative supported by an online information platform, provides decision-makers with a big picture view of critical Great Lakes issues.

Initially, Blue Accounting is supporting five complex issues:

- AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES
- SOURCE WATER
- PHOSPHORUS CONTROL
- COASTAL WETLANDS
- MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

Working together, we can improve the decisions we make to ensure the Great Lakes will always be the backbone of our region, supplying fresh water and natural beauty and serving as a powerful economic engine.