

Sandusky Bay Initiative—Area 3 Project

Sandusky, Ohio



from top: Initial conditions—near shore wetland and aquatic vegetation; Leopard frog (*Rana pipiens*); American lotus (*Nelumbo lutea*)

Located along the south shore of Lake Erie, Sandusky Bay is a major commercial and recreational hub for northern Ohio. Over the years, however, its coastal wetlands and nearshore aquatic habitat have been degraded by high Lake Erie water levels, infrastructure construction, shoreline hardening, and changes in land use practices. In addition, the Sandusky River watershed has contributed substantial nutrient and sediment loads into the Bay, stimulating harmful algal blooms.

In launching the Sandusky Bay Initiative, the City of Sandusky, with the support of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), is taking a proactive leadership

A pilot project establishes a foundation for restoration techniques that will reverse years of wetland degradation in East Sandusky Bay while providing community and ecosystem services to this important Ohio destination.

role in restoring ecology and aquatic habitat in Sandusky Bay. The Initiative aims to transform the Bay ecosystem through the beneficial reuse of sediments to restore coastal wetlands in a way that enhances nutrient assimilation, improves fish and wildlife habitat, and reduces suspended sediment loads.

The Initiative begins with a series of pilot projects involving the design and eventual construction of nature-based/living shoreline and nearshore wetland enhancement projects to improve water quality and wildlife habitat. Biohabitats is developing conceptual plans and construction documents for the most ecologically diverse pilot site, the Putnam Marsh Nature Preserve located in East Sandusky Bay.

After conducting a baseline assessment and setting project

restoration goals and objectives, Biohabitats will prepare conceptual plans and construction documents. This includes preparation of a permit strategy, management and adaptive management plan, and cost estimates, and working with a wide variety of stakeholders.

The project aims to cost-effectively maximize ecosystem services and community benefits such as aesthetics, environmental learning, and recreational opportunities. Key indicators for fish and wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and water quality improvements will be identified, and used for monitoring, maintenance, and guidance of future Sandusky Bay Initiatives.

SERVICES

- Inventory & Assessments
- Design
- Permitting Strategy
- Management

conservation planning
ecological restoration
regenerative design



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