



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
GREAT LAKES NATIONAL PROGRAM OFFICE  
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

APR 20 2004

Kenneth S. Pearce, Chairperson  
Black River Remedial Action Plan Coordinating Committee  
9880 South Murray Ridge Road  
Elyria, Ohio 44035

Christopher Jones, Director  
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency  
P.O. Box 1049  
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049

Dear Messrs. Pearce and Jones:

It is with great pleasure that we accept the Black River Remedial Action Plan Coordinating Committee's application for a change in the status of the beneficial use impairment (BUI) for fish tumors and other deformities in the Black River watershed, one of the United States Great Lakes Areas of Concern. The Great Lakes National Program Office, in consultation with staff at the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, has reviewed the data provided on documented improvements in the health of the river's fish communities, and we approve the change in status for the fish tumors BUI to that of Recovery Stage. Please note that this BUI, while now designated as being in recovery stage, still exists, and we encourage continued monitoring to document measurable improvement in the health of the Black River.

This is a notable achievement illustrating that source control and contaminated sediment removal can indeed improve the health of impaired waters. I commend the Black River Coordinating Committee and OEPA staff for realizing this milestone. A lot of progress has been made in the past decade in the Black River watershed and I am confident that many more successes are to come. The committee's participation in this effort, as well as innovative, grassroots efforts such as piloting the Lake Erie Forum's watershed implementation project, clearly show how the efforts of a dedicated group of citizens in an AOC can have a positive effect on their watershed which will resonate throughout the Great Lakes Basin.

By copy of this correspondence, U.S.EPA hereby notifies the International Joint Commission of this change in status of the Black River AOC BUI for fish tumors and other deformities. Finally, as we celebrate this new status for the fish tumors BUI, we renew our pledge of continued assistance to the Black River AOC as it continues to progress to a formal delisting. Congratulations again on your achievement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Skinner".

Thomas V. Skinner  
Great Lakes Program Manager

cc: International Joint Commission