

Chapter 2

Introduction and Overview of the Plan

This chapter presents an overview of 208 planning, summarizes the original 208 Plans completed in 1979 and 1981, outlines goals, and provides an overview of the 2000 Plan.

I. Introduction

This document is the first major update to Northeast Ohio's 208 areawide water quality management plan (WQMP) in twenty years. It is the result of the labor of many local public officials from the region representing counties, municipalities, sewer agencies, county health agencies, planning departments, conservation agencies and representatives of Ohio EPA, ODNR and the Ohio Department of Health and local watershed groups who assisted staff from NEFCO and NOACA in formulating the proposals in this plan.

The plan focuses on water quality management problems in five river basins tributary to Lake Erie in Northeast Ohio. From west to east these are the Black River in Lorain and Medina counties, the Rocky River in Cuyahoga, Lorain, Medina and Summit Counties, the Cuyahoga River in Cuyahoga, Summit, Portage and Geauga Counties, the Chagrin River in Lake, Geauga, Cuyahoga and Portage Counties and the Grand River in Lake and Geauga Counties.

This plan is a collaboration between NOACA and NEFCO who share water quality management planning responsibilities in several of the watersheds. NOACA is the designated planning agency for the five counties of Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina. NEFCO is the designated planning agency for Summit and Portage Counties whose land area lies primarily in the Lake Erie basin, and Stark and Wayne Counties whose land area lies in the Ohio River basin. See Figure 2.1 for a depiction of the 208 Plan Study Area.

Both NOACA and NEFCO were designated by the Governor of Ohio under provisions of the federal Clean Water Act to perform the areawide planning required under Section 208 of that Act. NOACA was designated by the Governor of Ohio in 1975 pursuant to 33 U.S.C. Section 1288 (FWPCA Section 208), and NEFCO was similarly designated in 1979. These agencies were designated because they are organizations governed by Boards of local elected officials with regional planning responsibilities in a metropolitan area. NOACA is organized under the Ohio Revised Code pursuant to the joint powers of County Government at ORC 307.14 **et seq.** NEFCO is organized under ORC 167.01 **et seq.**

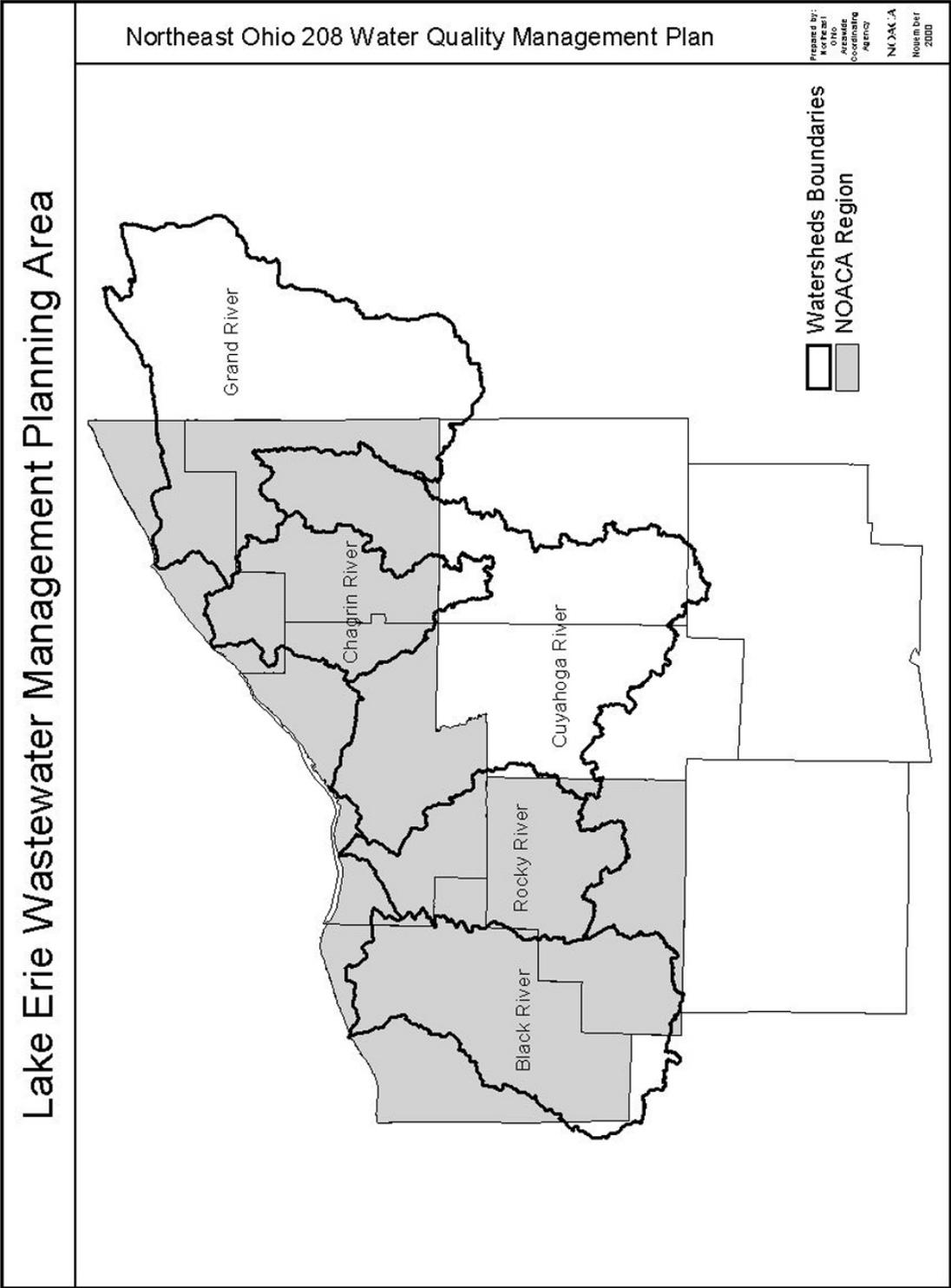


Figure 2-1

Section 208 of the Clean Water Act

Section 208 of the Clean Water Act sets forth requirements for water quality management planning (WQMP). In the urbanized areas of the state, the responsibilities for water quality management planning are shared by areawide and state agencies. Both municipal waste treatment issues and nonpoint source management and control are to be addressed in areawide water quality management plans. Water quality management plans guide implementation by defining implementation responsibilities of management agencies with municipal waste treatment or nonpoint source management responsibilities who are thereby designated to perform specific control recommendations. Authority to perform the WQMP function is provided in state law at ORC 6111.02(A), 41-42.¹

Areawide water quality management plans are one tool among several provided in the Clean Water Act to be utilized by the State to address water pollution and restore water quality in lakes, rivers and streams. Other tools include water quality standards setting, water quality assessments, the issuance of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NDPES) permits to control discharges, assistance in financing wastewater management facilities, enforcement, and water quality monitoring activities. In water quality assessment, the state is charged with the responsibility for evaluating and establishing the capacity of a water body to receive pollutant loads without harm to the water body's intended use. This is done through a program of establishing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and water quality-based effluent limits for a stream which provide the foundation for permit issuance. Table 2-1 illustrates water quality management roles and responsibilities among state, regional and local agencies.

II. Original Areawide Water Quality Plans

THE 1979 NORTHEAST OHIO LAKE ERIE BASIN (NEOLEB) PLAN

In 1979 a joint NOACA/NEFCO Board (Northeast Ohio Lake Erie Basin) Board first adopted an Areawide Water Quality Management Plan in 1979. Elements of this plan included:

- 1) a subplan for Publicly Owned Wastewater Treatment Works and Facility Planning Areas (POTW/FPA) which identified public jurisdictions with lead responsibility for managing and building improvements to the wastewater treatment facilities needed to attain water quality standards for the region;

¹Confer Ohio EPA's Continuing Planning Process (Draft 6/30/98) document for a detailed review of state and federal authority to perform planning and implementation responsibilities under the Clean Water Act.

Table 2-1: Water Quality Management Functions in Ohio

<u>Function</u>	<u>Lead Implementation Responsibility</u>
Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment	Ohio EPA has lead implementation responsibility
Water Quality Standards Setting	Ohio EPA has lead implementation responsibility
Water Quality Modeling and Total Maximum Daily Loads	Ohio EPA has lead implementation responsibility
Water Quality Management Planning	Ohio EPA and Areawide Planning Agencies have shared planning responsibilities
NDPES Permits Issuance	
Point Sources	Ohio EPA has lead implementation responsibility
Storm Water Permits	Ohio EPA has lead implementation responsibility
Pretreatment	Local POTWs have lead implementation responsibility with Ohio EPA oversight
Public Wastewater Treatment and Conveyances	Local Designated Management Agencies have lead implementation responsibility with Ohio EPA oversight
Sludge Management	Local POTWs have lead implementation responsibility with Ohio EPA oversight: USEPA currently administers the Part 503 program but is working on transferring it to Ohio EPA
Waste Treatment Works Construction	Ohio EPA and OWDA share management responsibility
State Revolving Fund Loan Management	
Home Sewage Disposal System Management	Local health departments have implementation responsibility with oversight from ODH
Semi-Public Sewage Disposal System Management	Ohio EPA delegates some implementation responsibilities to local health departments
Management of Combined Sewers	Local POTWs have lead implementation responsibility
Nonpoint Source Administration	
State Assessment	Ohio EPA has lead implementation responsibility
State Management Plan	Ohio EPA shares implementation responsibility with ODNR
Federal Grants Administration	Ohio EPA has lead implementation responsibility
State Grants Administration	ODNR has lead implementation responsibility
Nonpoint Source Controls	
Storm Water Management	Municipalities and counties have implementation responsibility
Urban Sediment and Runoff Control	Counties and municipalities have lead implementation responsibility
Agricultural Pollution	Voluntary controls by individual landowners are undertaken with incentives provided by USDA
Watershed Planning	Various forms of voluntary planning by state and local agencies are undertaken

- 2) a sewage treatment plant residuals subplan which outlined a coordinated approach to the management and disposal of sewage treatment plant sludge in the planning area;
- 3) a storm water runoff/sediment control subplan, which recommended policies and planning functions for storm water management by various local management agencies in the region, with a role for municipalities, counties, local agricultural agencies, and state agencies. A key recommendation was the implementation of county urban sediment/erosion control programs as permitted by Section 307.79 of the Ohio Revised Code enacted in 1980;
- 4) a rivers and waterways subplan which proposed enactment of legislation whereby projects of regional significance affecting water quality would be subject to a new regional environmental review procedure as well as reviews to be coordinated with local zoning and building permit policies. In addition, the subplan recommended the enactment of Critical Water Resource Protection legislation at the state level;
- 5) an industrial residuals subplan which recommended the establishment of an industrial hazardous waste facility in Northeast Ohio;
- 6) an environmental health subplan which outlined a series of recommendations for improving county level management of home sewage disposal systems in the region;
- 7) a technical program subplan which outlined the water quality data collection and analysis necessary to maintain the plan;
- 8) a continuing planning subplan which spelled out a plan implementation oversight structure and the role of the areawide agencies and local governments in sustaining plan implementation.

THE 1981 NEFCO PLAN

On October 20, 1981, the NEFCO General Policy Board adopted a revised and expanded Clean Water Plan which addresses water quality issues in the four county planning area. The Plan contains recommendations in fifteen separate areas, which address all known water quality problems in the four counties. Six areas address “point source” pollution, primarily caused by then inadequate wastewater treatment plants. Recommendations concerning “nonpoint source” pollution are made in six additional areas. The remaining three areas include recommendations for incorporating water quality information into local government decisions, for an ongoing data collection program to assess water quality, and for the institution of an areawide “continuing planning management structure” to coordinate on-going planning activities relating to water quality management.

NEFCO's plan is divided into four documents:

Volume One: Summary & Recommendations

Volume Two: Technical Program & Baseline Documentation

Volume Three: Point Source Documentation

Volume Four: Nonpoint Source Documentation

Implementation and Updates of the 1979 and 1981 Plan

Much has happened with the implementation of the plans in the two intervening decades. The municipal waste treatment components of the 1979 and 1981 plans have been virtually completed. Implementation of the nonpoint source elements has been less successful due in part to the largely voluntary nature of those recommendations. Nevertheless, some counties and cities have made progress in better management of home sewage systems and in the implementation of urban sediment control programs at construction sites. Other plan elements responsibilities were carried out by the Ohio EPA.

Most recommendations of the earlier plans were predicated on a twenty-year planning horizon.

Two decades have passed since then and it is time for a major revisiting of water quality management planning issues in Northeast Ohio. While several minor updates to the original plans were made to address changes to management agencies and wastewater facility planning areas, and to incorporate additional technical studies as they were completed, this plan update represents the first major overhaul of the plan in twenty years.

III. Northeast Ohio's Water Quality Problems Today

The public investments in wastewater treatment anticipated in the 1979 and 1981 plans have produced a remarkable recovery in the quality of water and in the return of aquatic life to many of the region's streams, lakes and rivers and to Lake Erie itself. In spite of these improvements, significant water quality problems remain in the old urban areas of the region largely due to storm water, sanitary sewer overflows and combined sewer overflows.

However, the most widespread threat to water quality currently is occurring in the rapidly developing areas of the region on the periphery of the existing urban areas. This threat comes from a variety of potential sources, including new point source discharges from residential and commercial developments, but most significantly from the combined effects of land disturbances to construct these new developments. This has caused a wholesale transformation of the landscape from rural, sparsely populated, vegetated open spaces to large areas of denser populations with corresponding increases in impervious surfaces (pavements, parking lots, and buildings). This transformation is threatening critical water resources once thought relatively secure from water pollution threats (upland drinking water reservoirs, headwaters areas, and high quality streams once far removed from urbanization). Thus, while the perceived water pollution problems of the 1970s have largely been addressed, there remains a whole new set of water pollution challenges at the turn of the century to be confronted.

IV. **The Current 208 Plan Update**

Goals of this 208 Plan Update

Several goals were established as a framework for plan development:

- 1) The plan should take a watershed approach that coordinates agencies addressing point and nonpoint pollution sources as the basis for management planning;
- 2) The plan should optimize use of the existing investment in infrastructure with infill development, not encourage public investments in new infrastructure;
- 3) The plan should be protective of what has been gained in environmental quality and outline measures needed to be undertaken to meet designated uses with particular attention to enhanced protection of critical water resource areas;
- 4) The plan should provide a regional framework for locally determined development density that is protective of water quality;
- 5) The planning process should be a tool for educating local public decision makers on regional water quality management issues; and
- 6) The plan should be an educational tool to elicit support of the general public for plan implementation.

Focus of this 208 Plan Update

This plan update primarily focuses on the threats to water quality posed by the rapidly developing areas of the region. Thus, attention has focused on issues of planned sewer expansions in the suburban counties, on better management of home sewage systems and semi-public sewage disposal systems, on more vigorous attention to the control of nonpoint source pollution, and on the protection of the region's critical water resources.

The plan is also concerned with the problems of the older urbanized areas which for the most part have addressed the problems of point source discharges from sewage treatment plants.

The plan includes three forms of directive: **policies, recommendations and strategies.**

Policies are definitive water quality management planning responsibilities of the designated areawide planning agency.

Recommendations include (1) proposed actions to be undertaken by local public jurisdictions and state agencies to implement the plan under existing authorities of state law or (2) legislative recommendations which require changes in law to implement the plan.

Strategies outline planning steps needed to support implementation of the plan.

The plan represents a vision of the region's future that seeks to balance development and economic growth with a sustainable high quality of the water environment. The plan is a challenge to public officials and the general public to undertake actions to protect Northeast Ohio's water resources for the next generation. It sets an agenda for continuing water quality management planning in Northeast Ohio for the coming decade.

Relationship of this Plan Update to the 1979/1981 Plans

The wastewater management facility planning policies and recommendations presented in Chapter 4 augment the 1979 POTW/FPA subplan.

The home sewage and semi-public sewage disposal management policies and recommendations presented in Chapter 5 supersede the 1979 Environmental Health Subplan.

The nonpoint source pollution and storm water management policies and recommendations presented in Chapter 6 supersede the 1979 Storm Water Runoff/Sediment Control Subplan.

The protection of critical water resources policies and recommendations presented in Chapter 7 supersede the 1979 Rivers and Waterways Subplan.

The ongoing planning policies presented in Chapter 10 supersede the 1979 Continuing Planning Subplan.

Planning Process to Date

NOACA and NEFCO have been jointly developing this plan during the past three years with the 208 Task Force of local public officials appointed by the NOACA and NEFCO Boards, and in consultation with representatives of local jurisdictions. Several work groups were formed to assist staff in technical analysis and the formulation of plan recommendations. Public meetings were held at the beginning of the process to set forth plan goals and during the summer of 1999 to discuss the expected scope of the plan recommendations.

V. Steps to Certification

In March 2000, the NOACA Board approved release of the draft Clean Water 2000 plan pertaining to the NOACA area for public review and comment. A number of public meetings were convened between March and May, 2000 to present the draft plan and elicit public comments. The draft plan was also circulated to local jurisdictions and agencies with the NOACA area.

This final draft plan incorporates revisions to the plan made in response to public comments received. Once the NOACA Board adopts the plan it will be submitted to Ohio EPA for certification and to USEPA for approval. Once approved, the Clean Water 2000 plan update process is complete and the plan becomes effective.

See discussion of certification process and timetable in Chapter 12 below.

VI. Plan for this Document

The plan for this document is as follows:

Chapter 1 - provides an Executive Summary of the plan.

Chapter 2 - provides an overview of the plan.

Chapter 3 - summarizes existing water quality conditions and development trends over the next twenty years.

Chapter 4 - presents the plans of local and county jurisdictions concerning new wastewater infrastructure, sewers and wastewater treatment facilities, anticipated to be necessary over the next twenty years. These plans are the result of consultations with county, municipal and township officials who developed the local plans. Chapter 4 also discusses how these sewer plans will be updated.

Chapter 5 - presents recommendations for better management of home sewage systems for those large areas of the region which will remain unsewered over the next twenty years. These recommendations are the results of a year long discussion among the seven county health departments with management responsibility in Northeast Ohio.

Chapter 6 - presents recommendations for implementation of nonpoint source controls by local jurisdictions in several areas including storm water management, riparian protection, urban sediment control, construction site design and others. This chapter also discusses the need for better wet weather standards in the region's urban streams.

Chapter 7 - identifies critical water resources in Northeast Ohio and makes a series of recommendations for enhancing the protection of these resources.

Chapter 8 - describes water quality conditions in urban areas of the region and presents an urban streams restoration planning process.

Chapter 9 - makes recommendations on enhancing the role and impact of watershed planning groups in the region.

Chapter 10 - presents the program of continuing planning that will be required to assure that the plan is implemented.

Chapter 11 - discusses strategies for enhancing the coordination of planning for public infrastructure at the areawide and county levels.

Chapter 12 - describes the process by which this plan gets approved locally and certified by the State.

Chapter 13 - describes the processes by which the community, local jurisdictions and the public have been involved in the plan's development.