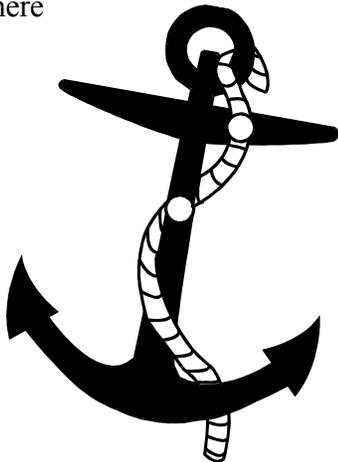


Valuing the Ottawa River

More detailed results can be found in the *Valuing the Ottawa River: Economic Values and Impacts of Recreational Boating*, the full report of the results of the three surveys. These surveys were conducted to make estimates of economic impact and economic value. Economic impacts are measures of how the money spent by boaters affect the sales of local businesses and the incomes of employees and property owners. Economic value, on the other hand, measures the satisfaction recreational boaters obtain from their sport. It is their “willingness to pay” for boating over and above what they currently spend to participate.

The first survey was of boaters who currently use the Ottawa River. The second survey involved registered boaters living in Lucas, Wood, and Fulton counties in Ohio and Monroe County in Michigan. The third survey was of area businesses where boaters purchase goods and services.



Acknowledgments

Valuing the Ottawa River: Economic Values and Impacts of Recreational Boating was conducted primarily by Ohio State University Sea Grant Extension. Financial support was provided by the Lake Erie Protection Fund, Ohio Sea Grant College Program, and the Maumee RAP Ottawa River Action Group.

Special thanks to West Marine, the Associated Yacht Clubs, and the Point Place Business Association for their significant contributions and assistance in contacting hundreds of businesses and members of the community who have been and continue to be supporters of and collaborators for this project.

For More Information . . .

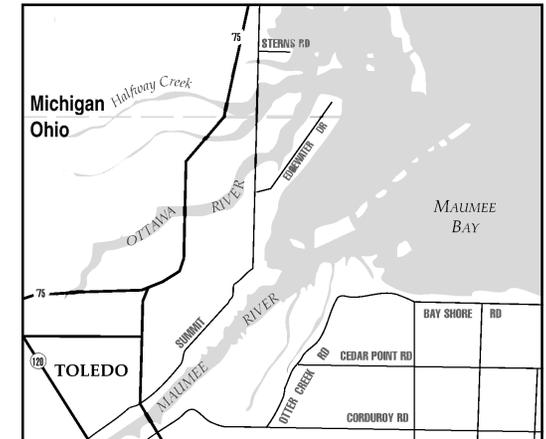
A copy of *Valuing the Ottawa River: Economic Values and Impacts of Recreational Boating* can be obtained from the publications page of the Maumee RAP web site at www.maumeerap.org. If you have any questions, please contact Jeanette Ball, Chair, Maumee RAP Ottawa River Action Group by e-mail at jeanette.ball@ci.toledo.oh.us or by phone at (419) 936-3761.



4000 copies printed April 2000

THE OTTAWA RIVER

Toledo, Ohio



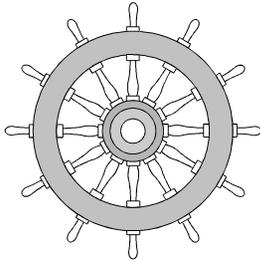
**How Important
Is It
To Our Community?**

December 1999

About the Ottawa River

Ottawa River and Maumee Bay have long been considered as Northwest Ohio's gateway to Lake Erie. Unfortunately, the long term effects of sedimentation and current low lake levels are causing shallow river depths. This has resulted in reduced boater activity and dock usage.

The usage of the Ottawa River was also greatly affected in 1991 when warning signs were posted on the lower sixteen miles of the river by the local and state health departments as an "advisory against eating fish from, or swimming or wading in, the Ottawa River from its crossing under I-475 in Toledo to Lake Erie." This advisory was partly due to contaminated sediments in the river.



Boaters and Businesses

In 1998 Ohio State University researchers collected information about boating-related expenditures in the Ottawa River area. Three different surveys were conducted with area boaters and business owners in the lower 3.5 miles of the river. This is the area downstream from the Suder Avenue bridge to north Maumee Bay plus Halfway Creek and Hooper Run in Michigan. Sixteen yacht clubs and marinas are located in this area.

Survey Findings

Surveys revealed that the 1998 economic impact to the local economy from Ottawa River boater activity was \$14 million in total annual sales of which \$8 million was "value added" income to labor, management, and property.

The direct economic impact to local area businesses of dredging the Ottawa River and a connecting channel to Lake Erie would be nearly \$5 million of additional annual sales. Nearly \$3 million of this would be additional income from new or higher paying jobs at these businesses. With increased boating capacity

(new boat docks) the increase in economic activity would be greater.

Since 1998, economic activity has declined due to added siltation and lower lake levels. If dredging does not occur, the annual sales which were \$14 million in 1998 will continue to decline.

Collectively, area boaters and businesses are willing to pay \$400,000 over a 10 year time horizon for dredging the Ottawa River and a connecting channel to Lake Erie for navigational and environmental improvements.

WHAT WILL BE DONE BASED ON THESE RESULTS?

The Maumee RAP Ottawa River Action Group will be trying to build local support for dredging the river by presenting these results to local, state, and federal government representatives. The group also plans to present the results to local stakeholders including area residents, yacht club members, marina occupants, launch site users, and business owners. A six step action plan has been developed:

- Obtain a local government sponsor to provide partial financial support for a dredging project.
- Develop a local revenue program for dredging with area marinas and yacht clubs based on current boaters' willingness to pay.
- Request and develop the support of the Toledo/Lucas County Port Authority for providing local disposal facilities for Ottawa River dredged material.
- Request and develop the financial support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers after determining local sponsorship.
- Expand the support base for dredging by seeking the involvement of the ODNR Division of Watercraft, the banking community, colleges & universities, economic development agencies, and other organizations.
- Communicate progress regularly to stakeholder groups and the media.