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**CITIZENS IDENTIFY PENNSYLVANIA'S TOP PRIORITIES FOR
GREAT LAKES RESTORATION**

ERIE: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Office of the Great Lakes Manager Lori Boughton today outlined results of the recent Great Lakes Restoration workshop that was conducted in Erie.

“Workshop participants concluded that controlling nonpoint source pollution—pollution from everyday activities—is the issue that deserves the most focused attention, Boughton said. “We’ve now heard what’s important to Pennsylvania so we don’t have to wait to start addressing our local priorities, putting our words into action.”

Approximately 100 people attended the Feb. 25 daylong workshop in Erie, one of a series of workshops throughout the Great Lakes being facilitated by Great Lakes Sea Grant Programs at the request of the Great Lakes Commission in conjunction with the Council of Great Lakes Governors.

“I was overwhelmed,” Pennsylvania Sea Grant Environmental Director Eric Obert said. “We had expected a much smaller turnout of mostly familiar faces. Instead, we had farmers there, landowners, people who I have never seen at the table before. This demonstrates to us that there is commitment across the board, across all walks of life, and how important Lake Erie is to the quality of our lives, whether to support our livelihood or recreation or the resources that sustain us.”

“Lake Erie is a good canary in the coal mine,” Great Lakes United former President Margaret Wooster said. “In the 1970s, problems in Lake Erie were the catalyst for the Clean Water Act and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Now, 30 years later, the dead zone and avian botulism outbreaks remind us that we cannot rest on our laurels and past accomplishments.”

The information that was gathered at the workshop will be passed on to the Great Lakes governors, legislators at both the federal and state levels, and Great Lakes mayors. Governors will develop a basinwide Great Lakes restoration plan and federal legislators are currently considering two bills that would appropriate between \$4-billion and \$6-billion for restoration work within the Great Lakes over the next five to ten years.

“This is a very exciting time,” Boughton said. “The Great Lakes are now getting the same level of attention that the Florida Everglades received in the 1980s and 1990s, where success is measured in thousands of acres of the Everglades being restored to pristine condition. Government and committed private citizens led the way in Florida, and today those of us in the Great Lakes region face a similar challenge and opportunity.”

For additional information about the Great Lakes and efforts to protect the environment, visit <http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/deputate/fieldops/nw/nw.htm>

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