



NEWS RELEASE

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

State of the Strait: Conference on Nov. 2 at Eastern Michigan to analyze environmental monitoring and management along the Huron-Erie corridor

by Geoff Larcom, Published October 31, 2011

YPSILANTI – A conference at Eastern Michigan University will focus on how to better manage and monitor an important and highly populated stretch of water and shoreline, the Huron-Erie corridor.

The State of the Strait is a one-day conference held every two years that brings together government managers, researchers, students, environmental and conservation organizations and concerned citizens from the United States and Canada to assess the status of the corridor and provide advice to improve research, monitoring, and management. The theme for the 2011 conference is "Use of Remote Sensing and GIS to Better Manage the Huron-Erie Corridor." The event will be held Wednesday, Nov. 2 in the EMU Student Center.

The corridor, which extends from the Port Huron area down through Lake St. Clair, past Detroit and to Lake Erie's southern shore on Ohio, includes one of the busiest navigation centers in the United States and is an international trade route with Canada and overseas markets. Over \$80 billion year in trade between the U.S. and Canada is carried out across the corridor, according to the Huron-Erie Corridor Initiative website. More than five million people live within an hour's drive, and it is also a major source of drinking water for Michigan, Ohio, and Ontario.

The corridor once provided spawning habitat for numerous sport and commercial fishes, but changes to the physical habitat coupled with effects of exotic species and exploitation of fish stocks have impaired the ability of the system to produce and support sustainable fish stocks. In

addition, conflicting uses of water for waste disposal, shoreline development, shipping, recreation, and fishing have resulted in a number of negative environmental changes.

Many of the environmental issues that can affect such a fragile and important area occur over large geographical areas. Thus, remote sensing and geographical information systems (GIS) have become important tools for environmental management. They facilitate data collection over large areas and provide an orderly way to visualize and analyze information.

The conference will focus on summarizing the results of existing projects and to disseminate best practices for future efforts.

"We're pleased to host the State of the Strait Conference," said Steve Francoeur, an associate professor of biology and a U.S. co-chair of the conference. "It is another example of how EMU is engaged in addressing important regional issues."

The keynote address, entitled "Technologies For Better Decisions in the Huron-Erie Corridor," will be delivered by Russell Kreis, a research aquatic biologist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency who earned bachelors and masters degrees from Eastern.

Other lectures will include:

- Stopover sites of migratory birds in the western Lake Erie basin, Ohio and Michigan: a GIS analysis.
- Developing spatially explicit models to guide conservation of diving ducks during migration.
- Development of remote sensing methods for detection of invasive wetland plants.
- Using GIS to identify potential fish spawning habitat remediation areas in the Huron-Erie corridor.
- Managing water quality data in the Huron-Erie corridor.

For more information about the State of the Strait conference, please visit www.stateofthestrail.org

You can contact EMU professors Steven Francoeur at 734-487-4242 and sfrancoeu@emich.edu; or Mike Dueweke at 734-487-8487 and mdueweke@emich.edu

###