

Enhanced Mussel Watch Phase 1: Eastern Great Lakes



Gunnar Lauenstein gives the location of the next sampling site to our new boat driver Mike Taetsch, GLERL.

Tuesday, September 15, 2009

- Cliff Cosgrove

Yesterday, our original boat captain, Tom Joyce, returned home. Today, at 11am, we met our new captain, Mike Taetsch, a gregarious man always willing to lend a hand. It took some work to get the boat ready to launch but by noon we were on the water, racing to the previous day's site near the Cuyahoga River. The Cuyahoga River literally caught fire one day in 1969, so it's no wonder that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers this to be an Area of Concern (AOC). The sediment was perfect fine-grain silt, easy to collect with the grab sampler. After two hours on calm water, under blue skies, and with a panoramic view of Cleveland's skyline, we had collected the needed samples. With the samples packed we headed to our next site and late in the afternoon we arrived at Ashtabula. We weren't too disappointed when the first hotel we visited, concealed by scaffolding and with plastic in place of glass for windows, was already full for the night. Not to waste anymore daylight on hotels, we launched the boat and headed to the Lake Erie Ashtabula site a couple of miles away.

Unlike the morning's site, here we dove for zebra mussels. We anchored off shore sitting above only ten feet of water. Gunnar and Ed dove down, bringing up rocks the size of personal pan pizzas. Within fifteen minutes we had more than enough. Our next goal here was to collect sediment samples, but out in 45 feet of water. The precise processes of sediment collection can be time consuming but we were still surprised to see the sun low on the water by the time we finished.