

## Enhanced Mussel Watch Phase 1: Eastern Great Lakes



Ashtabula harbor, Ohio (photo courtesy of the USACE)

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

-Kristina Lauenstein

We were on the water by 10am but immediately had to return as we'd forgotten our dredge. That was good luck as the winds had picked up quickly and the conditions were on the water were dangerous. With the boat back on the trailer, we drove a couple miles to the coast guard station to ask for advice. Ed Johnson explained our situation and with their directions, we found a perfect place along the river to launch our boat.

Out on the water, having approached the Mussel Watch site from the West instead of the East, we started dredging for mussels in the lee of a breakwater but found only sediment. On the other side of the harbor three dredge tows provided the mussels we needed. After transferring the many clusters of zebra mussels to a plastic bag we returned to the location of our initial dredging attempts. Back at the breakwater we found all the sediment we needed, each drop of the grab sampler was successful.

It was after 4pm by the time we arrived at the next site, Erie, PA. When asking directions to a boat launch, we had been advised that the entire area was abundant in zebra mussels. We discovered how true that was when one tow of the dredge yielded all the zebra mussels we needed. Here, the sediment collection was the more time consuming. Each time we lowered the grab sampler we retrieved it only to find it half-full. We soon had enough and enjoyed the view of sailboats in Presque Isle Bay on the way back to the boat ramp.