

Great Lakes Center Newsletter

Spring 2015



Long-tailed ducks fly over the icy lower Niagara River in March.

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Icy start to the sampling season

by Knut Mehler

It was quite busy over the winter 2014/2015 in the Great Lakes Center's laboratory. Benthic samples that were collected last summer from about 150 sites in the **lower Niagara River** are currently being processed. So far, organisms from 70 samples were measured, weighed and mounted. While chironomids were identified here at the GLC, Oligochaeta were sent out to Heidelberg University in Ohio to be identified by taxonomic experts there.

About 10,000 individual organisms belonging to 117 species have been identified. These data are currently under preparation for presentations on the Freshwater Science meeting in Milwaukee, WI and IAGLR in Burlington, VT in May.

Additionally, 60 sediments samples were processed by our GLES graduate student Anthony Cevaer including sieve analysis and organic matter content analysis. Both grain size and organic matter are important abiotic factors that can affect benthic invertebrate abundance and biomass.

Even though it was a very harsh winter in Buffalo, an attempt was made to continue sampling in the lower Niagara River in March. With a lot of confidence and happy to start the new sampling season Josh Fisher, Mark Clapsadl, Knut Mehler, and Anthony Cevaer went out to Lewiston to resume last year's sampling of the 3 sites that were identified as 'sturgeon hotspots.'

Upon arriving in the field the crew was



Graduate student Anthony is about to launch his first Ponar grab at the lower Niagara River in March 2015.

greeted by a thick layer of ice in all of our sampling areas. Nevertheless, our graduate student Anthony tried really hard and got us at least one sample. After only 20 minutes in the boat we all decided to head back into the warm laboratory and keep working on the taxonomic identification. The plan for the second half of the year is to finish up identification of the rest of the samples and get ready for another exciting sampling season at the Niagara River – hopefully at warmer temperatures. •



Knut Mehler keeps his humor despite the cold and icy conditions at the lower Niagara River in March 2015.