

Invited Abstract

## **NUTRIENTS AND WATER QUALITY**

MURRAY CHARLTON, NWRI, Environment Canada, Burlington, ON

Lake Erie has been sampled for over thirty years. Over that time the nutrient load has been cut in half. In the latter part of the period alien species such as zebra mussels arrived and have kept arriving at about one new species per year. There was a big effect of nutrient controls in the west basin and less in the central and east basins. Around 1995 there was a drop in phosphorus levels in the central and east basins. The low phosphorus concentrations have increased steadily from 1995 up to more than 10ugP/L. No explanation is forthcoming yet. Secchi depths and chlorophylls are at levels seen before the mussels in offshore waters. For offshore waters the major effect of the nutrient controls and the mussels was in the west basin. The causes of the recent nutrient perturbations needs more research.