As you know, my current research at Central Michigan University includes two major components. The first component involves stable isotope analysis of Great Lakes food webs. This summer, zooplankton, macro-invertebrate and fish were collected from coastal wetlands and adjacent near shore habitats at 13 sites across the Great Lakes. Currently, I am working to clean, dry and homogenize the samples for analysis. At current pace, samples will be analyzed at Notre Dame in early February and a thesis draft will be available in early April.

The second component involves re-constructing habitat use of yellow perch using otolith chemistry. At present, otoliths from wetland-caught young-of-year yellow perch have been collected. These otoliths, in addition to trace element water samples from wetlands, nearshore and wetland-nearshore transition zones will be used to establish a suite of trace elements unique to wetlands. Adult yellow perch from the nearshore have not yet been provided by the MDNR. We expect these samples by early September. All water samples will be analyzed the weekend of September 14th, 2012. After sectioning and polishing otoliths to expose growth rings, all otoliths will be analyzed in February. We expect to have processed data in early April, with a thesis draft in May.