

The Great Lakes Policy Report

Volume 1, Issue 1,
January 2012

IN THIS ISSUE

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.....1
 Putting GLRI Funds To Use.....1
 Great Lakes Geography.....3
 Great Lakes Policy Watch.....4

The Great Lakes Policy Report is a quarterly news report published by the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Natural Resource Department's Environmental Services Program. The report features Great Lakes policy updates and relevant initiatives, projects, and issues.

The report is meant to be an educational document, and does not express an opinion on the subjects discussed. Stories and information cited in this report are taken from a variety of sources including news articles, non-governmental reports, interviews, and government documents.



The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative



A map showing the location of all projects (by focus area) funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in 2010. Photo Credit: www.greatlakesrestoration.us

Over the past 100 years the Great Lakes have been exposed to everything from toxic substances and habitat destruction to the introduction of more than 140 invasive aquatic species. In 2008, presidential candidate Barack Obama recognized the serious environmental challenges the Great Lakes face in the 21st century. Promising that if he should become president of the United States, the lakes would get the attention and financial resources they desperately

needed in order to fulfill a Great Lakes cleanup strategy developed by the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration in 2005.

In 2009 President Obama made good on his promise to improve the health of the Great Lakes by budgeting \$475 million for restoration projects in the Great Lakes region for fiscal year (FY) 2010. This initial funding was the beginning of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) – an unprecedented, multi-year

Continued on page 2

Putting GLRI Funds To Use: Bear River Restoration

The Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB) Natural Resource Department (NRD) was awarded funding through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) for a restoration project in the Bear River Watershed. This is one of three GLRI grants LTBB NRD received in 2010, and is expected to last through 2012. The Bear River project is under the Habitat and Wildlife

Protection and Restoration focus area of the GLRI, and demonstrates what the GLRI was intended to produce: on the ground actions that improve the health of the Great Lakes and their tributaries.

Although the Bear River Restoration Project officially started in FY 2010,

Continued on page 3



The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative continued from page 1



The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative logo. Photo credit: USGS

program to support projects that address the most significant problems facing the lakes.

The GLRI is being led by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in collaboration with other federal agencies. Funds are distributed to federal agencies and departments that then administer millions of dollars' worth of grants to tribal, state, and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and research institutions. Federal agencies have also developed projects of their own using GLRI funds.

In order to coordinate, manage, and implement the initiative, 11 federal government agencies developed the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan. The Action Plan is a 4-year plan that identifies five focus areas to base projects on:

- Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern
- Invasive Species
- Nearshore Health and Non-point Source Pollution
- Habitat and Wildlife Protection and Restoration
- Accountability, Education, Monitoring, Evaluation, Communication and Partnerships

The Action Plan also outlines detailed “outcome-oriented performance goals,” measures of progress, and accountability standards. According to the GLRI Accountability System, there were 598 projects funded by GLRI in FY 2010. There are 90 projects around the Great Lakes targeting Toxic Substances and Areas of Concern. The Invasive Species focus areas has 64 projects, including projects related to the control of sea lamprey and Asian carp. There are 123 Nearshore Health and Non-point Source Pollution projects. There are 238 Habitat and Wildlife Protection and

Restoration projects. And the Accountability, Education, Monitoring, Evaluation, Communication and Partnerships has 82 projects using funds from 2010.

In a 2010 interview about the long term focus of the GLRI, EPA Senior Advisor to the Administrator Cameron Davis said “[w]hat it would look like is continually driving toward more action-oriented projects: Real on the ground, in the water work that makes a difference to actual species and actual ecosystems...in the Great Lakes...” He noted that it was also important to fund “study work and monitoring ... to start to lay the groundwork for future action. But as we move from year to year the goal is to do more and more action oriented work.”

Funding may prevent an increase in the number of projects that take place in the coming years. With budgets being scrutinized now more than ever in Congress, funding for the GLRI will most likely be reduced. For FY 2011 president Obama only proposed \$300 million – \$175 million less than FY 2010. Although the Action Plan is based on the assumption that GLRI funds for FY 2012 will return to the original \$475 million, funding for FY 2012 recently settled at 300 million. It is unclear if yearly funding will ever return to the originally proposed amounts, or make up for reduced funding from FY 2011 and 2012.

Even if future GLRI funding is reduced, current and future projects will continue, it is only a question of the number of projects and the amount of money available to implement those projects. The goal of the GLRI is not to fund a certain number of projects. The goal is to improve Great Lakes water quality, restore habitat, fight invasive species, and improve communication and partnerships. No future funding cuts can reduce the work already taking place to restore the health of the Great Lakes.

For more information about the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, current projects and to read the Action Plan visit www.greatlakesrestoration.us.



Putting GLRI Funds To Use continued from page 1

several activities over the last decade have contributed to the project's development. Six sites along the Bear River and in Walloon Lake have been monitored by LTBB as part of a Water Quality Monitoring Program since 2000. Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, a non-profit organization in northern Lower Michigan, has monitored water quality on the Bear River since 2006 and identified sediments as a primary pollutant into the river. Additionally, this project is in accordance with actions outlined in the Little Traverse Bay Watershed Protection Plan.

The goal of the Bear River Habitat Restoration Project is to improve the physical, chemical, and biological health of the Bear River watershed and the waters that flow into Little Traverse Bay and Lake Michigan. The Bear River flows from Walloon Lake past 15 miles of farmlands, forests, public and private lands, through downtown Petoskey to its outlet at Little Traverse Bay. The watershed covers approximately 74,215 acres. There are three main objectives for the project including river bank erosion control, invasive species removal, and habitat restoration.

Erosion problems from former dams, industrial activities, and logging have led to a loss of ecologically important riverbank vegetation, which then increases the amount of pollutants entering the water. Erosion sites along the river negatively impact fish spawning and rearing habitat by increasing the turbidity of the water as well as by smothering fish eggs and insect larvae. To combat this issue LTBB NRD will perform an erosion survey and restoration activities sites along the river.

Compounding the problems associated with human-caused erosion is an increasing number of invasive species in the watershed that undermine habitat quality by out-competing native plant communities. A variety of activities will be performed to remove invasive species and reintroduce native species; including invasive species surveys, and developing an invasive species management plan. Removal of harmful invasive plants and restoring shoreline with native species will improve native habitat.

Continued on page 4

Great Lakes Geography

Great Lakes, Great Size

The Great Lakes formed about 20,000 years ago when a massive continental glacier retreated as the climate warmed. The retreating glacier gouged out large areas in the earth's surface creating basins that filled with meltwater from the glacier. The five Great Lakes combine to create the world's largest freshwater system, containing 20 percent of the world's surface freshwater and provide drinking water for more than 40 million people. They hold about 90 percent of the United States' freshwater and have 10,210 miles of coastline; for comparison, the world is 24,859.8 miles in circumference. The Lakes also contain 30,000 islands. Although part of a single system, each Great Lake is unique.

Lake Superior is the northern most Great Lake and the largest, both by volume and surface area. By volume it is the third largest lake in the world with 2,935 cubic miles of water. Lake Superior's surface area is 31,700 sq. miles, making it the largest freshwater lake in the world. The lake reaches a depth of 1,333 ft. which is also the deepest point of any Great Lake. Lake Superior releases its water through the St. Marys River and into Lake Huron and Michigan.

Lake Michigan is the fifth largest lake in the world by volume and surface area. It is the second largest Great Lake by volume at 1,180 cubic miles. Its surface area is 22,300 sq. miles and the deepest point is 923 ft. Lake Michigan is connected to Lake Huron through the Straits of Mackinac.

Lakes Michigan and Huron are hydrologically a single body of water. If counted as one lake, Michigan-Huron replaces Lake Superior as the largest freshwater lake by surface area in the world.

Lake Huron is the fourth largest Great Lake by volume at 849 cubic miles, but has the second largest surface area at 23,000 sq. miles. Its deepest point is 750 ft. It flows south through the St. Clare River into Lake Erie.

Lake Erie is the shallowest of the Great Lakes and the smallest by volume at 116 cubic miles. However by surface area it is the fourth largest at 9,910 sq. miles. The maximum depth only reaches 210 ft. Water exits Lake Erie through the Niagara River and Welland Canal into Lake Ontario.

Lake Ontario's volume of 393 cubic miles makes it the third largest. Its surface area is 7,340 sq. miles and its depth reaches 802 ft. Lake Ontario is the final Great Lake before the water enters the Atlantic Ocean through the St. Lawrence River.

GREAT LAKES POLICY WATCH

In this section you can find current legislation and proposed regulations related to the Great Lakes. When applicable public comment periods and information on how to comment will be given.

Rules and Regulations

New York has proposed to establish a Vessel Waste No Discharge Zone (NDZ) for the New York State portion of Lake Ontario. US EPA Region 2 published a tentative affirmative determination in the Federal Register on October 5th 2011.

In November 2011, the US EPA issued a proposed 2013 Vessel General Permit. Among other watercraft rules, this regulation sets standards for ballast water discharge—a source of invasive species. Comments regarding the proposed rule is due by February 21, 2012 at www.regulations.gov and entering Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0141.

Legislation

On September 20th 2011, U.S. Senators Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) and Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ) introduced the Clean Coastal Environment and Public Health Act of 2011 into the U.S. Senate. The legislation would require new national beach water quality testing and public notification standards so beachgoers are informed about the safety of their beaches.

The Michigan State Senate and House passed SB 508, 509, and 510. together these bills will create an advisory committee to recommend actions addressing nonnative species and federal ballast water standards. It was approved by the governor of Michigan on December 21, 2011.

Putting GLRI Funds To Use continued from page 3

Additionally, further habitat restoration will be conducted by installing greenbelts (a segment or strip of land with permanent vegetation bordering developed land) along the river. Staff will perform a greenbelt survey and improve or install greenbelts on shoreline properties where necessary. Working with private landowners, the greenbelts will improve habitat, wildlife and water quality throughout the watershed.

The Bear River Restoration Project is one of 237 Habitat and Wildlife Protection and Restoration projects funded by GLRI in 2010. GLRI funding for habitat restoration projects range from several thousand dollars to several million dollars. Look for more information in the coming year on the GLRI grant LTBB NRD was awarded in 2011 to install a boat washing station on a local lake in order to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. To find details on all GLRI projects visit https://restore.glnpo.net/glas_pub/qareports.htm



Map of the Bear River Watershed (white area). Photo Credit Tip Of The Mitt Watershed Council



Please Recycle



Questions, comments, or to join our E-mail list
Contact

Lucas Evans

Great Lakes Policy Specialist

Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

LEvans@ltbodawa-nsn.gov

Phone: (231) 242-1570



Printed on 100%

Post-consumer recycled paper

<http://www.ltbodawa-nsn.gov/Departments/NaturalResources/Programs/Environmental/EnvironmentalStart.htm>