



PRESIDENT OBAMA'S HISTORIC PROPOSAL WILL RE-ENERGIZE GREAT LAKES CLEANUP AND RESTORATION

ILLINOIS GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

Left to right: Illinois Governor and Great Lakes Commission Chair Pat Quinn at the 2009 Great Lakes Commission Semiannual Meeting in Washington, D.C.; Nancy Sutley, chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, was a special guest at Great Lakes Day; Michigan Sen. Carl Levin at the Great Lakes Day Congressional Breakfast.

Restoration Initiative made 2009 a banner year

Flush with a resounding vote of commitment – and cash – from Washington in the form of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), Member states of the Great Lakes Commission, with support from Canadian Associate Member provinces, rolled up their sleeves in 2009 to seize full advantage of the opportunity.

The unprecedented \$475 million program was unveiled in February 2009 as part of President Barack Obama's FY 2010 budget proposal. It focused on the most critical environmental concerns facing the Great Lakes, including invasive species, toxic sediments, nonpoint source pollutants and wildlife habitat loss. There were also components covering accountability, education, monitoring, and communication.

"President Obama's historic proposal will re-energize Great Lakes cleanup and restoration," said Illinois Governor Great Lakes Commission Chair Pat Quinn. "The lakes are an economic force for the Great Lakes region. This initiative will comple-

ment work now underway by state and local governments and expedite cleanup and economic redevelopment efforts along the Great Lakes."

Led by a Great Lakes Congressional Delegation that included leadership in some key positions, the GLRI passed both the House and Senate, emerged from conference with its full \$475 million appropriation intact, and was signed by Obama late in the year.

The Initiative's framework was largely derived from the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy completed in 2005 in which the states and governors joined with some 16 federal cabinet and agency organizations – including EPA, State, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, HUD, Transportation, Homeland Security, Army, CEQ, and Health and Human Services, tribes, non-government organizations and other stakeholders – to establish Great Lakes restoration priorities.

As the measure worked its way through Congress, the Great Lakes Commission assisted EPA in convening outreach meetings in July and August in all eight Great Lakes states. The meetings helped prepare the region for the upcoming

call for proposals and provided input to the federal agencies on how the GLRI could best be implemented. The sessions involved more than 1,000 participants and generated some 250 written comments on such issues as the role of the states, how priorities will be established, and maximizing administrative efficiency and accountability.

As the year closed, the first round of projects to be supported by the GLRI were being drafted in response to a request for proposals issued by the EPA, which is expected to award up to \$120 million for an estimated 400 projects. Another \$6.5 million was to be awarded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

Great Lakes Day featured high-level speakers

Two Cabinet-level speakers were the centerpiece of the combined 2009 GLC Semiannual Meeting and Great Lakes Day in Washington in February. Lisa Jackson, administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Nancy Sutley,



AS THE GREAT LAKES GO, SO GOES THE NATIONAL POLICY AS TO WATER

U.S. EPA ADMINISTRATOR LISA JACKSON

Left to right: Executive Director Tim Eder, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson, and GLC Vice Chair Todd Ambis; student volunteers from Bunker School celebrate habitat restoration efforts at Muskegon Lake, Mich.

chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, were both on hand to underscore the Obama Administration's commitment to fulfilling campaign promises involving Great Lakes restoration and protection.

"As the Great Lakes go, so goes the national policy as to water," said Jackson, noting that Obama established his support for Great Lakes protection early in his campaign and was committed to following through with not only the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, but also other legislative vehicles such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

With *Restoration as an Economic Development Strategy* as an underlying theme of the meeting, Commission Chair Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn exhorted Commission Member states and Canadian provinces to maximize the potential of the lakes to lure new business and investment. Joe Roman, director of the Greater Cleveland Partnership, presented the regional chamber's "Business Agenda for Economic Transformation in the Great Lakes Region" at a panel session.

Among actions taken by the Commission were resolutions endorsing reauthoriza-

tion of the Coastal Zone Management Act, supporting reform of the Harbor Maintenance Tax and Trust Fund, and supporting the American Wind Energy Association's Windpower Conference in Chicago in May 2009.

GLC stimulus-funded programs aid habitat, air quality

Two projects supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) were awarded to the Great Lakes Commission in 2009, the largest a \$10 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to stabilize shoreline and restore wildlife habitat on 24 acres of wetland on Muskegon Lake in west Michigan. The project was among 50 habitat restoration projects funded by NOAA nationally, with some \$167 million designated within ARRA for marine and coastal restoration.

Other stimulus-funded habitat programs in the Great Lakes region included \$4.7

million to remove fish passage barriers and a dam on the Milwaukee River near Port Washington, Wis., and \$1.4 million to restore and reconnect six miles of stream spawning habitat in the Dunes Creek watershed near Hammond, Ind.

For the Muskegon Lake project, one of the largest in GLC history, the Commission is partnering with the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) to restore some 10,000 feet of shoreline "hardened" over several decades by broken concrete, foundry slag, sheet metal and other materials. The project will also remove more than 180,000 tons of degraded lake fill to improve aquatic habitat for fish and other species. The project includes a job creation commitment and is projected to generate almost 40,000 labor hours to support 125 jobs. More than \$20 million will be contributed by local sources through in-kind services, donations of land, and conservation easements.

In another ARRA-funded project, this one offered through the EPA's National Clean Diesel Program, the GLC was awarded a \$1.2 million federal stimulus grant to help repower four 30-year-old generators



THE **UNIFIED RESPONSE** OF THE GREAT LAKES STATES AND PROVINCES TO **EVIDENCE OF ASIAN CARP** WAS A PRIME EXAMPLE OF HOW A SMALL GROUP OF COMMITTED PEOPLE **CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

ILLINOIS DNR DIRECTOR MARC MILLER

on two Great Lakes bulk carriers with cleaner, more fuel-efficient diesel engines. The project was carried out at Wisconsin shipyards in Sturgeon Bay and Superior on two self-unloading vessels owned and operated by the American Steamship Company (ASC) of Williamsville, N.Y.

The 900-horsepower diesel generator sets, two on each vessel, were original equipment on the 770-foot M/V *H. Lee White* built in 1976 and the 1,000-foot M/V *Indiana Harbor* built in 1979. The units are used to supply electrical power to the vessels. The two ASC vessels operate primarily in the iron ore, coal and stone trades between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes.

By replacing the old generator sets – unregulated by EPA because of their age – with new models that comply with EPA Tier 2 emissions regulations, nitrous oxide (NO_x) emissions will be reduced by 46 percent and carbon monoxide (CO) by 74 percent. This will result in some 9.1 tons less NO_x over a year and 2.8 tons less CO. Significant reductions will also be realized in hydrocarbons and particulate

matter, and greater fuel efficiency will save up to 8,500 gallons of fuel a year per engine. The repowering work was done during the winter lay-up season of 2010 and will fulfill ARRA objectives of job creation by generating over 12,000 labor hours, which translates to about 34 full-time jobs. Also supported will be jobs involved in manufacturing and shipping the new diesel units.

Threat of Asian carp drew a regional response

Concerns over Asian carp nearing Lake Michigan via the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal reached a crescendo in late 2009 as new detection technologies suggested the invasive fish had neared and possibly already gotten past electric barriers established to contain them. The situation became even more critical when one of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-operated barriers was scheduled to be

shut down for maintenance in December.

As a stop-gap measure, the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources developed a plan to apply a potent dosage of the toxic chemical rotenone to a six-mile stretch of the waterway to prevent migration of Asian carp upstream during the outage. Constrained by budgets and limited stocks of the chemical, the agency, working with the Great Lakes Commission and other agencies, asked for help. The response was swift and substantial, as GLC Member states and Associate Member provinces immediately provided the additional resources in the form of money, manpower, chemicals and equipment to assure the project's success.

“Operation Silver Screen” involved some 450 people and 30 watercraft in a joint operation carried out in difficult weather conditions, with no casualties and, most significantly, no evidence of Asian carp migration through the barriers during the shutdown.

Wrote Illinois DNR Director Marc Miller, GLC commissioner, of the experience,



Left to right: the 1,000 foot M/V *Indiana Harbor*, recipient of two new, cleaner operating diesel generators under an ARRA grant administered by the GLC; Asian carp jumping; groundbreaking ceremonies for the Soo Lock Expansion Project at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., including, from right, Michigan Rep. Bart Stupak, Michigan Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, Brig. Gen. John Peabody, Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, Lt. Col. James Davis, Commander of the Corps of Engineers Detroit District, and Kirk Stuedle, Secretary of the Michigan Department of Transportation.

“The unified response of the Great Lakes states and provinces to evidence of Asian Carp near the electric barrier system on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship canal this past December was a shining leadership moment for our region, and a prime example of how a small group of committed people can make a difference.”

GLIN Labs: New online tools to aid Great Lakes decisionmaking

The GLC-led Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN: www.glin.net) launched GLIN Labs in September 2009, a new research and development portal to leverage the latest and greatest web applications to benefit the Great Lakes.

Supported by a grant from the Great Lakes Protection Fund, GLIN Labs provides an online meeting space where beta applications are being researched,

designed, tested and launched, including the platform for GLINv2.0. The vision is to allow users to integrate multiple sets of data into applications that display information of value to Great Lakes decision-makers, businesses and other interests. The project is also scoping out the future path for GLIN, assisted by an advisory team, which includes experts from Google, Yahoo and a variety of regional data providers and Internet technologists.

Visit labs.glin.net to view and comment on the latest applications! Similar to Google Labs, GLIN visitors are encouraged to test drive the products and tools under development and provide feedback.

Soo Lock project saw long-awaited construction start

The Great Lakes Commission involvement in the Soo Locks expansion project dates back to 1983 when the Commission first called for replacement of the

outmoded Davis and Sabin locks with a new large lock. Over a quarter-century later, ground was broken in summer 2009 for the project which will create a second large lock between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes.

The lock is designed to accommodate the largest classes of Great Lakes bulk carriers, including the 13 thousand-foot vessels that comprise over 70 percent of the U.S.-flag carrying capacity on the lakes. At present there is only one lock at the Soo, the Poe Lock, large enough for these vessels which operate largely in the iron ore, coal and stone trades.

A festive spirit surrounded groundbreaking ceremonies held at the construction site, which drew Michigan Senators Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, Michigan Congressman Bart Stupak, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Assistant Secretary for Civil Works Terrance Salt, and Great Lakes Commissioner and Lake Carriers’ Association President James Weakley. Also on hand were USACE Great Lakes and Ohio River District Commander Brig. Gen. John Peabody and USACE Detroit District Commander Lt. Col. James Davis.

“For the State of Michigan this represents a much needed infusion of jobs and economic impact, particularly for the eastern Upper Peninsula where it will be welcome indeed,” said Michigan Lt. Gov. John Cherry, GLC immediate past chair. “For the Great Lakes region as a whole, it represents a significant investment in a navigational infrastructure that is critical to such core industries as steel manufacturing, power generation and construction.”

The first phase of construction, building cofferdams to de-water the site, was enabled by a \$17 million appropriation in the omnibus spending bill enacted by Congress and signed by the President earlier in the year. The total project cost is estimated at \$485 million and with sufficient funding could be completed in about 10 years.