



Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

In the President's FY2010 Budget

A Jump-Start for Great Lakes Restoration

President Obama's proposed FY2010 budget includes a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative that will accelerate Great Lakes restoration by investing \$475 million to confront some of the most serious threats to the region, including invasive species, nonpoint source pollution and toxic sediments. It represents a significant down payment on a multi-year effort to restore the Great Lakes and help revive the region's struggling economy. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is specifically targeted at the following priorities:

- Cleaning up toxic substances and Areas of Concern (\$147 million)
- Preventing or removing aquatic invasive species (\$60 million)
- Improving nearshore health and preventing nonpoint source pollution (\$98 million)
- Restoring and protecting habitat and wildlife (\$105 million)
- Evaluating and monitoring progress (\$65 million).

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative will be a multiagency effort led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Funds are expected to be allocated strategically to implement both federal programs and projects implemented by states, tribes, municipalities, universities, and other organizations. EPA will transfer portions of the appropriated funding to other federal agencies for distribution. It is estimated that 60 percent or more of the funding will be distributed to nonfederal entities through existing contracts and grants as well as new programs. Funding under the Initiative is intended to build on, but not take the place of, existing federal activities. Federal agencies will be expected to maintain their current base level of funding for Great Lakes activities. The Initiative does not address wastewater and drinking water infrastructure activities, which will continue to be supported under the existing Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds. The President's budget includes an additional \$3.9 billion nationwide for these two programs.

A Region Ready for Implementation

The Great Lakes region is ready to implement on-the-ground restoration activities and has a strong plan in place to guide the implementation of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Building on years of research, monitoring and planning, the region came together and developed the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes*. The Strategy was developed with input from more than 1,500 stakeholders and identifies priorities, defines problems, outlines solutions, and provides clear goals and objectives for measuring progress in cleaning up the Great Lakes. The Strategy is accepted by state and federal agencies, business and industry, and environmental organizations as the primary blueprint for restoring the Great Lakes. The Strategy is organized around eight priorities identified by the Great Lakes Governors: stopping aquatic invasive species; enhancing fish and wildlife resources; restoring and protecting coastal health; remediating Areas of Concern; controlling nonpoint source pollution; reducing toxic pollution; enhancing indicators and information; and promoting sustainable development. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative represents a condensed version of these priorities.

Several of the Great Lakes states have developed plans to address Great Lakes problems within their jurisdiction. These plans take a state-level approach to implementing the recommendations of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy. In addition, each of the remaining 30 U.S. Areas of Concern – or “toxic hot spots” – has cleanup plans and measurable, science-based restoration targets. Other plans have been developed by entities such as the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Ducks Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy for specific priorities, such as restoring and conserving fisheries and waterfowl habitat, and controlling aquatic invasive species. The region is prepared to use this funding to address real problems and produce measurable improvements for the environment and the economy.

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Ensuring Effective Coordination and Clear Accountability

Using the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration as a foundation, federal and state agencies, tribes and nongovernmental partners are working together to address the most serious problems affecting the Great Lakes. Interagency teams are addressing degraded habitat, toxic “hot spots,” invasive species, contaminated beaches, and other issues. The institutional, technical and policy infrastructure is largely in place to effectively administer large-scale funding for Great Lakes restoration. The Great Lakes states are committed to working with EPA to ensure that effective mechanisms are in place to coordinate activities with state priorities, monitor progress, ensure accountability, and achieve measurable results. To help track progress under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the EPA has identified specific milestones and accomplishments that it plans to achieve with full funding.

Cleaning up toxic substances and Areas of Concern:

- Clean up more than one million cubic yards of contaminated sediments
- Restore and “delist” five Areas of Concern in the U.S.
- Issue grants to states and other stakeholders to restore beneficial uses, such as fishing and swimming
- Identify, prioritize and clean up sources of pollution (e.g., mercury and PCBs) in 400 impaired watersheds.

Preventing or removing aquatic invasive species:

- Develop and test up to six ballast water sampling and treatment technologies
- Target up to 50 non-native species that are not yet established but are being traded in commerce and quantify their potential for release and spread to prioritize controls or restrictions
- Accelerate implementation of aquatic nuisance species management plans developed by the Great Lakes states.

Improving near-shore health and preventing nonpoint source pollution:

- Identify and clean up sources of contaminants at over 100 beaches that were closed five or more days in 2007
- Collaborate with states and other partners to fund on-the-ground projects to control runoff and erosion via increased funding for Farm Bill programs, including the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

Restoring and protecting habitat and wildlife:

- Remove 40 barriers to fish passage
- Protect and restore 9,000 acres of wetland and other habitats near lakes, streams and coasts
- Restore 1,000 miles of streams to improve fish habitat by improving passage and stabilizing erosion
- Issue grants to tribal authorities to restore more than 1,500 acres of wetlands.

Great Lakes Restoration and the Economy

An investment in Great Lakes restoration will help with other efforts to reinvigorate the economy of a region especially hard hit by recent downturns in the global economy. In the Great Lakes region, freshwater and access to the lakes are intertwined with economic activity and are fundamental to our future. The Brookings Institution has estimated that implementing the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy will generate \$50 billion in long-term benefits. A coalition of more than 30 metropolitan Chambers of Commerce in the Great Lakes region has highlighted Great Lakes restoration as a critical component of a larger agenda for creating jobs and revitalizing our regional economy. Areas where cleanups have been completed are planning important waterfront redevelopment projects. For example, cleaning up contaminated sediments, alone, is projected to increase coastal property values by \$12 billion to \$19 billion. Boating, fishing, hunting and wildlife-watching in the Great Lakes region generate over \$50 billion in economic activity annually and support hundreds of thousands of jobs. Abundant fresh water, recreational amenities, and other benefits from the Great Lakes will be vital for attracting new industries and young workers in the future. The Great Lakes give our region a unique, competitive advantage in attracting jobs and investment in a global economy. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative provides an unprecedented opportunity to create jobs, stimulate economic development and invest in our nation’s freshwater resources that will be central to the future of the eight-state Great Lakes region.