

The Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat Characterization and Restoration Project

A cooperative agreement between the Great Lakes Commission and the Coastal Services Center of the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

April, 2003

Overview

The Great Lakes Commission, in cooperation with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is undertaking a project to characterize Lake St. Clair's coastal habitat and develop a restoration and conservation plan based on that characterization. The project is being conducted under a two-year cooperative agreement with NOAA's Coastal Services Center under its Landscape Characterization and Restoration program. The Great Lakes Commission is the principal cooperator with NOAA and will work cooperatively with various other project partners to gather data and information about Lake St. Clair coastal habitat and incorporate that information into a digital information resource. The digital information resource will provide the basis for development of a coastal habitat restoration and conservation plan for Lake St. Clair.

What Will the Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat Project Do?

The Lake St. Clair coastal habitat project will produce:

- A GIS database and complementary narrative information resource characterizing and assessing the status of Lake St. Clair coastal habitat.
- A decisionmaking tool for evaluating the impacts of various management decisions on Lake St. Clair coastal habitat.
- A draft coastal habitat restoration and conservation plan that will be integrated into the larger Lake St. Clair Management Plan.

The habitat restoration and conservation plan will be a concise document that synthesizes scientific data and associated information compiled during the study process. The project calls for the plan to identify priority areas for coastal habitat conservation and restoration. The plan will also identify specific actions that need to be taken, lead agencies responsible for implementing those actions and methods for ensuring ongoing assessments to measure progress toward the improvement of coastal habitat in the Lake St. Clair basin. To the extent feasible, the habitat restoration plan will be integrated into the Lake St. Clair Management Plan under development.

How Will the Plan and Other Products Be Developed?

The habitat restoration and conservation plan is being developed in partnership with the Michigan Natural Features Inventory and other U.S. and Canadian federal, state, provincial, local, nonprofit and tribal/First Nation entities.

The project is administered through a multi-tiered structure featuring a Project Management Team, a Project Advisory Committee, and a Core Group. A Decision Support Working

Group has been established to guide the development of the decisionmaking tool.

- The Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat Project Management Team includes representatives from federal, state/provincial, tribal/First Nation and local agencies; private interests, non-profit organizations and academic institutions with data, technical expertise or management responsibilities involving the Lake St. Clair coastal zone. It will provide information, feedback and leadership in developing all project products.
- The Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat Project Advisory Committee includes additional stakeholders with a broader array of interest in Lake St. Clair that can provide feedback and oversight on the project to ensure that project products build on and are integrated with the larger Lake St. Clair Management Plan and related initiatives.
- The Project Core Group consists of the Great Lakes Commission (also the project Secretariat), Michigan Natural Features Inventory and NOAA's Coastal Services Center. The Core Group is charged with providing project leadership and spearheading the work involved with the development of specific project products, including data compilation and analysis, the draft habitat plan and the integrated coastal management tool. Secretariat responsibilities include project administration and coordination.

Coordination with Other Management Initiatives

The entire Lake St. Clair coastal habitat project is designed to build on existing Lake St. Clair initiatives. For more information, about these related initiatives, visit www.glc.org/stclair.

Timeline

The Lake St. Clair coastal habitat project began in September 2002 and will continue for approximately two years.

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