



Cleaning Up Toxic Sediments

The Great Lakes states, in collaboration with U.S. EPA and local communities, are cleaning up 30 Areas of Concern (AOC) designated under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. These “toxic hot spots” include rivers, lakes and bays located across the Great Lakes region. Severe pollution in these areas has caused beneficial use impairments, such as restrictions on drinking water and beach closures. Detailed cleanup plans are being implemented in the AOCs to restore beneficial uses for local residents. Contaminated sediments are the most significant – and the most costly – pollution problem in the AOCs. In 2002 Congress passed the Great Lakes Legacy Act (P.L. 107-303) to provide dedicated funding for cleaning up contaminated sediments in the AOCs, with a minimum 35 percent of cleanup costs required from non-federal partners. Congress renewed the Act in 2008, authorizing



Ruddiman Creek cleanup in Muskegon, Mich.

- \$50 million annually to monitor, evaluate or remediate contaminated sediments, or prevent new contamination;
- \$3 million annually for research on innovative remediation technologies;
- \$1 million annually for public outreach and education;
- the use of Legacy Act funds to restore habitat at contaminated sediment cleanup sites; and
- full federal funding to evaluate contaminated sediment sites in preparation for full cleanups.

Great Lakes Commission Requests to Congress

The Great Lakes Commission requests congressional support for the following priorities to clean up toxic sediments:

- **Fully fund the Great Lakes Legacy Act at \$54 million and increase its annual funding authorization to \$150 million.** In 2008 the Great Lakes states identified a need for nearly \$500 million to clean up currently-known contaminated sediment sites in the Great Lakes.
- **Appropriate \$11.7 million to implement the AOC program,** including \$10 million for the Great Lakes states and community-based coordinating councils and \$1.7 million to U.S. EPA for technical support, regional coordination and program oversight.
- **Appropriate \$4 million for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Great Lakes Remedial Action Plan Program** for engineering and planning assistance to prepare sites for Legacy Act cleanups and to address other pollution problems.
- **Appropriate \$2 million for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Program** to restore fish and wildlife resources in the AOCs. NOAA funding will help complete habitat restoration at sites cleaned up under the Great Lakes Legacy Act and address other habitat restoration needs in the AOCs.

Funding History

AOC Priority	Fiscal Year Funding (millions of dollars)					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	GLC Request
Great Lakes Legacy Act	\$22.3	\$29.3	\$30	\$34.5	TBD	\$54.00
AOC Program Funding to U.S. EPA, States & Local Groups ¹	\$5.3	\$5.2	\$4.9	\$4.9	TBD	\$11.70
Army Corps of Engineers Great Lakes RAP Program	\$0.25	\$0.06	\$0	\$0.43	TBD	\$4.00
NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	TBD	\$2.00

¹Includes AOC and Lakewide Management Plan funding in base budget for U.S. EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office.

Committee Jurisdiction

AOC Priority	Committee Jurisdiction
Great Lakes Legacy Act – Appropriations	House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
AOC Program Funding to U.S. EPA, States & Local Groups	House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Army Corps of Engineers Great Lakes RAP Program	House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
NOAA Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Program	House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies

Progress to Date

Cleaning up toxic sediments under the Great Lakes Legacy Act: Approximately \$126 million has been appropriated for the Act since 2004. Eight cleanup projects and nine projects to monitor and evaluate contaminated sediments have been completed or are under way with a federal cost share of \$114 million and local funding of \$88 million. The eight cleanup projects alone will remove more than 1.3 million cubic yards of toxic sediments from the Great Lakes. There are eight projects under review, in development, or anticipated with an expected federal cost share of more than \$80 million.

Restoring beneficial uses and “delisting” AOCs: The first U.S. AOC – Oswego River in New York – was removed (or “delisted”) from the list of AOCs in 2006. Several other AOCs are expected to be delisted in coming years. AOCs are also removing individual beneficial use impairments as environmental goals are met.

Improving valuable fish and wildlife resources: As contaminated sediment cleanups are completed, U.S. EPA, NOAA and other agencies are rehabilitating fish and wildlife resources. In 2007 NOAA received seven proposals requesting \$21 million for large-scale habitat restoration projects in the AOCs. With continued support, this “clean and restore” approach will ensure a clean and fully-functional ecosystem, while also improving recreational opportunities.

Coordinating federal and state cleanup efforts: A Federal-State AOC Coordinating Committee has been established to improve the efficiency of regional efforts and leverage resources from all available programs.

Economic and Environmental Benefits

Benefiting local communities: The AOCs are located in each of the eight Great Lakes states, where pollution impacts thousands of local residents. Cleanup efforts will directly benefit local communities.

Safeguarding public health: Cleanup efforts will address public health threats from toxic sediments, bacterial contamination and other pollution problems in the AOCs.

Restoring beneficial uses: Cleaning up the AOCs will restore and enhance beneficial uses that are important to local communities, such as swimming beaches, fishing, and drinking water.

Increasing property values and promoting economic development: The AOCs include valuable waterfront areas that are vital for economic development. Studies project that property values in areas near contaminated sites will increase by up to 25 percent after the sites are cleaned up, and The Brookings Institution has projected that cleaning up contaminated sediments in Areas of Concern will raise coastal property values by \$12-\$19 billion.

More Information

Great Lakes Information Network, Areas of Concern: www.glin.net/envt/pollution/aoc.html

USEPA Areas of Concern: www.epa.gov/glnpo/aoc

Great Lakes Legacy Act: www.epa.gov/glnpo/sediment/legacy

Other Areas of Concern Resources: www.glc.org/rap/resources