

# SUSTAINING PROGRESS TOWARD GREAT LAKES RESTORATION AND ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION

## Regional Priorities for the Great Lakes

The Great Lakes community thanks Congress for supporting the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), a bipartisan plan to restore the Great Lakes, and requests continued support in FY 2012. The GLRI is supporting implementation of a comprehensive cleanup strategy that is broadly endorsed by the Great Lakes states, cities, tribes, conservation groups and business and industry. The Initiative is an unprecedented, multi-year effort to restore the Great Lakes and leverage them to create jobs, stimulate economic development and revitalize our economy.

### ***Our top priority for 2011: Maintain funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative!***

Restoring the Great Lakes is a long-standing priority that has united our region. Our Great Lakes restoration program began with priorities established by the region's governors, which guided development of a comprehensive restoration strategy completed in 2005. Under the GLRI the Great Lakes community is now implementing this strategy with strong bipartisan support from Congress. Sustaining progress under the GLRI is a wise investment that will create jobs and generate significant economic benefits for the eight-state Great Lakes region and our nation as a whole.

**Strengthening a vital economic asset:** The Great Lakes are a core element of our regional infrastructure that support our economy and define our way of life. Fully implementing our Great Lakes restoration strategy is projected to generate \$50 billion or more in long-term economic benefits.

**Strategically targeting urgent problems:** The GLRI addresses serious threats to the Great Lakes: shutting the door on invasive species such as Asian carp; cleaning up toxic sediments; controlling polluted runoff and cleaning up beach pollution; restoring degraded wetlands; and conserving and enhancing valuable fish and wildlife resources.

**Improving accountability:** The GLRI is supported by sound science and guided by an Action Plan with detailed performance goals and clear accountability standards.

**Producing on-the-ground results:** The GLRI is enabling us to implement on-the-ground actions that are putting people to work and directly benefitting local communities. Nearly 300 restoration projects are underway and hundreds more await funding.

**Leveraging local contributions:** Great Lakes states, cities, tribes, and nongovernmental organizations are investing scarce resources to implement the GLRI and generate benefits for their communities.

We ask Congress to maintain its support for the GLRI and to strengthen federal collaboration with state, tribal and local partners by reducing administrative burdens and streamlining the process by which funding is directed to states, cities, tribes, and nongovernmental groups to address local restoration priorities. The President has requested \$350 million for the GLRI in FY 2012.

## Other Priorities for Restoring the Great Lakes and Strengthening our Regional Economy

The GLRI addresses many, but not all, of the challenges facing the Great Lakes. Congress must maintain core programs that help us conserve and manage the Great Lakes and take action on other critical priorities.

**Invest in water infrastructure:** The GLRI does not address this critical need. We urge Congress to reauthorize and provide funding for the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs to end sewer overflows, keep Great Lakes beaches open and safeguard drinking water supplies.

**Halting Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species:** The imminent threat of Asian carp invading the Great Lakes underscores the urgent need to protect the region against damaging aquatic invasive species. We ask Congress to support full implementation of the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework and other efforts to safeguard the Great Lakes from Asian carp. We also urge development of effective federal ballast discharge regulations and continued support for the sea lamprey program and other successful control efforts.

***The Great Lakes region is united in asking Congress to support these priorities.***



Great Lakes Commission



Healing Our Waters<sup>®</sup>  
Great Lakes Coalition



Great Lakes  
Fishery Commission



Great Lakes and  
St. Lawrence Cities Initiative



Chippewa Ottawa  
Resource Authority



Council of  
Great Lakes Industries



Great Lakes Metro  
Chambers Coalition

Photos, left: boating in Lake Michigan off the coast of Chicago, Illinois; right: walking along the Lake Superior shore in northern Wisconsin.