

# 2009 Status Report and Legislative Agenda

Prepared by the Statewide Public Advisory Council for Michigan's Great Lakes Areas of Concern Program

April 2009

## Background

The Statewide Public Advisory Council thanks the legislature for its continued support for cleaning up Michigan's 14 Areas of Concern designated under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. This successful program is removing toxic pollution, safeguarding drinking water, restoring recreational opportunities and advancing economic development in our state's most heavily impacted waterfront areas. The Statewide Public Advisory Council, representing Michigan's Great Lakes Areas of Concern, urges continued support for this important program.

## Progress Report: A Record of Success

- ✓ **Cleaned up toxic sediments:** Since 2002 approximately 330,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediments have been cleaned up using funding from the Clean Michigan Initiative bond program and the Great Lakes Legacy Act, a federal program for cleaning up toxic sediments. Four additional sediment cleanups are being developed.
- ✓ **Leveraged federal funds:** Michigan has received more than \$21 million in federal funds for cleanups in the Areas of Concern. All DEQ staff dedicated to the program are funded by the federal government. DEQ and local partners recently applied for more than \$50 million in federal funding for large-scale fish and wildlife restoration projects in the Areas of Concern. The program's success is attracting increased support from federal agencies.
- ✓ **Established science-based cleanup goals:** DEQ has completed science-based criteria to measure progress in Michigan's Areas of Concern, and, ultimately, to remove them from the list of Great Lakes "toxic hot spots."
- ✓ **Documented progress:** DEQ has formally removed five environmental impairments under the Areas of Concern program and is preparing to remove several others. DEQ's new biennial updates are documenting progress and identifying remaining cleanup needs in the Areas of Concern.
- ✓ **Implemented a strategic approach:** DEQ has implemented a focused, strategic approach to allocating resources, establishing priorities, and documenting progress in restoring Michigan's Areas of Concern.

## Legislative Agenda

- 1) **Maximize Michigan's potential to secure federal funding for the Great Lakes:** Ensure that we benefit from growing federal support for the Great Lakes by supporting the executive branch's efforts to secure federal funding for Great Lakes restoration efforts, including state match required for federal grants. President Obama has proposed a **\$475 million initiative** to restore the Great Lakes. With its new *MI Great Lakes Plan*, Michigan can secure increased federal funding for cleanup and shoreline development efforts.
- 2) **Establish sustainable funding for programs that protect Michigan's air, land & water:** The legislature must provide long-term, sustainable funding for Michigan's environmental protection programs. In particular, the Council opposes relinquishing oversight of Michigan's wetland permitting program. Doing so will increase costs and delay permit approvals, hampering economic development and undermining environmental protections. Current funding mechanisms for this and other environmental programs are woefully inadequate. The legislature and DEQ need to develop fair and adequate funding mechanisms for programs that serve Michigan's citizens and businesses, while protecting public health and Michigan's valuable natural resources.
- 3) **Develop a new bond program to follow the Clean Michigan Initiative:** The CMI provided \$25 million to clean up contaminated sediments. Using these funds Michigan has implemented large-scale cleanups and leveraged more than \$20 million in federal funds. CMI funds are nearly exhausted. Without state funds, Michigan will be severely constrained in securing federal funds for remaining cleanup needs.

**The Statewide Public Advisory Council and the citizens in Michigan's 14 Areas of Concern thank you for helping to keep the Great Lakes great!**

## From Moonscape to Greenscape: Stamp Sands Remediation on the Keweenaw Peninsula

More than 200 million tons of stamp sands and smelter slag wastes from copper mining operations were dumped into Torch Lake and on its shoreline in the 1800s and early 1900s. U.S. EPA began remedial activities in 1998 under the federal Superfund law. Approximately 800 acres of stamp sand piles have been covered with soil and vegetation to prevent them from eroding into Torch Lake, Portage Lake and Lake Superior. The cleanup was completed in 2005.



Mason stamp sands two years after remediation.



Mason stamp sand area on Torch Lake before remediation.



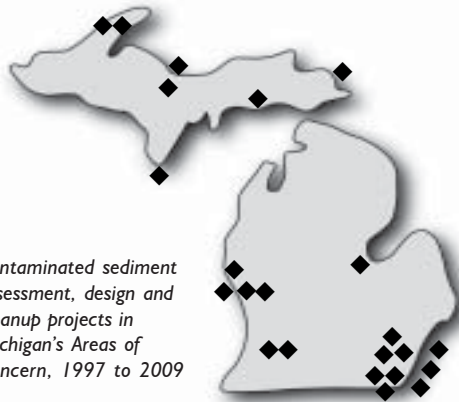
Native wildlife, such as this leopard frog, is returning to the formerly barren site.

## Scenes of



### Cleaning Up Toxic Sediments in Michigan's "Toxic Hot Spots"

Michigan is moving aggressively to remove contaminated sediments from local waterways using a variety of federal, state and non-governmental programs and funding sources. Approximately 1.6 million cubic yards of contaminated sediments have been cleaned up since 1997.



◆ Contaminated sediment assessment, design and cleanup projects in Michigan's Areas of Concern, 1997 to 2009

### Contaminated Sediment Cleanups Leverage Shoreline Restoration Funding for Muskegon Lake



Contaminated sediments have prevented public outdoor recreation in Muskegon Lake's Ruddiman Creek and pond, located in a city park next to a residential neighborhood in Muskegon. More than 90,000 cubic yards of toxic sediments were removed using \$8.8 million from the Great Lakes Legacy Act and \$4.7 million from the Clean Michigan Initiative. Two additional contaminated sediment cleanups are being planned. This work, coupled with other cleanup and pollution control efforts, has resulted in a comprehensive fish and wildlife restoration and shoreline redevelopment plan for Muskegon Lake.

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Artist rendering of habitat restoration proposed for the former Amoco Tank Farm site on Muskegon Lake.

## Federal Funding and Economic Benefits



### Bringing Federal Dollars to Michigan

President Obama has proposed a **\$475 million initiative** to restore the Great

Lakes. The initiative will target the most significant problems facing the Great Lakes and track progress in addressing them. If Congress provides the funds, Michigan's coastal communities could benefit from millions of dollars for restoration and development work.



### Economic Benefits from Restoring the Great Lakes

The Brookings Institution estimates over \$50 billion in long-term benefits from restoring the Great Lakes.

**Cleaning up contaminated sediments, alone, will raise coastal property values by \$12-\$19 billion.** *Healthy Waters, Strong Economy: The Benefits of Restoring the Great Lakes Ecosystem.* ([www.healthylakes.org/site\\_upload/upload/GrtLakesCostBenefit.pdf](http://www.healthylakes.org/site_upload/upload/GrtLakesCostBenefit.pdf))



### A Business Agenda for the Great Lakes

A coalition of Chambers of Commerce, including those for Detroit and Grand Rapids, has developed a business agenda for restoring

economic competitiveness in the region. The agenda highlights the importance of restoring the Great Lakes as part of a broader economic development strategy. *An Agenda for Jobs and Economic Transformation in the Great Lakes Region.* ([www.thepartnership.org/files/pdfs/BizAgenda%20FEB%2009.pdf](http://www.thepartnership.org/files/pdfs/BizAgenda%20FEB%2009.pdf))

# Success in Michigan's Great Lakes Areas of Concern



## Contaminated Sediment Cleanup Facilitates Economic Development on the Detroit River

The Black Lagoon, located on the lower Detroit River adjacent to the City of Trenton, trapped pollutants moving downstream from Detroit-area industries. The DEQ leveraged \$6.2 million in federal funds under the Great Lakes Legacy Act to match \$3.3 million from the Clean Michigan Initiative to clean up the lagoon. The City of Trenton plans to build a marina and park in the area, which will complement redevelopment plans for the adjacent McLouth Steel plant site. Nearby property values are projected to increase by \$60 million or more.



Oil plume entering the Black Lagoon on the Detroit River.



Proposed redevelopment for the Black Lagoon, including park, marina, condominiums and shops.

## Michigan's 14 Great Lakes Areas of Concern



Sport fishing brings more than a million dollars to the communities along the lower Detroit River each spring.

## Cleanups Leading to Restoration of Valuable Fish and Wildlife Resources and Recreational Opportunities

Restoring and enhancing valuable fish and wildlife resources -- and the recreational opportunities they provide -- is the next step after contaminated sediment cleanups and other pollution control activities are completed. Restoration plans for Michigan's Areas of Concern have identified specific sites where fish and wildlife can be restored and water-based recreation enhanced. Building on this planning, the DEQ and local partners have submitted proposals for more than \$50 million in federal funding for habitat restoration projects in the Areas of Concern. Fishing, hunting and wildlife watching generate more than \$4 billion each year for Michigan's economy.

## Plans to Guide Great Lakes Restoration



### A Comprehensive Plan to Restore the Great Lakes

The *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore*

*and Protect the Great Lakes* is a comprehensive restoration blueprint developed in 2005. Since that time, new coalitions among stakeholders and new cooperative actions are moving regional Great Lakes restoration and protection needs forward. ([www.gllrc.us/](http://www.gllrc.us/))



### Michigan's Great Lakes Restoration Plan

The new *MI Great Lakes Plan* will guide Michigan's

Great Lakes restoration and protection efforts. The plan will help Michigan leverage federal funding and emphasizes the economic benefits of restoring and protecting the Great Lakes. Among a number of critical issues, the plan supports actions to clean up Michigan's 14 Areas of Concern on the Great Lakes. ([http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/MI-GLPlan\\_262388\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/MI-GLPlan_262388_7.pdf))



### Cleanup Goals for Michigan's Toxic Hot Spots

DEQ has established measurable, science-based restoration goals

for Michigan's Areas of Concern. *Guidance for Delisting Michigan's Great Lakes Areas of Concern* provides a consistent, statewide approach for the cleanup process. (<http://www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-wb-aoc-delistguide.pdf>)

## Background on Michigan's Great Lakes Areas of Concern

Michigan is cleaning up 14 Great Lakes “toxic hot spots,” or Areas of Concern, designated under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Nearly half of the U.S. Areas of Concern are in Michigan. They are spread throughout the state, from southeast Michigan, to western Michigan to the Upper Peninsula. The areas include rivers, bays and lakes. Some are in heavily industrialized areas, such as the Rouge and Saginaw rivers. Others are in rural areas, such as those in the Upper Peninsula. In some cases, a single industry or facility is responsible for the major pollution problems. In most cases pollution stems from a number of sources.

The Areas of Concern suffer from severe pollution problems that threaten public health, damage valuable fish and wildlife resources, restrict recreational opportunities, and hamper waterfront redevelopment. The Department of Environmental Quality is implementing cleanup plans for the Areas of Concern in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and community-based advisory councils.



## The Statewide Public Advisory Council for Michigan's Great Lakes Areas of Concern Program

The Statewide Public Advisory Council is a coalition of local advisory councils that works with state, federal and local agencies in cleaning up the Areas of Concern.

Background on Michigan's Great Lakes Areas of Concern is available from the Statewide Public Advisory Council's website at <http://www.glc.org/spac/>.

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