



# Great Lakes Investments at work in **Minnesota**



**The state of Minnesota** – together with local communities, Indigenous Nations, nongovernmental organizations, business and industry – is collaborating with the federal government to implement a comprehensive restoration strategy for the Great Lakes. This partnership is generating on-the-ground actions that will improve Minnesota’s economy, environment and quality of life. These activities will benefit us today as well as the next generation of Minnesota residents and visitors who will look to the Great Lakes as an important resource to support their cultural, social, and economic well-being.

## **The Great Lakes: A Vital Economic Asset for Minnesota**

Lake Superior is one of Minnesota’s most valuable natural resources, serving as a source for drinking water and providing water for manufacturing, shipping, commercial and sport fishing, recreation and waterborne transportation. [Lake Superior supports:](#)

- an estimated **3.5 million visitors** to Minnesota’s “North Shore” each year, generating more than **\$1 billion** and supporting more than **20,000 jobs**;
- an **exceptional sport fishery** that generates more than **\$9 billion** in economic impact annually statewide;
- a **marine economy** supporting nearly **12,000 jobs** and more than **500 businesses** directly tied to Lake Superior that contribute **\$1.3 billion** to Minnesota’s GDP;
- a **recreational boating industry** that supports nearly **26,000 jobs** and **\$6.9 billion** in annual economic activity statewide;
- **capital investments for ports, terminals, and waterway infrastructure** totaling almost **\$300 million** since 2018; and
- a **maritime transportation network** critical to Minnesota’s mining and agricultural sectors, generating nearly **4,600 jobs** and **\$1.6 billion** annually in economic activity.

As these figures show, cleaning up the Great Lakes isn’t just about correcting mistakes of the past, but [leveraging a vital resource to build a better future](#).

## **Investing in Minnesota’s Communities**

The [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) (GLRI) is supporting the implementation of a comprehensive cleanup plan that has been broadly endorsed by the region’s governors, Indigenous Nations, cities, conservation groups, business and industry. Established in 2009, the GLRI builds on years of work to identify solutions to key problems facing the Great Lakes, including addressing the impacts of aquatic invasive species, cleaning up and managing contaminated sediments, controlling polluted runoff, restoring degraded wetlands and conserving and enhancing fish and wildlife resources.

Additionally, federal legislation enacted over the last several years has brought further investments into the Great Lakes region. Notably, the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA) and the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) (IRA) fund projects that upgrade drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, improve our maritime transportation network, enhance climate resilience and support conservation efforts in the region.

## Economic Benefits from Restoring the Great Lakes

Restoring the Great Lakes advances our region's broader strategy to create jobs, stimulate economic development and invest in freshwater resources and waterfront communities. A research team led by the Great Lakes Commission coordinated a study that found every dollar of federal spending on GLRI projects between 2010 and 2016 will produce \$3.35 in additional economic activity in the region through 2036. Another study by The Brookings Institution found that fully implementing the Great Lakes restoration strategy would generate \$80 billion to \$100 billion in benefits, including:

- **\$6.5 billion to \$11.8 billion** in direct benefits from [tourism, fishing and recreation](#);
- **\$50 million to \$125 million** in reduced costs to [municipalities](#); and
- **\$16.1 billion to \$26.5 billion** in benefits to the region's [largest metropolitan areas](#), including up to **\$300 million** for the [Duluth](#) metro area alone.

## Improving and Protecting Lake Superior

The GLRI builds on local and state efforts to solve the problems facing Lake Superior. Minnesota has identified a number of restoration goals, the largest of which is restoring the bistate [St. Louis River Area of Concern](#) (AOC) by implementing a comprehensive remedial action plan. As of September 2025, 83% of the plan's identified management actions are complete, and four of the AOC's nine beneficial use impairments have been removed. The state is also halting the introduction of invasive species through ballast water; reducing pollution in nearshore waters; improving habitat for fish and wildlife; and using the [Lake Superior Lakewide Action and Management Plan](#) (LAMP) to track and monitor progress, share information and build partnerships.

Minnesota has benefitted from the increase in GLRI funding the past five years with over \$117 million awarded for projects in 2022-2024. The increase in funding has helped support the following projects which are leading to [improved water quality in popular and frequented areas in the Lake Superior basin in Minnesota](#):

### St. Louis River Area of Concern in Duluth

- **Over \$177 million** to address contaminated sediments and restore habitat.

### Contaminant Monitoring

- Funding for several projects to [monitor mercury](#) in the environment.
- Funding for a critical project [monitoring PFAS in Minnesota fish](#), which supported the state's PFAS Blueprint.

### Invasive Species

- **Over \$630,000** to control invasive species in the St. Louis River Estuary.

### Green Infrastructure in Proctor, Two Harbors, Grand Marais, and Duluth

- **Over \$1.1 million** for green infrastructure projects to improve water quality in [Agate Bay and Burlington Bay](#) (Two Harbors).
- **Over \$3 million** in green infrastructure funds to reduce sediment and phosphorus in [Tischer Creek in Duluth](#)—located in a heavily used city park where residents and fish will enjoy improved water quality in an urban trout stream.
- **\$950,000** to restore brook trout habitat and improve water quality in Kingsbury Creek in Proctor.
- Three projects totaling **over \$2 million** in green infrastructure funds to reduce sediment and phosphorus in [Keene Creek in Duluth](#). These projects will also [protect a critical AOC habitat project at Grassy Point](#) where Keene Creek enters the St. Louis River.
- **\$250,000** to improve water quality by diverting [Chalberg Creek](#) from an eroding ditch back into its original channel, south of [Independence, MN](#).

### **Habitat Improvement and Aquatic Passage in Climate Resilient Native Brook Trout Streams**

- **Over \$500,000** for aquatic passage at [Hockamin Creek](#), a major tributary to the Baptism River.
- **Over \$1,000,000** to eliminate barriers in several other climate resilient [North Shore streams](#) since 2019.
- **\$270,000** to remove barriers to fish passage in [Berry Creek](#) in the [Upper Cloquet River Watershed](#).
- **\$675,000** to remove barriers to fish passage in [Coffee Creek in Duluth](#).
- **\$200,000** to improve riparian forests in the [St. Louis River Estuary](#).

### **Outreach and Education**

- **Over \$100,000** for Youth Education on Watershed Connections in [Hartley Park in Duluth](#).
- **Over \$20,000** for Indigenous Partnerships for Sturgeon Rearing and Education at the [Great Lakes Aquarium in Duluth](#).

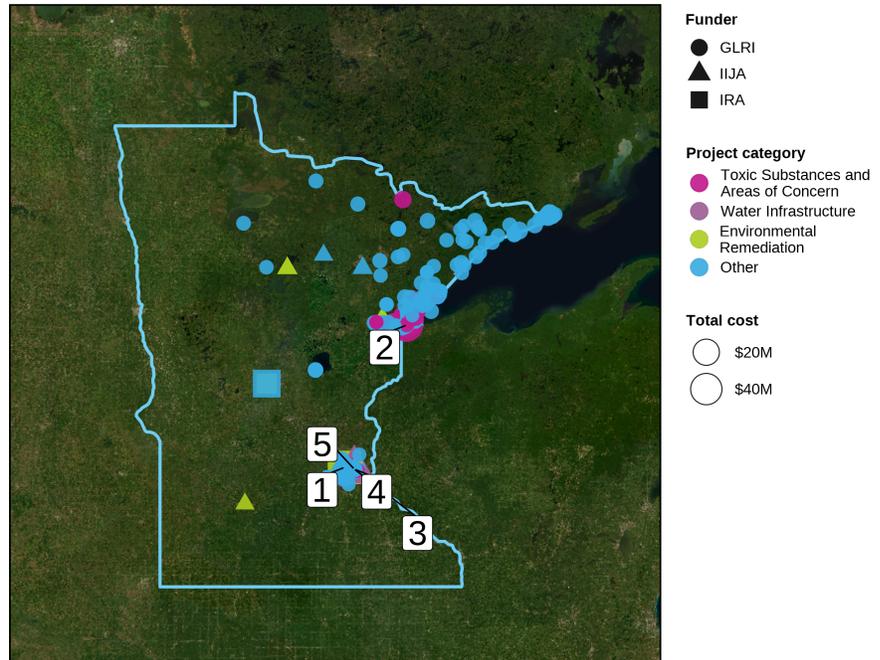
Minnesota is also considering a state [Clean Water Fund](#) (CWF) initiative to provide \$1 million in state FY 2025 of additional capacity funding to local governmental unit (LGU) partners within the Lake Superior basin. The CWF initiative would allow Minnesota to provide more funding to develop and implement LAMP projects and ensure LGUs can take advantage of more GLRI funding opportunities.

# The State of Minnesota

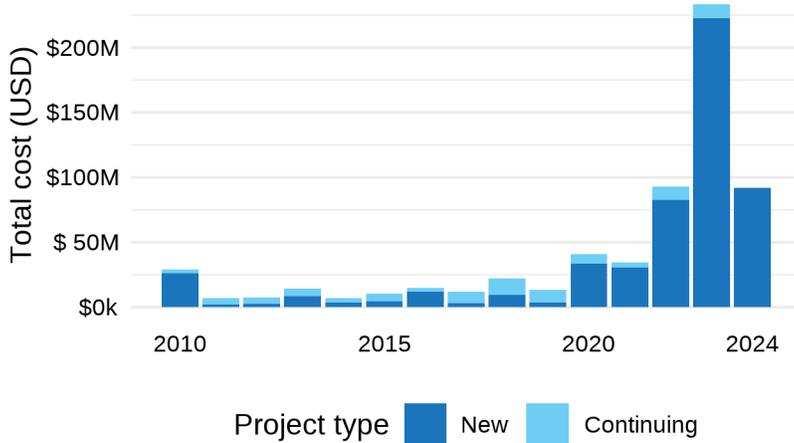
As of 2024, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) have funded 448 projects within the State of Minnesota, 176 of which have received additional funding after their first year. IRA and IIJA funding included in this report and in the Investment Tracker reflect only those programs directly related to Great Lakes Commission priorities.

The top-funded projects in the state are numbered in the map and detailed in the table below.

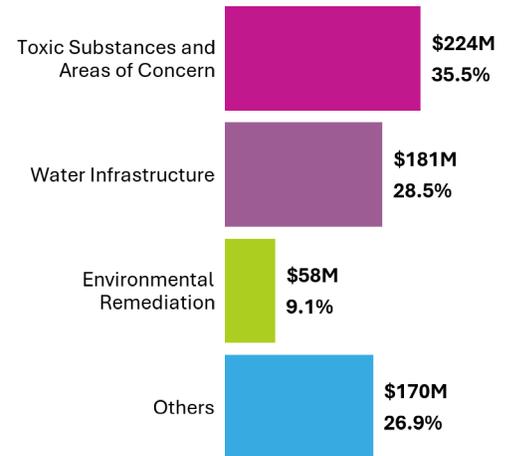
Learn more about these and other projects across the Great Lakes states at [investments.glc.org](https://investments.glc.org).



Total amount funded per year



Funding per category



Top-funded projects - Minnesota

#	Funder	Year	Project title	Recipient	Total funded
1	IRA	2024	Environmental and Climate Justice Block Grants: Region 5 Community Grantmaking for Environmental Justice (CGM4EJ)	The Minneapolis Foundation	\$50,000,000
2	GLRI	2022	Great Lakes Legacy Act Saint Louis River Area of Concern Spirit Lake Remedial Action	U.S. EPA	\$49,802,132
3	IIJA	2023	Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	Minnesota Public Facilities Authority	\$43,276,000
4	IIJA	2023	Clean Water State Revolving Fund	Minnesota Public Facilities Authority	\$35,984,300
5	IIJA	2023	Drinking Water State Revolving Fund	Minnesota Public Facilities Authority	\$30,211,500

Note: This report was automatically generated using data from U.S. federal government databases. Locations are approximate. See [investments.glc.org](https://investments.glc.org) for more information.