

Clinton River AOC Habitat Restoration

The Clinton River Project restored approximately two acres of coastal wetland marsh and spawning habitat, as well as increase recreational activities at Lake St. Clair Metropark.

Project Highlights

- Restoration of approximately two acres of coastal wetland marsh habitat
- Increase spawning and rearing habitat for phytophilic spawning fish, like Yellow Perch (*Perca flavescens*) and Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*), in the Black Creek channel
- Increase recreational activities at Lake St. Clair Metropark for paddlers, birders, and fishers
- Dredging of sediments and decades of *Phragmites* to create suitable channels and ponds in Black Creek
- Project is funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the U.S. EPA, and through the NOAA-GLC Regional Partnership.



Project location along Lake St. Clair

Environmental Benefits

Restore important wetland habitat
Enhance fish and wildlife habitat

Economic Benefits

Recreation
Improve sport-fishing
Tourism

Community Benefits

Increase recreation at Lake St. Clair Metropark
Improve water quality and ecosystem health

Background of the Area of Concern

Located north of Detroit in southeastern Michigan, the Clinton River is surrounded by biodiverse, but imperiled coastal wetland habitat, Lake St. Clair, and Lake St. Clair Metropark (formerly known as Metro Beach). While this area offers a range of activities for visitors and residents to enjoy, it has a past characterized by habitat degradation and pollution. Because of these factors, the Clinton River was declared an Area of Concern (AOC) under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1987. Clinton River is also listed for 8 of the 14 Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) evaluated under the AOC program, including Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations, Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat, and Degradation of Benthos. Numerous Remedial Action Report (RAP) updates have been published since the original 1988 report addressing specific plans and targets for delisting BUIs.

History of the River

The Clinton River was considered highly degraded due to a multitude of problems that included high total dissolved solids, sediment contamination caused by heavy metals, PCBs, and oil and grease, impacted biota, and pollutants, like high fecal coliform bacteria and nutrients. These factors led to the River's designation as an AOC, and continue affect the area today. The Clinton River Restoration Project's goals are to restore the wetland habitats, increase fish spawning and rearing habitat, improve water quality, provide more recreational opportunities at Lake St. Clair Metropark, and ultimately delist Clinton River as an AOC.



Dredging in Black Creek Marsh on December 11, 2017

Project Progress

The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) has done a significant amount of work to restore the coastal wetlands within the Clinton River AOC. Utilizing Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Great Lakes Commission (GLC) Regional Partnership, HCMA purchased private property containing significant Marsh acreage to allow for large-scale restoration of the Black Creek Marsh, including whole-scale *Phragmites* control and long-term hydrological restoration. HCMA has greatly reduced the percent cover of invasive *Phragmites* through aerial spraying, burning, and cutting. The area was also dredged to remove decades worth of sediment buildup and *Phragmites* to create channels and ponds for fish spawning and rearing habitat.

Funding and Partners

The Clinton River Area of Concern has received over \$30 million of funding from GLRI through the EPA and NOAA-GLC Regional Partnership. Monitoring of Black Creek Marsh is being managed and funded by HCMA and their contractor, ASTI. In addition, the Clinton River Watershed Council will monitor water quality, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division will monitor fish population, and lastly, Wayne State University is conducting large-scale and long-term monitoring of Lake St. Clair.

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