The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania – together with local communities, tribes, nongovernmental organizations and business and industry – is collaborating with the federal government to implement a comprehensive restoration strategy for the Great Lakes. With strong bipartisan support, this partnership is generating on-the-ground actions that will improve Pennsylvania’s economy, environment and quality of life. These activities will benefit the next generation of Pennsylvania citizens who will look to the Great Lakes as an important to their quality of life and economic well-being.

The Great Lakes:
A Vital Economic Asset for Pennsylvania
Lake Erie is among Pennsylvania’s most valuable natural resources and has extraordinary economic value for Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania’s Lake Erie coastal region provides:

- a home for an estimated 250,000 Pennsylvania residents and more than 3,000 jobs;
- Presque Isle State Park, which attracts 4 million visitors that spend an estimated $76.9 million annually;
- a tourism and recreation industry that contributes more than $65 million to Pennsylvania’s economy;
- harbors and marinas that support a $71 million annual recreational boating industry; and
- a growing steelhead fishery that generates nearly $10 million in expenditures and $6 million in value-added activity in Erie County.

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 Pennsylvania’s Waterfront Communities
The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is supporting implementation of a comprehensive cleanup plan that has been broadly endorsed by the region’s governors, tribes, cities, conservation groups, business and industry. Begun in 2009, the Initiative builds on years of work to identify solutions to key problems facing the Great Lakes, including:

- combating aquatic invasive species, such as Asian carp;
- cleaning up contaminated sediments in toxic hotspots;
- controlling polluted runoff and cleaning up beaches;
- restoring degraded wetlands; and
- conserving and enhancing fish and wildlife resources.

The GLRI is guided by an Action Plan with detailed performance goals and clear accountability standards. An interagency task force, led by U.S. EPA, is coordinating federal efforts and directing funding to states, cities and nongovernmental groups that are best able to address local restoration priorities.

Great Lakes Restoration in Pennsylvania
$12 million for 40 projects through FY2017
See GLRI projects in Pennsylvania and across the region at glrimap.glc.org

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 detailed 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
- $12 billion to $19 billion in increased property values in degraded shoreline areas, including up to $500 million for the Erie metro area alone.

Solving Problems Facing Lake Erie
GLRI funding was essential to removing Presque Isle Bay from the list of Great Lakes Areas of Concern, spurring more than a half billion dollars in public and private investment attracted by the restored water quality in Presque Isle Bay and Erie’s bayfront. The GLRI provides funding for water quality buoys, sensors, and monitoring that help protect public health and drinking water from harmful algae blooms and bacteria. GLRI support helped create the Pennsylvania Vested in Environmental Sustainability (VinES) Program that works with agriculture to reduce nutrient pollution to Lake Erie. Ongoing restoration priorities include preventing the loss of tourism dollars from beach closures; increasing municipal stormwater capacity and local cooperation; and improving local steelhead fisheries by restoring habitat along Lake Erie.

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Great Lakes Restoration at Work

Great Lakes Restoration at Work is an interactive map developed by the Great Lakes Commission showcasing nearly 2,600 restoration projects funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in its first eight years, FY 2010-2017. The map allows users to see projects by state, county or congressional district. Projects are fully searchable and can be sorted by title, lead agency, state and other parameters.

Using the Map

Selecting a project from the table will orient the map to the project site. The project locations may represent a specific site or the watershed in which restoration work is being conducted. In some cases the site is the location of the lead agency.

The map allows users to see the U.S. congressional districts in which projects are located. Selecting a congressional district on the map will show the member of Congress for that district, their website and the percentage of the district within the Great Lakes basin.

For additional background on the GLRI and specific projects, go to http://www.glri.us.