



# U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) Significant Activities Report

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March 2009

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### *GREAT LAKES REGIONAL COLLABORATION*

#### **Botulism Workshop Journal Article**

A journal submission summarizing the Great Lakes Basinwide Botulism Coordination Workshop and resulting options for next-steps in addressing botulism outbreaks was accepted for publication by The Botulinum Journal (<http://www.inderscience.com/tbj>). The article will be published in the journal's next quarterly edition.

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#### **Habitat Initiative Tribal Workshop**

GLNPO staff attended the February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) Habitat/Wetlands Initiative Workshop held in Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin. Sixteen Tribes and Tribal organizations attended the Workshop presented jointly by the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The Corps gave an overview of the GLRC Habitat/Wetlands Initiative project and funding databases. The GLC demonstrated the project database. Questions from the Tribes included: How often is the database being updated with current projects? What is the mechanism that will improve collaboration among organizations that submit projects to the database? What kinds of information or support will we

receive by entering our projects in this database to make it valuable to us? How effectively is the program being administered? Tribes stated that because their base funding is not protected, it is difficult to participate in a labor-intensive activity such as filling in the database. Tribes often only have one or two staff people who apply for grants, implement grant activities and other Tribal natural resource projects, and fill out all paperwork, making adding an extra database to the workload infeasible.

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### **LAKEWIDE MANAGEMENT PLANS**

#### **Outreach to Illinois Stakeholders**

The Illinois Park District Association held their annual conference *Soaring to New Heights* in Chicago, Illinois from January 29<sup>th</sup> through 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009. Lake Michigan Lakewide Management Plan (LaMP) Manager Judy Beck organized multiple sessions for the event in order to educate Illinois stakeholders on solutions to non-point source pollution that affect the Great Lakes. One session on landscaping with native species featured GLNPO staff member Danielle Green. As part of the panel *Climate Change, Turfgrass and the Environment*, Melissa Simon (ORISE Fellow) delivered a presentation on the projected ecological affects of global climate change and critical adaptation strategies. Turfgrass expert Derek Settle of the Chicago District Golf Association presented different techniques for managing pests and stormwater at golf courses. Judy Beck spoke on regional plans and resources for fostering “green” infrastructure. An engaging discussion with park district staff and managers concluded the session.

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Landsat Image of Chicago Lake Michigan Shoreline  
(photo courtesy of NASA)

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#### **Huron-Erie Corridor Meeting**

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009, GLNPO’s Rose Ellison participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Huron-Erie Corridor meeting: a binational meeting of habitat researchers throughout the Lake Huron-Lake Erie Corridor. The meeting covered updates on research over the past year, including: construction of a sturgeon spawning reef in the Detroit River; the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)/U.S. EPA’s historic Corridor mapping and habitation restoration target siting project; the Michigan Department of Natural Resources’ (MDNR) coastal wetland fish assessment; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) sturgeon surveys; the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) fish habitat research and modeling; research on the Northern Madtom (an endangered fish) in the Detroit River; and USGS’s emphasis on connectivity between larval fish and nursery areas. Participants discussed habitat restoration and research collaboration opportunities for the coming year. The meeting was sponsored by USGS and

Michigan Sea Grant, and hosted by U.S. EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office and Office of Research and Development. Representatives from U.S. EPA, USGS, USFWS, MDNR, DFO, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Walpole First Nations, and Detroit River Riverkeeper participated in the meeting.

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### Workshop on Impacts of the Shipping Industry and Global Climate Change

On Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009, approximately 110 people attended the Lake Superior Binational Forum's workshop on "*The Economic and Environmental Impacts of the Shipping Industry and Global Climate Change*" in Superior, Wisconsin. The speakers and their topics were as follows:

- Sustainable Superior: What is the City of Superior Doing to Protect Lake Superior?—*Mary Morgan, Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Superior*
- Treating Aquatic Invasive Species in Ballast Water and the Great Ships Initiative--*Dr. Mary Balcer, Director and Research Scientist at the Lake Superior Research Institute, University of Wisconsin-Superior*
- Climate Change Impacts on the Great Lakes Shipping Industry—*Dr. Richard Stewart, Co-Chair of Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute, UW-Superior*
- A Local Success Story: Twin Ports Interfaith Initiative on Global Warming--*Bill Mittlefehldt, Interfaith group organizer, and Northeast Minnesota CERT*

The Binational Forum also gave Lake Superior Binational Program Environmental Stewardship awards to two U.S. recipients: Duane Lahti of Oulu, Wisconsin, the former Lake



Ice-Covered Ship Enters Duluth Harbor  
(photo courtesy of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

Superior basin water leader for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, who served as a strong advocate for Lake Superior for 30 years; and the SMDC Health Systems of Duluth, Minnesota, for building the first Gold-level Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System certified building in Duluth, and the largest and one of the first Gold-level health facilities in the United States. The Stewardship Awards are given annually to American and Canadian young people, adults, businesses and industries, and communities or organizations that take outstanding actions that protect or restore the Lake Superior basin. This input session was also broadcast live on an EPA web site, making the information available to those who couldn't attend the



A Beach on Lake Superior's South Shore

meeting in person.

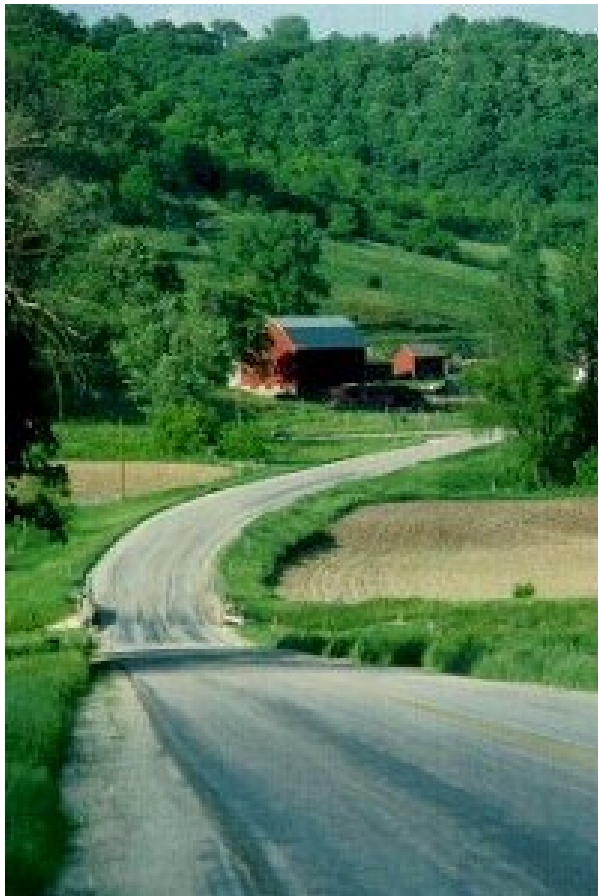
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### **Lake Superior Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan - Call and Status**

A plan for prevention of new introductions of aquatic invasive species (AIS) to Lake Superior is under development under the auspices of the Lake Superior LaMP. The plan will identify vectors and the associated pathways available to AIS for dispersal to the lake and will include recommendations for closing pathways that are open. The Plan builds on a number of existing AIS prevention and control plans, as well as regulatory programs in the Great Lakes states, Canadian provinces, and U.S. and Canadian federal governments. These include programs documented in previous Lake Superior LaMP reports; the Great

Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes; state, provincial, federal, and tribal management plans; and international, national, state, provincial, and local regulations.

Lake Superior has been the focus of special protection and restoration initiatives for many years, in recognition of its unique status among freshwater lakes in the world. This special status has been emphasized in the Lake Superior LaMP and the Lake Superior Binational Program since their inception. Canada and the U.S. share responsibility for protecting Lake Superior from the introduction of new AIS. The Lake Superior Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Plan has been developed to outline actions that need to be newly implemented, in addition to existing efforts, in order to close existing pathways on both sides of the border and to prevent new



Highway in Rural Wisconsin  
(photo courtesy of Wisconsin DOT)

invasions from entering and becoming established in the Lake Superior ecosystem. A concept map for vector and pathways prepared by a project team will show the routes AIS can take to get to Lake Superior. The draft Plan under development examines each of these and makes recommendations to close gaps in open pathways.

Representatives from the subgroup will be presenting the draft Plan at upcoming meetings including the Great Lakes Fishery Commission Spring meeting and the 2009 Meeting of the International Association for Great Lakes Research. Opportunities for input to the plan will be available in 2009.

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### **Landowner's/Realtor's Binder for Protection of Lake Superior**

The Lake Superior Work Group has prepared educational binders to help landowners protect the waters of Lake Superior and its watershed. The binders will help landowners find resources on the steps they can take to manage their property in ways that are in compliance with local regulations as well as being environmentally friendly. The binders will be distributed to each major city/jurisdiction in the Lake Superior basin. The binders are not compilations of existing materials, but provide guidance on where to find those materials.

The binders specifically focus on rural property owners since they have larger pieces of land and often have wells, septic systems and access to wetlands and water bodies. They also more frequently use backyard burn barrels for trash disposal because of inadequate information or perceived lack of other options. The binder will be available on the EPA web site in the near future. Copies may be obtained by contacting Lynelle Hanson of Wisconsin Extension Service, [lhanso14@uwsuper.edu](mailto:lhanso14@uwsuper.edu).

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### **CONTAMINATED SEDIMENTS**

#### **Ashtabula River Habitat Restoration Sampling Complete**

On February 3<sup>rd</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009, GLNPO and the Ohio EPA collected soil samples on the banks of the Ashtabula River to aid in the design of habitat mitigation plans for the Ashtabula River Great Legacy Act (GLLA) sediment remediation project. Utilizing the Ohio EPA's drilling equipment, GLNPO's contractor and the Ohio EPA collected a total of 39



Bridge Lifts for Sailboat Passage on the Kinnickinnic River  
(photo courtesy of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources)

soil borings along a peninsula adjacent to the Ashtabula River that is being considered for habitat restoration efforts to restore shallow water habitat in areas disrupted by the GLLA dredging project completed in 2007. The soils are being tested for heavy metal, PAH, and PCB contamination, as well as engineering properties to aid in designing restoration plans and estimate project costs. Results are expected in March 2009 with final habitat restoration designs due in June 2009. Construction work is expected to start in September or October 2009, and be completed by the end of the year.

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### **Kinnickinnic River Sediment Remediation Project Progress**

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2009, the construction of a sediment offloading platform began adjacent to the Milwaukee Area Confined Disposal Facility (CDF). Approximately 170,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediments from the Kinnickinnic River will be offloaded for disposal into a specially constructed cell in the CDF. Construction of the offloading platform will involve installation of approximately 160 linear feet of sheet piling to form the outside walls (dimensions are 30 feet long by 50 feet wide). Approximately 4,000 tons of riprap and stone will be placed inside of the sheet piling. The offloading platform will be able to support a 150-ton crane that will be used to

transfer sediments from barges to trucks or to a conveyance system for unloading into the CDF. Construction of the platform is expected to be completed at the end of March 2009.

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### **International Conference on Remediation of Contaminated Sediments**

Over 900 sediment specialists from around the world attended the Fifth International Conference on Contaminated Sediments in Jacksonville, Florida on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009. The Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA) sediment remediation program had a very high profile with at least 12 presentations/posters presented. From GLNPO, GLLA presentations were provided by Scott Cieniawski (Ashtabula River), Brenda Jones (monitoring for remedial effectiveness), Ajit Vaidya (Kinnickinnic River), Louis Blume (Trenton Channel), and Marc Tuchman (GLLA Program overview). Additionally, Scott Ireland, Scott Cieniawski, Brenda Jones and Marc Tuchman chaired technical sessions during the conference.

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### **Scott Ireland Gets 2008 Scientific and Technological Achievement Award**

Scott Ireland of the Great Lakes National Program Office received a Level III Scientific and Technological Achievement Award (STAA) for his work on a document entitled, "Interlaboratory evaluation of *Hyalella azteca* and *Chironomus tentans* short-term and long-term sediment toxicity tests." This document was published in the Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry journal of the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC).

The EPA's Science and Technological Achievement Awards (STAA) program promotes and recognizes scientific and technological achievement by EPA employees. STAA is among the most prestigious of EPA's scientific awards programs. The STAA program is an agency-wide competition sponsored by the Office of Research and Development (ORD) that recognizes outstanding scientific and technological papers published by EPA employees. EPA scientists and engineers submit their publications to be evaluated by a panel convened by EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB). The SAB convenes an experienced group of scientists and engineers who review and evaluate the nominations. The SAB review panel then produces a set of recommendations that ORD uses to select the actual awards.

Level III awards are for those who have accomplished an unusually notable research or technological effort. The awards are for a substantial revision or modification of a scientific/technological principle or procedure, or an important improvement to the value of a device, activity, program, or service to the public. Awarded research relates to a mission or organizational component of the EPA, or significantly affects a relevant area of science/technology. Others recognized for this work include: Theresa Norberg-King and Dave Mount of ORD in Duluth, as well as, Paul K. Sibley at the University of Guelph, Christopher Ingersoll and Nile Kemble at the Columbia Environmental Research Center of USGS, and G. Allen Burton and Carrie Rowland at the Wright State University.

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Unwanted Medicines Collection Logo  
(courtesy of IL-IN Sea Grant)

### **POLLUTION PREVENTION**

#### **Unwanted Medicines Toolkits Widely Distributed**

The Unwanted Medicines Toolkit, developed jointly by GLNPO and Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant (<http://www.iisgcp.org/unwantedmeds>) continues to be in high demand. Toolkits were distributed in February to states from coast to coast:

- One was requested by the Community Outreach Manager at the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission in Laurel, Maryland.
- One was requested by the counsel to the New York City Council Environmental Protection Committee.
- One was requested by the Director of Nursing Practice of Illinois Nurses Association.
- Fifty were requested for a workshop in Duluth, Minnesota for pharmacists interested in learning about unwanted medicines issues and collection programs.
- Ten were requested by a community outreach/education coordinator at a medical

center in New Hampton, Iowa who is giving presentations on the subject to the public in April and May.

- Two were requested by a Ph.D. student at the University of North Texas who is researching the environmental impact of pharmaceuticals in the water and environment; she is citing the guide in her dissertation.
- One was requested by an MBA student at the University of Dallas who is a member of the UD MBA Capstone group that is working with the EPA Region 6 to establish a Pharmaceuticals Mail-Back and Take-Back program at the university campus or in collaboration with Walgreens pharmacy.
- One was requested by a Water/Wastewater Treatment Facility in Goldendale, Washington to help start a joint collection program with the police department.

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### **HABITAT RESTORATION**

#### **Lake Superior Coastal Wetland and Stream Monitoring Project**

The final grant report on the Lake Superior Coastal Wetland and Stream Monitoring Project: 2007-2008 was completed recently. Sue O'Halloran, Amy Eliot and Kurt Schmude of the Lake Superior Research Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Superior undertook the Lake Superior Coastal Wetland and Stream Monitoring Project in 2007-2008. The goal of this project was to assess the condition of three Lake Superior coastal wetland communities utilizing Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Consortium (GLCWC) protocols. The water quality in three tributaries to these coastal wetlands was monitored and land cover characteristics within these watersheds were evaluated. Changes in watershed land cover, specifically forest and impervious

cover changes, is integrated into an overall evaluation of water quality in these watersheds.

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**Conserving Lake Ontario and Upper St. Lawrence River Bald Eagle Habitats: Phase 2**

The U.S.-Canada Lake Ontario Lakewide Management Plan worked with the St. Lawrence Bald Eagle Working Group to identify remaining bald eagle nesting habitats along Lake Ontario and the Upper St. Lawrence River. Phase 1 of this project used geographic information system computer modeling as a first step in identifying 19 US and 21 Canadian priority sites with the greatest potential to support successful bald eagle nesting territories. Phase 2 involved field-checking each site to verify appropriate habitat, as well as determine ownership and conservation priorities. Twenty-six shoreline locations with medium to high quality bald eagle nesting habitats were identified. New York State and the Province of Ontario will now begin working with stewardship councils and land trusts to develop conservation strategies for these valuable shoreline areas. Specific goals and targets for measuring progress in restoring bald eagle populations are provided.

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A Bald Eagle Landing on Its Nest  
(photo courtesy of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service)

We welcome your questions, comments or suggestions about this month's Significant Activities Report. To be added to or removed from the Email distribution of the Significant Activities Report, please contact Tony Kizlauskas, 312-353-8773, [kizlauskas.anthony@epa.gov](mailto:kizlauskas.anthony@epa.gov).