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

On the Web at:
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Bagpipes lead the Conveners arriving at the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration

Great Lakes Regional Collaboration

In May 2004, President Bush signed a Presidential Executive Order recognizing the Great Lakes as a national treasure, calling for the creation of a "Regional Collaboration of National Significance" and a cabinet-level interagency Task Force. After extensive discussions, the federal Great Lakes Interagency Task Force, the Council of Great Lakes Governors, the Great Lakes Cities Initiative, Great Lakes Tribes, and the Great Lakes Congressional Task Force moved to convene a collaboration.

The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration brings together a federal Task Force, the Great Lakes states, local communities, Tribes, regional bodies, and other interests in the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes Framework calls for these parties to design a strategy to restore and protect the Great Lakes now and into the future. They have set an ambitious deadline of one year for this complex task.

The "Great Lakes Regional Collaboration" convened in Chicago, Illinois on Friday, De-

cember 3rd. The Conveners Meeting was the official launch of this collaborative effort. Approximately 400 national and regional leaders and stakeholders attended the event. On this day, members of the President's Cabinet, the Great Lakes Governors, the Great Lakes Congressional delegation, Mayors, and Tribal leaders met and forged an intergovernmental partnership and officially voiced their support for a coordinated strategy to further protect and restore the Great Lakes. The Conveners Meeting provided a forum for the region's leaders, in the presence of interested stakeholders, to declare publicly and formally their support for the development of a widely understood and broadly supported strategy with actions to further protect and restore the Great Lakes through the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration process.

The ceremonial Conveners Meeting had two purposes:

- First, the convening body acknowledged the reasons behind launching the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. By signing the Great Lakes Declaration, Conveners pledged to support the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration process and devise an integrated, collaborative restoration/protection strategy for the Great Lakes basin.
- Second, there was a ceremonial signing of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Framework document by spokespersons or representatives of each of the convening groups. Following the ceremony, the document was signed by additional Conveners, including mayors, federal government representatives, Congressional delegates, and Tribes. The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Framework defines the commitment of the signatory bodies to meaningful participation in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration and the development of the Great Lakes Restoration and Protection Strategy.

Conveners pose with their signed copies of the Great Lakes Declaration

Following the Ceremonial Conveners Meeting, attendees and others met for the first time as Great Lakes Issue Area Strategy Teams. The Issue Area Strategy Teams were organized using the October 1, 2003 Council of Great Lakes Governors' priorities as a starting point. The Strategy Teams, made up of government representatives as well as representatives of organizations and entities, are the working bodies responsible for producing draft strategic action plans that are supported by specific action items and recommendations to address the issues considered by the specific Teams. The strategic action plans from the Strategy Teams will be combined into a draft of the comprehensive strategy that will be provided to the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration members for review and consideration. Participation on the Issue Area Strategy Teams is open to government and organizational representatives but on-line registration is required. The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration is a US effort; however, Canadian representatives may register for Issue Area Strategy Teams as observers.

The eight Issue Area Strategy Teams are:

1. Habitat/species
2. Indicators and information
3. Persistent bioacculumative toxics reduction
4. Invasive species
5. Sustainable development
6. Coastal health
7. Non-point source
8. Areas of Concern restoration/sediments

As they focus on the respective conditions and tasks of each Issue Area, the Strategy Teams will also address the following overarching considerations and topics:

- Human health impacts and priorities
- Tribal interests and perspectives
- Research and monitoring

Much more information about the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration effort is available on the Web at: http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/collaboration/index.html

(Contact: Vicki Thomas, 312-886-6942, thomas.vicki@epa.gov)

State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference

The 6th biennial State of the Great Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC) was held in Toronto, Ontario on October 6th to 8th. SOLEC is a joint effort of USEPA GLNPO and Environment Canada, who organize the conference and oversee the preparation of conference materials and presentations. Scores of Great Lakes experts worked for over a year to collect and interpret monitoring data and prepare summaries to present at the conference. Four hundred Great Lakes scientists, managers, and interested stakeholders actively participated in the meeting, listening to and discussing the presentations and related Great Lakes issues. Prior to the Conference, a draft "State of the Great Lakes 2005" report was prepared, relying on 56 indicator reports about the Great Lakes that were prepared by subject matter experts throughout the Basin. Also included were summary evaluations of each of the five Great Lakes, as well as the St. Clair River - Lake St. Clair - Detroit River ecosystem, and the St. Lawrence River.

SOLEC participants listen to Plenary session speaker

On the first day, presentations were delivered in Plenary sessions on groupings, or bundles, of related indicators. Participants at the Conference met in sessions following the Plenary to discuss the indicator findings, evaluations, and implications for management. Among the presentations at this year's SOLEC was one by the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium on 8 indicators of ecosystem health, including a map of all the 216,000 hectares (534,000 acres) of coastal wetlands in the basin.

Afternoon workshops expanded on the morning's presentation with in-depth presentations about individual indicators. One of the sessions was an "Introduction to Indicators" for conference participants who desired a more general briefing on the subject. Another special session involved about 40 senior-level managers and decision makers who explored implications of the indicator

findings on their programs.

On the second day, the ecosystem health of each of the Great Lakes was described and reports were given on the state of the fishery in Lakes Erie and Ontario. Afternoon discussion sessions focused on topics specifically relevant to each of the Great Lakes.

On the final day of the Conference, a series of concurrent workshops were held to allow participants to learn about and discuss various topics relevant to the Great Lakes in greater depth. Two of these are describe below.

One workshop was on Great Lakes islands. Participants included representatives from Environment Canada, Parks Canada, Great Lakes Commission, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-Great Lakes National Program Office, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ontario Parks, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Georgian Bay Land Trust, University of Minnesota, Nature Conservancy Great Lakes, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Northeast- Midwest Institute, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Service. Presentations were given, and feedback was given on the overview and approach of the Great Lakes Islands Conservation Consortium; the suite of SOLEC Indicators for Great Lakes Islands; the Freshwater Island Classification System being developed; and the Island Ranking Paper and proposed field testing of the ranking system. Participants identified where they wanted the Island Conservation Consortium to provide leadership:

1. Provide a large-scale science framework to evaluate islands for protection so that (local/state/provincial/federal/ binational) work can be done in a global context;
2. Offer a range of strategic approaches that might be applied at different scales of implementation. Particularly, try to identify policy and other strategies for island protection that operate at large spatial scales (i.e., policy and other)
3. Identify potential sources of funding to implement work and groups working on island conservation;
4. Be a communicator of information, work being done and on points 1-3 above.

Participants in SOLEC 2004 Workshop on Chemical Integrity of the Great Lakes

Participants supported an effort to pull together island science experts from throughout North America and beyond, to create guidelines for island managers and owners.

Another workshop was held on the subject of Chemical Integrity of the Great Lakes. One of the purposes of this workshop was to lay the groundwork for SOLEC 2006 where the overall theme will be Chemical Integrity (the themes of SOLEC 2002 and 2004 were Biological and Physical Integrity, respectively, which together with Chemical Integrity reflect the three broad perspectives on ecosystem health articulated in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement). Gerald Mattisoff of Case Western Reserve University introduced the “General Definition of Chemical Integrity.” Brian

Eadie of the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration spoke about "Advances in Monitoring for Research." Miriam Diamond of the University of Toronto gave a presentation on "Future Research Needs and Directions relative to Chemical Integrity." Four panelists (Keith Solomon of the University of Guelph, Robert Pepin of USEPA Region 5, Murray Charlton of Environment Canada, and Joseph DePinto of Linmo-Tech, Inc.) led discussions following each presentation. There was overall agreement that monitoring efforts need to eventually change over from the current set of persistent bioaccumulative toxics (PBTs) such as PCBs and DDT to emerging chemical of concern, and that revisions to the Water Quality Agreement should reflect a more dynamic process oriented approach to managing chemical threats as they arise in the Great Lakes Basin.

A Proceedings is planned to be prepared by the SOLEC organizers, and it should be available electronically and online in early 2005. The State of the Great Lakes 2005 report will also be finalized in early 2005.

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Chemical Integrity: Ted Smith, 312-353-6571, smith.edwin@epa.gov

Enhanced Asian Carp Barrier

USEPA Administrator Mike Leavitt joined U.S. Senators George Voinovich and Mike DeWine on October 14th at Cleveland's Wildwood Marina to announce that a funding package had been assembled to allow construction of an enhanced barrier to keep the invasive Asian carp out of the Great Lakes. The U.S. House and Senate voted to increase the cap on federal spending for the project, authorizing $6.825 million, which is 75 percent of the $9.1 million needed to complete the barrier. The Army Corps of Engineers, which is overseeing the project, says, with this authorization approved, it will be able to fund the federal share. The State of Illinois has committed $1.7 million and the Great Lakes governors have committed to funding the remaining non-federal

USEPA Administrator Mike Leavitt announces Asian Carp Barrier funding solution accompanied by (l to r) Colonel Gary E. Johnston (District Engineer, Chicago District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), U.S. Senator George Voinovich, Bob Collins (President, Lake Erie Charter Boat Association), and U.S. Senator Mike DeWine at Wildwood Marina in Wildwood State Park East of Cleveland, Ohio

share of $575,000.

"Asian carp threaten both the ecology and the economy of the Great Lakes system," Leavitt said. "The collaborative effort that brought together the Great Lakes Congressional delegation, Great Lakes Governors and federal agencies for the success we celebrate today provides hope that through the regional collaboration called for in the executive order we can protect and eventually restore this great natural resource."

The increased funding means the permanent electric barrier now under construction on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal can be built as originally planned. The barrier, is scheduled to be completed in February 2005. It also means that a second control house can also be built so that the two sets of electrodes – primary and backup – can be operated simultaneously. Funding also covers design changes to provide a stronger, more consistent electric field.

Partners in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Aquatic Nuisance Species Barrier Project include: Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Council of Great Lakes Governors, Commonwealth Edison, the Dispersal Barrier Advisory Panel, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the Great Lakes Sportfishing Council, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the International Joint Commission, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, Midwest Generation, the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wisconsin Sea Grant, and other state, nongovernmental, and academic partners.

For more information on the barrier and on Asian carp in the Great Lakes, go to: http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/invasive/asiancarp

(Contact: Marc Tuchman, 312-353-1369, tuchman.marc@epa.gov)

Black Lagoon Cleanup Begins

The first contaminated sediment cleanup project funded under the Legacy Act of 2002 began. Dredging of the highly contaminated muck started on October 19th. The site in the Trenton Channel of the Detroit River Area of Concern is heavily contaminated with oil and grease, heavy metals and PCBs. About 90,000 cubic yards of heavily contaminated sediment will be dredged from the Black Lagoon and placed in the Point Mouillee Confined Disposal Facility. The project is scheduled to be completed by January, 2005. In events leading up to the cleanup, USEPA Administrator Leavitt visited the Black Lagoon site on September 27th, and a public meeting was held in Trenton, Michigan on October 4th to

GLNPO's Marc Tuchman shows USEPA Administrator Mike Leavitt a jar of the kind of muck that will be removed from the Black Lagoon in the first Legacy Act funded sediment cleanup.

inform the local community about the project specifics.

(Contacts: Marc Tuchman, 312-353-1369, tuchman.marc@epa.gov; and Rose Ellison, 734.692.7689, ellison.rosanne@epa.gov)

MN PCB Transformers Removed

Using a combination of funding from GLNPO, the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources and other state funding, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has reported on a project to remove transformers suspected of containing PCBs. The four utilities that participated in the project are all located in northeastern Minnesota and have distribution transformers within the Lake Superior basin. The project includes a comparison of the utilitys' transformer inventories to manufacturing information; purchasing new transformers; and replacing, testing and disposal of the old transformers. Crews of linemen will be installing the last of the transformers this winter.

Of the four facilities whose inventories were evaluated, this project will result in removal of 71% of the transformers suspected to contain PCBs. All of the three utilities that actually removed transformers used their own resources as well as contracts with the MPCA to carry out the project. To their great credit, Lake Country Power removed 100% of the 292 suspect transformers even though the state contract covered only a portion of their costs. Cooperative Light and Power made similar arrangements, replacing 145 GE transformers in the suspect list of 241. The City of Grand Marais not only removed suspect transformers, but also tested other transformers. The Grand Marais data are included in the report and testing results from the other utilities will be summarized in an addendum.

Removing PCB-containing transformers helps safeguard the environment from leaks or spills

The report is available from Carri Lohse-Hanson at the MPCA at 651-296-9134 or carri.lohse-hanson@pca.state.mn.us.

(Contact: Elizabeth LaPlante, 353-2694, laplante.elizabeth@epa.gov)

2003 Sediment Cleanup Numbers

In 2003, over 975,000 cubic yards of sediment were remediated from eight U.S. sites and one Canadian site in the Great Lakes Basin. Four of these sites initiated work for the first time in 2003; these four and one other site completed their remedial actions in 2003. One large-scale project, U.S. Steel – Gary Works, made up approximately 80% of the total volume of contaminated sediment remediated in 2003. Graphic summaries of sediment remediation from 1997 through 2003 can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/glindicators/sediments/remediatea.html Details on the individual cleanup actions can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/glindicators/sediments/remediateb.html And additional information about GLNPO's sediment program can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/sediments.html

(Contact: Mary Beth G. Ross, 312-886-2253, ross.marybeth@epa.gov)

Saginaw Watershed Dioxin Study

During the week of October 18th, USEPA GLNPO's Scott Ireland and scientists from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) collected sediment samples in the Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay using GLNPO's 32-foot research vessel, the *R/V MudPuppy*. This sampling is part of a project MDEQ is heading under a grant from GLNPO to further characterize the nature and extent of dioxin-like toxicity in sediments from the Saginaw River and Saginaw Bay. While PCB contamination has been well documented in this area, dioxins and furans have not. While not as well studied, these compounds have been detected at levels exceeding human health-based regulatory criteria.

(Contact: Scott Ireland, 312-886-8121, ireland.scott@epa.gov)

N.E. Ohio Conservation Grants Workshop

On October 27th, GLNPO's Karen Rodriguez participated in the Northeast Ohio Conservation Grants Workshop organized by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) at the Rocky River Nature Center in Cleveland, Ohio. The meeting was funded in part by GLNPO through the cooperative agreement with NFWF, the GLNPO Grant Servicing Intermediary. More than 30 different local not-for-profit organizations, including land trusts and watershed councils, attended the meeting to learn about funding opportunities from GLNPO, NFWF, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Ohio Coastal Management Program, and the Ohio Protection Fund. At the end of the meeting, a "Cleveland Wilderness" to model after Chicago Wilderness was suggested and approved as a laudable partner project by the participants. NFWF and the Cleveland Metroparks will take the lead on organizing the project.

(Contact: Karen Rodriguez, 312-353-2690, rodriguez.karen@epa.gov)

Great Lakes Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center Dedicated

The world-class Shedd Aquarium, located in Chicago, Illinois in the Museum Campus along the shores of Lake Michigan, was officially dedicated by Coastal America as an Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center on October 28th. This prestigious national designation was presented to the Aquarium by James L. Connaughton, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality and chairman of Coastal America.

Coastal America is a partnership of 12 federal agencies, working to protect, preserve and restore America's coastal resources and watersheds. USEPA, one of the partner agencies, leads the team supporting Shedd's Learning Center.

Coastal America logo

"I am delighted that Shedd Aquarium has joined the Coastal America partnership," said Connaughton. "Shedd provides a window into the depths of marine life around the world. By making us better students, Shedd's educational tools are making us better stewards of our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes."

The Coastal America Learning Center network was established in 1996. Becoming a Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center offers many resources to Shedd Aquarium, includ-

ing time aboard research vessels, expert speakers, educational publications and workshops for the public. Shedd is the 17th designated Learning Center, and the first on the Great Lakes.

"We are extremely pleased to receive this designation and to strengthen our federal partnerships while working to protect our national treasure – the Great Lakes," said Shedd's Chief Executive Officer Ted Beattie. "This comes at a perfect time because Shedd is increasing our own efforts to make the public aware of Great Lakes issues that touch their lives." Beattie also serves as a member of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

Other participants in the dedication included Virginia Tippie, Director of Coastal America; Marcia Jimenez, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Environment; Senator Richard Durbin of Illinois; several Congressional representatives and Lt. Governor Pat Quinn. Federal agency directors and members of the Great Lakes Executive Order Regional Work Group also attended. Rich Greenwood, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Liaison to GLNPO and GLNPO's Judy Beck helped coordinate the event.

To learn more about Coastal America, see www.coastalamerica.gov.

(Contacts: Rich Greenwood, 312-886-3853, greenwood.richard@epa.gov; and Judy Beck, 312-353-3849, beck.judy@epa.gov)

New on the Web

Two beautiful new additions to GLNPO's Web Site to check out:

Explore Our Natural World: A Biodiversity Atlas of the Lake Huron to Lake Erie Corridor was produced by the Wildlife Habitat Council with funding from GLNPO. The book will be distributed widely throughout the region for use as a textbook and an information source. Hard copies may be obtained from Lawrence Brail at brail.lawrence@epa.gov. It's also available on the GLNPO Web Site at http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/ecopage/stclairbiodiv/index.html

(Contact: Karen Rodriguez, 312-353-2690, rodriguez.karen@epa.gov)

The ever-popular ***Landscaping with Native Plants***, also known as "***Wild Ones Handbook***" is now available in an updated (rev. 4) version on GLNPO's Web Site at: http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/greenacres/wildones/index.html

(Contact: Danielle Green, 312-886-7594, green.danielle@epa.gov)

Water Quality Data Online

Users can now perform their own queries and retrievals of GLNPO's open lake water quality monitoring data from the Great Lakes Environmental Database (GLENDA) through the Internet. Users first need to apply for a GLENDA account in order to access the database. Data from 1996 to 2003 is currently available for a suite of chemical and physical parameters as well as chloro-

GLNPO's open lake monitoring stations

phyll-a (an indicator of phytoplankton abundance in the water).

Links to apply for a GLENDA account as well as to query the database online can be found at: http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/monitoring/data_proj/glenda/glenda_query_index.html

In addition, monitoring data from the Lake Michigan Mass Balance project is available online at: http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/lmmb/drp.html

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Sediment Cleanup Planning

Several meetings were held recently to further sediment cleanup efforts in Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs) under a number of existing authorities, including the program authorized by the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002.

Ottawa River – Maumee River AOC

On October 6th, GLNPO's Mary Beth Ross attended the Ottawa River Remediation Team meeting in Toledo, Ohio. Ottawa River is part of the Maumee River Area of Concern. Hans Gottgens of University of Toledo presented the results from the Ottawa River Dam Removal Study, and John Hull of Hull & Associates presented the results from the Ottawa River Sediment Remediation Priorities project, which was funded by GLNPO in FY2002. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers gave an update on the status of the Ottawa River Navigational Dredging Project. Mary Beth provided a status report on the Ottawa River Great Lakes Legacy Act project that was submitted under the FY2004 Request for Projects, and discussed possible funding options for

A sediment remediation project underway

the additional sediment assessment that is needed to complete the design for the remediation project.

(Contact: Mary Beth Ross, 312-886-2253, ross.marybeth@epa.gov)

Rudiman Creek – Muskegon Lake AOC

On October 25th, A public meeting was held in Muskegon, Michigan about the proposed Ruddiman Creek Legacy Act project. Ruddiman Creek, part of the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern is an urban waterway heavily contaminated with PCB, PAHs, and heavy metals. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has submitted a Legacy Act project proposal to USEPA, and the meeting was convened to get feedback from the Mukegon Lake Public Advisory Council on the proposed plans for dredging of ap-

proximately 66,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediments from Ruddiman Creek and the adjacent lagoon. USEPA GLNPO's Marc Tuchman gave a presentation on the Legacy Act and the status of additional sampling scheduled for the site in November 2004.

(Contact: Marc Tuchman, 312-353-1369, tuchman.marc@epa.gov)

Cannelton Industries – St. Mary's River AOC

A public meeting was held in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan on November 30th to inform the local community and the St. Mary's River Public Advisory Council about the proposed Legacy Act sediment remediation project at the Cannelton Superfund site. This location was the site of an old tannery where the sediments and adjacent wetland are contaminated with high levels of chromium and mercury. Previously, on November 23rd, a meeting had been held in Chicago, Illinois with Phelps Dodge Corporation (owner of the site), USEPA Region 5 Superfund and GLNPO to review the design for the proposed dredging project.. It is anticipated that final plans and specifications will be provided for agency review by late January of 2005. If approved and a Project Agreement is signed shortly after, remediation could begin in the summer of 2005.

(Contact: Marc Tuchman, 312-353-1369, tuchman.marc@epa.gov)

Kinnickinnic River – Milwaukee Estuary AOC

On November 16th, GLNPO's Mary Beth Ross and Scott Cieniawski traveled to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to participate in a technical meeting regarding the status of the proposed Kinnickinnic River remediation

Scene on the Kinnickinnic River, Wisconsin

project. Representatives from the Milwaukee Port Authority, USEPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District attended the meeting. Several critical tasks must be completed prior to initiating remedial work at the site. Permission to use of the Jones Island confined disposal site (CDF) for sediment disposal and the stability of the existing seawall in the project area are major factors that could have significant impacts of the cost of the project. Wisconsin DNR, the Corps and the Port Authority all support the project and are currently discussing the use of the CDF. An agreement for use of CDF capacity needs to be worked out. Wisconsin DNR, the Corps and GLNPO are currently discussing the extent of sheet pile wall investigation required, funding mechanism, and contractual vehicles available for completing the investigation.

(Contact: Scott Cieniawski, 312-353-9184, cieniawski.scott@epa.gov)

Waukegan Harbor AOC

In a series of meetings in November, project managers from GLNPO and USEPA Superfund met with a wide-ranging group of Waukegan Harbor stakeholders to discuss

the status of planning work to address contaminated sediments in Waukegan Harbor, Illinois. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and USEPA are coordinating efforts to design and implement a joint remedial and navigational dredging project for the harbor to clean up sediments contaminated with PCBs. During the course of the month, the project managers met with Illinois Congressman Mark Kirk's representatives, industry groups, city officials, the Port District, and jointly with the Waukegan Harbor Area of Concern Citizens Action Group and the Environmental Justice Coalition to update them on the status of ongoing evaluations, obtain feedback on project direction, and discuss the potential availability of non-Federal funding that would be necessary to carry out the cleanup actions in the harbor. In general, all stakeholder groups voiced support of the ongoing cleanup efforts. GLNPO and USEPA Superfund plan to have contractors in the field by mid-December to collect sediment samples to fully delineate the vertical and horizontal extent of PCB contamination in the sediments, and to produce preliminary design and cost estimates for dredging and disposal of harbor sediments. The most optimistic project schedule would allow dredging to begin in early 2006. This schedule is subject to influence by funding availability and technical considerations.

(Contact: Scott Cieniawski, 312-353-9184, cieniawski.scott@epa.gov)

Hog Island Inlet - Newton Creek – St. Louis River AOC

USEPA is considering this site for cleanup under the Great Lakes Legacy Act. The proposal involves digging up and disposing of approximately 50,000 cubic yards of petroleum-contaminated sediment from Newton Creek and portions of Hog Island Inlet. If USEPA decides to take on this project, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources will obtain all the necessary permits and sign a project agreement with the Agency. Work could begin in February and would last about two months. The anticipated cost if this removal is $5.2 million where USEPA would pay 65% ($3.4 million). A public meeting outlining this proposed project was held in Superior, Wisconsin on December 15th.

(Contact: Scott Ireland, 312-886-8121, ireland.scott@epa.gov).

Binational Monitoring Plans

USEPA *R/V Lake Guardian* (left) and Environment Canada *R/V Limnos*

Representatives from Environment Canada, the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans and GLNPO met on November 9th and 10th to continue discussions of cooperative monitoring begun in February. Discussions and presentations included upcoming cooperative monitoring on Lake Erie, Lake Michigan, and Lake Superior. Environment Canada scientists presented results from their new protocol for sampling open lake contaminants in water. Participants discussed quality assurance and future collection and methods studies, particularly for fish tissue contaminants. Other discussions centered on how to most effectively share data from the cooperative monitoring efforts. Environment Canada agreed to continue assisting GLNPO in sampling dissolved oxygen levels in the Central Basin of Lake Erie.

(Contact: Paul Horvatin, 312-353-3612, horvatin.paul@epa.gov)

Fall Toxics Strategy Meetings

About 90 stakeholders attended the Fall 2004 Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy Stakeholder Forum on November 30th in Chicago, Illinois at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare International Airport. Dr. Dan Meyers, Associate Director of the American Dental Association gave the keynote speech, discussing his organization's efforts to encourage dentists in the United States to employ best management practices for dental amalgam in order to minimize mercury going to wastewater treatment facilities.

The Mercury, PCBs, Dioxins/Furans, and HCB/B(a)P workgroup co-chairs each presented updates in plenary and held subsequent breakout meetings. Presentations will be posted to the GLBTS website at http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/bns/meetings.html shortly.

In related news, working under a grant received from GLNPO this year, the American Dental Association is conducting a basin-wide mailing of a best management practices video to all dental practices in the Region.

The GLBTS Integration Workgroup met on the next day, with over 50 stakeholders in attendance. Agenda items included reviews of the draft final Octachlorostyrene (OCS) Reassessment Report presented by Tom Tseng, Environment Canada (EC); an update on draft Dioxins and Furans Reassessment Report presented by Anita Wong, EC; a panel on International PBT reduction efforts with presentations from Angela Bandemehr, USEPA Office of International Activities, and Luke Trip, Director, North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation - Smart Management of Chemicals program, and an summary of the SOLEC Chemical Integrity Workshop held last month in Toronto given by Dale Phenice, Council of Great Lakes Industries. The OCS report was well received by stakeholders, and is now final. The Dioxins and Furans Report will be modified to integrate stakeholder comments and will be distributed for further comment in January 2005. Other Level 1 substances will be reassessed over the next several months with the goal of presenting a comprehensive review of all twelve level 1 substances to the Binational Executive Committee at the Summer 2005 Meeting. The purpose of the reassessments is to provide management with advice on next steps for the GLBTS beyond the current interim reduction goal timeline, which ends in 2006. Presentations will be posted to the GLBTS website at www.epa.gov/glnpo/bns/meetings.html shortly.

(Contact: Ted Smith, 312-353-6571, smith.edwin@epa.gov)

Lake Ontario Habitat Workshop

GLNPO staff attended the Lake Ontario Habitat Workshop held on November 11th in Syracuse, New York. USEPA Region 2 hosted the event, which was attended by more than 50 partner organizations. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the

El Dorado Beach Preserve, Black Pond Wildlife Management Area, Eastern Lake Ontario

draft document "Developing Lakewide Habitat Priorities for New York's Lake Ontario Basin." The document identifies five categories of habitat issues to be addressed by Lakewide Management Plan partners:

- Tributary buffer restoration,
- Tributary upstream fish passage,
- Restoration and conservation of coastal wetlands,
- Protection of migratory bird habitats, and
- Protecting globally unique and rare habitats.

USEPA Region 2 will coordinate partner comments and re-issue a second draft document early next year.

(Contact: Karen Rodriguez, 312-353-2690, rodriguez.karen@epa.gov)

2004 Conservation and Native Landscaping Awards

Both public and private organizations play an important role in protecting natural resources and providing habitat for our native plant and animal communities. The Conservation and Native Landscaping Awards program is offered in appreciation of land management that supports native plant communities and the species that depend on them. Through this program, USEPA and the Chicago Wilderness organization recognize park district, municipal and corporate properties in the Chicago Wilderness area for their use of conservation practices and native plants in their landscaping designs. The first awards were given in 2000.

The 2004 Conservation and Native Landscaping awards presented at the Chicago Wilderness Congress on November 18th went to:

- Chicago Park District: Humboldt Prairie River

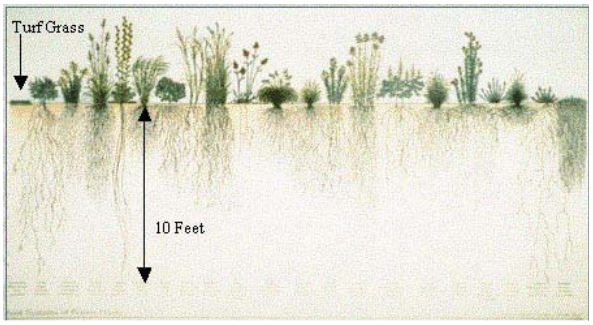
The Village of Schaumburg: Yeargin Creek Improvements

- Village of Glenview: Gallery Park Native Landscaping
- Park District of Highland Park: City of Highland Park, Hidden Creek Aqua Park Detention Basin
- The Village of Schaumburg: Yeargin Creek Improvements
- Village of Deer Park: Deer Park, Illinois, Vehe Farm

(Contact: Danielle Green, 312-886-7594, green.danielle@epa.gov)

Benefits of Landscaping with Native Plants

A 2-day scientific conference "Landscaping with Native Plants: Exploring the Environmental, Social, and Economic Benefits" was held at DePaul University on December 6th and 7th in Chicago, Illinois. Almost 200 people attended the conference and took an active role in identifying key gaps in the



Deep roots of native plants reduce irrigation needs

current knowledge base, and in defining future research priorities.

In preparation for this conference, selected scientists and researchers compiled a series of survey papers on the following topics:

- Biodiversity benefits of native landscaping
- Air quality benefits of native landscaping
- Emissions during controlled burns
- Ethical and aesthetic context of native landscaping
- Economics of native landscaping
- Public perception of native landscaping
- Hydrologic benefits of native landscaping
- Reduction in pesticide and fertilizer impacts through native landscaping
- Phytoremediation using native plants and
- Carbon sequestration using native plants.

Products resulting from the conference will include chapters for a planned book; content for GLNPO's ***Green Landscaping with Native Plants*** web site (http://www.epa.gov/greenacres/); and a research agenda to address the many gaps in information for the various topic areas.

The conference was sponsored by USEPA, DePaul University Environmental Science Program and Institute for Nature and Culture, City of Chicago Department of Environment, Chicago Wilderness, the Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, and the Gutsgell Foundation.

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New Publications

Two recent publications made use of GLNPO's long-term open lake monitoring data to explain important biological phenomena in the Lakes:

Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*)

The deep chlorophyll maximum in Lake Superior, R.P. Barbiero and M.L. Tuchman, *J. Great Lakes Res. 30 (Supplement 1):256-268*

This paper presents a multi-year analysis of physical, chemical and biological aspects of the deep chlorophyll maximum in Lake Superior, and is probably the most detailed report on the topic in the open literature. Aside from a paper out of GLNPO in 2001, this potentially important phenomenon hasn't been published on since 1983.

Long-term dreissenid impacts on water clarity in Lake Erie, R.P. Barbiero and M. L. Tuchman, *J. Great Lakes Res. 30(4):557-565.*

This paper builds on a previous GLNPO report [***Phytoplankton composition and biomass in the offshore waters of Lake Erie: Pre- and post-Dreissena introduction (1983-1993)***, Makarewicz, J.C., Lewis, T. W., and Bertram, P. 1999, *J. Great Lakes Res. 25:135-148*] to examine long-term changes in Secchi depth, turbidity and chlorophyll in Lake Erie since the invasion of zebra and quagga mussels. While long

thought to have 'cleaned up' the shallow regions of the lake, this paper shows that no long-term increases in water clarity have occurred in the Western or Central Basin since the dreissena invasion, although chlorophyll has declined markedly in the Western Basin. Instead, the most substantial impacts on water clarity have been seen during spring in the deeper Eastern Basin.

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Upcoming Events

2005

March 2	**Great Lakes Congressional Breakfast and Briefing: Washington, DC**
May 17-18	**Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy Stakeholder Forum: Toronto, Ontario Canada**
May 23-27	**International Association for Great Lakes Research Annual Conference: Ann Arbor, Michigan**
June 9-11	**International Joint Commission Great Lakes Conference and Biennial Meeting: Kingston, Ontario Canada**
November 29-30	**Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy Stakeholder Forum: Chicago, Illinois**

We welcome your questions, comments or suggestions about this 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.