



Photo: Robert Burns, Detroit Riverkeeper

RESTORING THE GREAT LAKES

What Does Restoration Mean?

While it may be impossible to restore the Great Lakes to a pre-settlement state, it is possible to focus restoration efforts on key issues. Michigan Sea Grant is working with a number of researchers, stakeholders and regional organizations to help define Great Lakes restoration.

A restoration initiative would have significant environmental, economic and social benefits – a sound investment in the greatest system of freshwater on the face of the earth.

Michigan Hosts First in Series of Great Lakes Restoration Focus Groups

In an effort to develop restoration planning priorities, Michigan Sea Grant and the Great Lakes Commission, in partnership with the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network, are leading an effort to develop the scientific basis for a comprehensive restoration plan for the region. At the heart of this initiative are focus group sessions held in each Great Lakes state.

Michigan hosted the first of these focus group sessions – a restoration priorities workshop – sponsored by Michigan Sea Grant, the Great Lakes Commission and the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes. Outcomes from the Michigan focus group session have been shared with Great Lakes Governors and others to inform and advance efforts for a ecosystem restoration effort. The five Great Lakes contain 20 percent of the earth’s fresh surface water, and the region’s natural resources drive the economies of the two nations, eight states and two provinces that share jurisdiction.

Meeting the Congressional challenge, the Council of Great Lakes Governors agreed to develop a series of restoration priorities for the region as a prelude to the development of a detailed plan. NOAA-National Sea Grant College Program is currently supporting two key pieces of this restoration planning initiative.

Restoration activities from the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network, the Great Lakes Commission and the Northeast-Midwest Institute are designed to develop science-based restoration priorities. The Northeast-Midwest Institute is exploring approaches that other regions have used to launch major ecosystem restoration initiatives. These efforts will provide Congress with a scientifically defensible Great Lakes restoration plan.

Michigan Sea Grant concurs with the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation – now is the time for an economic and environmental rehabilitation of the Great Lakes.

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