

Great Lakes RESTORATION



at work in Wisconsin

The state of Wisconsin – together with local communities, tribes, nongovernmental organizations, businesses and industries – collaborates with the federal government to implement a comprehensive restoration strategy for the Great Lakes. With strong bipartisan support, this partnership generates on-the-ground actions that improve Wisconsin's economy, environment and quality of life. These activities will also benefit the next generation of Wisconsin citizens who will look to the Great Lakes as an important resource to support their quality of life and economic well-being.



Top photo: Peter Ries.
Center photo: Titus Seilheimer

The Great Lakes: A Vital Economic Asset for Wisconsin

The Great Lakes have profound effects on our environment, culture and quality of life. Lakes Michigan and Superior provide:

- Vital water supply for drinking and manufacturing
- The foundation for a \$3 billion tourism industry in lakeshore counties
- Sport fishing opportunities for more than 250,000 anglers, bringing \$252 million to communities annually
- Harbors and marinas that annually support a \$9.4 billion recreational boating industry
- Maritime transportation networks that generate 8,800 jobs and \$2.4 billion in economic activity.

As these figures show, cleaning up the Great Lakes isn't just about correcting mistakes of the past, but also leveraging a vital resource to build a better future.

Economic Benefits of Restoring the Great Lakes

A 2018 University of Michigan [economics study](#) found that every \$1.00 of federal spending on GLRI projects from 2010–2016 produces at least \$3.35 in additional economic activity in the Great Lakes region through 2036. The number is even higher in some Great Lakes communities.



The [research](#) also shows that, while envisioned as an environmental program, GLRI also created and supported as many jobs per dollar of investment as would be created by a conventional federal stimulus program designed to boost job growth.

GLRI created or supported an average of 5,180 jobs per year and increased personal income by an average of \$250 million per year in the Great Lakes region from 2010–2016.

[Case studies](#) show how GLRI investments revitalize communities:

- Pollution cleanup in the St. Louis River AOC is a catalyst for mixed-use developments and increasing numbers of educated young people moving to Duluth and Superior. Hotels increased 10% along Duluth and Superior's waterfronts and water-based tourism has surged.
- Formerly contaminated industrial sites in the Sheboygan River AOC are reborn as valuable real estate desirable for being near the water. More than 400 new housing units were built along the waterfront, reflecting nearly \$70 million in investments.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Funding to Wisconsin

Over \$816 million from 2010—2023

See GLRI projects in Wisconsin and across the region
<https://www.glri.us/projects>

Investing in Wisconsin's Waterfront Communities

GLRI supports a comprehensive cleanup plan that's widely endorsed by the region's governors, tribes, cities, conservation groups, business and industry. Starting in 2010, the Initiative builds on years of work to solve key problems facing the Great Lakes, including:

- Cleaning up contaminated sediments in toxic hotspots (Areas of Concern or AOCs)
- Controlling polluted runoff and cleaning up beaches
- Restoring degraded wetlands
- Conserving and enhancing fish and wildlife resources
- Preventing and controlling spread of aquatic invasive species.

GLRI is guided by an [Action Plan](#) with clear goals and accountability standards. U.S. EPA coordinates federal efforts and directs funding to states, cities, tribes and nongovernmental groups that are best able to address local restoration priorities.

Solving Problems Facing the Great Lakes

GLRI builds on state and local efforts to solve problems facing the Great Lakes. The Wisconsin Great Lakes Strategy— developed in partnership by the Wisconsin DNR, local communities, tribes and nongovernmental organizations— outlines clear actions needed to restore Wisconsin's Great Lakes and their watersheds:

- Manage water use and water transfers out of the basin
- Clean up contaminated sites
- Eliminate persistent bio-accumulative toxins
- Control runoff pollution from nonpoint sources
- Restore vital habitat for native species & control invasive species
- Adopt sustainable practices to improve coastal resiliency
- Improve monitoring methods.