



Get Involved!

THE SOLUTIONS!

Regional Solutions



CONSERVATION

An Agreement between the states and provinces and a Compact among the states will prohibit most diversions and calls for ecosystem-wide conservation planning, from Duluth to Montreal. But this legislation must be passed by every state, province, and Congress to carry the force of law. More information can be found at: www.cglg.org and www.nwf.org/greatlakes.



COLLABORATION

The Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act calls for the U.S. implementation of consensus-based restoration recommendations from over 1,500 contributors from all walks of life—state and federal agency staff, conservationists, farmers, industry, average citizens and more. For more information on implementation plans: For the U.S. side of the basin at: www.glr.us/strategy.html. For the Canadian side of the basin at: www.glu.org/english/restoration/blueprint/index.htm.



GOVERNANCE

Improvements to the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement should detail federal responsibility for dealing with invasive species and the clean-up of the region's 43 toxic hotspots. Recommendations to update the Great Lakes Water Quality agreement at: www.greatlakes.org.

Local Solutions



YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY

- Talking to your friends, neighbors, and elected officials about Great Lakes restoration.
- Talking about how important Great Lakes restoration is to you and your community and the importance of funding it.
- Writing a letter to your local newspaper about Great Lakes Restoration.
- Initiating or participating in a local restoration project in your community.



LOCAL ACTION

Projects to restore the health of the lakes that engage community members with financial backing from the community make a difference. For more information on Great Lakes restoration and how to get a project going go to: www.freshwaterfuture.org.



What can you do to help the Great Lakes?

MICHIGAN, HURON, SUPERIOR, ERIE, AND ONTARIO—these incredible lakes are an international treasure. The Great Lakes are a part of regional heritage and deserve our attention and support for restoration. Every day we wait the problems get worse and the solutions more costly. We must act now to restore the health of the Great Lakes! You can help by speaking with lawmakers, community members, the media or even your neighbors about the threats facing the Great Lakes and solutions that exist. Encourage others to get engaged. Here you will find simple talking points on major threats facing the Great Lakes to help you start discussions that stimulate actions that are part of the solution.

THE CHALLENGES



AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

- There are 185 invasive species already in the Great Lakes—another is discovered every 28 weeks.
- Invasive species cost the Great Lakes region an estimated \$5 billion every year.
- Most invasive species enter the Great Lakes in the ballast waters of ships entering the Lakes from far off places.



HABITAT DESTRUCTION

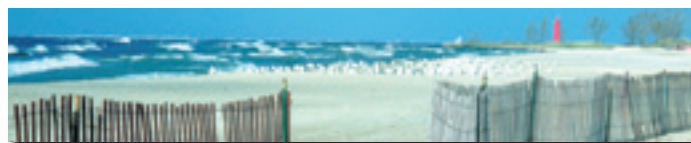
- Over 2/3 of the region's wetlands have been lost.
- Wetlands provide economic values that add over \$50 billion to the region's economy every year.
- Wetlands significantly reduce the amount of pollution in our waters by filtering runoff containing chemicals such as fertilizers, de-icing materials or leaking chemicals from automobiles before it enters our waterways.



POLLUTED RUNOFF

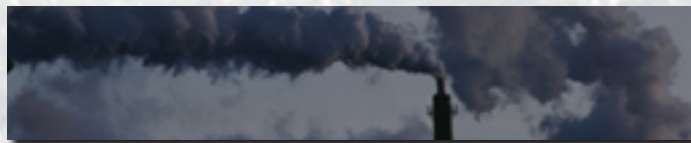
- Eroding soils from a construction site, fertilizers and pesticides that have been applied to the land, or oil and grease dripped from vehicles can all be carried by stormwater to local waterways and degrade water. Storm sewers help clear our streets of rainwater, but they also channel the water—and everything that comes with it—directly into the lakes.

- Pesticides and other toxic chemicals can kill insects that fish feed on or build up in the food chain.
- Soil, fertilizers, and phosphorous promote algae blooms that can choke out fish and limit recreational opportunities.



SEWAGE CONTAMINATION AND BEACH CLOSINGS

- Around the Great Lakes are old “combined” sewers that treat stormwater and sanitary waste in the same pipes. During large storms, these systems are easily overwhelmed and some communities resort to discharging the sewage into the lakes.
- Twenty cities were evaluated and found to be dumping the equivalent of more than 100 Olympic swimming pools full of raw sewage directly into the Great Lakes every single day. (Source: Sierra Legal Defense Fund)
- In 2006, Great Lakes beaches in the U.S. has at least 3,003 days of closing and advisories (Source: Natural Resource Defense Council)



TOXIC POLLUTION

- The Great Lakes are virtually a closed system, with less than one percent of the water in the lakes renewed each year. This means that what we put in the lakes generally stays in the lakes and certain types of pollutants have been building up in the Great Lakes ecosystem for many years.
- There are 43 “Areas of Concern” in the Great Lakes region where these persistent, toxic, and bioaccumulative chemicals have built up at the bottom of rivers and harbors, creating lasting toxic hotspots.
- These hotspots leach pollution, contributing to the ongoing contamination of Great Lakes fish.