

The Great Lakes Legacy Act: Fifteen Year of Successful Partnerships for Sediment Remediation in the Great Lakes

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Background/Objectives. In 1987, the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement designated 43 of the most heavily degraded Great Lakes waterways as Areas of Concern (AOCs). Contaminant discharges and physical alterations to these waterways had resulted in significant degradation to the biological functioning of these important natural resources. Between 1987 and 1993, EPA's Assessment and Remediation of Contaminated Sediments program had identified contaminated sediments as one of the major causes of beneficial use impacts at Great Lakes AOCs. Between 1993 and 2002, steady, but slow, progress was made towards remediating contaminated sediments in the AOCs. Recognizing the need for additional funding and partnerships to promote faster progress in restoring AOCs, Congress passed the Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA) which was signed into law in November 2002. GLLA was authorized to provide up to \$50M a year in federal funding to promote partnerships between EPA and non-federal entities to expedite clean-up of contaminated sediments at Great Lakes AOCs. GLLA has proven a success in promoting partnerships and also in advancing the restoration at AOCs. Since first receiving funding in 2003, GLLA has completed over 25 successful sediment remediation projects, resulting in the remediation of over 4.5M cubic yards of contaminated sediments in partnership with industry, state agencies, port districts, and other Great Lakes stakeholders.

This presentation will discuss the GLLA program, the attributes of the program that have promoted successful partnerships, and a discussion of the past, present, and future of GLLA.

Approach/ Activities. GLLA is an innovative program that promotes partnerships through cost-sharing and shared project goals. Success of the program is due to EPA's embrace of a true partnership environment promoting trust, shared work load, and open communications with stakeholders. GLLA generally provides 50% to 65% of project funding with direct EPA implementation of project activities. Non-federal sponsors are directly involved in technical aspects of projects and may also provide significant in-kind services to support project implementation.

Results/Lessons Learned. The GLLA has implemented a total of 24 completed and on-going sediment remediation projects since 2004, resulting in the remediation of over 4.5M cubic yards of contaminated sediments. These projects leveraged over \$300M in non-federal funding. EPA has partnered with over 50 different entities, including over 40 industry partners and six state agencies.