

Great Lakes Habitat Initiative (GLHI)

Status Report

25 JULY 2007

STUDY DESCRIPTION

Over 1,500 people from eight states participated in a one-year effort that culminated on December 12, 2005 with the release of the Strategy for the Protection and Restoration of the Great Lakes. These people represented state, local tribal and federal agencies, along with industry, business, and civic groups, which joined to form the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration. The Collaboration developed a Strategy that focused on eight priority issues identified by the Great Lakes Governors and Mayors. This effort will bridge the gap between the regional needs identified in the strategy of the Regional Collaboration and the programs that provide funding for site-specific, “on-the-ground” actions. This effort will “roll up” the readily available arrays of site-specific projects that have been proposed by all agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGO’s), expand the information sufficiently to make comparisons, and develop an implementation plan that prioritizes the projects that most effectively address habitat issues. As a result, project proponents will be able to target future projects to meet these needs, and will have access to an exhaustive menu of funding programs and partnerships that could be used to implement each proposed project. The primary tools being developed to support Great Lakes Habitat Initiative include a database of relevant funding programs and a database of projects being proposed within the Great Lakes basin.

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Counsel of Great Lakes Governors	State of Indiana
Ducks Unlimited	State of Michigan
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative	State of New York
Great Lakes Commission	State of Ohio
Great Lakes Fishery Commission	State of Pennsylvania
Great Lakes Indian Fish and Game Commission	The Nature Conservancy
Natural Resource Conservation Service	Tribes
Sate of Illinois	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sate of Minnesota	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,
Sate of Wisconsin	Great Lakes National Program Office
	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
	U.S. Geological Survey

FINANCIAL (THRU JUN 07)

- Available funds \$1.12M
- Current budget \$1.08M
- FY07 obligations \$556.1k
- FY07 expenditures \$366.5k
- Cumulative expenditures \$400.4k

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Substantially completed funding program database, final deliverable in JUL 07
- Substantially completed inventory of proposed projects, final deliverable in JUL 07
 - Approximately 200 projects currently in the database
 - Interim project database can be accessed through www.glhs.org
- Outreach workshops completed with all 8 Great Lakes states
- Provide regular briefings to Federal Interagency Task Force and Regional Working Group
- Great Lakes Regional Collaboration is considering official endorsement of GLHI tools
- There is overwhelming stakeholder support to sustain the tools developed for the GLHI for the purpose of improved regional management, public involvement, etc.
- Face-to-face Steering Committee meeting held on 25 JUN 07

ACTIVITIES PLANNED THRU FY07

- Finalize funding program and project databases with summary reports
- Two PDT workshops, AUG and SEP, for the purpose of refining information in the project database, identifying other potential uses of the database, develop and resolve the use/application of project performance attributes, and work on the “mock” report
- Finalize Great Lakes Habitat Initiative and Wetlands Initiative Synchronization white paper
- Substantially complete draft report based on progress to date
- Steering Committee meeting SEP 07, exact date TBD
- Great Lakes Interagency Task Force meeting tentatively scheduled for 04 SEP 07

ISSUES

- During the recent Steering Committee meeting most of the committee expressed concerns regarding our study goal of prioritization of habitat projects in the Great Lakes
 - One concern was the difficulty in reconciling the diverse priorities of habitat funding programs
 - Another was the potentially divisive effects of having projects compete against one another in this forum
 - Resolution of this issue is contingent upon identification of a compromise between no prioritization and the original study goal of developing a rigorous ranking of projects based on specific ecological and other relevant criteria
- Also at the last Steering Committee meeting, members proposed that the GLHI study subsume the GLRC Wetlands Initiative led by EPA, including the preparation of a single report
 - We support this idea and have prepared a white paper on what it would mean and how we would do it
 - To complete the integration of these two initiatives we must be careful that each retain their primary objectives

LESSONS LEARNED

- To a large degree measurements of project attributes such as sustainability, connectivity, output units, etc. are not readily available or consistent
- Collaborative planning and management can be complicated by agency/organization missions and priorities
- Collaborative planning and management requires tools, institutions (e.g. steering committee), and leadership
- Visualization of the project database in Google Earth makes it easier to see the connection of all agency programs with the Great Lakes, and that visual stimulus excites participants and encourages them to manage collaboratively