



## Habitat/Wetlands Initiative

### Progress Report – May 2008

#### Introduction

The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration's (GLRC) December 2005 Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes identifies habitat and wetlands degradation as a key threat and provides recommendations for protecting and restoring them. The GLRC's Wetlands and Habitat Initiative is working to address these recommendations. As a first step, the Initiative is focused on protecting and restoring 200,000 acres of wetlands in the Great Lakes basin. The Initiative aims to accomplish this by improving coordination among habitat restoration programs and partners, with a goal of achieving more by working together than by each alone.

#### Key Elements and Progress to Date

- A Steering Committee with representatives from federal agencies, state, local and tribal governments and non-governmental organizations from across the basin helps guide the Initiative. The Steering Committee has regular meetings and conference calls focused on improving our collective efforts to restore Great Lakes habitat.
- In keeping with improving our collective efforts to restore Great Lakes habitat, a habitat projects and funding programs database was developed to increase information integration and accessibility among stakeholders. The database contains information contributed by basin stakeholders on more than 200 potential habitat restoration projects and more than 130 programs that provide funding for restoration projects. The database is friendly for public access and empowers users with information about restoration needs and priorities, potential partners and funding sources. The database is available online at: <http://www.glhi.org/>.
- A data call was conducted to provide an estimate of the number of wetland acres protected, restored and improved since the release of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration's Strategy. Since December 2005, more than 65,000 acres of wetlands have been protected, restored and improved by federal agencies and their partners across the Great Lakes basin.
- A Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Wetlands and Habitat Initiative: A Progress Report and Call to Action that reports on progress, the habitat project and funding database, key issues and next steps has been drafted and is under final review for release to the public.
- Workshops will be held this summer with stakeholders and partners in each of the 8 Great Lakes states to seek input on ways to strengthen existing and initiate new collaborative partnerships and approaches to accomplish the habitat restoration goals of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration.