



**GREAT LAKES REGIONAL COLLABORATION
JUNE 30, 2009 PUBLIC CALL SUMMARY**

Call Participants:

The following members of the GLRC Executive Subcommittee, selected federal agencies, GLNPO staff, contractors and others participated in the call. Additional participants responded to the RSVP and are listed in records held by GLNPO.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Gary Gulezian, Macara Lousberg, Tony Kizlauskas, Alexis Cain,

Council of Great Lakes Governors: Dave Nafzger and Pete Johnson

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Jan Miller

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative: Dave Ullrich and Melissa Soline

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: Heather Stirratt

Congressional Great Lakes Task Force: Joy Mulinex

States: Ken DeBeaussaert and Emily Fiddle (Michigan), Don Zelazny (New York), Kim Walz (Wisconsin), Kathy L...sp? (Pennsylvania)

Great Lakes Commission: Tim Eder

Stakeholders and Other Entities: Gildo Tori (Ducks Unlimited), Bill Muno (Alliance for the Great Lakes), Chad Lord (Healing Our Waters Coalition), Andy Knobb (?), Jane Elder (Jane Elder Strategies), Will Mark sp? Nature Quebec ?, Others were on the line but not introduced.

Contractor/Call Facilitator: Tom Looby (EMA Inc.)

Contractor/ Note-taker: Maggie Clary (IEc)

Welcome and Introductions

Tom Looby (GLNPO Contractor and Call Facilitator) convened the call and reviewed the proposed agenda. Looby referred call participants to the GLRC web site for the agenda and other meeting materials at www.glrc.us/.

Gary Gulezian (U.S. EPA- Director of GLNPO) – Welcomed participants to the continuing series of Great Lakes Stakeholders Outreach calls sponsored by the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) Executive Committee and thanked them for their continuing participation.

1. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Funding Update

Gary Gulezian provided an update on the federal funding and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). Highlights include:

- \$475 M has been requested by the Obama Administration to fund restoration projects in the Great Lakes in FY 2010. U.S. EPA worked with 15 other federal agencies to develop the proposal and it has five key elements: toxics, invasive species, nonpoint sources, habitat protection, and accountability/ monitoring/evaluation/partnerships. It was based extensively on work from the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes*. Implementation will occur through a combination of federal action, grants, and contracts to accomplish the objectives.

More information on the Initiative can be found at www.epa.gov/greatlakes/glri. The GLRI was included in the President's 2010 Budget request to Congress.

- A multi-year strategic plan for funding in FY 2011-2014 is also being developed. A draft multi-year action plan will be posted on the GLNPO web site for review and comment. A series of public meetings will be held in each state of the basin and one regional meeting in Chicago during the summer to gather input.

Mr. Gulezian then responded to a series of questions on the GLRI as follows:

Gildo Tori: Will the multi-year plan be budget or program driven? It is based significantly on the GLRC Strategy recommendations but will also get into more detail so that it can guide budget decisions by federal agencies.

Bill Munro: What is the date of the Chicago meeting? Tentatively- July 21.

Don Zelazny: For the 2010 funding can you specify which elements will be grants and which will have non-federal match requirements? Yes, U.S. EPA will prepare a funding guide to delineate these requirements for all of the existing and new federal grants. EPA expects to put out anticipatory RFPs in late July- early August so that if the appropriations are forthcoming work can start by the end of the year.

Emily Fiddle: When will the funding guide be available? July.

Chad Lord: 1) What kind of consultation will you be seeking from stakeholders on the 2011 plan and 2) Have you determined how you will address the Congressional request for independent scientific review? 1) We will seek input on the goals, objectives and plan elements for the 2011 and beyond period. This will help inform budget development processes for FY 2011 and beyond. 2) We are still thinking about how to approach the scientific review effort and will seek input on it during the summer briefings.

Andy Knobb (sp?): Will these grants be new grants or increases to existing program grants? Mostly increases to existing grants but may include some new elements to fund implementation.

Jane Elder: How does the 4 year plan correlate with the Water Quality Agreement negotiations? It is good timing for both so that the U.S can put restoration initiatives on the table with the Canadians.

2. Federal Legislation Update- Joy Mulinex- Great Lakes Congressional Task Force

Joy Mulinex provided an update on authorizing legislation and appropriations bills:

- The Great Lakes Legacy Act was reauthorized in 2008. This year both the House and Senate are considering authorizing legislation to raise the funding level to \$150M/ year.
- Clean Water Restoration Act- Addresses wetlands and non-adjacent water bodies. Unclear if it will get to Senate floor.
- State Revolving Fund (SRF) Reauthorization- House passed. Senate Committee passed. Will be a conference bill.
- Beach Monitoring bill- Funding for states for beach monitoring and related initiatives. Passed Committees in both chambers.
- HR 669- Invasive species screening bill- Opposed by pet industry, future uncertain.

- GLRI Funding- House passed at \$475 M. Senate Appropriations Committee has \$400M. Conference will finalize.

Ms. Mulinex then responded to a series of questions/ comments as follows:

Chad Lord- Senate Interior Chair says she will support the full funding level for GLRI. Does House version of Beach Act include money for remediation? *Senate Bill does so will address it in conference.*

Dave Ullrich- Are there any Great Lakes “loser” states in the revised SRF funding allocation formula? *Yes, about half will have net loss due to an increase in the minimum funding level for all states. Also, the use of U.S. EPA’s needs survey does not favor states with aging infrastructure such as in Great Lakes Basin.*

Dave Naftzger- Are there formula changes in both the House and Senate versions? *The House has a hold harmless provision so the existing levels would remain for some.*

3. GLRC Executive Subcommittee Updates

Dave Ullrich- (GLSLCI): Cities are launching a stronger initiative on pharmaceuticals in terms of local collections and producer responsibility on U.S. and Canadian side. They applaud that the GL Water Quality Agreement is moving forward.

Ken DeBeaussaert – (MI Great Lakes Office): Michigan’s Great Lakes Plan has been approved and is on their web site. It has been provided to U.S. EPA Administrator Jackson and they want to advance it with resources from the GLRI.

Kim Walz (WI)- Wisconsin Great Lakes Plan is similar to MI’s and they are setting up to use GLRI funds for implementation as well.

Heather Stirratt - (NOAA): Update on ARRA awards in Great Lakes basin: 1) Dunes Creek Watershed- \$1.4M; 2) Milwaukee River and watershed restoration- \$4.7M; 3) Muskegon Lake restoration- \$10M. Great Lakes projects got about 10% of national funding.

Jan Miller- (USACE): Have \$200K for Habitat/Species work group to use on contractual services for improvements to web and databases of projects and funding sources.

4. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Update

Gary Gulezian provided an update on progress on the Agreement. The U.S. State Department and the Canadian Foreign Service have both given a green light to proceed with negotiations to update the Agreement. Representatives of the two countries will meet soon to discuss the approach, timelines and how to engage stakeholders.

Mr. Gulezian then responded to a series of questions from participants on the call:

Bill Muno- Will there be a role for the Work Groups involved in the earlier process from the U.S? *They are still analyzing the best way to engage stakeholders, binationally.*

Bill Muno- Sediments Work Group proposed to combine Annexes 7 and 14. What is the outcome of that? *All recommendations from process will be considered in the negotiations.*

Jane Elder- Who is the point person for the State Department? *Currently it's Bea Soila, but she is retiring soon.*

Will Mark (sp?)- (Nature Quebec): What will the role of the Quebec government be in the negotiations? They want the Quebec government to be a full partner. *The scope of Agreement includes the Great Lakes and the bi-national part of the St. Lawrence River. The agreement needs to consider downstream impacts so you should raise that question with the Canadian government.*

5. Progress Report on Joint Initiatives:

- Habitat/ Species Initiative- Jan Miller: Next meeting of Habitat Species Work Group to be set in early July when they will discuss the NOAA projects.
- Beaches Initiative- Melissa Soline: Phase 2 continuing as they gather and disseminate more information on best beach management practices to beach managers. They will be compiling and sharing beach survey results.
- Toxics Initiative – Alexis Cain: They published the mercury production phase down strategy last year. They also formed an implementation group that met in May and are working on a mercury emissions reduction strategy that they hope to have a draft of soon to release for review and comment.

6. Stakeholder Updates:

Chad Lord (HOW): They are holding a number of visibility events to highlight the links of the restoration projects to jobs. The HOW conference is set for September 10-12 and information can be found on their web site- www.healthylakes.org .

Jane Elder: The HOW events will be in Green Bay on August 3 and Milwaukee on August 10.

Gildo Tori (DU): DU doing a lot of wetlands and uplands restoration work this summer including work on St. Lawrence River and Ontario projects, western Lake Erie, Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Detroit and Shiawassee Rivers. They are continuing work to update the National Wetlands Inventory.

Tim Eder (GLC): There is also a \$10M restoration project occurring on Muskegon Lake in MI.

Will Mark (sp?): In Quebec there is a new work group developing regulations for Lake Ontario.

Gary Gulezian: Thanked everyone for their participation in the call.