



**GREAT LAKES REGIONAL COLLABORATION  
SEPTEMBER 17, 2008 PUBLIC CALL SUMMARY**

1. **Call Participants:** The following members of the GLRC Executive Subcommittee, selected federal agencies, stakeholders and contractors participated in the call.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency:** Gary Gulezian, Vicki Thomas, Macara Lousberg, Tony Kizlauskas, James Schardt, Rita Cestarc, Alexis Cain, Judy Beck

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:** Jan Miller

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration:** Mary Baker

**U.S. Geological Survey:** Norm Granneman

**U.S. Department of Transportation:** Doris Bautch

**Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission:** Gigi Cloud-Mannila for Reggie Cadotte

**Congressional Great Lakes Task Force:** Joy Mulinex

**States:** Lisa Wojnarowski (Council of Great Lakes Governors), Bill Horns (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources), Don Zelazny (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation)

**Cities:** David Ullrich, Melissa Soline, (Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative)

**Stakeholders and Other Entities:** Matt Doss (Great Lakes Commission), Mark Burrows (International Joint Commission), Sanjiv Sinha (ECT), John Jackson (Great Lakes United), Dale Phenicie (Council of Great Lakes Industries), Chad Lord (Healing Our Waters Coalition), Julie Schreiber (Waukegan Harbor), Ned Dikmen (Great Lakes Boating Federation and Magazine), Bill Muno (Alliance for the Great Lakes), Evans Paul (Northeast- Midwest Institute), and others on the line but not introduced.

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

**Contractor/ Note-taker:** Maggie Clary (IEc)

2. **Background and Introductions:** Macara Lousberg welcomed participants to the call on behalf of the Subcommittee of Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Executive Committee. She explained that today's call is a continuation of the outreach efforts commenced in the fall of 2007. She summarized the topics for today's discussion as:

- GLRC Initiatives (Toxics, Wetlands, Beaches, AIS, Clean Boats): Recaps and Updates
- Status of Selected Federal Legislation
- Updates by Stakeholders

3. **GLRC Implementation Initiatives:** Facilitator Tom Looby introduced discussion on the five Great Lakes Implementation Initiatives currently underway. Presenters will give a status report on the initiatives and outline what's ahead for each one. EPA and other Subcommittee representatives summarized the status of each as follows:

**Toxic Substances Initiative:** *Alexis Cain (U.S. EPA)* summarized some of the key elements of this initiative. There is a work group up and running that consists of both technical and management teams addressing Mercury (Hg). A tribal representative has been requested to participate. The technical team has been writing draft strategies on the impacts of Hg deposition, criteria for emission reductions and sectors to target for attention. The management team will send out drafts for stakeholder and public review soon. An evaluation of Hg reduction opportunities is still being drafted. Stakeholders are being asked for input on our plans for strategy development, and we also recently received comments from the Council of Great Lakes Industries. A request was made to post the draft documents on the GLIN and GLRC list servers so a

broader audience could see them. The Council of Great Lakes Industries believes the documents are guidance and should be posted online and in the federal register. EPA noted that no decisions have been made yet and that they are being prepared under the auspices of GLRC, not EPA. Mr. Cain went on to report on the product phase-down strategy which has been completed. We're on to the implementation phase and we plan to put an implementation grid together this fall, plus we'll be inviting Environment Canada. He read a statement from Ted Smith regarding e-waste and pharmaceutical waste: "At the Earth Day Challenge to turn in e-waste and pharmaceutical waste, residents in the Great Lakes basin turned in approximately 5 millions lbs. of e-waste and 4.5 million pills. Region 5 awarded 26 grants to facilitate these events. EPA had 188 partners in this effort." Gary Gulezian (U.S. EPA) noted that they were very pleased with the response, that it will help jumpstart the effort and that they will look at their budget for next year to see if it can be continued. Dave Ullrich (GLSLCI) reported that the GLSLCI adopted a resolution on pharmaceuticals this summer, are in the process of developing a questionnaire for cities and are focused on enhancing local capacity to do more collections.

**Habitat and Wetlands Initiative:** Jan Miller (USACE) reported on several elements of this initiative. First, under the direction of the Wetlands Subcommittee an action report was put together that tried to quantify the acres of wetlands restored since the Regional Collaboration Strategy was approved. It estimated that approximately 70,000 acres of wetlands are being addressed. The Habitat Initiative Steering Committee, now lead by Col. Quarles (USACE), developed a report that documents what was done over 2 years with \$1.2 million funding and the tools that were developed (including the database of potentially 180-200 habitat projects). The funding program and habitat project databases will be made available online. The next series of state workshops in each of the eight Great Lakes states and with tribal participants will occur in late October to early 2009. The Great Lakes Commission is coordinating the effort and will announce them on GLIN. The purpose is to show the tools and to identify a limited number of high priority habitat projects in each state. A final issue is the transition of the Habitat Initiative Steering Committee into the next generation, to make sure the tools live on and are updated and refreshed. We have baseline funding through Corps of Engineers for these basic tasks. The next meeting of the Steering Committee is in early November, at which time we will nail down the work plan and other logistics.

Rita Cestarc (U.S. EPA) highlighted the differences between the workshops we are planning and last year's workshops. This year we're having wider participation of state and local entities and NGOs. The federal agencies will be doing a lot more listening. We're seeing this as an opportunity to get a dialogue going and I encourage people to consider attending.

Susie Schreiber (Waukegan Harbor) – Is the modeling project part of this?

Jan Miller – That is a more local project, the Habitat Initiative is broader.

Bill Horns (WDNR) mentioned the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, that next Monday is a steering committee meeting to form a Great Lakes Basin Partnership and asked about the interface w/ the GLRC efforts.

Jan Miller – We're looking to the effort you're talking about as another vehicle to help focus attention on individual projects, we're looking to develop a relationship between the subcommittee we are forming and the partnership you are developing because we have such direct, common purposes.

Sanjiv Sinah (ECT) – The three phases of the process appear to be a) inventory of wetlands projects, b) developing a prioritization system, and c) implementation. What stage are you in?

Jan Miller – Most of the Habitat Initiative's effort is spent getting together an inventory of actions and projects that are possible, of which only half are wetlands. We recognized early in the game that it would

be foolish to develop one single prioritization scheme, because that would be divisive. We wanted to give funding programs and agencies latitude in deciding prioritization.

*Bill Horns* – There is a Great Lakes GIS program developed at the University of Michigan, has there been any discussion of using that?

*Jan Miller* – We had not thought about how to make linkages, right now the database we have can be used on a variety of GIS platforms as well as Google Earth, but it makes sense to link this to other GIS databases with information on wetlands mapping and the like.

*Mary Baker (NOAA)* – We are also kicking off a Great Lakes habitat restoration project. My question is about the new steering committee - will that move more towards implementation and decision-making?

*Jan Miller* – First we want a platform for sustaining the tool we've developed, I don't think this group will really get into implementation.

**Beaches Initiative:** *Melissa Soline (GLSLCI)* The Clean Beaches Initiative is trying to address beach health goals with a standard sanitary survey form, and also through advancing education and other tools. A targeted initiative started in 2008 to ensure that beach managers and others were aware of the survey tool. The form was distributed in early May 2008. We held a successful press event at the end of May in Wisconsin, where we received great feedback that the tool was being well-received and was planned to be used at many different beaches. We are currently looking full scale use of the form in 2009 and also predictive modeling.

*Norm Grannemann (USGS)* – Did you go to the Great Lakes Beaches Association?

*Melissa Soline* – No but others did.

*Don Zelazny (NYSDEC)* – SUNY has a predictive model of fecal bacteria. How can we get our information onto your network?

*Melissa Soline* – I'll make sure we connect.

*Mark Burrows (IJC)* – Let people know that I had a lot of microbial source projects entered into resource inventory ([www.ri.ijc.org](http://www.ri.ijc.org)), if anyone is interested in searching for those.

**Aquatic Invasive Species:** *James Schardt (U.S, EPA)* provided a recap of highlights of the AIS efforts: The project has gone well beyond what was originally envisioned. The idea of a rapid response initiative was supposed to take place at Federal level but it grew and now we have a Great Lakes Basin-wide multi-agency rapid response effort. We established the rapid response communications protocol, and in July we conducted a mock exercise. We reviewed major steps that would occur and saw how that would work on the ground. We had several state and federal agencies there, and worked on who would have jurisdictional authority for possible invasions. We had 4 or 5 boats on the water and 12 or 15 parts of government working together. This fall we'll have a summary report of the findings which will give us something to think about looking ahead.

*Dave Ullrich (GLSLCI)* – Thanks Jamie for all the work you did. We should have been doing this long ago, I'm really glad it happened. We've learned that we aren't as ready as we need to be, so follow-up will be very important. We may do another exercise in a different location, potentially getting a city to take a major role. It was a success and we've learned what we don't know, what we need to do, and that situations are very different in different jurisdictions.

*Mark Burrows (IJC)* – We have a near shore framework with a policy framework for rapid response, Jamie is on that workgroup, the GLRC work is helping the IJC's effort, and we're partnering to try to add to the work by researching potential showstoppers, policy conflicts, and barriers to effective rapid response. We are hoping to have that work done by March 2009.

**Clean Boats Initiative:** *Lisa Wojnarowski (CLG)* This was the Clean Boats Initiative's first year, and our focus was on conducting an inventory of existing boater education efforts and outreach materials to be put up on the GLRC website. We also compiled a list of boater outreach events throughout the region.

*Doris Bautch (USDOT)* – This initiative is working well, I've been traveling into Northern Michigan where I've seen billboards talking about clean boats, so somebody is paying attention.

*Ned Dikmen (GL Boating Federation and Magazine)* – We are open to any clean boating initiatives that anyone would like to share, we reach 67,000 boaters with the magazine and have two websites.

4. **Pending Federal Legislation:** *Joy Mulinex (Congressional Great Lakes Task Force)* reported on several legislative items in Congress: 1) Reauthorization of the Great Lakes Legacy Act. Today the House is expected to take up the measure and is likely to pass it. 2) Ballast Water- The House passed it in the Coast Guard Reauthorization Act. We are still looking for a way to pass it in the Senate. 3) Reauthorize and increase the State Revolving Loans Fund - Passed House and we are hopeful it will pass the Senate in the next couple weeks. 4) Great Lakes Water Basin Compact- has passed the Senate and will be taken up by the House on Monday, September 22nd.

*Bill Muno (Alliance for GL)* – Does the Legacy Act include provisions from the GLRC Strategy to streamline the sediment provisions?

*Joy Mulinex* – There is a mix of provisions included in the House and Senate bills, some were part of Regional Collaboration and some were not.

*Tom Looby (EMA)* – You may want to talk to folks at GLNPO who were actively involved in that Appendix of the GLRC Strategy.

*Gary Gulezian (U.S. EPA)* – We've taken a look at the bills and will be glad to talk to you about that. If you give Dave Cowgill a call you can follow up on the specifics.

*Dave Ullrich (GLSLCI)* – What's the dollar level for state reauthorization?

*Joy Mulinex* – \$3 to 5 billion, which is a significant increase.

*Judy Beck (U.S. EPA)* – Is there any information on the Beach Act?

*Joy Mulinex* – It is temporarily stalled, they are working on issues having to do with increase in authorization.

*Mark Burrows (IJC)* – Any news on the status of the cargo sweepings bill?

*Joy Mulinex* – I have not seen anything, they could be waiting for a new Congress rather than trying to squeeze something into the last few weeks.

## 5. Stakeholder Updates:

- *Evans Paull (Northeast Midwest Institute)* – The Northeast Midwest Institute is funded by the Great Lakes Protection fund to look at creative financing solutions to Great Lakes sediment cleanup. Two specific areas we were asked to consider were tax and government financing and a Great Lakes bond. We looked broadly beyond those two issues and our report was sent in draft form to your listserv and we're happy to get comments. Highlights include: Several problems with tax and government financing - sediment is diffuse and crosses jurisdictional boundaries, and local governments only look at tax and government financing for economic development work. On the subject of bond issues, only Clean Michigan has been used for sediment cleanup. Some bond issues are exhausted, but there may be opportunities to get in on the ground floor. It's important for those interested in cleaning up AOC areas to get in on the ground floor and make sure sediment cleanup is eligible for bond financing. Big picture, cure-all approaches have not met much receptivity at least in the Chesapeake Bay area. Our report also looked at other areas, such as insurance archeology. A last suggestion is to make some changes to how the legacy program works, specifically with respect to matching funds and the creation of a pooled source. Contact [epaull@nemw.org](mailto:epaull@nemw.org) for more information.
- *Matt Doss (GLC)* announced the AOC-RAP Conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan on September 24-25, 2008.
- *Chad Lord (HOW)* noted the Great Lakes Restoration Conference in Milwaukee that had 250 participants and that Great Lakes Day in Washington DC is set for February 25, 2009.

6. **Next Steps:** U.S. EPA will arrange for a summary of the call to be developed and will continue these calls for the Subcommittee to engage w/ stakeholders.

7. **Closing Remarks:** *Gary Gulezian (U.S. EPA)* thanked participants for joining in the discussion. He invited suggestions on how to improve the ongoing outreach efforts.