



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NOAA Joins with Great Lakes Commission to Restore Muskegon Lake

Representatives from NOAA and the U.S.-Canadian Great Lakes Commission joined Michigan's Lt. Gov. John Cherry today on the banks of Muskegon Lake to launch a new partnership to restore fish and wildlife habitat in the Great Lakes Region.

NOAA launched the partnership by awarding \$50,000 to the Great Lakes Commission to design several habitat restoration projects on Muskegon Lake and in other areas of the region. The commission promotes the comprehensive use and conservation of water and related natural resources in the Great Lakes basin and St. Lawrence River. The commission's members include the state of Michigan and the seven other states in the Great Lakes basin. The Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec are associate members.

"The Muskegon Lake project is an important step towards restoring critical habitat within the region," said Patricia A. Montanio, director of the Office of Habitat Conservation for NOAA's Fisheries Service. "We've got a lot of work ahead of us but together we'll be able to dramatically improve this lake and then move on to other Great Lakes restoration projects."

Development surrounding Muskegon Lake, a 4,150-acre lake that drains into Lake Michigan, has caused sediment to fill shallow water wetlands, which has reduced the size of the lake by 26 percent, eliminated fish habitat, and contributed to decades of poor water quality. The grant will fund the engineering and design of projects to return the lake's shorelines to a more natural state by removing fill and restoring wetlands. The long range plan is to reverse decades of neglect and the cumulative effects of invasive species, sewage contamination and the destruction of wetlands and other fish habitat.

"For generations, people have enjoyed fishing on Lake Erie, swimming in Lake Michigan, and hiking in the forests that surround Lake Superior," said Cherry. "The effort to restore the Great Lakes is not just about water. It's about restoring a resource that millions of people depend on for their drinking water, jobs, recreational opportunities and quality of life."

The president's 2009 budget request includes \$1.5 million to launch the NOAA-wide Great Lakes Habitat Restoration Program allowing NOAA to contribute to much needed habitat restoration efforts in the Great Lakes Basin.

The program will use NOAA expertise and a scientific approach to address lake-wide ecosystem problems, such as persistent contaminants in sediment and the loss of high-quality fish and wildlife habitat. NOAA will build on existing expertise and ongoing partnerships to address state, local, and tribal priorities. NOAA has diverse capabilities in the Great Lakes and an established research station, the Lake Michigan Field Station, in Muskegon, Mich., which is part of NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 70 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory: <http://www.glerl.noaa.gov>