

## INTRODUCTION FOR FDR NEWS LETTER

**The Detroit River** is a 32-mile international connecting channel linking Lake St. Clair and the upper Great Lakes to Lake Erie. The Detroit River **Area of Concern** (AOC) includes the areas which drain directly to the river and the drainage area of its tributaries in Michigan and Ontario (700 square miles), as well as the City of Detroit “sewershed” area (107 square miles). It is a binational AOC with complex issues in both the U.S. and Canada that have negatively impacted water quality in the river. Approximately 75 percent of the total land area of the watershed is in Michigan (607.7 square miles). Eleven beneficial use impairments have been identified in the river. The known causes of impairments include urban and industrial development in the watershed, bacteria, PCBs, PAHs, metals, and oils and greases. **Combined sewer overflows** (CSOs) and municipal and industrial discharges are major sources of contaminants within the AOC. Stormwater runoff and tributaries in Michigan are also major sources of contaminants. Additional environmental concerns include invasive species, changes in the fish community structure, and reductions in fish and wildlife habitat.

### **The Challenges**

There are two Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) related to fish and wildlife in the Detroit River Area of Concern: 1) Loss of Fish and Wildlife Habitat and 2) Degradation of Fish and Wildlife Populations. Remedial actions to clean up the Detroit River over the past 30 years have restored adequate conditions for reproduction and early life history survival by a large number of native fish species, however suitable habitat is still lacking. To address these BUIs, a delisting plan has been developed that includes a list of habitat projects recommended as part of the criteria for delisting. Three of these projects have received funding under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

### **The Need for Solutions**

The Great Lakes and coastal resources like the Detroit River are Michigan’s most valuable natural resources and are fundamental to our identity and quality of life. The Great Lakes have extraordinary economic value for Michigan.

The lakes provide

- jobs for more than 800,000 Michigan residents
- a world-renowned commercial and sport fishery with an annual value of more than \$4 billion
- a \$12.8 billion travel industry
- water resources for manufacturing industries, which produce 60 percent of our nation’s steel and automobiles
- harbors and marinas that support a \$2 billion annual recreational boating industry

### **Great Lakes Restoration in Michigan**

The work on the Detroit River is part of a broader effort to restore Michigan’s Great Lakes resources.

The State of Michigan—together with local communities, tribes, business and industry, and nongovernmental organizations—is collaborating with the federal government under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), a five-year program begun in 2009 to implement a comprehensive restoration strategy for the Great Lakes.

Progress - List of projects

#### **2010:**

- Detroit River AOC Habitat Restoration: Blue Heron Lagoon/South Fishing Pier & U.S. Steel
- Ellias Cove Fish Habitat Native Plantings
- Fish Habitat Enhancement Strategies for the Huron-Erie Corridor
- GLOS Enhanced Trib Monitoring to Support AOC & LaMP Activity
- Review & Statewide Assessment of Three BUIs in Michigan AOCs
- Assessing Michigan’s Beneficial Use of Sport-Caught Fish

#### **2011:**

- Develop & Implement a Closure Plan for the Grassy Island Unit/Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge
- Expanded long-term Great Lakes contamination monitoring
- Fish Habitat Enhancement Strategies for the Huron-Erie Corridor
- Forest restoration & green infrastructure development of the Refuge Gateway
- Great Lakes Coastal Habitat Restoration/Refuge Gateway & Humbug Marsh
- Implementation of the Great Lakes Observing System
- Simple Avian Management Techniques