



PROJECT LETTERS OF SUPPORT



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOHN D. CHERRY, JR.
LT. GOVERNOR

January 19, 2010

Mr. Cameron Davis
Senior Advisor to the Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Great Lakes National Program Office
77 West Jackson Boulevard (G-17J)
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3511

Dear Mr. Davis:

On behalf of the state of Michigan, this letter indicates our support of Michigan proposals submitted under the Fiscal Year 2010 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) that advances implementation of the goals and recommendations of the *MI-Great Lakes Plan, Our Path to Protect, Restore, and Sustain Michigan's Natural Treasures* (MI-Great Lakes Plan) as well as other approved state plans for restoration and protection of Michigan's Great Lakes resources. We believe the GLRI is a tremendous opportunity to invest in Great Lakes restoration, to realize our vision of a sustainable Great Lakes ecosystem that ensures environmental integrity, and supports economically viable and healthy communities. In support of those outcomes, the state of Michigan encourages funding for projects that are consistent with the restoration and protection measures of MI-Great Lakes Plan that will:

- Restore and delist Michigan's 14 Areas of Concern
- Protect human health associated with fish consumption advisories and harmful algal blooms
- Restore beaches by controlling pollutants such as phosphorus, pharmaceuticals, and bacterial contamination
- Prevent the introduction and control the spread of invasive species
- Update old and deteriorating infrastructure throughout the state
- Ensure effective and efficient management of urban stormwater
- Implement and share effective land use planning tools throughout Michigan
- Increase opportunities for the public to access the Great Lakes and our inland lakes and streams
- Protect and restore critical fish and wildlife habitat
- Ensure that alternative energy sources are pursued and that the environmental impacts of current energy sources are minimized
- Expand Great Lakes educational and outreach efforts to build community-based, grassroots stewardship

Mr. Cameron Davis
January 19, 2010
Page 2

The GLRI is an important opportunity to restore and protect a magnificent resource, and it is through the many quality projects that will be proposed by Michigan's Great Lakes partners that the outcomes we seek will be realized. We look forward to continuing our partnerships with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies to achieve a healthy environment, strong economy, and high quality of life for the Great Lakes region. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of the Great Lakes at 517-335-4056.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Cherry, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Lieutenant Governor John D. Cherry, Jr



CITY OF DETROIT
RECREATION DEPARTMENT
NORTHWEST ACTIVITIES CENTER

18100 MEYERS
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48235
PHONE 313•224•1100
FAX 313•224•1734
WWW.DETROITMI.GOV

January 22, 2010

Charles R. Bristol, P.E., Treasurer
Friends of the Detroit River
P.O. Box 725
Trenton, MI 48183

RE: Support for the GLRI Grant Application entitled
**CONNECTING THE DETROIT RIVER TO BELLE ISLE BLUE HERON LAGOON AND
SOUTH PIER**

Dear Mr. Bristol

The City of Detroit Recreation Department is pleased to support the “Connecting the Detroit River to the Belle Isle Blue Heron Lagoon and South Pier” project, as prepared by the Friends of the Detroit River for submittal to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. We are committed to working in partnership with the Friends of the Detroit River and the other project partners to achieve the goals and objectives of the project.

It is my understanding that the Beneficial Use Impairments in the Detroit River Area of Concern include loss of fish and wildlife habitat and loss of fish population in the river. This project will address and reverse those trends. The Blue Heron Lagoon is a 41-acre lagoon on Belle Isle that discharges into the Detroit River. However, the flow from the river to the lagoon, which would provide direct access for fish and aquatic resources to the Lagoon is prohibited by sheetpile walls, grates and drop structures. The proposed project will reconnect and naturalize the discharge of Belle Isle’s Blue Heron Lagoon into the Detroit River, and vice versa, thus restoring fish access to over 95 acres of wetlands, shallow and deep water habitat and over 2.2 miles of lotic (canal) habitat. Additionally, proposed coastal wetland and habitat enhancement around the U.S. Coast Guard South Pier meets the goals and objectives to ameliorate loss of fish and wildlife habitat in the river.

As you know, such enhancement of fish habitat in the Detroit River has been proposed by the Remedial Action Plan. The Plan encourages participation in government incentive programs for habitat protection and rehabilitation activities in the AOC (Recommendation 20) and identifies Belle Isle as a candidate site for habitat remediation (Recommendation 23). It also recommends an assessment of the status of fish populations in the Detroit River (Recommendation 25). The RAP describes this project as one means of delisting impaired beneficial use.

The City of Detroit Recreation Department fully supports the CONNECTION OF THE DETROIT RIVER TO BELLE ISLE BLUE HERON LAGOON AND SOUTH PIER project, and is committed to working in collaboratively with the Principal Investigator for this project. The objectives of the project are totally in keeping with those of the Detroit Recreation Department: “to deliver the highest quality service in the management of parks...so that children, families and seniors can grow and flourish.”



The project goals have also been identified in the EPA Strategic Plan (2008), Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and Great Lakes Regional Collaborative Building on Success (2009), the Lakewide Management Plans and other regional coordinated strategic planning efforts including the Comprehensive State Wildlife Action Plans, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) National Fish Habitat Action Plan, A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Fishery Convention and the Great Lakes Fishery Plan.

We look forward to working on this vital project with the Friends of the Detroit River, as well as other partners such as the Friends of Belle Isle, Belle Isle Botanical Society, Belle Isle Women's Committee, Belle Isle Nature Zoo and the host of volunteers associated with these groups.

Sincerely,

Alicia C. Minter
Interim Director

JOHN CONYERS, JR.
14TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

COMMITTEE:
CHAIRMAN
JUDICIARY

SUBCOMMITTEES:
COMMERCIAL AND
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND
CIVIL LIBERTIES

COURTS AND COMPETITION POLICY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2214

January 27, 2010

Gary V. Gulezian
Director, Great Lakes National Program Office
Environmental Protection Agency
77 W. Jackson Boulevard (G-17J)
Chicago, Illinois 60604-3511

Dear Mr. Gulezian,

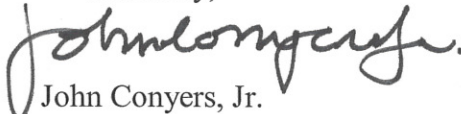
I am writing to express my support for the proposal entitled "**Connecting Blue Heron Lagoon and Detroit River**" being submitted by the Friends of Detroit River to restore habitat in the Detroit River Area of Concern (AOC). The project would bring critically needed restoration to the local waterways.

The Detroit River AOC habitat project that is being proposed to EPA is an important project for the region. The Blue Heron Lagoon is a 41-acre lake/wetland on Belle Isle that discharges to the Detroit River. The geographical features of this site make it a prime candidate for an aquatic reconstruction project. The project will enhance five acres of coastal wetland specifically designed for fish rearing and nursery habitat.

The Great Lakes are a crucial component of our economy and their restoration and protection is vital to ensuring a brighter future for our region. This project presents a unique opportunity to provide environmental sustainability jobs to people in my congressional district and can serve as the foundation for an ecological recovery in the Detroit River.

Friends of Detroit River is a community organization that promotes environmental protection and education in southeast Michigan, which encompasses the Congressional District I represent. I support the Friends of Detroit River in this initiative and urge the EPA to continue its support for environmental restoration in the region by funding this very important project.

Sincerely,


John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

CC: Charles Bristol
Friends of Detroit River

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2426 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-2214
PHONE: 202-225-5126
FAX: 202-225-0072

DETROIT OFFICE:
669 FEDERAL BUILDING
231 WEST LAFAYETTE
DETROIT, MI 48226
PHONE: 313-961-5670
FAX: 313-226-2085

TRENTON OFFICE:
2615 W. JEFFERSON AVENUE
TRENTON, MI 48183
PHONE: 734-675-4084
FAX: 734-285-5443

E-MAIL AND WWW:
JOHN.CONYERS@MAIL.HOUSE.GOV
HTTP://WWW.CONYERS.HOUSE.GOV



January 21, 2010

Charles R. Bristol, P.E., Treasurer
Friends of the Detroit River
P.O. Box 725
Trenton, MI 48183

RE: DETROIT RIVER AOC HABITAT RESTORATION - BLUE HERON LAGOON AND SOUTH PIER

Dear Mr. Bristol:

This letter is in support of your application for funding under the *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Request for Proposals* announced by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, Great Lakes National Program Office.

The Detroit River Canadian Cleanup (DRCC) is a community-based partnership between government, industry, municipalities, scientists, the conservation authority and citizens working to improve the Detroit River Area of Concern (AOC) identified in the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Our ultimate goal is to protect, enhance, and restore the Detroit River ecosystem (e.g., loss of habitat) in order to remove the Detroit River from the list of Great Lakes AOCs.

The proposed project seeks to reconnect and naturalize the 41 acre Blue Heron Lagoon on Detroit River's Belle Isle restoring fish access to over 95 acres of wetlands, shallow and deep water habitat and over 2.2 miles of lotic (canal) habitat. This habitat project will meet the recommendations proposed in the DRCC's Canadian Stage 2 Remedial Action Plan to protect and improve fish habitat and is needed to help both the countries achieve their goal of delisting the Detroit River. Therefore, the DRCC is in support of the Connection of the Detroit River to the Belle Isle Blue Heron Lagoon.

We look forward to seeing this important project become a reality. Together, we can achieve a healthier Detroit River ecosystem!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Natalie Green".

Natalie Green, M.Sc.
Detroit River Canadian Remedial Action Plan Coordinator



BIRD STUDIES CANADA
ÉTUDES D'OISEAUX

understand appreciate conserve
comprendre apprécier conserver

26 January, 2010

Mr. Charles R. Bristol, FDR Treasurer
PO Box 725
Trenton, MI 48183

Re: “Detroit River AOC-Connecting Blue Heron Lagoon to the River” and “Detroit River AOC-South Fishing Pier Nursery Habitat.”

Dear Mr. Bristol,

As Bird Studies Canada’s Aquatic Survey Programs Coordinator I am pleased to support the Friends of the Detroit River’s (FODR) two proposed projects on Belle Isle: “Detroit River AOC-Connecting Blue Heron Lagoon to the River” and “Detroit River AOC-South Fishing Pier Nursery Habitat.”

Bird Studies Canada’s Marsh Monitoring Program (MMP) is a long-term, Great Lakes basin-wide marsh amphibian and bird monitoring program, employing the skills and dedication of hundreds of Citizen Scientist volunteer participants. Since 2007, the MMP has been active in the Detroit River Area of Concern (AOC) and its surrounding watersheds. Monitoring marsh bird and amphibian diversity and abundance is an effective means of assessing the general health of wetlands and their surrounding environments as restoration efforts are implemented.

MMP participants played a vital role in monitoring wetland health on Belle Isle for the first time in 2009. The baseline information that they provided will improve wetland management and help establish conservation strategies to benefit the full spectrum of marsh dependent species as restoration proceeds.

We look forward to the completion of your project goals:

- Improving fish access to the Blue Heron Lagoon and the island’s other lakes and canals;
- Restoring additional coastal marsh and deep and shallow water habitat in the lagoon;
- Creating fish nursery areas by the South Fishing Pier;
- Improved habitat for many birds, reptiles and amphibians;
- Increased public awareness of Belle Isle’s remarkable natural resources.

The Marsh Monitoring Program will continue to look for opportunities to support volunteer training, monitoring and public education, to maintain the proposed improvements to Belle Isle’s natural systems.

Sincerely,

Ryan Archer
Aquatic Survey Programs Coordinator
Bird Studies Canada

Canadian co-partner of
un partenaire canadien de

BirdLife
INTERNATIONAL

January 25, 2010

Melvadean Pearson,
Chair, Environmental Stewardship Committee

THE FRIENDS OF BELLE ISLE

8109 East Jefferson
Detroit, MI 48214

Mr. Charles R. Bristol, FDR Treasurer
PO Box 725
Trenton, MI 48183

Dear Mr. Bristol,

I am writing on behalf of the Friends of Belle Isle's Environmental Stewardship Committee to express support for the Friends of the Detroit River's (FODR) two proposed projects on Belle Isle: "**Detroit River AOC-Connecting Blue Heron Lagoon to the River**" and "**Detroit River AOC-South Fishing Pier Nursery Habitat.**"

The Friends of Belle Isle began to assist the Detroit Recreation Department with water quality monitoring in 2009. The need for more extensive environmental support was apparent, and later that year, an Environmental Stewardship Committee was formed. The Committee has taken a leadership role in organizing a series of workdays to address invasive species in the island's natural areas, in cooperation with the Lakeplain Cluster of the Stewardship Network.

We look forward to the completion of your project goals:

- Improving fish access to the Blue Heron Lagoon and the island's other lakes and canals;
- Restoring additional coastal marsh and deep and shallow water habitat in the lagoon;
- Creating fish nursery areas by the South Fishing Pier;
- Improved habitat for many birds, reptiles and amphibians;
- Increased public awareness of Belle Isle's remarkable natural resources.

The Environmental Stewardship Committee looks forward to supporting volunteer training and outreach, to maintain the proposed improvements to Belle Isle's natural systems.

Sincerely,



Melvadean Pearson
Chair, Environmental Stewardship Committee

THE FRIENDS OF BELLE ISLE



DETROIT RIVER REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN

25 January, 2010

Mr. Charles R. Bristol, FDR Treasurer
PO Box 725
Trenton, MI 48183

Dear Mr. Bristol,

I am writing to express support for the Friends of the Detroit River's (FODR) two proposed projects: **“Detroit River AOC-Connecting Blue Heron Lagoon to the River”** and **“Detroit River AOC-South Fishing Pier Nursery Habitat,”** which are being submitted to USEPA under:

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-R5-GL2010-1

Focus Area: I.D. - Habitat and Wildlife Protection and Restoration

Program: 2 - Habitat Restoration in Great Lakes Areas of Concern

The Public Advisory Council's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Committee (PAC-FWH) included both projects in our Fish and Wildlife Plan: *Delisting Targets for Fish/Wildlife Habitat and Population Beneficial Use Impairments for the Detroit River Area of Concern*. Each has also been prioritized as a “Tier I Action (0-3 yrs)” in the listing of needed actions in the “Michigan's Area of Concern Program Strategy Tracking Table” (page 10) of MDEQ's “*Strategy for Delisting Michigan's Great Lakes Areas of Concern.*”

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/wb-AOC-delisting-strategy_306163_7.pdf

The Blue Heron Lagoon was ranked with a priority of 95 percent among publicly held sites that were considered in *Detroit River Candidate Sites for Habitat Protection and Remediation* (Manny, 2002), a USGS study that resulted from recommendations in the Detroit River Remedial Action Plan (RAP – 1991, updated 2002).

During our assessment of habitat needs in the AOC, the PAC-FWH Committee identified fish nursery areas as a critical need in the upper river. Although fish larvae from 16 species of native fish have been collected in the area, their fate is uncertain; most are swept downstream by strong currents before they can find suitable nursery habitat. The proposed projects would address these needs directly. The Blue Heron Lagoon project will restore fish access to over 95 acres of existing wetlands, shallow and deep water habitat and over 2.2 miles of internal canals. It will also enhance five acres of coastal wetland specifically designed for fish nursery habitat.

The South Fishing Pier project will create 2.5 acres of coastal wetland immediately downstream from a sturgeon spawning reef that was completed in 2004. It would also create deep and shallow water habitat in the flat bottomland.

Seven species of state listed fish were found here historically and several of them have been found near Belle Isle recently, including Northern Madtom (*Noturus stigmosus* – State Endangered), Lake Sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens* – state threatened), Mooneye (*Hiodon tergisus* – state threatened) and Brindled Madtom (*Noturus miurus* – state special concern). Frankly, many of these species are in trouble because their distribution was limited to this area historically—as habitat was degraded or eliminated completely, their numbers plummeted. Improved habitat quality and quantity could bolster their populations considerably.

Belle Isle's location within several migratory flyways provides additional opportunity for wildlife benefit. According to *Belle Isle Bird Surveys – 2005*, (Chartier), 205 bird species were observed on Belle Isle. As of 2009, 241 species have been noted on the island. However, evidence of breeding activity has been noted for only 63 of these species, a smaller number than would be expected based on the island's size, and many are introduced species. Additional coastal marsh habitat would provide breeding opportunities for native species such as blue-winged teal, sora, Virginia rail, and black-crowned night heron.

The island also has small populations of reptiles and amphibians that would benefit from the restoration of coastal marsh; 17 species have been found there in recent years including the state threatened eastern fox snake (*Pantherophis gloydi*), and the state special concern Blanding's turtle (*Emys blandingii*).

Addressing fish and wildlife habitat and population impairments within the Detroit River has been a particular challenge for the PAC, simply because so few suitable sites are available for restoration. We are delighted by the Detroit Recreation Department's to restore critical habitats on Belle Isle and demonstrated commitment to this project. We urge USEPA to support it also.

Thank you for your consideration—and support for ecological restoration in the Great Lakes.

Sincerely,



Suzan Campbell

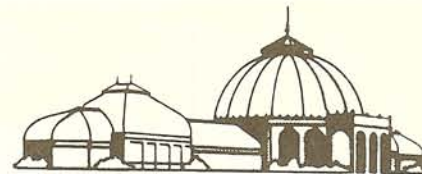
Co-Chair, Fish and Wildlife Habitat Subcommittee, Detroit River AOC

Conservation Associate

Michigan Natural Features Inventory

PO Box 30444

Lansing, MI 48909-7944



25 January 2010

Charles R. Bristol, P.E., Treasurer
Friends of the Detroit River
P.O. Box 725
Trenton, MI 48183

RE: Support for the GLRI Application entitled CONNECTING THE DETROIT RIVER TO THE BELLE ISLE BLUE HERON LAGOON AND SOUTH PIER

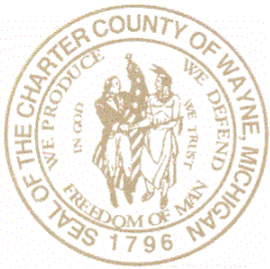
Dear Mr. Bristol:

The Detroit River Area of Concern Habitat Beneficial Use Impairments includes loss of fish and wildlife habitat. The Blue Heron Lagoon is a 41- acre lagoon on Belle Isle that discharges to the Detroit River. However, sheet pile walls, grates and drop structures prohibit direct access for fish and aquatic resources from the river to the lagoon. This Project will reconnect and naturalize the discharge of Belle Isle's Blue Heron Lagoon to the Detroit River restoring fish access to over 95 acres of wetlands, shallow and deep-water habitat and over 2.2 miles of lotic (canal) habit. Enhancement of fish habitat in the Detroit River has been proposed by the Remedial Action Plan which encourages participation in government incentive programs for habitat protection and rehabilitation activities in the AOC (Recommendation 20) and identifies Belle Isle as a candidate site for habitat remediation (Recommendation 23). It also recommends an assessment of the status of fish populations in the Detroit River (Recommendation 25). The RAP describes this project as one means of delisting impaired beneficial use.

The Friends of Belle Isle supports the CONNECTION OF THE DETROIT RIVER TO BELLE ISLE BLUE HERON LAGOON and will collaborate with the Principal Investigator for this project. The objective of the project supports the goals of Friends of Belle Isle and has been identified in the EPA Strategic Plan (2008), Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and Great Lakes Regional Collaborative Building on Success (2009), the Lakewide Management Plans and other regional coordinated strategic planning efforts including the Comprehensive State Wildlife Action Plans, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) National Fish Habitat Action Plan, A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Fishery Convention and the Great Lakes Fishery Plan.

Sincerely yours,

Roberta Henrion
President
Friends of Belle Isle



Robert A. Ficano
County Executive

22 January 2010

Mr. Charles R. Bristol, Treasurer
Friends of Detroit River
PO Box 725
Trenton, MI 48183

RE: Support for the GLRI Grant Application entitled
Connecting The Detroit River To Belle Isle Blue Heron Lagoon And South Pier

Dear Mr. Bristol:

The Beneficial Use Impairments for Detroit River Area of Concern (AOC) include loss of fish and wildlife habitat. The Blue Heron Lagoon is a 41-acre lagoon on Belle Isle that discharges to the Detroit River. Direct access for fish and aquatic life from the River to the Lagoon is prohibited, however, by sheetpile walls, grates and drop structures. This project will reconnect and naturalize the discharge of Belle Isle's Blue Heron Lagoon to the Detroit River and will thus restore fish access to over 95 acres of wetlands, shallow and deep water habitat and over 2.2 miles of lotic (canal) habitat. Enhancement of fish habitat in the Detroit River has been proposed by the Remedial Action Plan (RAP) which encourages participation in government incentive programs for habitat protection and rehabilitation activities in the AOC (Recommendation 20) and identifies Belle Isle as a candidate site for habitat remediation (Recommendation 23). It also recommends an assessment of the status of fish populations in the Detroit River (Recommendation 25). The RAP describes this project as one means of delisting impaired beneficial use.

The Detroit River is the eastern boundary of Wayne County, and its restoration and protection is vital to its role as a recreational centerpiece for southeast Michigan. This project has been identified in EPA's Strategic Plan (2008), Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and Great Lakes Regional Collaborative Building on Success (2009), the Lakewide Management Plans and other regional coordinated strategic planning efforts including the Comprehensive State Wildlife Action Plans, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) National Fish Habitat Action Plan, A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Fishery Convention and the Great Lakes Fishery Plan

We support Friends of Detroit River in the Connection Of The Detroit River To Belle Isle Blue Heron Lagoon project and will collaborate with the Principal Investigator. We urge the EPA to sustain environmental restoration in the Great Lakes by funding this very important project.

Sincerely,

Kelly A. Cave, P.E.
Director, Water Quality Management Division



January 5, 2010

Charles R. Bristol, P.E., Treasurer
Friends of the Detroit River
P.O. Box 725
Trenton, MI 48183

RE: Support for the GLRI Grant Application entitled
**CONNECTING THE DETROIT RIVER TO BELLE ISLE BLUE HERON
LAGOON AND SOUTH PIER**

Dear Mr. Bristol,

The Detroit River Area of Concern Habitat Beneficial Use Impairments includes loss of fish and wildlife habitat. The Blue Heron Lagoon is a 41-acre lagoon on Belle Isle that discharges to the Detroit River. However, direct access for fish and aquatic resources from the River to the Lagoon is prohibited by sheetpile walls, grates and drop structures. This project will reconnect and naturalize the discharge of the Belle Isle's Blue Heron Lagoon to the Detroit River restoring fish access to over 95 acres of wetlands, shallow and deep water habitat and over 2.2 miles of lotic (canal) habitat. Enhancement of fish habitat in the Detroit River has been proposed by the Remedial Action Plan which encourages participation in government incentive programs for habitat protection and rehabilitation activities in the AOC (Recommendation 20) and identifies Belle Isle as a candidate site for habitat remediation (Recommendation 23). It also recommends an assessment of the status of fish populations in the Detroit River (Recommendation 25). The RAP describes this project as one means of delisting impaired beneficial use.

Friends of Belle Isle Aquarium supports the CONNECTION OF THE DETROIT RIVER TO BELLE ISLE BLUE HERON LAGOON and will collaborate with the Principal Investigator for this project. The objective of the project supports the goals of Friends of

Belle Isle Aquarium and has been identified in the EPA Strategic Plan (2008), Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and Great Lakes Regional Collaborative Building on Success (2009), the Lakewide Management Plans and other regional coordinated strategic planning efforts including the Comprehensive State Wildlife Action Plans, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) National Fish Habitat Action Plan, A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Fishery Convention and the Great Lakes Fishery Plan.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vance Patrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "V".

Vance Patrick, President



United States Department of the Interior
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
Great Lakes Science Center
1451 Green Road
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48105
PH: (734) 994-3331 • FAX: (734) 994-8780

January 20, 2010

Friends of the Detroit River
C/O Douglas Denison
110 Miller Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104


RE: USGS – Great Lakes Science Center support for the GLRI grant application entitled:
CONNECTING THE DETROIT RIVER TO BELLE ISLE BLUE HERON LAGOON AND SOUTH PIER

Dear Mr. Denison:

The 2008 Biennial Remedial Action Plan (RAP) Update for the Detroit River Area of Concern (AOC) indicates that loss of fish and wildlife habitat remains a Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) nearly 19 years after the original Detroit River RAP was developed in 1991. The impaired use resulted from significant loss of wetlands and other habitats through agricultural conversion, urban development, and industrial growth. The original 1991 RAP suggested that improved or increased wetland habitat would result in enhanced fish and wildlife populations and would have a positive impact on the health of the river.

The 41-acre Blue Heron Lagoon on Belle Isle discharges to the Detroit River and presents an opportunity to improve and increase available wetland habitat in the AOC. Currently, direct access for fish and aquatic resources from the Detroit River to the Blue Heron Lagoon is obstructed by a series of manmade physical structures (e.g., sheet-pile walls, grates, and drops). This proposed project will eliminate those obstructions to reconnect and naturalize the connectivity of the Belle Isle's Blue Heron Lagoon to the Detroit River, and in so doing restore fish access to over 95 acres of wetlands, shallow and deep water habitat, and over 2.2 miles of lotic (canal) habitat. Enhancement of fish habitat in the Detroit River is proposed in the RAP, which also encourages participation in government incentive programs for habitat protection and rehabilitation activities in the AOC, identifies Belle Isle as a candidate site for habitat remediation, and recommends an assessment of the status of fish populations in the Detroit River. The RAP describes this project as an activity likely to have an impact on restoring beneficial uses in the AOC.

The U.S. Geological Survey, Great Lakes Science Center (GLSC) supports the CONNECTING THE DETROIT RIVER TO BELLE ISLE BLUE HERON LAGOON AND SOUTH PIER proposal and will provide technical advice and other support to the Principal Investigator for this project. The objective of this project supports the goals of Huron-Erie Corridor Initiative and has been identified in the EPA Strategic Plan (2008), Great Lakes Interagency Task Force and Great Lakes Regional Collaborative Building on Success (2009), the Lakewide Management Plans and other regional coordinated strategic planning efforts including the Comprehensive State Wildlife Action Plans, the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) National Fish Habitat Action Plan, A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Fishery Convention, and the Great Lakes Fishery Plan. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Kurt Newman at (734) 214-7257.

Sincerely,

Russell M. Strach
Director
USGS Great Lakes Science Center



*Dedicated to the sustainable use
of Great Lakes resources.*

www.miseagrant.umich.edu

Charles R. Bristol, P.E., Treasurer
Friends of the Detroit River
P.O. Box 725
Trenton, MI 48183

January 11, 2010

RE: Support for the GLRI Grant Application entitled
**CONNECTING THE DETROIT RIVER TO BELLE ISLE BLUE HERON LAGOON AND
SOUTH PIER**

Dear Mr. Bristol:

Beneficial Use Impairments for the Detroit River Area of Concern include loss of fish and wildlife habitat. The Blue Heron Lagoon is a 41-acre lagoon on Belle Isle that discharges into the Detroit River. However, direct access for fish and aquatic resources from the river to the lagoon is prohibited by sheet pile walls, grates, and drop structures. The project proposed herein will reconnect and naturalize the discharge of Belle Isle's Blue Heron Lagoon into the Detroit River, restoring fish access to over 95 acres of wetlands, shallow and deep water habitat, and over 2.2 miles of lotic habitat. Enhancement of fish habitat in the Detroit River has been proposed by the Remedial Action Plan, which encourages participation in government incentive programs for habitat protection and rehabilitation activities in the AOC (Recommendation 20) and identifies Belle Isle as a candidate site for habitat remediation (Recommendation 23). It also recommends an assessment of the status of fish populations in the Detroit River (Recommendation 25).

Michigan Sea Grant (MSG) is a program funded by NOAA, the State of Michigan, University of Michigan, and Michigan State University to enhance the sustainability of Michigan's coastal resources, communities, and businesses through research, outreach, and education. In this role, MSG is a member of the Huron-Erie Corridor Initiative Steering Committee, which focuses on developing science that supports the restoration of native aquatic species and their habitats within the corridor. This region has a history of severe human impacts, and has been identified as one of the most impacted parts of the Great Lakes. The project proposed for Belle Isle focuses on enhancement of fish habitat in this area, and as such, complements the goals of MSG and the HEC. We support this proposal and look forward to restoration activities in the HEC.

Sincerely,

Dr. James S. Diana, Director
Michigan Sea Grant College Program

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN