

A satellite-style aerial photograph of the Great Lakes basin in North America. The five Great Lakes (Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario) are visible as dark blue-green bodies of water, surrounded by a complex network of rivers and streams. The surrounding land is shown in shades of brown and tan, indicating a mix of forested and agricultural areas. The image is taken from a high angle, showing the curvature of the Earth on the right side.

# Great Lakes Restoration Initiative – Accelerating Great Lakes Protection & Restoration

**Cameron Davis**

**Senior Advisor to the Administrator, U.S. EPA  
Great Lakes Legislative Caucus Annual Meeting**

**Milwaukee, WI**

**July 16, 2016, 2016**

# Overview

- ▶ Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
  - Basics & History
  - Progress
  - EPA Role
  - Future Prospects
  
- ▶ Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement
  - Basics & History
  - Progress
  - EPA Role
  - Future Prospects

# Great Lakes Restoration Initiative



# Basics & History

- ▶ USEPA Administrator chairs 11 federal departments as part of the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force. They oversee the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.
- ▶ The GLRI is the largest Great Lakes-specific investment in U.S. history (\$2 billion US over 6 years), with investments in five urgent issues:
  - Cleaning up toxics and areas of concern;
  - Combating invasive species;
  - Promoting nearshore health by reducing runoff;
  - Restoring wetlands and other habitat; and
  - Cross-cutting issues:
    - Climate Change
    - Education
    - Adaptive Management

# Basics & History

- ▶ **Purpose:** Summarizes the actions that federal agencies plan to implement to protect and restore the largest fresh water system in the world
- ▶ **Long-term goals of the Action Plan:**
  - Fish safe to eat
  - Water safe for recreation
  - Safe source of drinking water
  - All Areas of Concern delisted
  - Harmful/nuisance algal blooms eliminated
  - No new self-sustaining invasive species
  - Existing invasive species controlled
  - Native habitat protected and restored to sustain native species

# Progress: Focus Area 1-Toxics



# Progress: Focus Area 1 – Toxics



# Progress: Focus Area 2–Invasive Species

- ▶ The Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee is so far achieving its mission of keeping populations of bighead and silver carp from becoming established in the Great Lakes.
- ▶ States and Provinces are key.



npr.org



# Progress: Focus Area 3–Nearshore Health

- ▶ The Interagency Task Force estimates that over 160,000 pounds of phosphorus will be reduced to targeted watersheds.



# Progress: Focus Area 4–Habitat and Species

- ▶ In FY15, more than 36,000 miles of habitat in targeted watersheds were protected, restored and enhanced to sustain habitat and species.



# Focus Area 5–Foundations for Future Action

- Climate Change
- Education
- Adaptive Management



Chris Bentley

# EPA Role & Future Prospects

- ▶ EPA Administrator Chairs IATF. Priority on ensuring we hear constructive criticism:
  - U.S. EPA Science Advisory Board
  - GAO
  - Great Lakes Advisory Board
- ▶ Future Prospects



# Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

# Basics & History



# Basics & History



**PROTOCOL AMENDING THE AGREEMENT  
BETWEEN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
ON GREAT LAKES WATER QUALITY, 1978, AS AMENDED  
ON OCTOBER 16, 1983 AND ON NOVEMBER 18, 1987**

**AGREEMENT BETWEEN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA ON GREAT LAKES WATER QUALITY, 2012**

# Progress

- Great Lakes Executive Committee
- Article 6(c) Notification
- Annex 3 – Chemicals of Mutual Concern
- Annex 4 – Phosphorus Reduction Targets



# EPA Role & Future Prospects

- EPA Co-Chairs the GLEC and oversees U.S. implementation of the Agreement.
- Prospects: solid. Effectiveness depends on federal implementation with state, tribal, municipal and other partnerships.

# Observations

- Very few are talking about a “balance” between environment and economy. Most see the two as integral to one another. Great Lakes restoration = economic restoration and vice versa.
- Enormous Great Lakes progress over the past several years.
- More progress is on the way as long as the GLRI remains.
- It is critical to lock in progress:
  - Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee.
  - Nutrients – “pay for performance” reductions.
  - Resiliency and distressed communities may be a next public policy imperative.

Cameron Davis  
Senior Advisor to the Administrator  
312-886-4957  
[Davis.Cameron@epa.gov](mailto:Davis.Cameron@epa.gov)  
<http://glri.us>