



Great Lakes Restoration Efforts Produce More Than 3-to-1 Return

New study demonstrates that the GLRI is good for the environment and economy.

A new report from economists at the University of Michigan, Central Michigan University and Duke University demonstrates that the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative's (GLRI) ecological investments are resulting in significant economic benefits for the region and nation. The study shows that investing in cleaning up toxic hot spots in Areas of Concern (AOC), controlling invasive species, restoring wildlife habitat, protecting wetlands, and reducing harmful algae causing runoff returns **more than 3-to-1 in additional economic benefits** across the region. Environmental restoration of the nation's largest source of drinking water is:

- Creating new real estate and commercial development, particularly in waterfront areas
- Resulting in a resurgence in water-based, outdoor recreation and increasing tourism across the region
- Increasing housing options and home values
- Increasing the number of young people staying in or relocating to Great Lakes communities

In addition, restoration investments created or supported jobs. GLRI projects through 2016 are responsible for more than:

- 9 percent total job growth in Ashtabula County, Ohio
- 4 percent total job growth in Duluth, Minn.
- 3 percent total job growth in Sheboygan, Wisc.

RETURN FOR EVERY \$1 SPENT (THROUGH 2036)



The regionwide impact of federal Great Lakes restoration spending is impressive:

- Every \$1 of federal investment on projects funded under the GLRI from 2010-2016 will produce \$3.35 in additional economic output in the Great Lakes region through 2036.
- Additional tourism activity generated by the GLRI will increase regional economic output by \$1.62 through 2036 for every \$1 in federal GLRI spending.
- Increase in quality of life as measured by increased housing prices and stakeholder interviews.

The results from restoration and protection efforts are inspiring:

- In the two decades before the GLRI, only one AOC was cleaned up. Since the GLRI, three Areas of Concern have been delisted. The actions necessary to delist seven additional AOCs have also been completed; one more will be completed this year, 3-5 more in 2019.
- Combined with other funding, farmers implemented conservation action on more than 1 million acres of rural lands to reduce erosion and farm runoff that feeds toxic algal blooms, doubling farmland under conservation in Western Lake Erie, Saginaw Bay, and Green Bay and preventing 402,000 pounds of phosphorus from entering the Great Lakes.
- More than 513 dams and barriers were removed allowing fish to access more than 4,600 miles of river.

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Ashtabula, Ohio

- In Ashtabula, pleasure boat registrations went up 42 percent and boat rentals went up 28 percent between 2008 and 2017. Harbor Yak – a kayak, canoe, and stand-up paddleboard rental shop – opened on the river in 2017.
- Twenty-seven new businesses opened to serve growing numbers of waterfront visitors in Ashtabula since 2010.

Buffalo, New York

- Buffalo opened a multi-million-dollar entertainment complex in 2015 on an old industrial site, offering a restaurant, ziplining, climbing wall, kayak and paddleboard rentals, hockey rink, and roller derby facilities.
- More than 1.5 million people attended 1,000 events on the waterfront in 2016, up from 150,000 and 115 events in 2010.

Detroit, Michigan

- Once designated as one of the Great Lakes' most polluted rivers, cleanup of the Detroit River AOC has made water-based recreation popular again along Detroit's 3.5 miles of RiverWalk, a \$163 million project connecting nearly three million people to the city's waterfront.
- Business at Detroit Outpost (a kayak outfitter and tour company) has increased 500 percent since 2013 and business at Detroit River Sports has doubled since 2015

Duluth, Minnesota

- In Duluth, Pier B Resort, a \$32-million hotel complex was constructed over a former shipping pier. It opened in 2016. Two other hotels opened along the city's waterfront in 2014 and 2017.
- Five new breweries on or near the waterfront opened in Duluth to take advantage of Lake Superior's high-quality water.

Erie, Pennsylvania

- Erie has a new \$150 million development called Harbor Place, which includes hotels, retail shops, condominiums, apartments, and outdoor amenities like an ice rink. Erie also has a new \$20 million Hampton Inn and Suites hotel to serve tourist and other visitors.
- Visits to Presque Isle Bay in Erie for fishing and other recreational activities increased to 22 percent between 2006 and 2017.

Muskegon, Michigan

- New waterfront development projects in Muskegon have totaled \$47 million, with the potential for several hundred million dollars in investment possible.
- KL Outdoors, the world's largest kayak manufacturer, opened its corporate headquarters on the waterfront in Muskegon in 2018. The company plans to invest more than \$9 million and create 150 new jobs in the city by 2021.

Sheboygan, Wisconsin

- Visitor spending in Sheboygan went up 32 percent between 2010 and 2016 and visiting boaters spent 41 percent more at Harbor Centre Marina in Sheboygan in 2017 than in 2014.
- Sheboygan, which in the past experienced a housing shortage, will have nearly 300 new housing units available in 2018 due to nearly \$40 million in new residential development along the waterfront.

Waukegan, Illinois

- Bay Marine Chicago Yachting Center opened in Waukegan in 2018. The \$5-million development serves pleasure boaters.
- Thousands of people now converge annually for festivals and other activities on the waterfront in Waukegan.