What is the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative?

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative accelerates efforts to protect and restore the largest system of fresh surface water in the world – the Great Lakes. Built upon the foundation of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy, GLRI answered a challenge of the governors of the Great Lakes states. Since 2010 the multi-agency GLRI has provided funding to 16 federal organizations to strategically target the biggest threats to the Great Lakes ecosystem and to accelerate progress toward achieving long term goals:

- 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

What are some of the benefits of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative?

The interagency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) targets improvements to address the most significant environmental problems within the Great Lakes Basin.

Economic Benefits from Restoring the Great Lakes Restoring the Great Lakes advances the region's broader strategy to create jobs, stimulate economic development and invest in freshwater resources and waterfront communities.

A detailed study by The Brookings Institution found that fully implementing The Great Lakes restoration strategy would generate $80 billion to $100 billion in benefits, including $6.5 billion to $11.8 billion in direct benefits from tourism, fishing and recreation; $50 million to $125 million in reduced costs to municipalities; and $12 billion to $19 billion in increased property values in degraded shoreline areas, including $3.7 billion to $7 billion for the Detroit metro area alone.

Engineering and design of sustainable restoration projects, new technologies to detect bacterial contamination, and techniques to monitor invasive species. Pollution prevention to keep the Great Lakes clean, prevent beach contamination, safeguard investments in restoration and prevent polluted runoff from agricultural land and city streets.

Outreach to engage citizens in restoration efforts; promote best practices to prevent the introduction of invasive species; improve fish consumption and beach advisories; and keep pesticides, pharmaceuticals and other pollutants out of the lakes.

Monitoring of mercury pollution to protect children's health; beaches to enhance swim advisories; and Great Lakes water and wildlife to detect contaminants.

Research to strengthen management, including control methods for invasive species such as Asian carp, Phragmites and sea lamprey; preventing the introduction of invasive species in ballast water; enhancing knowledge of the Great Lakes ecosystem; protecting endangered species; identifying habitat for sensitive species; and understanding climate change impacts.

Capacity building to help states and local governments implement restoration projects, improve collaboration, and educate health care providers about fish consumption advisories. Sound science and accountability to ensure that funds are spent effectively and that the GLRI reflects a strong, science- based understanding of the Great Lakes.