



Working Together for Healthy Great Lakes Coastlines

Great Lakes Coastal Assembly

The GREAT LAKES COASTAL ASSEMBLY envisions coastal landscapes that support the unique structure and processes essential for sustaining healthy species populations, resilient natural communities, and for providing benefits to human society. The COASTAL ASSEMBLY will work collaboratively with governments, industries, indigenous communities, and non-governmental organizations to align actions around coastal priorities, develop and pursue goals guided by stakeholder desires, and use the best available science to inform coastal conservation strategies.

The Issue:

The Great Lakes are ringed by hundreds of miles of coastline. This narrow ribbon where land meets water is home to a spectacular array of plants and animals, and serves to protect inland areas through natural flood control. The conversion of natural coastlines to support growing human populations, along with the higher frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, jeopardizes the future health of our Great Lakes coasts.

The Solution:

The Great Lakes Coastal Assembly is a diverse assemblage of federal and state agencies, tribal governments, and private interests working together to conserve and restore lands and waters in the critically important coastal zones of the Great Lakes.

A Colossal Collaboration

The Great Lakes Coastal Assembly involves dozens of agencies and organizations that all recognize that conservation on such a large scale cannot be done alone. A snapshot of our successes to date:

- **Helping Decision Makers** — developed two Decision Support Tools that help users identify and prioritize coastal wetlands and other key areas for conservation and restoration
- **Information Sharing** — tracking progress towards shared goals for a resilient system of Great Lakes coastal wetlands on the *Blue Accounting* platform and developing relevant metrics to aid decision-makers, including the most comprehensive database of coastal wetlands project investments in the Great Lakes Basin
- **Research** — conducting research that fills information gaps to inform practical, on-the-ground decision making



Land managers and stakeholders from across the Great Lakes region come together to formulate collective goals for conserving coastal wetlands. Photo: NOAA

Cutting Edge Science and Conservation

The Great Lakes Coastal Assembly is focused on the application of cutting edge science to drive effective conservation efforts on the ground. There are many organizations working for conservation in the Great Lakes. Rather than working independently—often overlapping and occasionally conflicting—the Coastal Assembly has assembled a cross-agency team to match up the many differing priorities, plans, guidelines and resources of all. Through these efforts, plans and priorities can be aligned, resulting in economies of scale and synergy of results.

Pilot Collaboration

In a pilot area from Saginaw Bay to western Lake Erie, the Coastal Assembly is implementing *Landscape Conservation Design*—a collaborative effort among myriad stakeholders to strategically identify, plan and implement effective coastal wetland conservation efforts in this critically important area.

Laser-Focused Projects

Several agencies and organizations in the Coastal Assembly provide grants to fund conservation projects on the ground. By collaborating to assess and match up the various agency priorities, the Coastal Assembly can now strategically select the projects that best achieve commonly held goals.

Photo: Jim Sorbie / CC BY 2.0



Photo: Matthew Cooper, Northland College

Working Together

Nearly 400 individuals and entities have worked together and/or supported the conservation efforts of the Coastal Assembly, which is made up of representatives from these agencies and organizations.

State or Local Organizations

- Audubon Great Lakes
- Ducks Unlimited
- Great Lakes Commission
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, & Energy
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- New York Department of Environmental Conservation
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- The Nature Conservancy
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

First Nation or Federal Organizations

- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Geological Survey

Universities

- Central Michigan University
- Northland College
- Michigan State University

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)



GLRI funding has supported numerous Great Lakes Coastal Assembly projects, provided millions of dollars to restore, enhance, and protect coastal wetlands as well as support needed science and monitoring. GLRI is the largest investment in the Great Lakes Region in more than two decades.

Photo: US Fish and Wildlife Service

Learn More

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Visit: blueaccounting.org/organization/great-lakes-coastal-assembly-glca

Great Lakes Coastal Assembly:
Creating Critical Connections

