

AOC/Sediment Chapter
Attachment 5

Assessment of Ongoing Activities

Program Administration: US EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) has assumed oversight responsibility and appointed federal liaisons to each AOC. In 2004, Congress increased funding for state and local support for AOC efforts, recognizing the need to rebuild capacity in this critical area. However, much work remains to bring State and local programs back to effective levels and to reduce bureaucratic requirements that impede progress in the AOC program.

Restoring beneficial uses: The Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2002 provides dedicated funding for sediment remediation, filling an important gap in the Great Lakes program. The accelerated sediment remediation program envisioned by this Act builds on a considerable amount of preparatory work by US EPA and other federal, state, local and tribal agencies to characterize the nature and extent of contaminated sediments in the AOCs and to evaluate remedial options.

The Act authorizes \$270 million over five years (beginning in fiscal year 2004) to remediate contaminated sediment in the US or bi-national AOCs. US EPA received \$10 million in FY 2004 and \$22.5 million in Legacy Act funding for 2005. Though Legacy Act funds are a boon to AOCs, progress is slowed by the fact that appropriated funds have not reached authorized levels, and by well-intended but convoluted provisions in the Act that make it difficult to disburse funds.

Delisting: In 2001, the US Policy Committee developed delisting principles and guidelines (www.epa.gov/glnpo/aoc/delist.html) that clearly describe the attributes of acceptable delisting targets and the process to totally delist an AOC. The guidance is being used by the States and local Remedial Action Plan (RAP) groups to define delisting targets for the BUIs identified in their AOCs. The guidelines allow for incremental progress towards delisting by BUI or by stream segment, and present a viable option for better measuring intermediate progress in AOCs. "Area of Concern in Recovery" status is available for AOCs that have implemented all feasible cleanup activities, but require time for the ecosystem to respond.

Over the last several years, GLNPO has begun funding technical workshops, research on feasible targets for BUIs, and development of statewide and local AOC restoration targets. The current lack of delisting targets slows down remedial work and creates the impression that the Great Lakes region is not ready to undertake a full-scale restoration effort.

AOC status updates

The most recent review of progress in the U.S. AOCs is the 2004 updates of the Lakewide Area Management Plans: 2004 LaMP Updates (U.S. EPA, GLNPO, April 2004, www.glin.net/aocstrategyteam/documents/AOCs2004.pdf)

In 2002, the Great Lakes Commission also produced a status report on progress in the AOCs: [An Overview of U.S. Great Lakes Areas of Concern \(Great Lakes Commission and U.S. EPA, 2002, www.glc.org/docs/AOC/aocoverview.pdf\)](http://www.glc.org/docs/AOC/aocoverview.pdf) [Includes BUI table for all U.S. AOCs.]