

GLRI Workgroup Recommendations

Theme 3: Seek Advice and Recommendation on GLRI Outreach

Charge Question to GLAB: *How well are EPA and its federal, state and tribal partners communicating the goals, challenges and accomplishments of GLRI? Are there stakeholder groups that could be more effectively communicated with? What additional and/or innovative tools could be used to improve outreach to citizens, elected officials and partners?*

1. Increase GLRI visibility and recognition among the general public and stakeholder communities

- a. Better promote GLRI initiatives and accomplishments
 - b. Require GLRI branding (such as a logo) on GLRI initiatives and products
 - c. Measure outreach initiatives
 - d. Conduct a communications audit to identify current communication methods, budget, audiences, and gaps, clarifying especially whether target communities are reached
- Tactics could include engaging new voices to share accomplishments (e.g., youth, those impacted by AOC); identifying ways to reach defined audiences, such as messaging through mass and social media; greater use of LAMPs.

2. Effectively engage stakeholders, paying special attention to communities affected by EJ concerns

- a. Invite stakeholder participation from the *beginning* of any initiative
 - b. Ensure communication is two-way
 - c. Provide for multilingual communication
 - d. Intentionally identify and target remoted or often-overlooked stakeholders who have not yet been reached (e.g., disadvantaged communities, First Nations, environmental justice entities)
- Tactics could include requiring a community engagement component in all grants (strategy, timeline, budget requirements in all proposals); funding and engaging public advisory councils; deploying culturally fluent EPA community liaisons; creating a low-barrier grant application process; and defining outcomes and measures for community engagement.

3. Manage stakeholder expectations

- a. Clearly communicate to stakeholders how EPA defines “restoration” in each case
- b. Ensure stakeholders understand pace of restoration (i.e., it’s slow and expensive; we need scientific data to create solutions)
- c. Ensure stakeholders understand GLRI scope, goals, and challenges

Theme 5: Outcome-Based Investments in the Great Lakes

Charge Question to GLAB: *As we enter the next decade of GLRI funding, what are appropriate annual ecological and community-based outcomes (coupled with appropriate baselines and monitoring) to show that we are making progress in the areas of AOC remediation and delisting, invasive species control and prevention, nutrient reduction, and habitat restoration and protection, such that we can show a good return on investment?*

1. Measure success in a variety of ways

- a. Use scientific indicators to measure outcomes

- b. Include outcome measures that are defined by and relevant to local communities, not only to EPA experts
- c. Integrate and advance scientific indicators, monitoring, and assessment into projects to employ the principles of adaptive management and communicate results from GLRI investments

2. Invest long-term

- a. Commit to identifying new AOCs, not simply addressing legacy AOCs
- b. Commit to moving from restoration to protection and prevention

Ecological and community-based outcomes and baseline data

AOCs

- AOCs delisted
 - Remediation disposal locations? (S.O.)
 - New or exacerbated concerns with monitoring and management?
- BUIs removed
- Management Action Lists for BUI removal
- Complex AOCs – making progress on all AOCs

Invasive Species

- Current number of invasive species
- Prevention measures against new species
- Management measures for existing species
- Impacts of climate change on invasive species management

Nutrient reduction (and HABs?)

- Nearshore monitoring of nutrients
- Lake or sub-lake models
- Climate models and impacts on nutrients
 - Nexus of water, food and energy
 - Sustainable communities
- Access to clean water
 - beaches are open more often
 - HABs are greatly reduced
 - Lower costs for drinking water treatment

Habitat Restoration

- Coastal conditions
 - Resilience
 - Hardening of shorelines
- Coastal wetlands

Habitat Protection

- Investments in protecting habitat in concert with restoring habitats

Theme 6: GLRI's Role in the Vitality and Reinvestment of Great Lakes Communities

Charge Question to GLAB: *How can GLRI projects and funding be further leveraged across Federal agencies and programs, including Opportunity Zones and Brownfields, to maximize environmental and economic benefits to Great Lakes communities?*

1. Develop models that include not only ecosystem dynamics but also policy and economic forces
2. Revise Legacy Act to continue to prioritize AOCs but expand program to include all contaminated sites in the Great Lakes
3. Ensure benefits reach disadvantaged communities and improve

General Considerations and Comments

Theme 3

- Need to better reach communities that have not had a longstanding place at the table, particularly to address EJ concerns.
- GLAB currently focused on communication gaps and could use more information about current GLRI communication campaigns or strategies

Theme 5

- EPA and communities often do not share standards on what “cleaned up” means; (e.g., Mackinaw Straits is not an AOC)
- What is the process to determine an AOC? Historical problem?
- Must implement initiative *with* communities
- Need to prioritize address most polluted communities
- Monitoring and reporting on our progress is critical to evaluating action plans and setting priorities

Theme 6

- Information needed on Opportunity Zones and brownfields include
 - what and where are they?
 - What are their funding and program profiles?
 - How might they connect with GLRI?
 - Potential to model Opp Zone/brownfield program on Legacy Act?
 - How do these programs support or challenge equitable outcomes?
- Any Superfunds overlap? Justice40 Initiative?
- Former GLAB were adamant that projects are not prioritized according to ability to leverage.