



The Lower Green Bay and Fox River AOC spans seven miles of the Lower Fox River (downstream of the De Pere Dam to the mouth) and approximately 22 square miles of southern Green Bay.

GREAT LAKES AREAS OF CONCERN: Lower Green Bay & Fox River

Great Lakes rivers and harbors that have been most severely affected by pollution and habitat loss are considered “Areas of Concern,” or AOCs. Designated in 1987 as part of an international agreement between the U.S. and Canada known as the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement*, these geographically-defined sites need special attention. This fact sheet highlights some of the progress that partners in Wisconsin have made toward removing Lower Green Bay and the Fox River from the list of AOCs.



WDNR



WDNR

Green Bay is the world’s largest freshwater estuary and it historically sustained native cultures of the area with its abundant fish, waterfowl, and wild rice. As development occurred, Lower Green Bay and the Lower Fox River were degraded by pollution and habitat loss, leading to their eventual designation as an AOC.

Efforts are underway to address the environmental problems in the AOC, including the world’s largest PCB cleanup, multiple habitat restoration projects, and watershed projects to address runoff pollution.



UW-Extension



UW-Extension

AOC Accomplishments

Over 320,000 cubic yards of sediment have been dredged so far in 2013 as part of the PCB sediment cleanup project (Check <http://www.foxrivercleanup.com/> for most recent numbers); it is estimated that more than 2.16 million cubic yards of sediment were dredged from 2009 to 2012 (entire project area, not just the AOC).

U.S. EPA approved the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report establishing a “pollution budget” for total phosphorus and total suspended solids in the Lower Fox Watershed in May 2012. The TMDL will drive the implementation of practices to reduce sediment and phosphorus loading to the river and bay.

A Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) that formed in 2011 continues to improve public input into AOC activities and foster 2-way communication between DNR and the CAC member organizations.

Through Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) settlement funds, over \$36 million has been provided to replace, restore, or acquire habitat for fish and wild-life species injured by PCBs within the Lower Fox River Watershed and Green Bay.

As the result of a project to remove Phragmites and lyme grass from Wisconsin’s Lake Michigan shoreline, 768 acres in and adjacent to the AOC were treated with herbicide in 2011. Phragmites and lyme grass are invasive species that do not provide the habitat needed to sustain native coastal ecosystems.

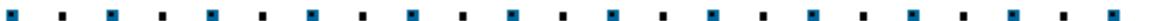
Highlights from the Lower Green Bay & Fox River Area of Concern

Lower Fox River PCB Cleanup



Bojdt

The Lower Fox River Contaminated Sediment Cleanup project is now into the fifth year of active remediation. This project includes the remediation of all sediments with PCB concentrations greater than or equal to 1.0 ppm in the area from the mouth of the Fox River (a short distance into Green Bay) to just upstream of the Little Rapids Dam (approximately 13 mile stretch of the river). The lower 7 miles of the project are in the Lower Green Bay and Fox River Area of Concern, and dredging work is currently occurring within the AOC. Completion of dredging, capping, and sand covering for this project is anticipated in 2017. Impairments addressed include Degradation of Benthos, Degradation of Fish & Wildlife Populations, Restrictions on Fish & Wildlife Consumption, Bird or Animal Deformities or Reproductive Problems, Fish Tumors or Other Deformities, and Restrictions on Dredging.

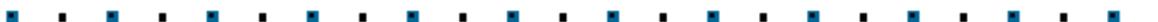


Cat Island Chain Restoration Project



Brown County, WI/USACE

Reconstruction of the Cat Island chain began in 2012. This project includes construction of a 2.5 mile wave barrier and side dikes for three islands, which is expected to be complete in fall 2013. The wave barrier protects and restores 1,400 acres of shallow water and wetland habitat. Upon completion of the wave barrier, 272 acres of islands will be constructed over the next 20 to 30 years using clean dredged material from the Green Bay Harbor. Restoring the islands will lead to recovery of a significant portion of the lower bay habitat and will benefit sport and commercial fisheries, colonial nesting water birds, shorebirds, waterfowl, marsh nesting birds, amphibians, turtles, invertebrates, and fur-bearing mammals. Impairments addressed include Degradation of Fish & Wildlife Populations and Loss of Fish & Wildlife Habitat. .



Integrated Stream & Wetland Restoration: Lower Green Bay-Fox River AOC



The Nature Conservancy

This integrated inventory, research, analysis, design, and restoration project focuses on the Duck-Pensaukee Watershed to advance delisting of the Lower Green Bay and Fox River AOC impairments. It includes a wetland assessment and prioritization, fish barrier analysis and prioritization, a northern pike habitat assessment, a sediment and nutrient data assessment, and wetland restoration. Products so far include Release 2 of the Tributary and Coastal Wetland Decision Support Tool (online at <http://maps.tnc.org/duckpentool/>) and the Watershed Approach assessment and prioritization final report (available online at <http://conserveonline.org/library>; search "Duck Pensaukee"). Impairments addressed include Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae, Degradation of Fish & Wildlife Populations, Loss of Fish & Wildlife Habitat, and Degradation of Benthos.



For more information, contact Laurel Last, Lower Green Bay and Fox River AOC Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Green Bay, WI.
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