



AREAS OF CONCERN

What are Areas of Concern?

These are locations within the Great Lakes identified as having experienced high levels of environmental harm.

Under the 1987 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between Canada and the United States, 43 such areas were identified, 12 of which were Canadian and 5 of which were shared binationally.

The 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement reaffirms both countries' commitments to restoring water quality and ecosystem health in Great Lakes Areas of Concern.



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Objective

To restore water quality and beneficial uses of the ecosystem by cleaning up severely contaminated and degraded locations around the Great Lakes.

What is the Government of Canada doing?

The Government of Canada has contributed millions to support local action to clean up Areas of Concern since 1987. In Budget 2010, the Government of Canada renewed and made permanent its funding of \$8 million per year for this work, and a further \$48.9 million was allocated by the Government of Canada to address the problem of remediation of contaminated sediments.



This money has been put to good use. Work has been completed in five Canadian Areas of Concern, and by 2019 we anticipate being able to complete all required remedial actions in a further five Canadian Areas of Concern: Nipigon Bay, Niagara River, the Bay of Quinte, St. Lawrence River (Cornwall) and Peninsula Harbour. To date, we have:

- Cleaned up and confirmed restoration of water quality and ecosystem health in three Areas of Concern—Severn Sound, Collingwood Harbour and Wheatley Harbour—which allowed the Government of Canada to remove these sites from the list of Areas of Concern; and,
- Completed all clean-up actions in two Areas of Concern—Spanish Harbour on Lake Huron and Jackfish Bay on Lake Superior—allowing these sites to be designated as Areas of Concern in Recovery, which means that all actions are complete and the areas now need more time for the environment to recover naturally.

To date, over 900 restoration projects have been completed by Environment Canada and community partners in the Areas of Concern. With financial and scientific support provided by Environment Canada, these projects were undertaken at the community level and they have enhanced water quality, restored fish and wildlife populations and habitats,

improved management of municipal waste waters, and investigated and developed options to manage contaminated sediments in the Areas of Concern. These projects have served to remediate environmental quality at the local scale, leading us ever closer to completing all required remedial actions.

Contaminated sediment management projects have been completed in the St. Lawrence River (Cornwall), Niagara River, Detroit River, Bay of Quinte and the Peninsula Harbour Area of Concern.

Randle Reef in the Hamilton Harbour AOC is the largest Canadian contaminated sediment site in the Great Lakes, and clean-up is now underway. This project will be the last major step in the process to restore Hamilton Harbour and remove it from the list of Areas of Concern. The project will improve water quality and make it safer to consume fish caught in the harbour. When completed, current restrictions on navigation will be removed and economic returns will be generated through the creation of valuable port lands. The estimated cost of the Randle Reef sediment remediation project is \$138.9 million. In addition to the \$46.3 million in funding from the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario has committed to provide \$46.3 million, and \$14 million is being contributed by the City of Hamilton, \$14 million by U. S. Steel Canada and \$14 million by the

Hamilton Port Authority, as well as \$2.3 million from the City of Burlington and \$2 million from Halton Region.

Why is action needed?

Cleaning up Areas of Concern contributes to the environmental, social and economic well-being of local communities and to improving water quality and ecosystem health throughout the Great Lakes.

How can you be involved?

There are many community and municipal groups engaged in cleaning up Areas of Concern in their area. The success of many of the projects undertaken are in large part the result of enduring partnerships at binational, national, provincial and local levels. Without the dedicated effort and commitment of all of our partners, we could not have accomplished all that we have in these areas. If you are interested in participating in your area, please contact Environment Canada via email at: greatlakes-grandslacs@ec.gc.ca

To see more specific information on individual Areas of Concern, click on the appropriate link below:

Where can you find more information?

Environment Canada:

Online:

www.ec.gc.ca/raps

Contact Us:

greatlakes-grandslacs@ec.gc.ca