



# U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) Significant Activities Report

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## **Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Rolls Ahead**

As mentioned in the [previous issue](#) of the Significant Activities Report, the “Northbound Train” is rolling! The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Conveners met in Chicago on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2004 in Chicago, Illinois. At that meeting, the Conveners signed the “Great Lakes Declaration” and “Framework” documents affirming the commitment to the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration process and the development of a comprehensive strategy to further protect and restore the Great Lakes.

The “Framework” document established eight Issue Area Strategy Teams comprised of government, quasi-government, regional stakeholders, and other interested parties, as the working bodies responsible for drafting action plans that will be used for the development of the Great Lakes Strategy. The eight Strategy Teams include:



Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich speaks at Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Conveners Meeting in Chicago on December 3, 2004.

- Habitat/Species
- Indicators and Information
- Persistent Bioaccumulative Toxics Reduction
- Invasive Species
- Sustainable Development
- Coastal Health
- Non-point Source
- Areas of Concern Restoration/Remediation

The Teams quickly swung into action immediately following the Conveners Meeting and have been working hard on drafting Strategy pieces for their particular issue area through extensive use of conference calls, email, and specially-established collaboration Web Sites. A face-to-face working meeting of the Executive Committee’s subcommittee and the Strategy Teams was held February 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> in Toledo, Ohio. The completed

draft strategy document is scheduled for presentation to the members of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, and ready for public review and comment, at Summit I, scheduled for July 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in Duluth, Minnesota.

For more information about the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/greatlakes/collaboration/index.html>

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### Caribbean Mercury Workshop

On January 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, Alexis Cain attended a United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) Mercury Awareness-Raising Workshop in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. This meeting was for the non-Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries, attended by approximately 50 staff of local governments. Other participants included representatives of USEPA's Office of Water, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation (U.S./Canada/Mexico) and the Mercury Policy Project/Ban Mercury Working Group, as well as UNEP staff and students from the University of the West Indies. Alexis gave four presentations at the workshop:

- Mercury sources and emissions
- Mercury in products
- Measures to limit mercury releases from wastes
- Measures to reduce releases from chlor-alkali plants

With respect to mercury, the countries of the region can be divided into 3 groups:

1. Guyana and Suriname: These countries have more in common with South America than they do with the Caribbean island countries, because their primary mercury problems result from ar-



Bauxite ore (pictured) contains small amounts of mercury which can be released into the environment during mining and refining  
*Photo courtesy of USGS*

tisanal gold mining. In both cases, mining takes place in the interior of the country, and is conducted primarily by people who live in the coastal areas of the country, but who set up camp temporarily in the interior to mine, causing mercury accumulation that affects the indigenous populations of the interior. In addition, both countries have bauxite mining.

2. Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados: These countries do not have artisanal mining, but do have some heavy industry. All three have cement production. Jamaica mines bauxite and produces alumina, and Trinidad and Tobago produces oil and gas.
3. Members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, the Bahamas, Belize: These countries have little industry and mining. Mercury problems are associated primarily with imported products, and with disposal of municipal and hospital waste.

There was general uncertainty about how important an issue mercury is for the region. None of the countries have done emissions inventories, and data on mercury exposures

or levels in biota and environmental media are very limited. The exception is that Guyana and Suriname both have collected substantial amounts of information about the artisanal gold mining issue, and have found high levels of mercury in fish near mining sites, and high exposures to miners, their families, and nearby fish-eating populations.

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### **Burn-it-Smart**

USEPA invited Environment Canada to deliver a “Burn it Smart” wood heat workshop in Watertown, New York on January 24<sup>th</sup>. “Burn-it Smart” workshops provide important information on the proper use of wood stoves and fireplaces, including selection of high-efficiency wood stoves as well as proper burning practices to reduce emissions and to conserve energy. The workshop was held as part of a public education campaign on residential wood combustion and includes the use of an outdoor burn trailer. The trailer contains two woodstoves mounted to the floor of the trailer. One stove is an old technology stove and the second is a USEPA-certified, advanced technology appliance and the display is used to demonstrate the difference in wood smoke emissions from the two units. These workshops are an effective educational tool to help reduce fine particulate and hazardous emissions from wood smoke.

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### **Conserving Bald Eagle Habitat**

The U.S.-Canada Bald Eagle Working Group, a Lake Ontario LakeWide Management Plan (LaMP) working group, has drafted “Conserving Lake Ontario and Up-

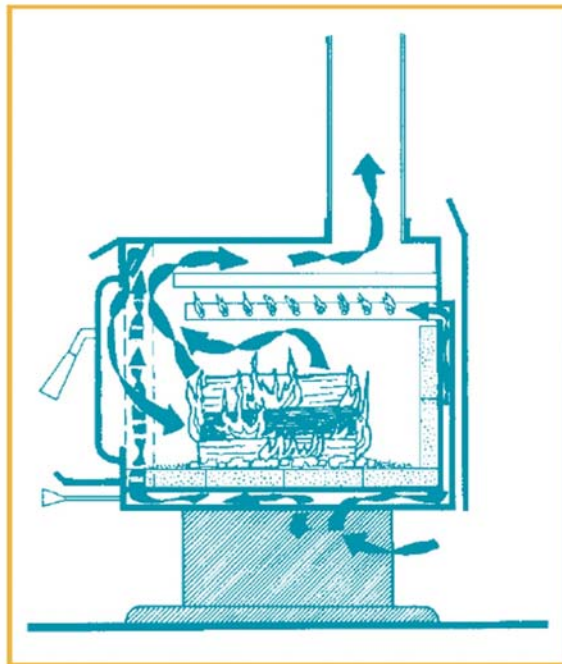


Illustration of a high-efficiency wood stove  
Image courtesy of Natural Resources Canada

per St. Lawrence River Bald Eagle Habitats.” The group came together to prioritize bald eagle habitat, develop improved LaMP bald eagle restoration goals and objectives, identify opportunities for increased binational cooperation, and prioritize activities and conservation tools for future funding and implementation. Three parameters that can serve as predictors of high quality bald eagle nesting and foraging habitat were incorporated into an ArcGIS model. Forty-one sites were identified that met the requirements. Based on the results, the group has proposed three recommendations for LaMP ecosystem protection and restoration goals:

1. At least five priority sites in each of the U.S. and Canada should be protected and ten active nests established in these areas within ten years.
2. At least 12,000 acres of bald eagle habitat should be protected within ten years.
3. An average of 80 percent of nesting pairs should be successful at a produc-



Bald eagle

Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

tivity of at least 1.0 young each year for existing and new nests. The group will develop a list of recommendations for resource and coordination needs at a summer 2005 meeting.

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### **Sediment Cleanup Planning Waukegan Harbor AOC**

From January 4<sup>th</sup> through January 12<sup>th</sup> GLNPO, USEPA Region 5 Superfund, and their contractor CH2M Hill collected 63 sediment cores in Waukegan Harbor, Illinois. The purpose of the GLNPO-funded sampling was to more fully delineate the horizontal and vertical extent of PCB contamination in harbor sediments, and to col-

lect geotechnical and physical data to inform remedial design work. USEPA's FIELDS group will utilize the PCB data to develop concentration contours for volume and cost estimation. GLNPO continues to coordinate with Illinois EPA, USEPA Region 5 Superfund, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other state and local stakeholders to develop a plan and funding strategy for addressing the contaminated sediments in Waukegan Harbor.

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### **Ashtabula River AOC**

GLNPO's Scott Cieniawski hosted an Ashtabula River planning meeting on January 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss remaining technical issues regarding the Ashtabula River Cleanup project that was submitted for potential Great Lakes Legacy Act funding under the FY2004 Request for Projects. Members of the Legacy Act technical review committee (the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, USEPA Region 5 Superfund and Office of Regional Council, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and GLNPO) were joined by representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Buffalo District, the Ashtabula River Cooperation Group II, the Ashtabula River Partnership, and the Ohio EPA. The general consensus of the group was that there are no insurmountable technical hurdles, although additional work needs to be performed regarding a potential residual cover layer, site restoration activities, and the vertical and horizontal extent of dredging. The group also discussed possible funding options and technical responsibilities for completing the additional work in order to prepare the site for potential GLLA funding in FY2006.

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### **Maumee River AOC**

On January 19<sup>th</sup>, the Ottawa River Great Lakes Legacy Act sediment remediation project team convened via conference call to discuss the sampling plan GLNPO drafted for the delineation of the remedial target area boundaries and the investigation of possible continuing sources of contamination. The Ottawa River is part of the Maumee River Area of Concern. The City of Toledo submitted a Legacy Act project proposal to USEPA, and this sampling plan addresses the next steps that need to be taken before a remediation project can begin in the Ottawa River. Participants included representatives from GLNPO, the City of Toledo, Ohio EPA, the Toledo Metropolitan Council of Governments, Hull & Associates, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The outcome of the call is that GLNPO will further revise the sampling plan based on the group's comments. The USEPA Superfund FIELDS Team will conduct the bathymetric and sediment thickness surveys in early April 2005 with the sediment sampling survey scheduled for late Spring.

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### **Muskegon Lake AOC**

On January 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, Marc Tuchman and Mary Beth G. Ross attended a meeting in Muskegon, Michigan for the Ruddiman Creek Legacy Act project. Ruddiman Creek, part of the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern is an urban waterway heavily contaminated with PCB, PAHs, and heavy metals. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has submitted a Legacy Act project proposal to USEPA for the remediation of contaminated sediments in Ruddiman Creek. The meeting was con-



A tank farm on the shores of Muskegon Lake, MI

vened to review the proposed design and plans and specs as developed by the Michigan DEQ's contractor. The group also walked the site. Participants included representatives from GLNPO, USEPA Superfund, MDEQ, Army Corp of Engineers, City of Muskegon, Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council, Grand Valley State University, the County Drain Commissioner, Earth Tech, and Environmental Quality Management, Inc.

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**Upcoming Events**

**2005**

April 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Earth Day
May 17 <sup>th</sup>	Great Lakes Binational Toxics Strategy Stakeholder Forum, Toronto, ON Canada
May 23 <sup>rd</sup> -27 <sup>th</sup>	Conference on Great Lakes Research, Ann Arbor, MI
July 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup>	Great Lakes Regional Col- laboration Summit I, Duluth, Minnesota

We welcome your questions, comments or suggestions about this month's Significant Activities Report. To be added to or removed from the Email distribution of the Significant Activities Report, please contact Tony Kizlauskas, 312-353-8773, [kizlauskas.anthony@epa.gov](mailto:kizlauskas.anthony@epa.gov).