



LAKE MICHIGAN FEDERATION

November 16, 2002

James D. Watkins, Chairman
U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
1120 20th Street, NW
Suite 200 North
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Chairman Watkins:

Thank you for your recent letter asking me to respond to questions that members of the commission could not ask because of time limitations during the Chicago hearing.

- How can we strengthen collaboration between diverse Federal restoration programs with a variety of local constituent interests, and encourage them to work effectively with local partners to set and meet regional priorities for restoration of natural resources? What process is being used to coordinate habitat restoration activities in the Great Lakes?

Federal “collaboration” often comprises of an agency putting out a draft document for comment by the public, rather than supplying the public with appropriate means to draft goals in partnership with agencies. Experience in other areas prove the former approach often fails. See www.lakemichigan.org/elimination/communitydecisionmodel.asp

The latter approach is often more successful for a number of reasons. First, community-based efforts “start from the bottom up” with their restoration goals, often leading to longer-lasting restoration successes. In addition, government restoration plans are often broad, but lack tangible “on the ground” measures that are useful for communities. Finally, community-based organizations can sometimes mobilize large volunteer pools to do hands-on restoration work. The advantage: restoration work gets done and, in the meantime, a corps of stewards is built to ensure the maintenance of the site over time.

Instead of government agencies drafting a restoration plan for public review and comment, agencies should consider funding citizen coordinators to develop plans or efforts with appropriate agency oversight.

A number of examples for the above and processes to coordinate restoration activities in the Great Lakes exist:

— Urban Aquatic Habitat Initiative

The Lake Michigan Federation has started the Urban Aquatic Habitat Initiative to bring habitat back to Great Lakes cities, starting in Chicago. This effort seeks to bring habitat to shoreline

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neighborhoods to provide diversified recreational activities and educate people about fish and wildlife who otherwise might never have the chance to experience them. For information is online at: www.lakemichigan.org/habitat/urban_aquatic_habitat.asp

—Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network & Fund

Through a major grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council coordinates the Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat Network & Fund (GLAHNF) with coordinators in each of the eight Great Lakes states and two Canadian provinces to assist community-based organizations in restoring local habitats through a small grants program. More information is available online at: www.glahabitat.org

—Adopt-A-Beach

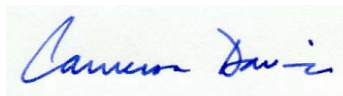
Volunteers can help reduce state and local water quality monitoring, litter pickup, and habitat reconstruction costs. Online information is available at: www.lakemichigan.org/jobs/adopt.asp

- In addition, Edward Rasmuson and I left unfinished an exchange about grant and foundation funding because of time limitations. He asked at the hearing how habitat restoration could be accomplished with funding cuts in private and public sources alike.

Habitat advocates must be good fiscal advocates as well. The Lake Michigan Federation has launched its Urban Aquatic Habitat Initiative without major funding from any one source. Instead, it has pieced together smaller grants of approximately \$15,000 each to total support for a major project that entails planning for lakefront habitat and starting site specific habitat recovery projects.

I hope this helps to answer your questions. Thank you for your leadership in guiding the nation to better protection of its coasts. Please do not hesitate to contact me at cdavis@lakemichigan.org or (312) 939-0838 if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cameron Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered on a light-colored rectangular background.

Cameron Davis
Executive Director