



NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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NOAA Celebrates Earth Day at Recovery Act Project to Restore Muskegon Lake Shoreline

NOAA and local partners celebrated Earth Day today at an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act project that is putting local residents to work restoring 24 acres of wetland and almost two miles of shoreline along Muskegon Lake in Michigan.

“The Recovery Act is working here on Muskegon Lake, putting local residents to work in blue and green jobs – an exciting and growing part of our economy,” said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator. “Habitat restoration is also a long-term investment in the health of the ecosystem and the coastal economy.”

The \$10 million Recovery Act restoration project is removing almost 200,000 metric tons of this sawmill waste and demolition material filling shallow water and wetlands in Muskegon Lake. The project also involves replacing a hardened shoreline of brick, concrete and cement debris with a natural shoreline of native wetland vegetation to help restore the ecosystem for fish and wildlife.

The project will employ a broad spectrum of professions, including engineers, biologists, and construction workers.

“This restoration project is a sound investment in the regional economy, both during construction and over the long term as we work to strengthen tourism and recreational opportunities in west Michigan,” said Michigan Lt. Governor John Cherry, immediate past chair of the Great Lakes Commission.

Mark Evans, who recently lost his job at a local paper mill and now works coordinating volunteers for the restoration project, praised the improvements to Muskegon Lake. “For 20 years, schoolchildren, neighbors, union members and others have done their best to improve this site for water quality, people and fish and wildlife,” he said. “The Recovery Act project is accomplishing these goals in ways we never dreamed possible.”

Through the Recovery Act, NOAA was provided \$167 million for marine and coastal habitat restoration. The Great Lakes Commission and West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission are leading the Muskegon Lake wetland restoration project, which is one of 50 Recovery Act habitat restoration projects taking place.

More than 30 projects have broken ground, with the rest preparing to start throughout the next year and a half. The 50 projects are supporting thousands of short-

term and long-term jobs. They support the equivalent of more than 250 full-time jobs as of the latest report and are expected to support the equivalent of an additional 1,000 full-time jobs before they are completed.

When all the planned projects are complete, 8,900 acres of habitat will be restored, and fish will gain access to 700 stream miles that had been blocked by obsolete and unsafe dams. The projects also will remove more than 850 metric tons of abandoned fishing gear and other marine trash, rebuild oyster and other shellfish habitat, and reduce threats to 11,750 acres of coral reef habitat.

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On the Web

NOAA Recovery Act: www.noaa.gov/recovery

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