



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Coastal Program

Success on the Great Lakes



Caring for Our Coastal Habitats

The binational Great Lakes Basin represents the world’s largest fresh water system, the nation’s fourth largest coastline, and supports the livelihood and activities of 10 percent of the U.S. and 25 percent of the Canadian populations. As the premier freshwater system in the world, the Great Lakes basin is home to a wide variety of fish and wildlife species with a unique assemblage of habitats. The environmental and economic vitality of the Great Lakes depends on the ecological state of the lakes and their fish and wildlife communities. The Service initiated a Coastal Program in the Great Lakes Region in FY 2000, and made tremendous strides with numerous partners on conservation and habitat restoration projects across the basin. Together with our partners, the Service undertook first year projects that focused on island habitat restoration, monitoring, invasive species control, erosion prevention along tributaries, and education.

Working with Partners to Restore Habitats

The Great Lakes Coastal Program is now concentrating its efforts on the lower Detroit River corridor and the western basin of Lake Erie, southern Lake Michigan and the western basin of

Lake Superior. While these areas represent some of the greatest restoration challenges in the Great Lakes, each site benefits from established stakeholder groups that recognize the importance of ecosystem integrity for local economies and communities. Projects are locally-led and concentrate on shoreline and corridor restoration, identification and application of Best Management Practices to avoid fish and wildlife habitat loss, invasive species prevention and control, fish passage and education.

For 2001, and into the future, the Service will continue to help foster a team approach to conservation in the Great Lakes by identifying common conservation goals and achieving results.

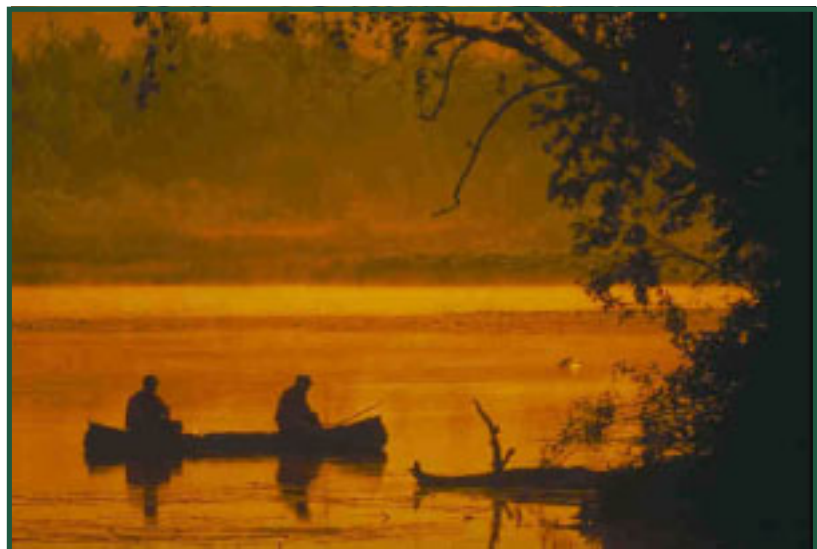
On-the-Ground Results

With its non-regulatory partnership approach, the Great Lakes Program has played a key role in funding dozens of projects in its first 2 years, which were associated with coastal habitats of Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, the Detroit River and Lake Ontario.



These cooperative projects have:

- benefitted coastal ecosystems by conserving fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats in coastal lands and waters;
- restored or protected more than 906 acres of coastal fish and wildlife habitat;
- protected approximately 3 miles of riparian habitat, and restored 8 miles of riparian habitat; and
- removed three fish passage barriers in Great Lakes tributaries, reopening 8 miles of stream to allow passage of anadromous trout and salmon.



Recreational fishing is important to tourists and the local communities surrounding the Great Lakes.

Fish Passage on Graveyard Creek

Great Lakes Coastal Program funding assisted the Bad River Band restore fish passage on Graveyard Creek. The project area is located within the Bad River Indian Reservation Boundaries (Ashland and Iron Counties) in northern Wisconsin.

Removing Barriers and Restoring Habitat

In the mid-1980s, Bad River Natural Resources Department personnel observed coaster brook trout spawning in Graveyard Creek along with coho salmon, brown trout and steelhead. However, due to a massive logjam that developed at the mouth of Graveyard Creek, fish were no longer able to migrate to and from Lake Superior. Great Lakes Coastal Program grant dollars were used in FY 2000 to remove the debris dam at the mouth of Graveyard Creek, again allowing passage of anadromous trout and salmon.

With assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and additional Coastal Program funding in FY 2001, another 30 smaller barriers were removed. Also, instream and riparian areas were restored. Three miles of stream were opened for fish migration, and stream banks were stabilized to prevent erosion.



The log jam blocking fish access to spawning areas in Graveyard Creek.



Graveyard Creek.

Photo: USFWS

Plans for the Future

In the next several years, instream structures will also be used to restore stream flows into the historic channel, which will improve coaster brook trout habitat. The BRNRD has been a major cooperator and believes that with a minimal amount of effort, anadromous coaster brook trout can be restored once again to Graveyard Creek.



Coaster brook trout.

“The Great Lakes Coastal Program is a welcomed addition for those of us that seek to address the myriad of conservation and restoration issues facing the Great Lakes basin. With the program, the Service brings a level of expertise and capability that keeps fish and wildlife and their associated habitats front and center as we determine priorities and implement on-the-ground results.”

John Hartig
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