

GREAT LAKES RESTORATION

Restoration projects include everything from cleaning up toxic hot spots to restoring wetlands, reducing runoff pollution, protecting native fisheries, and restoring habitat for fish and other wildlife. Funding for these projects can come from federal, state, and local governments. And many government agencies must often work together to make restoration projects happen, from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to your local park district or forest preserve.

Congress established and funded the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in 2010 to ensure that the Great Lakes would be restored and protected. To date, GLRI has funded more than 8,100 individual projects totaling more than \$4 billion and has greatly improved the quality of life in the region, and restored ecosystems. It is estimated that, for every dollar spent on GLRI projects, an additional three dollars of value is added to the regional economy.

Sample candidate questions:

For federal candidates:

- Would you commit to funding the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) at \$500 million in next year's federal budget?
- Various federal agencies – including, for example, the EPA, Department of the Interior, and Army Corps of Engineers – must work together to ensure that Great Lakes restoration projects move forward, but funding and staffing have been cut significantly. Would you support additional staff or funding to ensure that these projects will be managed well and can move forward?

For all candidates:

- Which restoration projects, such as wetland restoration, toxic sediment cleanup, or habitat restoration, would you prioritize?
- How will you ensure that restoration projects will help the communities where they're located, and are designed to include benefits like reduced community flooding, more green space, and economic development?
- How would you get community input to guide restoration efforts?

