



2023 Areas of Concern Conference

September 12-14

KI Convention Center

333 Main St, Green Bay, WI

#GLAOC2023

WiFi: Network: @Hyatt_Meeting

Password: GREAT2023

OPTIONAL PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE		LOCATION	CAPACITY
12:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Lower Menominee AOC & Menominee Dam Fish Lift Tour*	Marinette, WI	50
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Lower Fox River Watershed Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Efforts Tour*	Multiple	50
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Lower Green Bay & Fox River AOC Habitat Restoration Projects Tour*	Multiple	50
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	AOCs 101	KI Center – A1	N/A
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	Sediments 101	KI Center – A2	N/A
2:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Lower Fox River Revitalization Tour*	Green Bay, WI	50
3:00 - 6:00	Registration desk is open	KI registration desk	
5:00 pm	Begin poster setup (posters can be set up through 8 a.m. Wed morning)	KI Center – Lobby west and lobby south	N/A
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm	Pre-conference Reception	KI Center Riverview Rooms	N/A

* Choose one pre-conference field trip included with registration; Pre-conference reception will have a cash bar.

FIELD TRIPS AND TOURS (INCLUDED)

Meet at the KI Convention Center for departure. Choose one tour, included with your registration. Sign up during registration (note limited capacities):

12 – 5 p.m. Lower Menominee AOC & Menominee Dam Fish Lift Tour (max 50): Tour participants will depart from Green Bay and travel to Marinette, Wisconsin to visit the recently delisted Lower Menominee River AOC. Tour stops will include habitat restoration sites, a tour led by Eagle Creek Renewable Energy and the River Alliance at the Menominee Dam Fish Lift, and a sediment remediation site. On the way to and from Marinette, EPA, DNR, and local representatives will provide information about the 30-year efforts to restore and delist the Lower Menominee River AOC, the AOC delisting process, and needs for post-delisting restoration and conservation efforts.

For more information about the tour location and topic, check out these resources:

- [Menominee River Area of Concern: Changing Waters](#)
- [Remediation, Restoration, Revitalization – Menekaunee Harbor](#)

- [Menominee River Fish Passage](#)

1 – 5 p.m. Lower Fox River Watershed Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Efforts (max 50)

Tour participants will depart from Green Bay and travel to locations in the Lower Fox River Watershed Basin to learn about how the AOC is approaching the Eutrophication or Undesirable Algae BUI in context with broader TMDL implementation efforts. Tour stops will include locations where different kinds of best management practices (BMPs) are being implemented to create a treatment train approach, such as in-field and edge of field BMPs, downstream water storage and conveyance BMPs, and pilot BMPs such as phosphorus removal systems.

For more information about the tour locations and topic, check out these resources:

- [Improving Soil Health in Outagamie County](#)
- [Agricultural Runoff Treatment Systems](#)
- [Two-Stage Ditch System](#)
- [What's New in the Apple Creek Watershed](#)

1 – 5 p.m. Lower Green Bay & Fox River AOC Habitat Restoration Projects (max 50): Tour participants will visit several habitat restoration sites in the AOC in different phases of completion, including planning, design, implementation, and ongoing maintenance/monitoring. WDNR and local partners will talk about the process to develop metrics for priority fish and wildlife populations, matching metrics to project locations and restoration goals, adventures in project management at complex project sites, and the importance of strong partnerships to sustain management and maintenance long term.

For more information about the tour locations and topic, check out these resources:

- [Cat Island – Rebirth of an Environment](#)
- [Plovers Are Back in Green Bay](#)

2 – 5 p.m. Lower Fox River Revitalization Tour (max 50): Come and learn about how remediation and water quality improvement efforts have helped AOC communities return to the waterfront over the past several years. The first tour stop will be at the [Shipyards Redevelopment Project](#) site, where a City of Green Bay Economic Redevelopment Specialist will share how efforts are underway to transform a vacated brownfield into a destination for tourism and recreation. The Brown County Port Director will also share port expansion efforts that are currently underway and how this work connects to shoreline redevelopment along the Fox River. The second tour stop will be at [Ashwaubomay Park](#), where Village of Ashwaubenon and Stantec will share efforts to restore the shoreline, increase recreational opportunities and to redevelop the shoreline. The third stop will be in downtown Green Bay, where partners will share how the vision to redevelop the shoreline and create a social center has reacquainted the community with the Fox River, improved the local economy, encouraged investment and has drawn a creative workforce to live, work and play at the water's edge along the [CityDeck](#).

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATIONAL SESSIONS (INCLUDED)

1:00 – 2:30 p.m. Held in the KI Convention Center.

AOCs 101 (Ballroom A1): This session will provide an introduction to the Areas of Concern program. This is a great opportunity for anyone new to the program to ask questions and connect with agency program managers.

Sediments 101 (Ballroom A2): Sediment contamination and abatement issues remain one of the biggest challenges for the AOC program. This session will provide background information regarding biogeochemical characteristics of riverine sediments, their natural affinity for contaminants, and remediation/abatement approaches.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

3:00-6:00 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to check in for the AOC conference at the KI convention center during this time.

PRE-CONFERENCE RECEPTION (INCLUDED)

6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Join us for hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar in the Riverview rooms of the KI Convention Center, where there is a lovely view of the Lower Fox River and access to an outdoor patio along the riverfront. Please consider attending as we will recognize Chris Korleski's important contribution toward AOC successes during his time at EPA and wish him well in his retirement at approximately 6:45 p.m.

DAY ONE: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2023

DAY 1 SCHEDULE — ALL GENERAL SESSIONS ARE IN MEETING ROOM B	
7:45 – 8:45 am	Registration and Breakfast
8:30 – 5:30 pm	Poster Viewing (Lobby west and lobby south)
8:45 – 9:25 am	Welcoming remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none">Eric Genrich, Mayor, City of Green BayU.S. Representative Mike Gallagher (WI-08) (recorded message)Debra Shore, Regional Administrator, U.S. EPA Region 5 (recorded message)Jim Zellmer, Environmental Management Division Administrator, Wisconsin DNR
9:25 – 9:45 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Chris Korleski, Director, Great Lakes National Program Office, U.S. EPA
9:45 – 10:00 am	Wisconsin AOCs: setting the stage – Wade Strickland, Director, Office of Great Waters, Wisconsin DNR
10:00 – 10:45 am	Technical Plenary: The Value of Long-Term Species Monitoring Data in Great Lakes AOCs and LAMPs: A Case Study Using the Bald Eagle - Dr. William Bowerman, University of Maryland
10:45 – 11:00 am	Break
11:00 – 11:45 am	Environmental Justice Plenary: Creating Meaningful and Equitable Access to the Lower Rouge River – Herman Jenkins, Friends of the Rouge
11:45 am - 12:00	Lunch set up
12 – 1:20 pm 12:30 – 1:20 pm	Lunch <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lunchtime panel: Great Lakes Champions, featuring John Hartig in conversation with Victoria Harris, H. J. (Bud) Harris, Kevin Fermanich, and Brie Kupsky
1:20 – 1:30 pm	Overview of afternoon and transition to breakout rooms
1:30 – 3:00 pm	Breakout Session A (choose one of four sessions to attend)
3:00 – 3:45 pm	Break and Poster Session
3:45 – 5:15 pm	Breakout Session B (choose one of four sessions to attend)
6:00 pm	Optional Dinner: Titletown experience *

* \$21 cost, cash bar

Conference Moderators: Kendra Axness, Wisconsin DNR, and Amy Pelka, U.S. EPA GLNPO

- 7:45 am Conference Registration and Breakfast (included)**
- 8:45 am Welcoming Remarks**
 Eric Genrich, Mayor, City of Green Bay
 U.S. Representative Mike Gallagher (WI-08) (recorded message)
 Debra Shore, Regional Administrator, U.S. EPA Region 5 (recorded message)
 Jim Zellmer, Environmental Management Division Administrator, Wisconsin DNR
- 9:25 am Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Update**
 Chris Korleski, Director, U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office
- 9:45 am Wisconsin AOCs: setting the stage**
 Wade Strickland, Director, Office of Great Waters, Wisconsin DNR
Highlights of Wisconsin AOC accomplishments and current work will be presented.
- 10:00 am Technical Plenary: The Value of Long-Term Species Monitoring Data in Great Lakes AOCs and LaMPs: A Case Study Using the Bald Eagle**
 Dr. William Bowerman, University of Maryland
Bald eagles are the avian top predator of the Great Lakes region. Negative impacts of DDT, organochlorine pesticides and PCBs once limited their ability to reproduce, leading to the species being listed as federally endangered in 1973. Banning of these compounds, and habitat restoration efforts such as those of the AOC program have allowed the populations to rebound leading to their removal from the endangered species list in 2007. However, concerns about their health in areas, such as AOCs, with pollutants, reduced habitat quality, prey availability, human activities, and avian diseases remain. Decades of intense monitoring programs have produced a near total count of nesting attempts and fledglings produced. Collection of unhatched eggs, blood of nestlings, and feathers show exposure trends of chemicals from the Great Lakes food web and their effects. Developmental deformities reported are nearly all from the Great Lakes basin and questions persist if populations are healthy and self-sustaining at current contaminant levels. How we use them for wildlife BUIs will be described, including advantages and limitations. How to use their life history to educate the public will also be described, building upon the DDT egg shell thinning story.
- 10:45 am Break**
- 11:00 am Environmental Justice Plenary: Creating Meaningful and Equitable Access to the Lower Rouge River**
 Herman Jenkins, Friends of the Rouge
Friends of the Rouge (FOTR) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission focuses on restoration, stewardship, and community connection in the Rouge River watershed in southeast Michigan. FOTR has been championing the Lower Rouge

River Water Trail Strategic Plan, a collective trails initiative that aims to connect underserved communities along the river to the waterfront. In addition to improving access along the river, the plan also aims to connect residents to a 29-mile paddling trail, providing equitable opportunities to recreate on the Rouge in communities that have historically lacked recreational access to the river. It is through the Friends of the Rouge Lower Rouge Water Trail Leadership Committee that the county, municipalities, and community stakeholders build out this vision. However, some communities lacked the resources and staff capacity to effectively participate in Lower Rouge Water Trail Leadership Committee meetings—subsequently, development of water trail design/access plans and activities lagged far behind other vested communities along the trail. Recognizing this disparity in project development, Friends of the Rouge developed a pop-up event format with an emphasis on meeting the people where they are in their communities, to educate community members about the Water Trail and the Rouge River as a natural resource, while garnering community interest in kayaking and canoeing as recreational activities. The "Dry Dock Pop Up" helped build grass roots interest and spawned new working coalitions to advance project development in communities that lagged behind.

11:45 am Lunch set up

12:00 Lunch (included)
Plated Lunch

12:30 pm Lunchtime Panel: “Great Lakes Champions”
John Hartig will facilitate a conversation with local representatives, including "Great Lakes Champions" Bud and Vicky Harris, about perspectives on establishment of the AOC program, the need to think beyond boundaries, how science and research are driving implementation strategies, and how agencies are using this information and perspective to develop resource management plans at different scales.

Moderator: John Hartig, Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research, University of Windsor
Panelists:
H. J. "Bud" Harris, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Emeritus
Victoria Harris, University of Wisconsin Sea Grant Institute, Retired
Kevin Fermanich, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay and Wisconsin Extension, Emeritus
Brie Kupsky, Wisconsin DNR

1:20 pm Overview of afternoon and transition to breakout rooms

Breakout Session A (Choose one of four sessions to attend)**Session A-1 (Ballroom A1): Community perspectives on environmental justice in AOCs** (Moderator: Juan Corpus (He, Him, El), New North, Inc.)

Summary: *Over the past few years, the AOC program has taken steps to increase and improve community engagement and have a targeted focus on environmental justice. This session will dig into the community perspective on that work through an interactive discussion answering questions such as: What is the role of the AOC program in advancing the environmental justice movement? What successes are out there to celebrate and where are there still the greatest opportunities for impact and change? What has worked well, and maybe not so well, in specific AOCs? What should be the role of community advisory committees in Areas of Concern? How can these committees aid in shaping the decisions made during the AOC delisting process?*

Topics and Speakers:

- Moderator and Panelist Introductions (Panelists: Shalina Ali, Milwaukee CAC member and TRUE Skool co-Executive Director; Herman Jenkins, Friends of the Rouge; TBD)
- Panel discussion
- Audience Q&A and discussion

Session A-2 (Ballroom A2): Evaluating the Bird or Animal

Deformities/Reproduction Problems BUI (Moderators: Rae-Ann Eifert, Wisconsin DNR; Mandy Annis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Summary: *The bird or animal deformities/reproduction problem BUI is often one of the later BUIs to be removed as it takes time for populations to recover following remedial actions. Given the timing of removal for this BUI, decades may pass between when monitoring to confirm the BUI and evaluation of recovery. During that period, a population that may have once been abundant in the AOC may no longer be so due to various factors, including development and disease. Further complicating the evaluation of this BUI is that AOCs are typically urbanized areas that may not have many "ideal" indicator species. This session reviews various approaches that may be used when evaluating this BUI to ensure managers can move forward to BUI removal with confidence that the AOC's goals are met. Participants are encouraged to come up with specific questions from any step in the evaluation process, from getting started to understanding ambiguity in results.*

Topics and Speakers:

- Multiple lines of evidence - how to deal with non-ideal indicator species? - Dr. William Bowerman, University of Maryland
- Use of Tree Swallows - Dr. Christine Custer, U.S. Geological Survey
- Overview of the Lower Green Bay Fox River AOC Approach - Sean Strom, Wisconsin DNR

Session A-3 (Ballroom A3): Economic revitalization in AOC communities and maintaining access for everyone (Moderator: Joe Fitzgerald, Milwaukee Water Commons)

Summary: *This session will invite participants to think critically about how investments in waterway cleanup and restoration can produce social, environmental, and economic benefits through restorative access. Panelists will share insights from their own experience working to revitalize water spaces while maintaining access to cleaner water and enhanced green spaces for community members as well as restoring access to water spaces for historically marginalized communities. Restorative access will be discussed through presentations, panel conversation, and audience participation exploring the roles of community planners, AOC advisory committee members, and residents in shaping policies and actions to ensure both economic revitalization and environmental justice.*

Topics and Speakers:

- Muskegon Lake case study – Kathy Evans, Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership
- Maumee/Toledo Metroparks examples – Allen Gallant, Metroparks Toledo
- Milwaukee Community Land Trust - Lamont Davis, Milwaukee Community Land Trust

Session A-4 (Ballroom A4): GLNPO's Quality Assurance Program Supporting the GLRI (Moderator: GLNPO)

Summary: *Practitioners and managers supporting the GLRI depend on obtaining reliable data to evaluate achievement of project goals. This interactive session will address key topics aimed at ensuring project data support its intended use. We will share valuable tools and resources as well as inform attendees on EPA's current quality assurance (QA) initiatives. The application of QA practices does not have to be a burden! Let us discuss topics such as QA practices for construction activities supporting restoration projects, how to evaluate the quality and use of existing data, the accessibility and availability of tools and resources designed to help you, and much more. Please feel free to bring any questions you have and let's all collaborate on ways to support each other!*

Topics and Speakers:

- EPA QA-related changes and available QA tools – Louis Blume, GLNPO
- QA-related topics in the GLLA Program – Mark Loomis and Christian Bako, GLNPO
- QA implementation from a state perspective and the application of the graded approach – Donalea Dinsmore, Wisconsin DNR

3:00 pm

Break & Poster Session

Time to view and discuss posters with presenters. Please vote for your favorite poster by the end of the day Wednesday! The top three favorites will be announced on Thursday morning. Snacks provided.

3:45 pm

Breakout Session B (Choose one of four sessions to attend)

Session B-1 (Ballroom A1): Achieving 2030 AOC goals: addressing challenges and planning for success (Moderator: Brennan Dow, Wisconsin DNR)

Summary: *In February 2022, President Biden and U.S. EPA announced their intention to dedicate \$1 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding to complete management action implementation and delist 22 of the remaining 25 AOCs by 2030. The infusion of funding above and beyond the AOC GLRI funds is critically important to achieving this goal, but the funding alone will not get us there. AOC partners will need to plan for and overcome many challenges along the way. This session will explore issues surrounding federal, state, and local capacity to carry out management actions and programmatic processes (e.g., BUI removals and AOC delisting). Presenters will highlight strategies that they are considering for managing increased workload, for streamlining projects and administrative processes, and for securing non-federal match funding for GLLA projects. The session will include time for questions and discussion.*

Topics and Speakers:

- Federal capacity considerations & strategies – Mark Loomis, U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office
- Local partner capacity considerations & strategies – Natalie Dutack, Milwaukee County
- State capacity considerations & strategies – Lynn Garrity, Ohio Lake Erie Commission
- Our Next Great Challenge: Match for Momentum – Cameron Davis, GEI Consultants

Session B-2 (Ballroom A2): Making habitat restoration projects climate resilient: case studies from AOCs and beyond (Moderator: Terry S. Heatlie, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries)

Summary: *Considering the impacts of a changing climate is increasingly important when designing AOC habitat restoration projects. This session will describe different approaches established by AOC stakeholders as well as government agencies used to consider the changing climate and to incorporate climate resiliency into the design of habitat restoration projects within the Great Lakes and AOCs. Different methods developed to integrate resiliency into habitat restoration design will be described by those involved in the development of their respective processes. Following the two presentations, a panel composed of the speakers and restoration practitioners will be available for answering questions and further discussion.*

Topics and Speakers:

- State perspective and examples - Madeline Magee, Wisconsin DNR
- Federal perspective and examples – Kaitlyn McClain, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District

Session B-3 (Ballroom A3): New technology and novel approaches to BUI assessment for informing BUI removals (Moderator: Lisa Fogarty, U.S. Geological Survey)

Summary: *In the delisting process for Areas of Concern, managers must determine appropriate management actions to remove beneficial use impairments. Science and data collection approaches provide information to assist managers implementing actions that meet delisting requirements. This session will provide examples of how agencies have used advanced science and monitoring approaches to support BUI removals and provide the AOC partnerships strategies for long term management for “Life after Delisting”.*

Topics and Speakers:

- Barb Huberty, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Sarah Janssen, U.S. Geological Survey- Mercury Research
- Joel Hoffman, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency- PCB Research

Session B-4 (Ballroom A4): Utilizing geospatial environmental justice tools in the AOC program (Moderator: Amy Pelka, U.S. EPA GLNPO)

Summary: *Environmental Justice is an important element in EPA’s mission, including environmental health in Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOC). Remediation and restoration work in AOCs may have a nexus with underserved communities, but there are multiple approaches and tools that can be used to further understand that nexus. As a result of Presidential Executive Order 14008, as well as initiatives within EPA and other agencies, multiple publicly available tools have been published and updated to assist in evaluating social vulnerability and environmental burden across these AOCs. These tools include EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJScreen) and several State agencies have EJ geospatial tools for their States and AOCs. This session will offer demos of different geospatial tools and discuss potential and actual approaches to understanding EJ concerns in the AOC program.*

Topics and Speakers:

- Moderator and Panelist Introductions (Panelists: Nathan Melia, USEPA TMPO; Trent Henry, ORISE at USEPA GLNPO; Jim Lehen, NYSDEC; Regina Strong and John Esch, MDEQ EGLE)
- Demo of geospatial tools and analyses by each panelist – Q&A after each presentation

5:15 pm Adjourn

6:00 pm Optional Dinner: Titledtown Experience (\$21)

See Lambeau Field and visit the Pro Shop. Enjoy brats and burgers at Stadium View Bar & Grill. A cash bar will be available. Bus transportation will be provided between KI and the Titledtown District. Buses will be parked along North Adams Street (across from the lobby west counter). Buses will begin loading at 6 PM, departing by 6:15 PM for Lambeau Field. At 7:00 p.m., buses will travel from Lambeau Field to

Stadium View. The buses will leave Stadium View to return to KI at 9 p.m. Note that there is only one departure time from KI and one departure time from Stadium View. Attendees are welcome to drive separately to and from the venues.

DAY TWO: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2023

DAY 2 SCHEDULE — ALL GENERAL SESSIONS ARE IN MEETING ROOM B	
8:00 – 8:45 am	Networking Breakfast
8:45 – 9:00 am	Reconvene and Recap of Day One
9:00 – 9:30 am	Getting Work Done at AOCs
9:30 – 9:45 am	Break
9:45 – 11:15 am	Breakout Session C (choose one of four sessions to attend)
11:15 – 11:30 am	Break
11:30 am – 12:15 pm	Life after AOC Plenary: Lake Superior Headwaters Sustainability Partnership Establishes a Systems Approach Building off AOC Efforts – Gini Breidenbach, Minnesota Land Trust
12:15 – 12:30 pm	Wrap-up and Follow-up Actions
12:30 pm	Adjourn

8:00 am Networking Breakfast (included)

8:45 am Reconvene and Recap of Day One
Amy Pelka, U.S. EPA GLNPO and Kendra Axness, Wisconsin DNR

9:00 am Getting Work Done at AOCs
U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office

9:30 am Break

9:45 am Breakout Session C (Choose one of four sessions to attend)

Session C-1 (Ballroom A1): Indigenous perspectives strengthening the Area of Concern program (Moderators: Betsy Galbraith, Deputy Project Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Matt Steiger, St. Louis River Area of Concern Coordinator, Wisconsin DNR)

Summary: *Indigenous knowledge and the perspectives shared by Tribes and Tribal partners enhance conservation projects within the Great Lakes, including AOCs. This session will explore several projects enriched by Indigenous knowledge, partnerships with Tribes, or incorporating the voices of Tribal communities. The lessons learned from these projects provide tools for Area of Concern participants to honor the past, repair and remediate sites, and implement meaningful improvements for the future.*

Topics and Speakers:

- Habitat restoration and bird monitoring on the Oneida Nation reservation - Erin Giese, UW-Green Bay Cofrin Center for Biodiversity Senior Researcher and Randy Cornelius, Oneida Nation cultural educator

- Working with Native Communities in Urban Areas : Nothing About Us Without Us - Mark (Marin) Denning, Oneida Tribal member and Adjunct Lecturer Continuing Education at UW-Milwaukee

Session C-2 (Ballroom A2): Turning Tribulations into Triumphs: Lessons Learned from Great Lakes Legacy Act Remedial Projects (Moderators: Barb Huberty, St. Louis River AOC Coordinator, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; Jim Lehnert, Statewide AOC Coordinator, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation)

Summary: *Over the last several years, AOCs have been busy constructing a variety of remedies to address contaminated sediments. Many challenges are encountered during the assessment, development, and execution stages of these projects. From project inception to after-construction debriefings, this session will uncover examples of these challenges along with tips to anticipate and avoid potential pitfalls. Participants will be invited to share their own experiences and solutions during the discussion portion of the agenda.*

Topics and Speakers:

- Overview of the Restrictions on Dredging BUI/GLLA Context - Scott Cieniawski, U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office
- St. Louis River Area of Concern Examples - Meaghan Kern, U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office; LaRae Lehto, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- New York Area of Concern Examples - Wendy Paterson, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper; Jessica Telano, Honeywell

Session C-3 (Ballroom A3): Navigating Project Management Challenges: Section 7 and Section 106 Requirements for Federally Funded Management Actions (Moderator: Mandy Annis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Summary: *Project Management for federally funded projects through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative can often be complex and include several requirements to follow state and federal rules and regulations. Once a management action list is finalized for an AOC, now what? How does someone ensure that the work will not adversely impact state and federally endangered or threatened species? Or that the work will not negatively impact a culturally significant area? This session will cover these challenges and provide a general project management approach for addressing Section 7 Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) processes. It will also provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions and share ideas during the discussion portion of the agenda.*

Topics and Speakers:

- Steve Choy, USFWS, MNWI ES Field Office
- Felipe Avila, WI SHPO
- Curtis Sedlacek, USACE

Session C-4 (Ballroom A4): Stories of accomplishments, successes, and challenges from management action implementers (Moderator: Lynn Garrity, Ohio Lake Erie Commission)

Summary: *There are many Management Actions underway in 2023 within in the Great Lakes AOCs as the remaining AOCs implement the work necessary for their future delisting. These actions are big and small in complexity, partnerships and budgets. As AOCs throughout the Great Lakes are in the depths of implementation, these actions can be a journey on its own to accomplish. This session will share stories from local, state and federal implementers to some of the most complex management actions to date in the Great Lakes and bring forth knowledge learned from the implementation experience.*

Topics and Speakers:

- Spirit Lake - Mark Loomis, U.S. EPA GLNPO
- Black River - Kate Golden, City of Lorain
- Milwaukee Estuary AOC - Stacy Hron, Wisconsin DNR

11:15 am Break

11:30 am Life after AOC Plenary: Lake Superior Headwaters Sustainability Partnership Establishes a Systems Approach Building off AOC Efforts

Gini Breidenbach, Minnesota Land Trust

When we are focused on implementing our Remedial Action Plans, it's hard to find time to imagine what happens after our AOCs are delisted. However, if we want to capitalize on synergies established through the AOC work, having a plan in place for coordination on collective priorities after delisting is important. Over the last four years, the Minnesota Land Trust (a non-profit organization that works to protect and restore Minnesota's most vital natural lands) has led a collaborative effort building off and strengthening AOC partnerships to establish a systems-based approach with a shared vision, priorities, goals, and objectives. The vision of the partnership is:

"The Lake Superior Headwaters Sustainability Partnership establishes an inclusive and intentional framework for how and where we work to achieve a thriving estuary landscape and community. The principles of sustainability, resiliency, and equity guide our approach to managing our natural resources by including economic development and community health and well-being considerations."

Gini Breidenbach, Restoration Program Manager at MLT, will share the evolution of the Lake Superior Headwaters Sustainability Partnership and how it is already being utilized to create a restoration vision for Allouez Bay, Wisconsin.

12:15 pm Wrap-up and Follow-up Actions

U.S. EPA GLNPO and Wisconsin DNR

12:30 pm Adjourn