

This is the City Manager's week in review for the week of May 30, 2022.

EPA Announcement – Tuesday the EPA announced an increased pace in cleaning up toxic hot spots in the Great Lakes Region. By the end of the decade, the EPA anticipates cleanup work on 22 of the remaining 25 areas of concern will be completed with the exception of two in Michigan, one of which is the Kalamazoo River. The Kalamazoo River's toxic PCB contaminated sediment is considered a Superfund site and will require a comprehensive plan to move that project forward and may include the removal of additional dams. The EPA anticipates the project won't be cleaned up until 2036 or beyond. See Attached.

Campbell Road – Progress on Campbell has been slow. Crews continue to install conduit under the road this week. The hope is to be paving by the start of the second week in June. Due to the missed completion date, the City is considering charging a financial penalty for the missed deadline.

Union Street Sidewalk – The preconstruction meeting for the Union Street sidewalk project was this week. The project will install sidewalk on the west side of Union Street between Blue Star Highway and Center Street to better accommodate pedestrian traffic. The project is anticipated to start after the 4th of July and will take approximately 5 weeks to complete. Residents within the work zone will be sent a Notice of Construction letter to inform them about the scope of work and schedule. The notice will also be posted on the City's website for the general public to reference.

Beach Clean Up – A Douglas Beach clean-up day is scheduled for June 9 between 9am and 11am. The sponsors of the event will coordinate volunteers for the beach clean-up day and will sort and weigh the debris collected for reporting purposes. In 2021, 9.25 lbs. of trash were removed from the area around Douglas Beach. Anyone interested in volunteering may register at <https://bit.ly/DouglasCleanup>

Allegan Conservation District – I met with representatives of the Allegan Conservation District about a project we hoped to implement last year. The conservation district is proposing to install a beach clean-up station at Douglas Beach with the intent of providing easy access to supplies to clean up beach debris. Once signage and supplies are installed, visitors may collect debris for disposal at Douglas Beach trash receptacles. They hope to have the signage and supplies installed in the middle of June.

Foam Recycling Event – A Styrofoam collection event sponsored by the Tri-Community Recycling Committee will be held June 11 from 9am to 3pm at the City of Saugatuck DPW (3338 Blue Star Highway). Drop off times are available by registering at <https://bit.ly/styro-no>

Pride Event – City staff worked with the Pride Committee to finalize details for the upcoming Pride activities that started this week.

That is all I have for now.

Rich LaBombard
City Manager

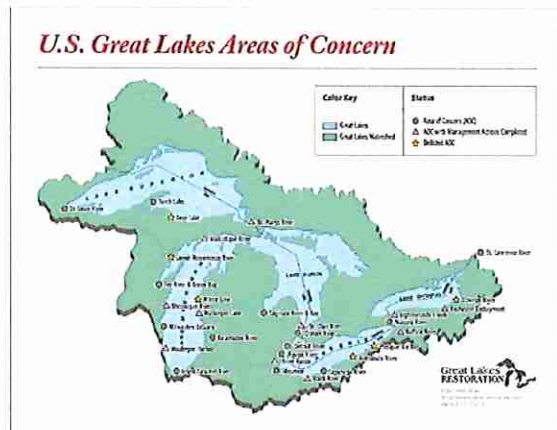
EPA: Two toxic hot spots in Michigan will take longer to clean up than many others in Great Lakes states



USEPA Region 5 Administrator Debra Shore speaking in Muskegon, Michigan. She was announcing the completion of cleanup, remediation, and restoration at the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern. The next step in the process is delisting the site." (Lester Graham/Michigan Radio)

One of the biggest pollution cleanup efforts in the Great Lakes region is getting a boost. The pace of repairing the damage in the most toxic hot spots of the region is going to speed up dramatically.

Back in the 1980s, the U.S. and Canada identified 43 highly polluted sites around the Great Lakes. The governments came up with a very government sounding label for them: Areas of Concern. And then, not a lot happened.



This map depicts Great Lakes Areas of Concern across the region.

“There was a slow burn, if anything at all for many years,” said Mike Shriberg, Executive Director of the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Regional Center.

He said not a lot got done until a new U.S. funding project under the Obama administration got bipartisan approval.

“And the GLRI, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, it accelerated things very much. If you look at the graph, it was largely flat before that. When the GLRI comes into being. You start seeing major progress.”

Of the well over \$3 billion of Great Lakes Restoration Initiative money over the last eleven years, about \$1 billion has gone toward cleaning up Areas of Concern. That funding is continuing at about the same rate. But, there’s even more money coming over the next five years.

Infrastructure Law, combined with funds from the annual Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, appropriations and funding from other sources. We projected by the end of the decade, we will have completed work at 22 of the 25 remaining Areas of Concern,” said Debra Shore, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Region 5 and Great Lakes National Program Office.

That’s important to Michigan because of the 43 Areas of Concern or AOCs in Canada and the U.S, 14 –nearly a third of them- are in Michigan. So far, only three in Michigan have been completely cleaned up.

“EPA’s goal for the management work to be completed on all but three AOCs in the U.S. by the end of this decade is absolutely bold, and I also find it quite inspiring,” said Liesl Clark, Director of Michigan’s Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.



Liesl Clark, Director of Michigan’s Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, at the Muskegon Lake AOC announcement. (Lester Graham/Michigan Radio)

There’s one catch: Of those three that won’t be completely cleaned up, two are in Michigan.

Rick Hobrila is the Michigan state coordinator for the Areas of Concern program. Speaking to an AOC conference held in Michigan last week, he outlined why those two site in Michigan would take longer to clean up.

The first one is the Kalamazoo River. In the past, there were a lot of paper mills in the area which produced toxic PCB wastes. Over the years, a series of dams were built and behind each one PCB-contaminated sediment has piled up.

That cleanup is under Superfund, a federal program that is very involved and always lengthy.



Rick Hobrla speaking at a recent AOC conference in Muskegon. He coordinates Michigan AOC program for EGLE. (Lester Graham/Michigan Radio)

A couple of the dams have been removed and the PCBs cleaned up. Hobrla said two or three more might need to be removed.

“But we can't just go in and remove the dams without having a comprehensive plan to handle the PCBs that are behind them. So we continue to work with the Superfund program on trying to move that forward.”

The second Michigan AOC that won't be cleaned up by the end of the decade is the Saginaw River watershed and Saginaw Bay. Hobrla says the biggest problem there is nutrient enrichment, phosphorus and nitrogen runoff primarily from the surrounding farmland in the watershed. Since work began, things have been in flux.

“There have been huge food web changes in the Saginaw Bay over the time that- just over the time it became an AOC. We had a lot of fisheries goals that were set early in this century that we've had to completely throw out the window because the food web in Saginaw Bay now looks nothing at all like it did 20 years ago. It's completely changed,” he said.

The EPA projects those two sites might not be completely cleaned up until 2036 or beyond.

Environmental advocates such as Mike Shriberg at the National Wildlife Federation say that's daunting, but the additional one billion dollars over the next five years will go a long way in completing the cleanup of the U.S. Areas of Concern.

“What I'm excited about is not only the clean up that's happening, but think about this: When we have actually removed that toxic legacy, when we've actually rehabbed those sites that actually should free up resources over the long term for other projects.”

He says seeing the Great Lakes region turn away from its history of industrial pollution and making waterfronts a point of community pride is heartwarming. But, after that seeing the continued GLRI funding spent on habitat restoration, building trails, and preventing invasive species damage, he said the next generation of benefits for the Great Lakes looks even better.

We know you like
the lakeshore
as much we do.

Help us clean it up.

Join the Allegan Conservation
District for a beach cleanup and
DIY cleanup station unveiling

Where: Douglas Beach

When: June 9th @ 9am-11am



ALLEGAN
CONSERVATION
DISTRICT



LAKESHORE
CLEANUP
COALITION

Please Register Here

<https://bit.ly/DouglasCleanup>