



While seeking to protect our resources from new sources of pollution and remediate problems caused by old sources, MUCC also seeks to ensure their long-term health through restoration activities, programs, and policies. Michigan's Great Lakes have been severely degraded by invasive species, pollution and toxic sediments. Critical coastal wetland habitats have been filled in or degraded and beaches closed every summer due to harmful bacteria. MUCC needs to ensure that the Great Lakes remain the economic driver, tourism beacon, and sportsperson's paradise of the region through implementation of a strong restoration campaign.

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Cormorant Control

The effect of the double-crested cormorant on the Great Lakes fisheries is a critical concern for all of MUCC's members. The ecology of the Great Lakes is changing due to influx of invasive species, nutrient loadings, wetlands destruction and other threats. While undoing the damage caused by invasive species is unlikely, it is possible to prevent the damage caused by cormorants. MUCC's Board of Directors have directed staff to work toward securing increased federal and state dollars for cormorant control in the state. Increased dollars have been secured and the impact is being felt. The fishery in the Les Cheneaux Islands and around Brevort Lake has dramatically improved. More significant work remains to be done as the Cormorant extend their range into southern Michigan.

ACTION: Continue to push for increased monies on the state and federal level to control cormorants. **LEAD:** April Bennett

Dam Removal Assistance Fund

Michigan faces significant problems and real opportunities in managing its 2,552 dams. Currently, there are nearly 120 identified dams in need of an estimated \$50 million to address repair or removal issues. Currently, the few dam removals that have been completed have been financed by numerous sources of money from state, federal and private sources. These projects often take years to aggregate sufficient funding to remove the dam. There is no state source of money to provide low/no interest loans to help remove dams and restore rivers.

Such a funding source has real opportunities to make a significant positive resource impact. Removal of a dam restores the natural flowing charac-

ter of a stream and essential ecological processes in the river, opening the river to use by a variety of fish species. In addition, removal of dams addresses safety threats to downstream communities. Dam removal costs in many cases are significantly less than estimated expenditures for long-term safety, environmental compliance, repair and maintenance.

ACTION: Support legislation to create a dam removal assistance fund.

LEAD: Donna Stine

Organisms in Trade

The category "organisms in trade" means aquaculture, bait fish, ornamental fish trade, and aquarium and zoo trade. All of these trade routes could be possible vectors for the introduction of new invasive species. Currently, a voluntary program exists called the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Planning (HAACP) for aquatic nuisance species (ANS), adapted by the Michigan Sea Grant. HAACP helps in understanding the pathways being used to transport live organisms and helps to develop plans to prevent contamination by any unwanted organisms or pathogens. This is a proactive approach to help keep new invasive species and diseases out of the Great Lakes that may enter through the organisms in trade pathway and this program is already being used in Michigan by some of the larger aquaculture and retail bait facilities.

ACTION: Requiring that HAACP planning and training be done for all retail trade of live organisms to help ensure that Michigan's trade of live organisms is not a vector for invasive species introduction.

LEAD: Dave Nyberg

MUCC RESTORATION POLICY PRIORITIES

Restoring the Great Lakes

Our membership has made it clear through years of resolutions that restoring the Great Lakes is a priority. Resolutions created and passed by our membership have urged a ban on phosphates because of their impact on the Great Lakes, especially Lake Erie. In 1984, MUCC passed a resolution to encourage farming practices that prevent non-point source pollution. Resolutions passed in 1970 and in 2005 addressed the issue of mercury deposition into the Great Lakes. Over 30 years of resolutions direct the organization to be involved in the treatment of our sewage. Also, in 1992 MUCC began to seek treatment of ballast water in ships entering the St. Lawrence Seaway.

MUCC's resolutions have directed the organization to take a leadership role in Michigan's campaign to restore the Great Lakes. Leading a coalition of like-minded organizations, we are working to inform Michigan citizens about the issues facing the Great Lakes and solutions to those problems. MUCC has published Michigan's Role in Great Lakes Protection and Restoration; Analysis and Recommendations. This report takes a tough look at the important work Michigan has already done to help protect and restore the Great Lakes and compares those actions to the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, the blueprint for action created by the region's top scientists, political leaders, advocates and officials. The report provides detail on Michigan's work in these areas and recommendations where gaps occur. In addition, the report identifies 16 priority actions for Michigan to take that will make the most difference in the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes.

ACTION: Implement the 16 recommendations of the report including the recommendation for Michigan to prepare a comprehensive action agenda to restore, remediate and protect the Great Lakes. LEAD: Donna Stine, Dave Nyberg, April Bennett

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- ▶ **Ballast Water:** MUCC joined with National Wildlife Federation and the Alliance for the Great Lakes in filing a motion to intervene in Federal district court to defend the new Michigan law designed to protect the Great Lakes from discharge of invasive species by ocean-going vessels into Michigan's waters. In a victory for those who treasure the Great Lakes, the Court upheld the right of the state to control Michigan's waters from pollution.
- ▶ **Great Lakes Gap Analysis Study:** MUCC completed a major study analysis of the next steps Michigan must take to meet its responsibilities to protect the Great Lakes. Included in the analysis are recommendations to implementing the Great Lakes Regional Collaborative and sixteen priority recommendations of steps Michigan must take as the Great Lakes state.