Next Steps: Evaluating Past GLRI Projects

Successful projects are essential to the credibility of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative program. Clarity on what "success" means to GLRI and the ability to document progress are fundamental to demonstrating strategy, value and impact of the federal investment. A review of past projects in each GLRI Focus Area will serve to define "success" for GLRI projects, establish success measures for past projects, establish progress measures for current and future projects, and provide recommendations for oversight of project selection as it relates to the Action Plan goals. The review process and information gathered will also support the EPA's effort to build a public database of GLRI projects.

Purpose of the Review:

- To define what "success" means to GLRI at the project level
- To establish progress measures for GLRI project review, both independently and in comparison to other GLRI projects
- To provide greater transparency on project selection, progress and results
- To recommend oversight strategies for project selection as it relates to the Action Plan goals
- To provide recommendations for structure and content of a public GLRI database, as well as to supply the EPA with information on past projects for the database

Overview of the Evaluation Process:

A GLAB subcommittee will work with EPA staff to select at least three projects within each of the five Focus Areas for review. A diversity of habitats, ecological functions and geographic locations will be represented in the selected projects. The subcommittee will consult with GLAB and other federal agencies and organizations to define what "success" means to GLRI and to identify potential progress measures. These measures will be tested against the selected projects, in consultation with GLAB, the selected projects' managers and other stakeholders. The subcommittee will leverage insights gleaned from the review process to further refine measures for final recommendations to GLRI. These recommendations will include progress measures for past, current and future projects; additional selection criteria for future projects; and thoughts on structure and content for the EPA's future GLRI publically-accessible database.

Outstanding Questions for GLAB:

How involved is EPA in selecting projects and deciding what is reported? Do we want to make recommendations on the types of projects being reviewed?

Are awareness or learning specific outcomes included in the criteria used to review project success?

What will constitute "diverse" projects?