

2019 Region 5 Highlights

February 2020

At EPA Region 5 we are dedicated to the proposition expounded by President Trump and EPA Administrator Wheeler that we don't have to choose between a healthy economy and a healthy environment — we can have both. We do that by offering our state, tribal and business partners and the general public certainty in the way we operate and fulfill our mission to protect the environment and safeguard human health.

Certainty from regulators gives the American public the ability to do what they do best: innovate, create, and produce cleaner and safer technologies. EPA is working hard to provide certainty to our stakeholders throughout the six states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

We had many accomplishments in 2019. This report highlights a few that demonstrate our commitment to achieving certainty for our stakeholders, effective economic revitalization, and cleaner air, water, and land.

Cleaner Air

Nowhere were Region 5's accomplishments more important than our contributions to cleaner air. We completed five air quality re-designations (a third of the nation's total) and are on track for an unprecedented 15 more areas to be re-designated in 2020.

In 2019, the Region had the privilege of helping Columbus, Ohio, celebrate becoming the nation's first nonattainment area to meet the 2015 ozone air quality standard — delivering cleaner air for 4 million people.

Great Lakes Restoration

Region 5 and Canada share the responsibility of protecting North America's inland seas, which provide drinking water to 40 million people.

Failure is simply not an option when it comes to protecting and restoring the Great Lakes.

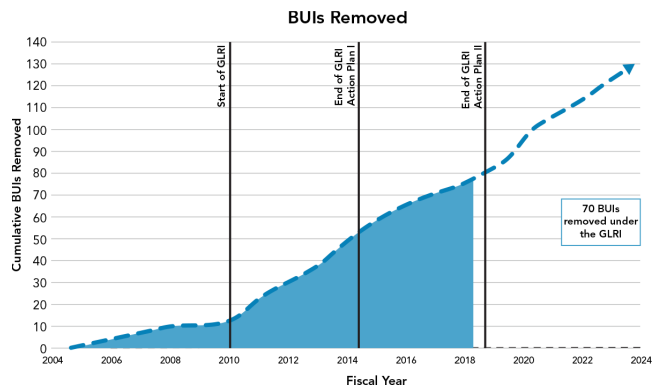
During 2019, the Region 5-based Great Lakes National Program Office, through the Sustain Our Great Lakes partnership, funded 26 restoration projects across the basin totaling \$6.9 million with non-federal investments totaling \$8.1 million. We removed nine beneficial use impairments at five Areas of Concern in five states, putting them on the path to recovery and de-listing, and promoting revitalization in surrounding communities.

Another noteworthy project: The GLRI provided \$11.5 million in grant funding for 21 projects to reduce nutrients throughout the basin. In 2019, a new grant category was announced featuring five innovative, market-based water-quality trading projects that will receive funding totaling \$2 million.

The Great Lakes National Program Office will also be the leader of EPA's new Trash-Free Great Lakes grant program, which was kicked off in mid-December. The program will make \$2 million available for beach, shoreline, and waterway cleanups throughout the Great Lakes basin.

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Removing Beneficial Use Impairments

In FY19, removed nine Beneficial Use Impairments at five Areas of Concern in five states, bringing cumulative BUI removals since the start of the Great Lakes Restoration initiative to 79. The BUI removals will help delist these AOCs and promote community revitalization.



Trash-Free Waters

In June, Administrator Wheeler launched the Great Lakes Trash-free Waters program. For the first time, EPA will be requesting competitive applications for GLRI funding for trash-free water project grants in the Great Lakes.



Sustaining Our Great Lakes

Funded, through the Sustain Our Great Lakes program, 26 restoration projects totaling \$6.9 million (with recipient matches of \$8.1 million), including projects to: 1) recover native fish populations; 2) control invasive species and improve wildlife habitat; and 3) reduce more than 21 million gallons of storm water runoff from entering waterways and install more than 99,000 square feet of green stormwater infrastructure to reduce loadings of sediment, nutrients, toxic contaminants, and pathogens to Great Lakes tributaries and nearshore waters.

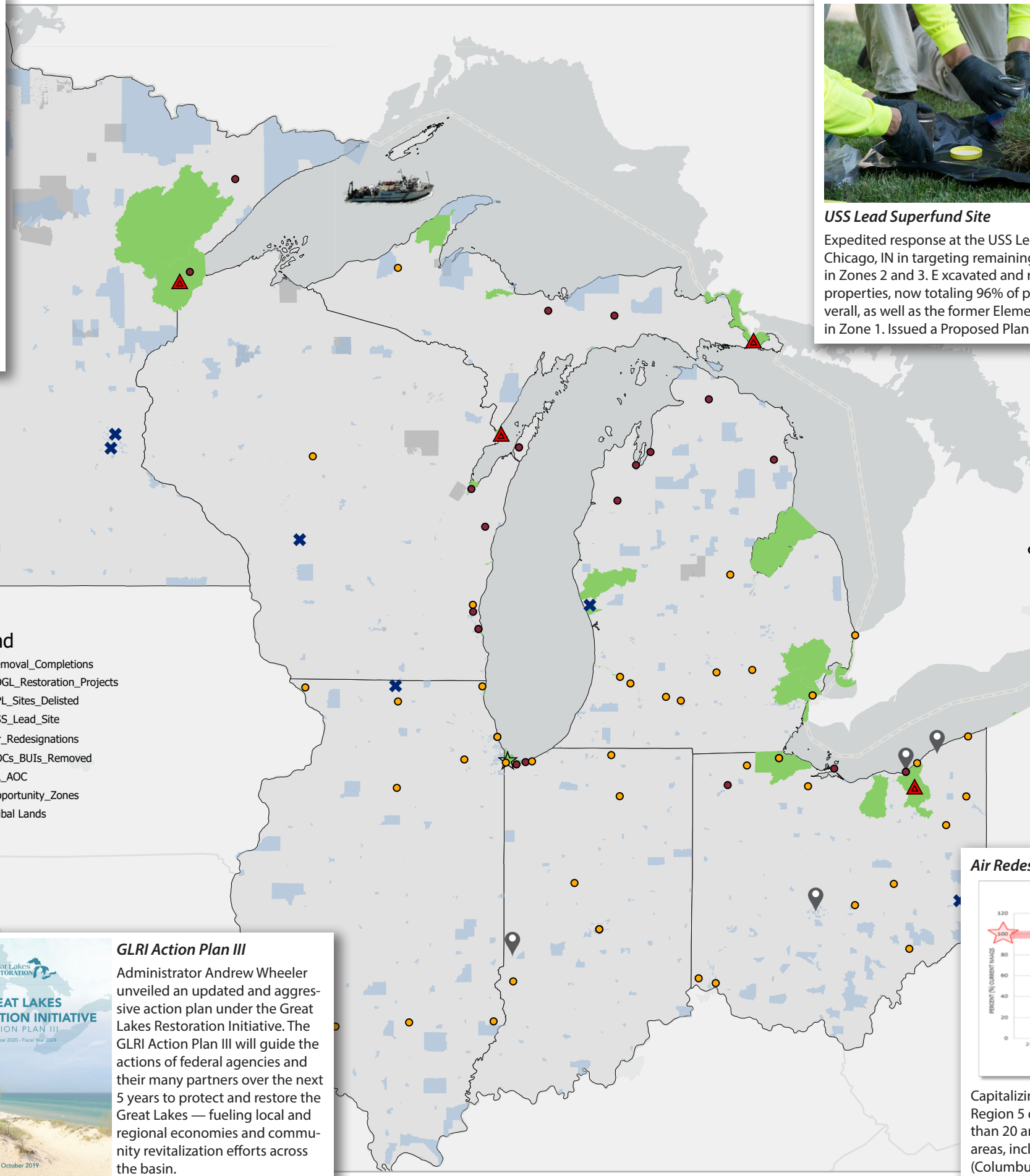


GLRI Action Plan III

Administrator Andrew Wheeler unveiled an updated and aggressive action plan under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The GLRI Action Plan III will guide the actions of federal agencies and their many partners over the next 5 years to protect and restore the Great Lakes — fueling local and regional economies and community revitalization efforts across the basin.

Legend

- Removal Completions
- SOGL_Restoration_Projects
- ✕ NPL_Sites_Delisted
- ★ USS_Lead_Site
- 📍 Air_Redesignations
- ▲ AOCs_BUIs_Removed
- GL_AOC
- Opportunity_Zones
- Tribal_Lands



USS Lead Superfund Site

Expedited response at the USS Lead Site in East Chicago, IN in targeting remaining properties in Zones 2 and 3. Excavated and restored 220 properties, now totaling 96% of properties overall, as well as the former Elementary School in Zone 1. Issued a Proposed Plan for Zone 1.



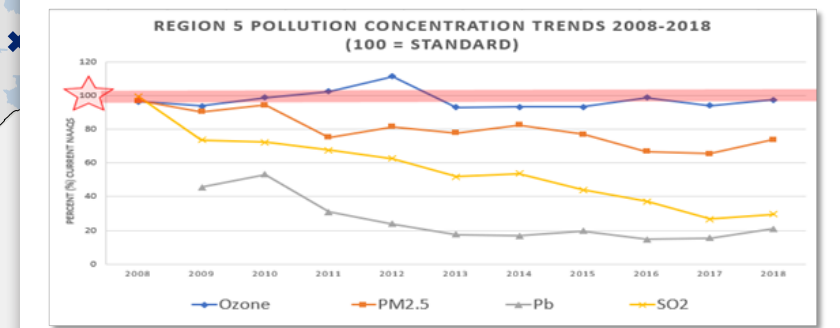
Superfund Cleanups

Region 5 continued to chip away at the Midwest's legacy of industrial pollution. EPA deleted six Region 5 sites from the National Priorities List, completed remedy construction at 16 sites, and determined 26 sites are now ready for re-use. We also completed 50 emergency removals to address immediate threats to public health (exceeding the target for completed emergency removals by 47%). At the time of this writing, Region 5 had deployed staff to 36 emergency response sites involving hazardous waste or oil cleanups.

Opportunity Zones and Redevelopment

Created by President Trump's 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the 1,051 Opportunity Zones in Region 5 offer incentives for long-term capital investments in low-income census tracts where investment has been sparse, and business growth has been minimal. EPA's Brownfields grants will be an effective tool to spur redevelopment in Opportunity Zones during 2020. Region 5's success in economic development is remarkable. We leveraged more than \$559 million in outside investment for cleanups and redevelopments in R5 communities, which in turn created 2,963 new jobs. Redevelopment of 37 acres at RACER Trust auto sector sites is projected to result in \$17.5 million in investments and 38 new jobs.

Air Redesignations



Capitalizing on significant reductions in air pollution levels across the region, Region 5 developed a three-year Air Attainment Strategy to redesignate more than 20 areas to attainment of the NAAQS. In 2019, Region 5 redesignated seven areas, including the first redesignation for the 2015 ozone NAAQS in the country (Columbus, Ohio) and five redesignations in opportunity zones.

Smart Sectors

Region 5 held several Smart Sector events in December 2019 to launch a permanent Smart Sectors regional team to work with trade associations on identifying opportunities for environmental improvement in 2020. These successful events allowed the Smart Sectors team to put plans into motion to serve as ombudsmen within the Agency, conduct educational site visits, host additional roundtables with EPA leadership, and deliver solutions for environmental improvement throughout the coming year.

In December, Region 5 heard from each state chamber of commerce directly about their priorities for current and future topics to explore in 2020. At a separate event, Regions 5 and 7 jointly conducted an initial Smart Sectors meeting for the agriculture industry on renewable fuels. Participants found these roundtable events worthwhile as opportunities to discuss EPA connections to a wide range of current and emerging issues.

Lean Management

Region 5 is well-positioned to meet these ambitious goals thanks to the staff's embrace of the principles of lean management and continuous improvement. In 2019, Region 5 became the first EPA Region to meet the national goal of 80% of personnel trained in the ELMS, the EPA Lean Management System.

Our commitment to ELMS shows in these dramatic numbers: Region 5 reduced its permit backlog by a whopping 89% during the last fiscal year; Region 5 reduced the backlog of FOIA responses by more than 50%; we are now meeting our target of sending complete inspection reports back to companies within 70 days more than 80% of the time, up from less than 50%; and the regional laboratory issues lab audit reports in an average of 90 days, down from 240 days.

These process advances were fully implemented by a team in the Region 5 Air and Radiation Division. Their use of lean management tools cut the approval process for routine air permits by more than half. This innovative process improvement resulted in the team receiving a Gears of Government national award, which recognize individuals and teams across the Federal workforce whose dedication supports exceptional delivery of key outcomes for the American people.

These are significant improvements. While the substance of the work is the same, we are adding a greater focus on delivering EPA's actions and services in a timelier manner. This will serve our partners, stakeholders, and the public well as EPA continues its core mission in 2020.

Conclusion

We have accomplished much this past year, but the work of environmental protection never ends. Looking ahead to 2020 and beyond, the managers and staff of Region 5 intend to build on their successes and continue to improve our efforts to form closer partnerships and streamline our processes in order to serve the taxpayers in the most efficient way possible.



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