



RE: SCR 11 & SR 42
DATE: June 25, 2015

The Michigan Environmental Council (MEC), a coalition of more than 65 member-based organizations across the state, supports both Senate Concurrent Resolution 11 and Senate Resolution 42 that urge Congress to restore full funding to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The GLRI grants have provided funding to projects that likely would never have been done otherwise, and have greatly improved the environment and the beauty of the Great Lakes. Of the numerous projects funded by GLRI grants, highlighted here are three projects by MEC member groups funded by these grants, one is ongoing, one is complete, and the third is just starting.

Paint Creek Habitat Restoration – Clinton River Watershed Council

This \$725,000 project was funded by \$704,725 from GLRI grants. The project centered around removing a dam that had long been on the Department of Natural Resources removal list, as it created a Beneficial Use Impairment for Loss of Fish and Wildlife habitat designation for the creek. This award winning project removed the obsolete dam and restored 2000 lineal feet of stream. The importance of this is made greater as Paint Creek is the last cold water stream in Southeast Michigan. This project had large downstream impacts, as in addition to restoring fish habitat it re-connected the stream to natural wetlands and also stabilized the banks to prevent soil erosion. This project also contributes to delisting the Clinton River as an area of concern.

Little Traverse Bay Stormwater Initiative – Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

This multifaceted project was funded through an \$887,723 GLRI grant and has vastly improved stormwater management and natural stream flow in the northern Lower Peninsula. This project worked to correct three stream crossings that had been altered for stormwater management. These new stream crossings were made to make the stream flow back toward its natural state, while still addressing stormwater. These changes have decreased erosion and increased downstream water quality. Additionally, this project installed a stormwater wetland for treating runoff from North Central Michigan College. The wetland area on campus had been degraded and was causing increased loads of nutrients, soil and other pollutants to enter the Bear River. The new wetland effectively filters stormwater discharges from the campus and has decreased the loading of pollutants to the Bear River. A final stage of the project will install rain gardens in a stormwater stressed area of Bay View.

Reconnecting Coldwater Habitat in Northwest Michigan Rivers – Trout Unlimited

This is a new project and is funded through an \$202,053 GLRI grant. This is a new project, only receiving funding last year. Trout Unlimited plans to reconnect and restore 45 miles of habitat on the Manistee, Pine, Little Mansitee and Pere Marquette rivers. These science based restorations will help build resiliency in these waters to any future negative impacts that could come along.

Without full funding to the GLRI program, it is less likely that all these amazing projects would be done in Michigan. We fully support SCR 11 and SR 42 and hope that projects like those highlighted above will continue for years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sean Hammond".

Sean Hammond
Deputy Policy Director