Great Lakes Coastal Assembly

A parnership for healthy Great Lakes coasts

| Our Vision | Coastal landscapes that support the unique structure and processes essential for sustaining healthy species populations, resilient natural communities, and for providing benefits to human society.

| Our Priorities |

- Catalyze Collaboration
- Provide Technical Expertise
- Facilitate Communication & Learning
- Support Science & Tool Development
- Strive Toward a Holistic Approach

| The Need | Thousands of miles of coastline encompass the Laurentian Great Lakes. This narrow ribbon where land meets water is home to a spectacular array of plants and animals. It serves to protect inland areas through natural flood control, improve water quality, and provides many opportunities for recreation. The conversion of natural coastlines to support growing human populations, coupled with extreme weather events made more frequent and intense by climate change, jeopardizes the future health of Great Lakes coasts.

| Our Purpose | The Great Lakes Coastal Assembly (Assembly) is a diverse group of over 25 federal, state, provincial, and inter-state agencies, tribes, NGOs, and universities working together to conserve and restore the land-water interface in the critically important coastal zones of the Great Lakes. Our members work collaboratively to 1) promote collaboration of the management, restoration, and conversion of coastal areas, 2) assist organizations in assessing where investments will have the most beneficial impact across regional, state, and local goals, and 3) identify needs for science and support tools that help coastal managers make effective decisions.

| About Our Work | The Assembly is a binational, voluntary partnership that works through member collaboration. Our members represent a mix of staff conducting research and monitoring, implementing on-the-ground restoration, and working on policy, planning, and outreach. Together, we have taken steps toward large-scale conservation in the Great Lakes region with a primary focus on coastal wetlands. Here is a glimpse of our accomplishments to date:

- **Decision Support Tools** – Developed the Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Decision Support Tool and the Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Restoration Assessment models. These tools help users identify and prioritize areas for conservation and restoration.
- **Track Progress** – Published metrics on the Blue Accounting platform for wetland breeding birds and amphibians, percent protected of coastal wetlands, and project investments in the Great Lakes basin.
- **Coastal Wetland Conservation Framework** – Developed a framework that 1) establishes baseline extent and condition, 2) determines extent, condition, and representation needed to achieve desired status, and 3) identifies where to focus efforts to achieve conservation targets for Great Lakes coastal wetlands.

Main Photo: Great Lakes Coastal Assembly Members visit Garden Island by Liz Berg/USFWS
Side Photo: 2022 Great Lakes Coastal Assembly Bird Walk by Luke Franke/Audubon

| Looking Ahead | The Assembly is always exploring new ways to engage in the Great Lakes coastal space. Here is a snapshot of ongoing and upcoming efforts we're looking forward to:

- **Pilot the Framework** – Implement the Lake Erie pilot of the Coastal Wetland Conservation Framework in Lake Erie. The Assembly received support from key Lake Erie partners and funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. We have formed a Steering Team and expect to make significant progress towards completing the Lake Erie pilot by 2026.
- **Explore New Priorities** – Identify coastal priorities beyond wetlands. To date, the Assembly has focused on coastal wetland conservation goals and strategies. For example, we recently formed new workgroups focused on Great Lakes Islands and Great Lakes Coastal Resilience.
- **Semi-Annual Coastal Symposium** – Gather conservation land managers, scientists, and partners engaged in coastal work across the Great Lakes basin to expand our conservation network, share information, and deepen our understanding of coastal systems.

Great Lakes Coastal Assembly Members

| State and Interstate | Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources · Michigan Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy · Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources · Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources · New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation · New York State Dept. of State · Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources · Ohio Lake Erie Commission · Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection · Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources · Great Lakes Commission **| Federal & Tribal |** Bay Mills Indian Community · Canada Water Agency · National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration · Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians · U.S. Army Corps of Engineers · U.S. Environmental Protection Agency · U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service · U.S. Geological Survey **| Local Government |** Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative **| Private & Nongovernmental |** Coastal States Organization · Ducks Unlimited · Great Lakes Audubon · The Nature Conservancy · Nature Conservancy of Canada · Trout Unlimited **| Universities & Extension Offices |** Central Michigan University · Michigan Sea Grant · Michigan Natural Features Inventory · Grand Valley State University

Contact Us to Learn More

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- **Janice Kerns** – Assembly Co-Chair and Reserve Manager at Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve, Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, janice.kerns@dnr.ohio.gov

Visit our website: greatlakescoastalassembly.org

Great Lakes RESTORATION

The Assembly, formerly the Coastal Conservation Working Group under the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Landscape Conservation Cooperative, is supported in part by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Photo: 2022 Great Lakes Coastal Assembly Field Trip by Luke Franke/Audubon