

# EPA awards Great Lakes restoration funds in Wisconsin

By [Dan Egan](#) of the Journal Sentinel  
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Federal environment officials Wednesday unveiled a list of Wisconsin projects for the ongoing Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

The Environmental Protection Agency has set aside nearly \$4 million in awards this year to eight Wisconsin organizations and agencies.

The restoration program was a campaign promise by President Barack Obama. Now in its second year, more than \$700 million has been spent -- or committed -- to projects intended to repair and restore the world's largest freshwater system.

“The President’s Great Lakes Restoration Initiative aims to rehabilitate the ecosystem that is the foundation of this region’s economy,” Cameron Davis, the EPA’s point person for the Great Lakes restoration program, said in a news release. “For the regional economy to thrive, we need to accelerate our efforts to comprehensively attack problems such as habitat loss, invasive species and pollution that causes algae that choke beaches and fish life. Today’s investment will help make that happen.”

The Wisconsin projects announced Wednesday include:

- More than \$1 million to the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh to implement mitigation strategies for Wisconsin beaches plagued by periodic swimming closures.
- \$385,000 to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to reduce invasive plant species in the Great Lakes.
- \$747,000 to the Door County Soil and Water Conservation District to implement beach management practices to improve water quality in the popular vacation spot.
- \$85,000 for stormwater management at UW-Milwaukee's power plant.

The restoration initiative, a five-year plan running through 2014, is billed as the largest investment in the Great Lakes in two decades.

Its stated goals include cleaning up toxic hot spots, combating invasive species, promoting water quality by protecting watersheds from polluted runoff and restoring wetlands and other habitats.

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett welcomed the investments announced Wednesday.

"The Great Lakes and its tributaries are central to our quality of life in southeastern Wisconsin," Barrett said in the release. "From manufacturing, to agriculture, to recreation, a healthy lake and rivers makes it all possible."

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