



Environment
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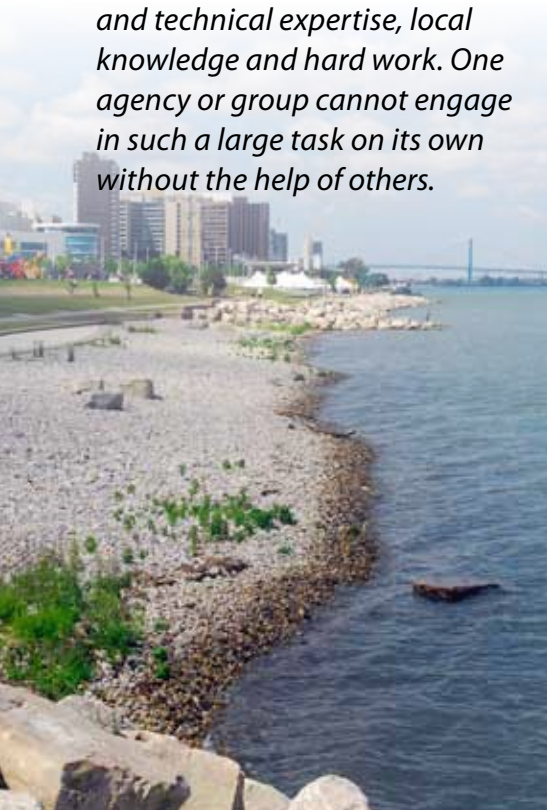
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AREAS OF CONCERN **DETROIT RIVER**

Efforts in the Detroit River (Canadian Section) are undertaken in a partnership between the Government of Canada, other levels of government and non-government groups, including members of the public.

Undertaking environmental restoration requires scientific and technical expertise, local knowledge and hard work. One agency or group cannot engage in such a large task on its own without the help of others.



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The contributions of binational, federal, provincial and local agencies, local industries, and other community partners continue to have a positive impact upon the water quality and ecosystem health within the Canadian section of the Detroit River Area of Concern (AOC).

Why was it listed as an Area of Concern?

The Detroit River was designated as an AOC in 1986 because a review of available data indicated that water quality and environmental health were severely degraded. Further monitoring showed that the history of industrialization, urbanization and agricultural land use activities along the shores and within the tributaries of the Detroit River had resulted in 8 of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement's 14 beneficial use indicators of environmental quality being deemed as impaired.

What have we accomplished?

There have been many improvements towards restoring the Canadian section of the Detroit River AOC.

A \$110 million expansion and upgrade of the Windsor municipal wastewater treatment plant and a \$60 million retention basin to capture and treat combined sewer overflows in Windsor reduced domestic sewage pollution significantly. This reduction has helped to improve water quality and aesthetics. Funding was provided by the federal, provincial and city governments.

In Turkey Creek, 975 cubic metres of contaminated sediment and creek bank soil were removed through a partnership between Environment Canada, the Province of Ontario, local industries and local municipalities at a cost of \$1.2 million.

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Natural shoreline restoration projects were implemented to replace vertical sheet pile walls and create habitat for fish and wildlife in Windsor, LaSalle and Amherstburg.

The Windsor Riverfront Pollution Control Planning Study was completed and adopted by the city. This \$1 million study was funded jointly by Environment Canada, the City of Windsor and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. The study developed a strategy for controlling combined sewer overflows and reducing the pollutant concentrations in the Detroit River to levels consistent with the objectives of the Remedial Action Plan.

The implementation of the provincial Municipal Industrial Strategy for Abatement (MISA) regulations in the mid-1990s virtually eliminated toxic substances and addressed other problems caused by industrial discharges entering the Detroit River.

Other notable environmental successes include:

- The protection of 366 hectares of wetland;
- The development and implementation of a rural non-point source control strategy for nutrients;

- The creation of in-river fish spawning habitat at Fighting Island, Fort Malden, McKee Park and Riverfront Park;
- The implementation of conservation tillage techniques on more than 15,000 hectares of agricultural lands has reduced nutrients, sediments and chemical inputs to the local water courses; and
- The undertaking of more than 60 restoration projects supported by various stakeholders and partners in the area.

While measurable improvements have been made, more work needs to be done. The 2012 Remedial Action Plan report confirmed that beneficial uses remain impaired. These impairments include restrictions on fish consumption, degraded fish and wildlife populations, fish tumours and other deformities, bird or animal deformities, degraded benthic communities, restrictions on dredging activities, beach closings, degraded aesthetics, and loss of fish and wildlife habitat.

What is left to do?

- Finalizing the upgrades to Amherstburg's wastewater treatment plant, which are nearing completion.
- Further habitat restoration, particularly the rehabilitation of coastal wetlands, construction of fish spawning habitats and

shoreline naturalization projects, are also a major upcoming priority in the remediation of the area.

- In addition, continued monitoring of the area will be required to track progress of restoration efforts.

Outlook

It is anticipated that this AOC will be delisted by 2025.

Where can you find more information?

Environment Canada e-mail:

greatlakes-grandlacs@ec.gc.ca

Environment Canada web site:

www.ec.gc.ca/raps

Detroit River Canadian Cleanup: _

www.detroitriver.ca

PARTNERS

Brighton Beach Power

Canadian Auto Workers

Citizens' Environmental Alliance

City of Windsor

Essex County Stewardship Network

Essex Region Conservation
Authority

Ford Motor Company of Canada

General Chemical Canada

Great Lakes Institute of
Environmental Research –
University of Windsor

Honeywell HF

Little River Enhancement Group

Ontario Ministry
of Natural Resources

Ontario Ministry
of the Environment

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

Town of Amherstburg

Town of LaSalle

Windsor and District
Labour Council

Windsor Port Authority

U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency