

PROJECT PROFILE

Project Title: Growing and Sustaining Great Lakes Restoration Successes

Grantee Organization: National Wildlife Federation

Project Team: Jennifer Hill, National Wildlife Federation; Celia Haven, National Wildlife Federation; Jordan Lubetkin, National Wildlife Federation; Todd Ambs, National Wildlife Federation; Cheryl Kallio, Freshwater Future; Jill Ryan, Freshwater Future.

Contact Person: Jennifer Hill, Field Manager, Great Lakes Restoration, National Wildlife Federation (hillj@nwf.org)

Grant Amount: \$100,000

Time Frame: January 27, 2015 to December 31, 2015

Focus Area: Special Project

Brief Project Summary: The Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition (HOW) has completed this project as part of the Coalition's Implementation Grant Program. The project supported work by the Coalition to continue a small grants program which provides funding to local organizations to build needed capacity to leverage federal dollars for Great Lakes restoration projects from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and to illustrate the ecological and economic benefits of restoration. In 2015, the grant program successfully awarded eight grants to local organizations for projects addressing (but not limited to) stream and wetland habitat restoration, invasive species, and fish passage in eight priority areas across the Great Lakes.

Project in Context

The HOW Coalition's continued leadership in the Great Lakes restoration community makes the organization well positioned to provide the resources needed by the community to effectively implement restoration projects under the GLRI. HOW has proven with its sixth successful annual grant cycle that it plays a critical role in providing resources to local organizations to ensure project success and leverage significant federal funding dollars. HOW has built and continually maintains excellent working relationships with the other entities doing work on GLRI implementation in the region. The HOW Grant Program supports the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy's vision and the GLRI's long-term investment in Great Lakes restoration. After six years of this successful grant program, it remains evident that ensuring organizations of all sizes have the opportunity to receive GLRI funding for high priority restoration projects is important to ensure the success of the GLRI in the region. The HOW Grant Program continued to meet the needs of the Great Lakes implementation community through small grants to build capacity and help groups prepare for GLRI grant applications and small grants that engage the community on existing federal GLRI projects. In addition, HOW was successful in communicating with a variety of different audiences including local organizations engaged in Great Lakes restoration work in HOW priority areas and groups throughout the basin.

Goals of the Effort

The main goal of HOW's Priority Area Implementation Grant Program is to help local organizations succeed in implementing the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy through the GLRI.

This is achieved through:

- A. Providing local organizations with small grants targeted to 1) provide capacity building assistance for a project before federal funding is sought under the GLRI, 2) help current GLRI

grantees successfully carry out the federal grant guidelines for their project, or 3) allow groups to engage the local community in GLRI projects being implemented by state or federal agencies.

B. Developing and distributing additional tools and resources as needed (factsheets, webinars, one on one project consultation) to help HOW Coalition members successfully navigate the federal funding opportunities available under the GLRI.

C. Maintaining a steady drumbeat of communication to illustrate to the public, the media, the Great Lakes community and public officials the economic and ecological benefits from the federal government's continued investment in the GLRI.

Results

HOW continued to manage a small grants program able to administer capacity building grants to local organizations to do restoration work throughout the Great Lakes region. HOW awarded grants to local organizations within seven priority areas. Grants ranged from \$7,000 to \$15,000 and were awarded to eight projects. Of the eight projects awarded funding, six projects were partially funded through Trust funds. These projects addressed habitat restoration, fish passage, and invasive species.

HOW continued to provide project implementers and partners in the Great Lakes restoration community with additional help to take advantage of available GLRI dollars, including one on one consultation, development of HOW grant applications and dissemination of federal funding opportunities as they became available. HOW continued its work to chronicle restoration success stories throughout the basin to illustrate to the Great Lakes community, the media and others that federal investment in the GLRI continues to be a sound investment of federal funding. Throughout the year, Great Lakes restoration success stories were added to HOW's robust collection of over 140 online success stories which are featured prominently on the HOW website.

We have shown that the HOW program is helping non-profit organizations apply for and implement GLRI projects and that these projects do their part to contribute to the resounding success of the GLRI. Each year, as more projects are implemented with GLRI funds, we are seeing more and more signs of success.

Products and Resources

WEBSITES

- Main HOW Coalition Website (www.healthylakes.org)
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- HOW Restoration Success Story Library (<http://healthylakes.org/successes/restoration-success-stories/>)
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- HOW Interactive Success Story Map (<http://healthylakes.org/map>)
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PUBLICATIONS

- *Great Lakes Restoration Projects Producing Results for People, Communities*
HOW produced two reports featuring successful restoration projects around the region in February and September 2015. The reports may be accessed at:
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EVENTS

- The 11th Annual Great Lakes Restoration Conference was held in Chicago, Illinois in September 2015. Hosted by the Healing Our Waters – Great Lakes Coalition, the 11th Annual Conference brought together the leading decision makers, implementers, and stakeholders for restoring the Great Lakes. The conference featured workshops and presentations that focused on policy, project implementation, grassroots restoration movements, and emerging Great Lakes issues, including several workshops with a focus on successful restoration projects and a plenary presentation dedicated to a comprehensive plan for the Chicago River. The conference also included robust communications efforts, including extensive coverage and live broadcasting of sessions by Detroit Public Television and live-blogging and social media work of plenaries and sessions by HOW staff.

Growing and Sustaining Great Lakes Restoration Successes
Final Narrative Report to the Great Lakes Fishery Trust
Grant 2014.1501
February 2016
National Wildlife Federation
on behalf of the Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition

Background/Overview

1. Briefly summarize the project description as outlined in the original proposal.

The HOW Coalition is made up of over 135 conservation, science, environmental, and civic organizations across the Great Lakes basin and plays a critical role in advancing the restoration of the Great Lakes at a regional and national level. HOW's goal is to improve the overall health of the Great Lakes through the successful implementation of a comprehensive restoration plan to clean up toxic hotspots, end sewage overflows, and restore hundreds of thousands of acres of wetlands and thousands of miles of streams and coastlines. HOW has been critical to obtaining over \$2 billion in federal Great Lakes restoration funding since 2010.

One of HOW's priorities continues to be to enable local groups to use Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding to conduct effective restoration efforts in key locations around the Great Lakes. To that end, HOW operates the Priority Area Implementation Grant Program (Grant Program). The HOW Grant Program provides local and state organizations with small grants to build the capacity they need to capture and leverage federal dollars for the most important restoration projects under the GLRI.

2. Was the project completed as originally intended? If not, how did the final outcomes differ from what was anticipated? Does your experience suggest that original expectations were realistic? What factors hindered or helped progress?

Yes, the project was completed as originally intended. The only outcome that we predicted within the chart of work which we were not able to meet was the goal of disseminating the progress on our long term program benchmarks. Staff have been working since the early fall of 2015 to collect information from the first several years of grantees to assess the longer term benchmarks of the program. Getting responses and feedback from a majority of our past grantees has taken longer than expected, however, this work is ongoing and we expect to be able to gather results and disseminate this information this spring.

Outcomes

3. What activities were pursued in relationship to intended outcomes, and to what extent did you achieve the following intended outcomes listed in your proposal?

The Healing Our Waters-Great Lakes Coalition (HOW) successfully enacted the grant deliverables over the granting period. Specifically, through HOW's Implementation Grant Program, HOW has:

Conducted One on One Outreach to Potential Applicants: HOW and Freshwater Future conducted one on one outreach to organizations within the eight HOW priority areas and throughout the Great Lakes region. Outreach included consulting with groups who showed

interest in applying for a HOW grant, talking through creating a feasible proposal, and communicating about proposal improvements to prospective applicants.

Produced and released HOW RFP: The HOW Request for Proposals was refined and updated to reflect the amount of funding available for the 2015 calendar year. The 2015 RFP included both grants being offered by the Implementation Program in 2015: Federal Project Support grants and Community Engagement grants. The Community Engagement grants were added to the HOW grant program in 2014 and were again offered in 2015. As in past years, the RFP was released on a rolling deadline. The program began receiving applications in mid-winter through early summer. The RFP was broadly disseminated through the HOW listserv, the Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN), Freshwater Future's large on the ground network, and in various social media outlets. The 2015 RFP is attached.

Evaluated Proposals and Made Awards: HOW continues to use a grant reading team made up of two HOW staff members, one Governance Board member, and one Coalition member who is a GLRI project implementer. HOW grant readers evaluated proposals and awarded the full \$104,000 available in 2015 to eight projects. The 2015 HOW grant recipients are: Center for Environmental Initiatives, Clinton River Watershed Council, Ducks Unlimited, The Greening of Detroit, Huron Pines Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc., and Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Friends of the Detroit River, and Minnesota Environmental Partnership. Detailed descriptions of each project, as well as a breakdown of which projects were funded using GLFT funds may be found in Appendix A. GLFT funds were only used to fund projects that align closely with the mission of the GLFT and were not used to fund advocacy of any kind. Examples of projects funded in 2015 include:

- Huron Pines Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc. received \$15,000 for a project in the Au Gres watershed in Michigan. Huron Pines will use recent inventory data and work with stakeholders and partners to prioritize projects in the watershed, including reconnecting aquatic habitat and enhancing aquatic and riparian habitat, and reducing nonpoint pollution. Reconnecting aquatic habitat and reducing non-point pollution will both have direct benefits to improving fish populations.
- Western Reserve Land Conservancy received a grant of \$15,000 for the Snyder Ditch Stream and Wetland Restoration Plan. The project will restore recently purchased property including ditched streams and disturbed wetlands to improve water quality in Rock Creek while improving fish, amphibian, wildlife, and waterfowl habitat within the 1,300-acre property. These improvements should benefit fish health in the area. Rock Creek is a major tributary of the Grand River in Ashtabula and Trumbull counties in Ohio.
- Center for Environmental Initiatives received \$14,899 to create a river bank stabilization/restoration plan for a portion of the Upper Genesee River near Houghton, New York. River bank stabilization will benefit fish by reducing sediment loading into the River and improving aquatic habitat.
- Friends of the Detroit River received \$9,101 to evaluate project opportunities on Celeron and Belle Isle islands in the Detroit River and put together a larger grant under the GLRI.

Identified Needs Within the Implementation Community: HOW and Freshwater Future staff are well positioned to identify needs within the Great Lakes restoration community. Staff maintain communication with implementers throughout the region. Additionally, Jennifer Hill maintains membership on the Great Lakes Advisory Board, which allows her to provide input to ongoing conversations regarding adaptive management in Great Lakes restoration programs.

Jennifer's membership on GLAB enables her and HOW staff to keep a close eye on efforts to develop specific metrics to gauge restoration efforts in various areas, including habitat restoration and fishery enhancement. If additional needs arise within the implementation community, HOW will work to meet them.

Provided One on One Consultation to Grantees: HOW and Freshwater Future staff are made available to HOW grantees on a regular basis to help them as they pursue their restoration project and execute their grant.

Produced Restoration Success Stories: HOW has produced a steady drumbeat of success stories throughout the grant period. This included producing new success stories every month which have been published on HOW's website. In addition to our online work, HOW has produced two online packaged success stories reports: one featuring success stories in and around the Chicago area which was done in conjunction with our 11th Annual Great Lakes Restoration Conference and one published in February 2015. HOW continues to produce reports that provide educational materials regarding projects successes across the basin. All success stories produced by the Coalition are disseminated to our networks through our listserv, the Coalition's state leaders, Twitter, and Facebook. Each success story is also added to our interactive map and to our state-specific slideshows as a way to further increase the visibility of this work (see more at www.healthylakes.org).

Communicated Progress on HOW Benchmarks: HOW staff were able to compile successes from the Implementation Grant Program through 2013; a detailed account of these grant outcomes are included in Question 6. As the Implementation Grant Program continues, HOW staff are working to tabulate the program's longer-term benchmarks and will communicate successes as they are completed. HOW continues to communicate about the program's successes to target audiences at strategic times through multiple platforms.

4. What audience(s) were you particularly hoping to reach? To what extent did you reach them? Did you receive feedback?

As in years past, HOW staff worked throughout the grant period to share the outcomes and results of the Program with HOW Coalition members and partners, federal and state agency officials, the Obama Administration, members of Congress, and the media. Grant Program successes are a demonstration to decision makers that the HOW Coalition and the Great Lakes community are doing their part to ensure the success of the GLRI and putting restoration efforts into action. We are bridging a critical gap between project inception and the realization of restoration goals. As we ramp up for another year of grant-making, it is more important than ever to effectively communicate the success of the program.

HOW utilizes many avenues to promote the success of the HOW Grant Program, including through our website, on Twitter, and on Facebook. However, our most frequent and effective form of communication about our program is through the frequently-published restoration success stories produced by the Coalition. HOW produces two success stories per month and pushes them out on the HOW website, through social media, through email listservs, and in paper publications. We have found that our success stories are the most effective method of communicating frequently and successfully with the targeted audiences mentioned above. We consistently receive feedback from Coalition members, federal agency staff, the Administration, staffers on the Hill, and our non-governmental partners that the Coalition's success story work is extremely valuable to the work they are doing and in demonstrating the importance of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

5. What relationships or opportunities were developed or strengthened through the work?

In 2015, the most significant relationship that was strengthened was with the Frey Foundation and their support through funding of the Grant program. HOW and Freshwater Future's track record running an extremely successful leveraging program piqued the interest of the Frey Foundation several years ago and in 2015 HOW was successful in securing funding for the Grant Program from the Frey Foundation to expand our ability to impact larger geographic portions of Lake Michigan – specifically to benefit more organizations along the northeastern shore of Lake Michigan.

The Coalition's success in securing funding from a new funder for the Grant Program is a great example of an opportunity that would not have existed if not for the success of the placed based program we run and its proven track record over the last several years. We will continue to develop existing and new relationships with funders and others as opportunities arise.

6. Was an evaluation included as part of this project? If so, what were the key findings?

The evaluation plan for the Grant Program is based on the Program's developed benchmarks, which catalog successes in year increments. Since the Grant Program began in 2010, HOW has been able to measure the program's outcomes against the developed benchmarks. In particular, HOW has looked to evaluate the amount of GLRI applications being submitted as a result of HOW funding and from there, the amount of GLRI funds awarded to HOW projects. In addition, HOW is tracking funding outside of the GLRI that is being leveraged by these projects. As the amount of GLRI funds made available for competitive grants decreases, HOW is happy to see that projects are also leveraging funds outside of the GLRI in order to implement the restoration work needed to bring the Lakes back to health.

This section includes information that we have built upon as the HOW Grant Program has grown. We include our program outcomes from 2010 through 2013 and we plan to continue to compile the outcomes from 2014 through the present in the coming months and years as results become available. There is significant lag time between the awarding of a HOW grant and when staff can compile the outcomes of the grant: before results can be tabulated, a grantee must have time to execute their project, prepare an application under the GLRI or other funding program, wait for the appropriate Request for Proposals to become available, and finally wait for a decision from the funding entity. This can take up to several years – meaning that there is a delay in between the HOW grant award and the appropriate time to compile outcomes of a specific year's grant program.

In its first year, the 2010 HOW Grant Program expended \$200,000 to fund fifteen projects, eight of which were partially funded by Trust funds. The recipients of these fifteen awards were subsequently able to generate twelve applications for GLRI funds, six of which were accepted and funded – a total of \$1,693,963. 2010 grant recipients who were unsuccessful in securing GLRI funds were also able to apply for and receive \$4,215,832 in non-GLRI funding. HOW's 2010 grants have leveraged a total of \$5,909,795: a 29 to 1 return on investment overall, and a 10 to 1 return on investment of GLRI funds alone.

The eight 2010 projects funded using Great Lakes Fishery Trust funds generated six applications under the GLRI, three of which were funded for a total of \$626,950. These eight projects also brought in \$4,042,800 in other subsequent funding, for a total of \$4,669,750 generated. This represents a 10 to 1 return on GLFT investment in GLRI funds, and a 77 to 1 return on GLFT investment overall.

- An example of the remarkable outcomes of the 2010 program comes from Alliance for the Great Lakes, who received a HOW grant of \$15,000 to build partnerships to support a federal GLRI funding proposal for a ravine improvement prioritization and tracking system and a joint GLRI proposal with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources for implementation of the Lakewide Management Plan for Lake Michigan. The grant allowed the Alliance for the Great Lakes the time and resources needed to bring stakeholders together and develop solid, multi-jurisdictional partnerships that were reflected in the subsequent GLRI grant proposals. The Alliance for the Great Lakes received subsequent funding for multiple projects, including collaborating with the Illinois DNR and other organizations to develop and implement an Illinois Lake Michigan Implementation Plan, which will improve the implementation of restoration projects throughout the Lake Michigan Watershed. This project has directly led to improved habitat restoration projects and strengthened Lake Michigan's ecosystem health.

In 2011, the HOW Grant Program expended \$133,000 on eleven projects. The recipients of these eleven awards were able to generate ten applications for GLRI funds, three of which were accepted and funded, totaling \$1,079,050. In addition to this GLRI funding, the grant recipients in 2011 have also applied for and received \$499,721 in non-GLRI (both federal and non-federal) funding. In total, the HOW 2011 grants have leveraged a total of \$1,578,771, a nearly 12 to 1 return on investment overall. In addition, five of the 2011 HOW grants provided additional technical assistance to enable the completion of previously awarded GLRI grants totaling over \$5.8 million. All of the projects that received subsequent funding as a result of their small grant from HOW were partially funded using GLFT funds.

- For example, Friends of the Shiawassee River was able to secure \$130,000 in additional grant funding as a result of their original \$14,180 award from the 2011 HOW Grant Program. The group received the funds to accomplish multiple dam removal projects in the Shiawassee River watershed that will both restore habitat, increase fish access, and directly benefit fish populations.

The results of the 2012 program are impressive: the program included eleven projects totaling \$145,000. These eleven projects were able to produce 8 applications under the GLRI, 7 of which were funded, totaling \$5,803,000 in subsequent GLRI investment. Additionally, these projects received \$5,810,813 in non-GLRI funds for a grand total of \$11,613,813 in funding received by 2012 HOW grantees. This represents an 80 to 1 return on investment overall for the 2012 Grant Program! Out of the eleven projects funded in the 2012 program, five were funded using GLFT funds. These five projects applied for and received two GLRI grants, totaling \$833,000, and \$84,720 in additional funds, for a total of \$917,720.

- The 2012 HOW Grant program awarded \$15,000 to Huron Pines to expand the scope and impact of their conservation efforts in the Northern Saginaw Bay Watershed. The award allowed Huron Pines to create a priority map of sensitive ecosystems and then work closely with landowners and volunteers to complete several stream bank restoration projects. One streambank erosion control project resulted in 600 feet of native plantings and eliminated an estimated 183 tons of annual sediment loading. The HOW grant helped Huron Pines to receive two subsequent GLRI grants and over \$900,000 total in funding that is allowing the group to complete habitat improvement projects, invasive species control, streambank erosion control, and fish passage restoration. All of the work being

done as a result of this grant is having direct and indirect beneficial impacts to the local fishery.

- Clinton River Watershed Council received a 2012 HOW grant of \$15,000 to survey and inventory impairments to tributaries to Paint Creek, a cold water trout fishery in southeastern Michigan. The information gathered during this project helped to guide the engineering design for a larger project that will minimize stormwater runoff and pollution into Paint Creek and directly benefit the creek's fish habitat.
- Minnesota Land Trust was extremely successful in leveraging the \$7,189 it received from the HOW Grant Program into over \$4 million in GLRI funds and over \$5 million in non-GLRI funds. MLT worked closely with Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and the St. Louis River Alliance to prepare several applications under different GLRI programs. Their work will directly affect habitat restoration in the St. Louis River estuary, benefiting fish populations, reducing pollution, and protecting valuable ecosystems.

In 2013, the HOW Grant program awarded grants to seven projects totaling \$100,000. Groups from these projects were able to put together 10 proposals under the GLRI, 2 of which were subsequently awarded totaling \$501,000. Additionally, these groups were also able to apply for and receive \$2,791,000 in non-GLRI funds. In total, 2013 HOW grantees received \$3,292,000 in subsequent funding, a 33:1 return on investment.

- Milwaukee Riverkeeper received \$15,000 in HOW grant funds to design a larger scale restoration project that was then used in several applications under the GLRI. The group was also able to meet with several landowners to discuss impediments to fish passage for future projects. Milwaukee Riverkeeper's work will directly benefit fish passage in Milwaukee's Rivers.
- Grand Rapids Whitewater received \$18,293 in 2013 towards their goal of restoring the rapids in the Grand River. The funding was used for a critical study of endangered mussels early on in the project that was necessary to move forward with plans to restore the rapids. Restoration of the Grand River will improve habitat conditions for fish populations.

HOW will continue to utilize this model of highlighting successes as we receive outcomes from our grantees and will use the outcomes of these grants to continue to measure our progress against the established evaluation plan. As HOW staff work to compile these grant outcomes there is a common thread among conversations with program grantees: their work would not have been able to move forward without the small grant they received from the Implementation Program. HOW grant money was essential in developing key partnerships, performing informative research, and executing critical projects. This increased capacity led to larger restoration projects under the GLRI and other programs that will benefit fish populations, restore habitat, and help the Great Lakes.

7. Whether they were intended or unintended, what do you consider the most important benefits or outcomes of this special project?

The most important benefit of this project continues to be the ability of HOW's implementation grants to leverage such large amounts of federal funding for restoration work in our priority areas.

The heart of the restoration of the Great Lakes is not people sitting around a table and strategizing about what's next (although that is an important piece of the pie), it's actually the folks working on the ground and in the water to do the actual projects that must get done to restore the Lakes. It's moving the dirt, restoring the stream, taking out the dam, removing the invasive species and making the Lakes a better place for our children in the process. HOW's Implementation program helps make these projects possible and it allows our Coalition members and partners to be integral on the ground implementers who are getting out into the field and doing the work. Both of these benefits are critical to ensuring the Lakes are brought back to health and we are proud to be doing our part.

Related Efforts

8. Was this project a standalone effort or was there a broader effort beyond the part funded by the GLFT? Have other funders been involved either during the time of your GLFT grant or subsequently?

The HOW Coalition secured additional resources from the following foundations for the Implementation Program and the overall HOW Campaign in 2015. These foundations include:

- The Frey Foundation: Awarded \$150,000 over two years for the Implementation Program (2015 and 2016)
- The Wege Foundation: Awarded \$500,000 per year for five years (2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017)
- The Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation: Awarded \$150,000 per year for three years (2013, 2014, and 2015)
- The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation: Awarded \$50,000 per year for two years (2014 and 2015)
- The Joyce Foundation: Awarded \$325,000 for 2015

The additional funding for the Implementation Program from the Frey Foundation is especially noteworthy in 2015. With this regionally-targeted money, HOW was able to start enhancing our project-specific work in Western Michigan. This funding has added greatly to our ability to fund projects in Western Michigan and provide more in depth capacity building services to local organizations doing restoration work on the ground and is ongoing through 2016.

9. Has there been any spinoff work or follow-up work related to this project?

Because the HOW Implementation Program is an ongoing effort, there has not been any spin-off work. In addition, as mentioned before, HOW staff continue to work on evaluating the first several years of the Implementation Program through the lens of our established evaluation benchmarks. We are planning to complete this work by spring of 2016.

Communication/Dissemination

10. List publications, presentations, websites, and other forms of formal dissemination of the project deliverables, tools, or results, including those that are planned or in process.

WEBSITES

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11. Please characterize your efforts to distribute and encourage use of products, processes, programs, etc, developed through this grant.

HOW distributed information about the Implementation Grant Program widely through the HOW email listserv, website, and social media. The most pertinent audience to reach were local organizations engaged in Great Lakes restoration work within the eight HOW priority areas but

also throughout the Great Lakes basin. Local organizations across the Great Lakes continued to be the target audience for the tools and resources developed by HOW and its partners for groups to successfully navigate the GLRI funding. HOW was successful in reaching this audience, interacting with over 100 local organizations through a variety of means, including events such as one on one consultation services, the 11th Annual Great Lakes Restoration Conference, the Coalition email listserv, the HOW website, and social media. In addition, HOW widely shared information about new success stories through the same channels as well as press releases and a success story publication.

Reflections

12. Please describe any unanticipated benefits, challenges, surprises, and/or important lessons learned over the course of the project.

HOW continues to see the benefits of providing a long-term, critical service to the implementation community by helping groups jump-start needed restoration projects with small grants. HOW sees the importance of continued investment in Great Lakes restoration through the work that grantees accomplish every year, the impressive outcomes of previous years' programs, and the growing network of partners dedicated to comprehensive Great Lakes restoration. At the creation of the GLRI, it was understood that restoring the Great Lakes would require a long-term, concerted commitment of funding and work. This has certainly proven to be the case, and the ability to continue to both build on successful projects but also create new and lasting relationships with grantees that are implementing these GLRI projects will, we believe, be key to making lasting progress on habitat enhancement, nutrient reductions that lead to improved water quality, and overall fish ecosystem improvement. Furthermore, HOW is excited to be able to gain more insight into the Implementation Grant Program as staff compile the longer term benchmarks as the program continues.

13. What recommendations (if any) would you make to other project directors working on similar efforts, or to the GLFT?

Because of the unique nature of this program, I don't believe there are other programs in the region doing what the HOW Implementation program is doing. Therefore, I don't have any recommendations to make at this time.

Attachments

14. Please attach any reports or materials developed through the grant.

The following documents are included as attachments and referenced throughout the narrative report:

- 2015 Grant Program RFP
- 2015 Grant Summary
- 2013 Grant Outcome Factsheet
- Benchmark Rubric