

America's Great Waters Coalition

I. Introduction

From the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, from the Puget Sound to the Chesapeake Bay, our Great Waters are the lifeblood of our nation. They drive regional economies and shape American's daily lives. However, thus far our nation has not adequately ascribed the proper value to these important ecosystems, and as a result, degraded water quality, invasive species, altered water flows, climate change and loss of habitat have taken their toll. Although restoration efforts in many of these regions are making progress, they are hampered by a lack of funding, broken federal water policies, and limited political will.

In order to change the status quo, the restoration community has come together with the goal of making the restoration these national treasures a reality. A unified restoration community will be better able to leverage existing funding, ensure that it is used efficiently, and advocate for increased future funding. In addition, a coalition can provide a forum to make sure federal restoration efforts are coordinated and streamlined to achieve the most beneficial environmental benefits. Perhaps most importantly, a national Great Waters Coalition will not only create a unified national agenda for the benefit of all ecosystems, it will also elevate the profile of each individual ecosystem effort through strategic partnerships where one ecosystem can help another advance its regional priorities in the national political spotlight.

America's Great Waters Coalition is an alliance of national, regional, state and local organizations working to protect preserve and restore our nation's Great Waters. The coalition is a result of years of work by national and local organizations to bring the broader restoration community together to "raise all boats."

Vision: America's Great Waters Coalition envisions a day when America embraces its Great Waters and ensures they are healthy, valued, and productive resources for our nation.

Mission: By speaking with a united voice the Coalition will work to ensure the restoration of our Great Waters to protect people, wildlife, and the economy.

II. Coalition Objectives and Goals

In order to make our vision a reality, the Coalition will work over the next three years towards the following overall policy objectives and strategic goals:

Galvanizing public support to make restoration of our great waters a national priority

Securing long term sustainable dedicated funding for restoration

Enacting and ensuring sound implementation of restoration legislation

Providing a forum for information and resource sharing