

# St. Lawrence Environment Trustee Council (SLETC)

## Preferred Ecological Restoration Projects

November 2012



### Site History

The Alcoa Aggregation (now Alcoa West), Reynolds Metal Corporation (formerly RMC, now Alcoa East) and the General Motors Central Foundry Division (GM) Sites are located on the St. Lawrence, Grasse and Raquette Rivers. The Alcoa Sites are active aluminum production plants, the GM site is closed and formerly manufactured aluminum cylinder heads.

### Contaminants of Concern

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), aluminum, fluoride and cyanide.

Under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Oil Pollution Act (OPA), state, federal and tribal agencies serve as natural resource trustees to assess and restore natural resources injured by hazardous substances and oil to compensate for lost services, such as fishing or boating.

### Identifying Preferred Restoration Projects

Trustees solicited restoration project ideas from government, public and non-governmental organizations familiar with the St. Lawrence River ecosystem. The trustees then vetted these ideas through evaluation criteria, identifying preferred ecological restoration projects. These preferred projects will soon go through a public review process. Preferred projects will be described in the Restoration Compensation and Determination Plan.

### Acquisition and Restoration of RAMSAR Wetlands, Coles Creek and Wilson Hill Parcels, Franklin and St. Lawrence Co.

**Addressing Injuries to:** Birds, mammals, fish and sediment-dwelling organisms.

**Project:** Wetland restoration is proposed on the RAMSAR and the Wilson Hill parcel. Upland restoration is proposed on the Coles Creek and Wilson Hill parcels. The RAMSAR wetlands will be managed by the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe; the Coles Creek and Wilson Hill parcels by the State of NY.

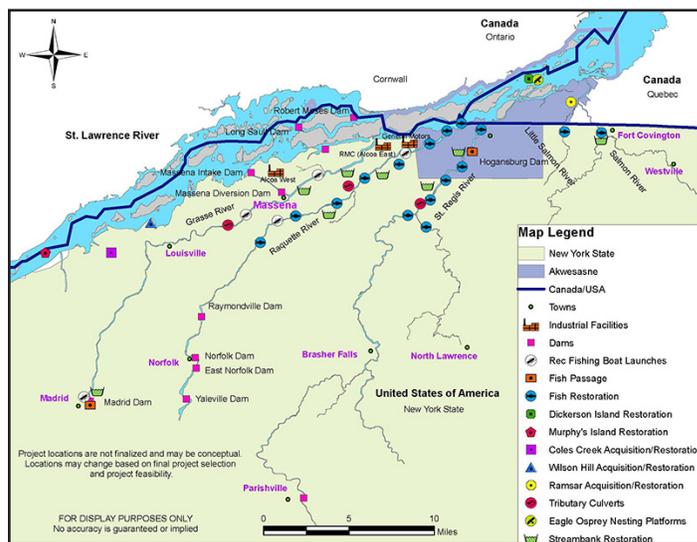
**Total Acreage:** ~726 acres acquisition, ~37.5 acres upland restoration, >20 acres wetland restoration.

### Natural Resource Trustees for St. Lawrence NRDA

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- New York State
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### Injuries

- Sediment-Dwelling Organisms
- Fish
- Birds
- Mammals



Map of preferred restoration projects.

**Ecological Benefits:** Permanent protection and provision of improved habitat for fish, birds, mammals, herps and sediment-dwelling organisms, including the state threatened Blandings turtle and black tern.

**Economic Benefits:** Wildlife viewing, preservation of open space (including internationally recognized wetlands), education, boost to the local economy during construction.

## Avian Restoration on Dickerson and Murphy Islands and Nesting Platform Construction

**Addressing Injuries to:** Birds.

**Project:** Predator control (cormorants, raccoons) and management of vegetation to enhance common tern, great blue heron and common egret; platform construction to provide nesting sites for bald eagle, osprey.

**Total Acreage:** >21 acres.

**Ecological Benefits:** Enhanced breeding and roosting habitat for terns, herons and egrets.

**Economic Benefits:** Wildlife viewing, improved landscape, boost to the local economy during construction.

## Streambank Enhancement/Restoration

**Addressing Injuries to:** Birds, mammals, fish, herps and sediment-dwelling organisms.

**Project:** Improve riparian zones along tributaries to the St. Lawrence River, could range from exclusion fencing to intensive planting.

**Total Acreage:** ~85 acres.

**Ecological Benefits:** Fish and wildlife habitat enhancement.

**Economic Benefits:** Wildlife viewing, improved water quality, education, boost to the local economy during construction.

## Fish Passage, Fish Restoration and Fish Habitat Enhancement

**Addressing Injuries to:** Fish (state and federally protected or proposed protection species), birds, mammals, herps and sediment-dwelling organisms.

**Project:** Remove dams/install fish passage structures and upgrade culverts to improve fish passage, enhance spawning beds (e.g., northern pike and lake sturgeon), stocking of St. Lawrence tributaries (e.g., salmon, lake sturgeon) or other fishery restoration.

*Photos, left to right: Coles Creek acquisition and restoration would benefit numerous species including the Blandings turtle, a state-protected species.*

*Murphy Island restoration to benefit birds, including the state threatened common tern.*

*Fish passage, stocking and habitat enhancement projects benefit lake sturgeon and other species.*

*Enhancement/restoration of riparian buffers benefit benthos, fish and wildlife.*

**Total Acreage:** ~1,715 acres.

**Ecological Benefits:** Restoration of historical feeding, spawning, nursery and adult fish habitat; enhancement of depleted fish populations; enhancement of benthic habitat; increased prey base for wildlife; improvement to water quality.

**Economic Benefits:** Wildlife viewing, improved water quality, enhanced fishing and recreation, improved safety, education, boost to the local economy during construction.

## Evaluation Criteria

In order to ensure the appropriateness and acceptability of restoration options addressing ecological losses, the Trustees evaluated each option against site-specific restoration requirements and DOI damage assessment regulations.

## Location within the St. Lawrence Watershed

- Linkage to injured resources or associated services.
- Proximity to injured resources.
- Habitat connectivity.
- Proximity to protected lands.
- Benefits to protected species or sensitive or unique habitats.
- Public enjoyment or use of natural resources.
- Likelihood of success.
- Viability and sustainability.
- DOI NRDA Criteria (43 C.F.R. §11.82(d)).

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