

WAUKEGAN RIVER

Coastal Habitat Restoration

Lake County, IL

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed coastal wetland and dune project is located at the mouth of the Waukegan River in Lake County, Illinois.

The primary loss of natural habitat within the Waukegan River subwatershed is attributed to converting natural coastlines and tributaries from beach, dune, marsh, savanna, and prairie into industrial, urban, and recreational lands. Natural coastal topography has been altered and, as in most modifications to systems this large, the effects are difficult to repair in terms of ecological function, and other factors become important, such as funding and the attitude of local constituents. In terms of habitat restoration, however, certain goals are quite achievable.

The goal of the project is to restore coastal wetland, beach, dune, and riverine habitat. Currently, the nearshore lake, beach, dune, and riverine ecotypes provide very little habitat for coastal species in the project area. Dune and beach habitats are overrun by non-native and invasive plant species and completely littered with foreign debris. The surf zone currently provides habitat for a nominal number of minnow species such as sand shiner and spottail shiner. The potential for restoring dune, coastal marsh, and littoral vegetation at the mouth of the Waukegan River is good due to the shallow water depths and the protection against wave action from the north. Specific project design would be guided by the

Fish Community Objectives for Lake Michigan that were established by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission special publication 95-3.

Benefits would be accrued by increasing habitat quality and native species' richness and abundance. Project restoration features would be beneficial to locally threatened, endangered, and rare species such as marram grass, sea rocket, banded killifish, lake chub, black tern, black crowned night heron, osprey, Foster's tern, and common tern. Project features would be designed to support the effort of important fisheries restoration.

NONFEDERAL PARTNER

- City of Waukegan

CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST

- Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL)
- Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL)
- Representative Robert Dold (R-IL-10)

CURRENT STATUS

With continued funding the project design and construction efforts could be completed.

Funding

	Total	Federal	Nonfederal
Current working estimate	\$2,150,000	\$1,400,000	\$ 750,000
Funding to date	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$0
Funds required to complete project	\$2,120,000	\$1,370,000	\$ 750,000

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