



Great Lakes Dredging Team Beneficial Use Implementation Strategy

A work group of the Great Lakes Dredging Team (GLDT) was formed at the October 4-5, 2000, meeting to prioritize the 18 recommendations developed by the Great Lakes Commission's Beneficial Use Task Force. Although all of the recommendations are considered important, five of highest priority have been selected to form the basis of the following GLDT preliminary work plan to address the beneficial uses of dredged material.

Primary Objective: To increase the beneficial reuse of dredged material from navigation channels, ports, harbors, marinas and connecting channels of the Great Lakes

Strategy #1 (Recommendation 16)

Expand the current federal program for beneficial use of dredged material (Section 204, WRDA 1992) to all beneficial uses, including but not limited to: habitat restoration, topsoil creation/enhancement, landscaping, land reclamation (e.g. minelands and brownfields), shore protection, beach nourishment, replacement fill, capping, and construction materials for in-water, nearshore and upland scenarios.

Activity: State caucus of the Great Lakes Regional Dredging Team works with other regional and local groups to lobby Congress for an amendment to expand the scope of beneficial use applications within the authority of Section 204, WRDA 1992.

Strategy #2 (Recommendations 2, 3 and 15)

Develop risk-based guidance that establishes contamination thresholds or parameters for different beneficial use applications based on the physical and chemical properties of the dredged material and its desired end use. This guidance should use a comparative, risk-based approach for dealing with contaminants instead of strict numerical standards yet could allow for case-specific determinations to allow for consideration of the range of physical and chemical characteristics of dredged material and exposure pathways associated with its end use. Combine this effort with the recommendations to develop testing and monitoring protocols for dredged material.

Activity: Great Lakes states take the lead through the GLDT with technical and financial support from the USEPA and the Corps to develop a regional manual on beneficial use testing, monitoring and interpretation. Perhaps Michigan's current approach could be evaluated as a possible model.

Strategy #3 (Recommendation 5)

Modify the federal standard to promote beneficial uses of dredged material and develop guidance on how the federal standard is applied. In support of a modified federal standard, such guidance should clarify how the federal standard is applied and should acknowledge that the federal standard is a flexible policy. The federal standard should be applied based on an evaluation of the net social, environmental and economic benefits and impacts/costs of different dredged material management options – not strict adherence to a least costly alternative based on present value.

Activity: GLDT state caucus work with state caucuses of other regional dredging teams to lobby Congress and the Corps for a change in Corps' regulations.