

AOC Program :

Getting to your Short-List

**United States Environmental Protection Agency
Great Lakes National Program Office**

T. Kevin O'Donnell

May 15th, 2014

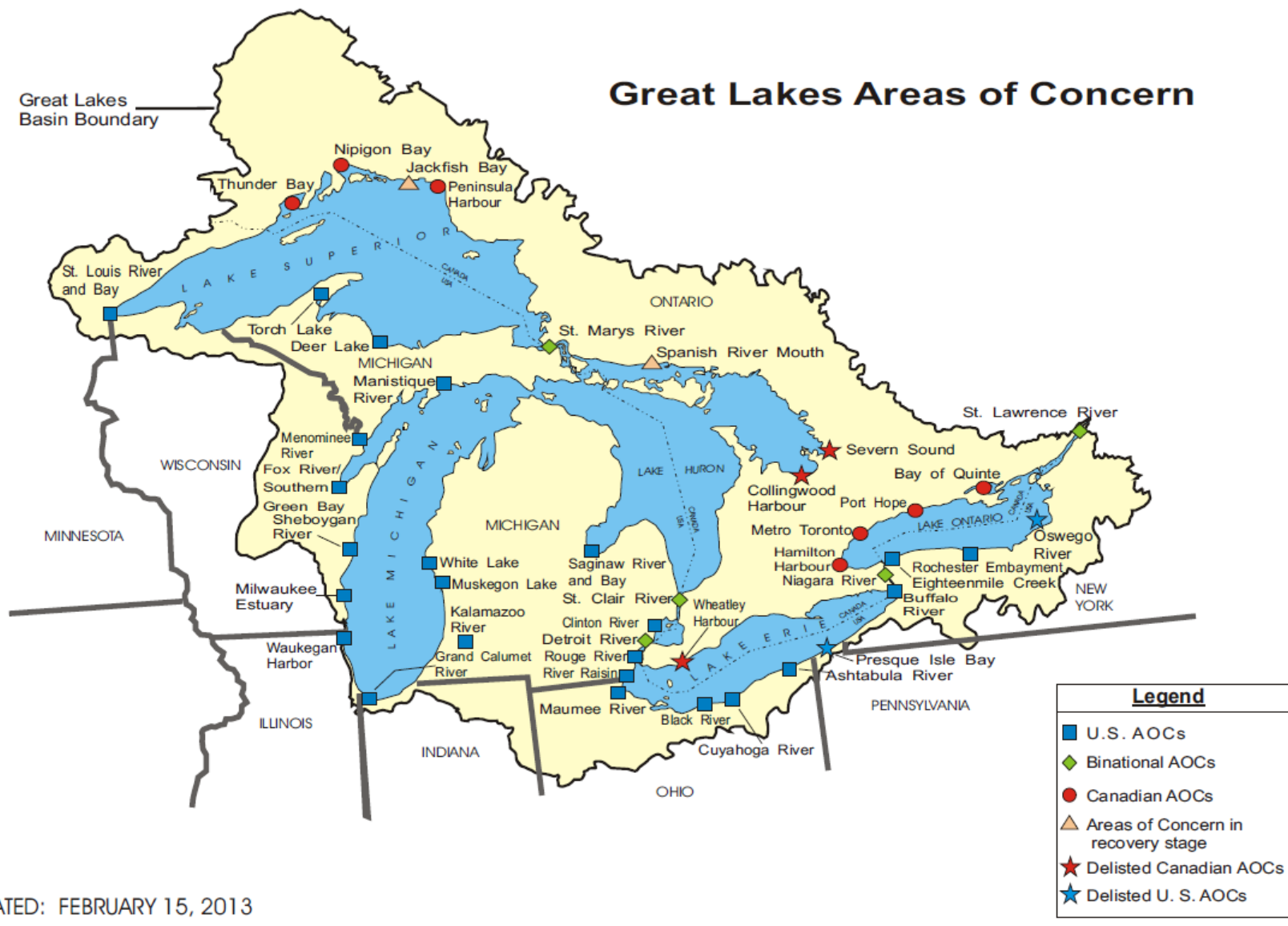
Presentation Outline

- AOC program restructuring due to the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)
- How do you determine if you are a Near-term AOC and the process to get there
- The importance of being a Near-term (i.e., Priority) AOC



Change in AOC Program Due to GLRI

Great Lakes Areas of Concern



Near-term AOCs for completion of management actions

2012/2013

- Sheboygan
- White Lake
- Ashtabula
- Deer Lake

2014/15

- St Clair
- St Marys
- Waukegan

2016/17

- Buffalo
- Rochester
- Lower Menominee
- Black River
- Manistique
- River Raisin

2018 “contenders”

- Muskegon
- Clinton
- Grand Calumet
- Detroit River

Regional Working Group (RWG)

Federal AOC Committee

- Partners – EPA, NOAA, USGS, USFWS, USACE
- Calls once a month
- Review status of AOCs project-by-project
- Identify problems needing technical assistance or resolution
- Key question for all AOCs: “Where are you in the process of managing the AOC”



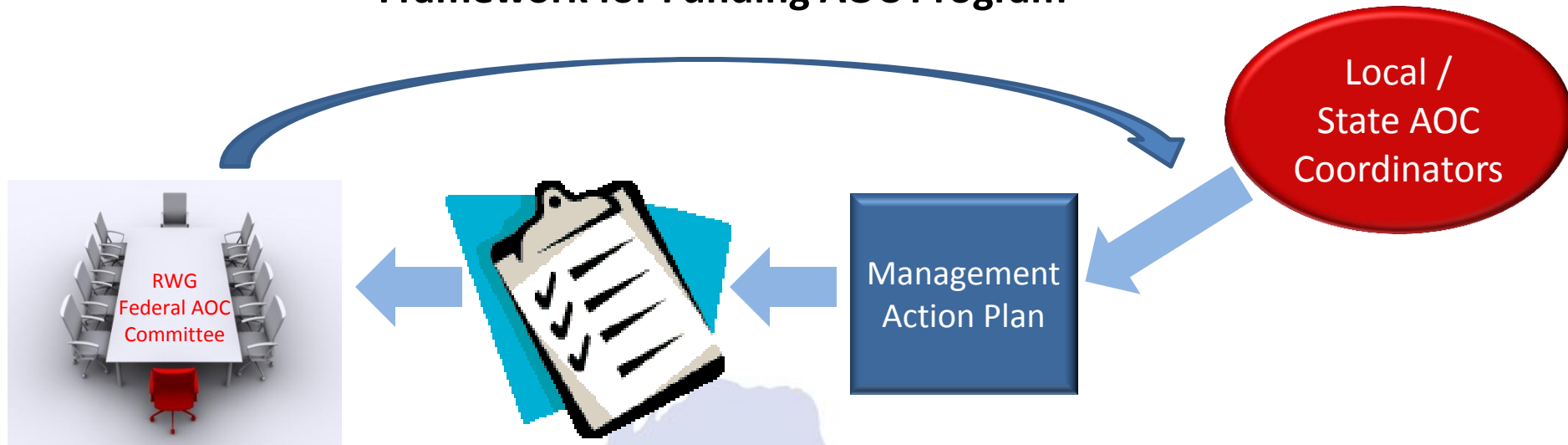


What is a Near-term AOC?

Determining if an AOC is Near-term?

- Conversations between EPA and State Agency
 - Are sediment remediation actions completed/planned?
 - Are habitat restoration projects completed/planned?
 - Are any other actions needed?
- Discussions with local AOC coordinator(s)
 - Willing to make difficult choices on projects?
- Ability to come up with the list of management actions?

Framework for Funding AOC Program



- **Are all projects needed for BUI removal identified?**
- **Does rational for projects make sense?**
- Determine funding allocations and timing of project implementation

- State submits list of projects to the Regional Working Group Federal AOC Committee

- A clear vision of success is defined
- **Actions/Projects to remove BUI's are defined**
- **Rational for those actions/projects is explicitly stated**
- Some level of uncertainty in final project results is expected

- Problem identification
- **Laser-like focus on BUI Removal & Achievable Goals**
- **Coordination on local level**
- Leadership, capacity in place

EPA-Great Lakes National Program Office assigns one Task Force Lead (TFL) for each AOC to facilitate this process, coordinate funding, provide recommendations/direction, etc.

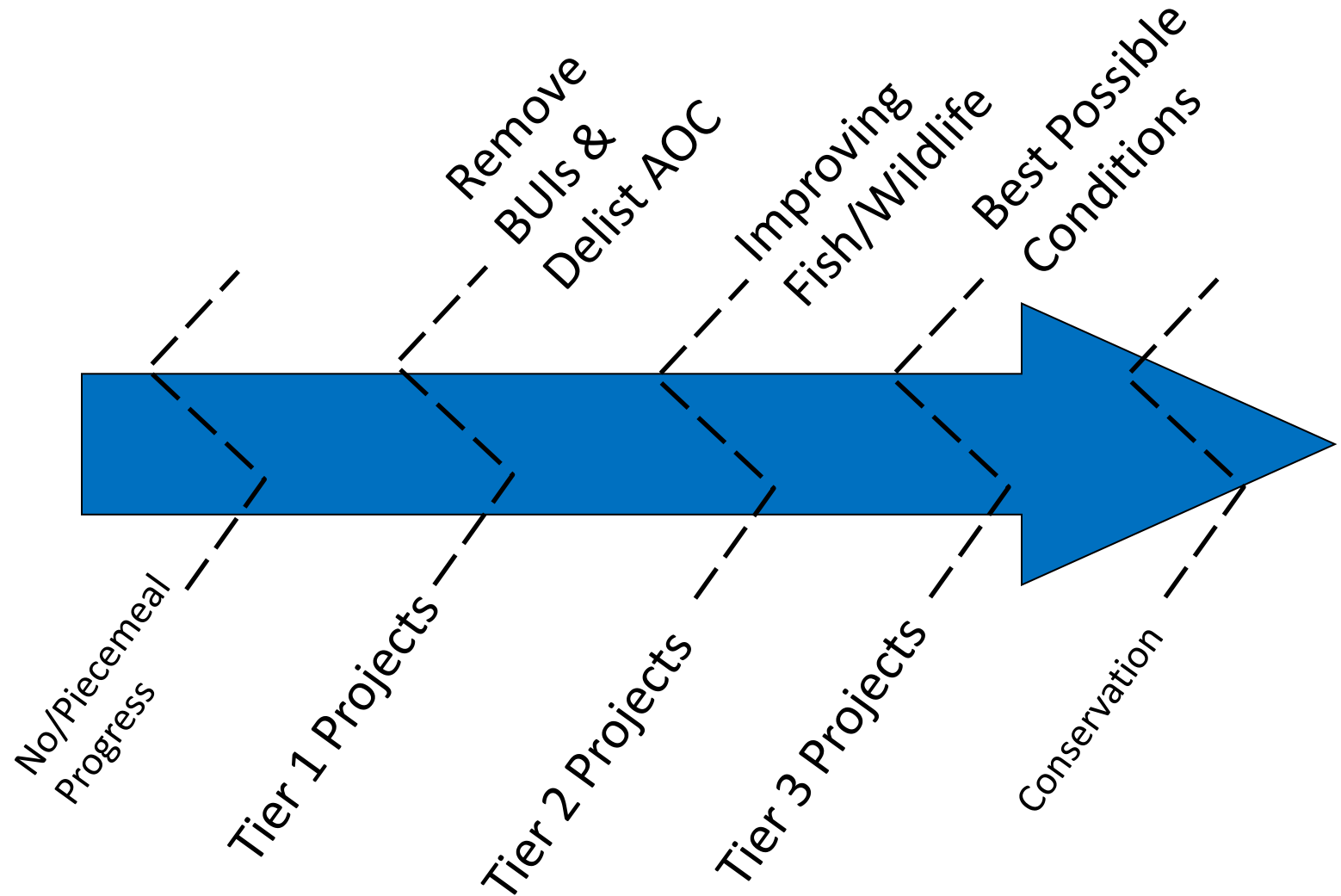
Keys to Becoming a Near-Term AOC

- Develop an agreed upon list of management actions ***necessary and sufficient*** to remove all BUIs
- Rational for projects is strong and related to AOC designation/cause of AOC impairments
- Key components
 - GLLA sediment projects
 - Habitat restoration projects
 - Additional projects

Keys to Becoming a Near-Term AOC

- Close coordination with federal and state agencies
- Strong local/state leadership to implement projects and achieve BUI removals
- Strong partnership of local residents/elected officials/industry
- Make hard decisions of what projects are essential for the AOC program and BUI removal

Possible AOC Planning Strategy





Near-term (i.e., Priority) AOC Status

Importance of Near-Term (i.e., Priority) AOC Status

- If Near-term AOC, GLRI funds can be provided directly to implement agreed upon list of management actions
 - Habitat Restoration funding
 - Other BUI projects (studies, analyses, monitoring)
 - Direct funding from other GLRI Agencies
- Legacy Act funding requires Non-Fed match
- For long-term AOCs projects may have to be competed via other grant programs
- EPA will fund both near-term and long-term AOCs but at different levels

FY 13 Funding at Priority AOCs*

- 2012 AOCs:
 - Ashtabula, White Lake (\$5M)
- 2014 AOCs
 - St Clair – 5 Shoreline Habitat and 1 reef (\$7.2M)
 - St Marys – Little Rapids (\$6M)
 - Waukegan – Strategic Navigation Dredging Project (\$4.6M)
- 2016 AOCs
 - Rochester – Wetland Reconnaissance (\$0.35M)
 - Manistique – Debris Removal –Phase 1 (\$7M)
 - Buffalo – Habitat Projects RD/RA (\$1.8M)
- 2018 AOCs
 - Muskegon Lake – Fenner's Ditch RI/FS (\$0.5M)

*Listed projects above do not include sediment remediation funding through the Great Lakes Legacy Act in FY13

Summary

- Work with your local AOC coordinator to develop ***necessary and sufficient*** plans that define the key management actions (i.e., projects) and rationale for actions
- If you have an AOC Management Action Plan in place, funding follows
- GLRI Agencies are here to help!!

**“The success story for each AOC
is yours to write”**

