



## History of Target Revisions for the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern

March 2020

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Office of Great Waters is responsible for implementing Wisconsin's Areas of Concern Program, which is a non-regulatory program aimed at restoring Beneficial Use Impairments in AOCs. Removal targets are a key element of the AOC program. They define the end goal that determines when Beneficial Use Impairments can be considered adequately addressed in the AOC, and thus eligible to be removed. Targets also inform the selection of monitoring approaches to determine status of the impairments and management actions to address them. Once all impairments have met their targets and are removed, the AOC can be formally delisted.

Refining our targets helps us implement projects under the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan III](#), which outlines the priorities for GLRI funding for the next five years.

In 2008, DNR worked with AOC stakeholders to establish locally derived removal targets and published the document, *Delisting Targets for the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern*. As part of the planning efforts to develop management action project lists for the Milwaukee Estuary AOC, many BUI removal targets require modification as we learn more about the impairments and to account for changes in the AOC.

Considerations for revising targets include:

- new information has become available;
- target language needed clarification be specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, and time-bound;
- target reflected goals that were beyond the AOC program framework (e.g. overlap with existing permit or regulatory compliance program functions);
- the scope of achievable activities within the AOC has become better understood as program implementation has occurred.

Targets are developed with input from stakeholders in consensus-based processes to ensure they are meaningful, measurable, and achievable and to ensure that targets reflect current understanding of AOC conditions and program policies.

The following table shows the history of target revisions in the Milwaukee Estuary AOC.

## Summary of Target Revisions in Milwaukee Estuary AOC

| <b>Beneficial Use Impairments</b>                        | <b>Year</b> |      |      |      |
|--|-------------|------|------|------|
|  | 2008        | 2011 | 2016 | 2020 |
| Restrictions on dredging activities*                     | X           | X    |      | X    |
| Fish tumors or other deformities*                        | X           | X    |      | X    |
| Bird or animal deformities or reproduction problems*     | X           | X    |      | X    |
| Restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption*           | X           | X    |      | X    |
| Degradation of benthos*                                  | X           | X    |      | X    |
| Degradation of phytoplankton and zooplankton populations | X           |      |      | X    |
| Loss of fish and wildlife habitat*                       | X           | X    |      | X    |
| Degradation of fish and wildlife populations*            | X           | X    |      | X    |
| Beach closings/Recreational restrictions                 | X           | X    |      | X    |
| Eutrophication or undesirable algae                      | X           | X    |      |      |
| Degradation of aesthetics                                | X           |      | X    |      |

\* Beneficial Use Impairments denoted with an asterisk are linked to contaminated sediment cleanup timelines. Remediation of contaminated sediment in the Milwaukee Estuary AOC is key to addressing these beneficial use impairments.