



Seminar Series

Winter 2020

Alexander Hall
Room 265

Thursday,
March 12

12 noon

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Great Lakes Revival: How Restoring Polluted Waters Leads to Rebirth of Great Lakes Communities

There is no doubt that the industrial revolution created many **Great Lakes cities**, but left a legacy of unchecked **water pollution, loss and degradation of habitats**, and contamination. Indeed, the environmental awakening in the 1960s catalyzed the establishment of the Canada Water Act of 1970, the U.S. National Environmental Policy Act of 1970, the U.S. Clean Water Act of 1972, the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1972, and the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973. By 1985, cleanup of the most polluted areas of the Great Lakes, called Areas of Concern, had stalled and governments committed to developing and implementing remedial action plans to restore impaired beneficial uses using an ecosystem approach. Today, these collaborative, ecosystem-based, cleanup efforts are paying major dividends. **We have seen how cleanup of Great Lakes Areas of Concern leads to reconnecting people to these waterways that leads to community and economic revitalization.** This makes a powerful case for sustaining the flow of cleanup funding that is quite literally helping revive communities. **Key lessons learned include:** adopt an ecosystem approach to build capacity for use restoration and create a sense of local ownership; ensure meaningful public participation toward a viable desired future state; engage local leaders and recruit a high-profile champion; establish a compelling vision with clear goals; establish measurable targets for use restoration and delisting as an Area of Concern; practice adaptive management and involve research scientists; build partnerships; pursue collaborative and creative financing; build a record of success and celebrate it frequently; and quantify benefits.