



Conservation Resource Alliance

Chair Rep. Jared Huffman, D-CA
House Committee of Natural Resources
Water, Oceans, Wildlife Subcommittee

Kira Davis, Program Director
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Support of Authorization of H.R. 4092 and Reauthorization of H.R. 5973,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of Conservation Resource Alliance and as a public citizen regarding **support to authorize H.R. 4092 and reauthorize H.R. 5973.**

My name is Kira Davis, a Tribal Citizen of Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and Program Director of Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA). Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians federally recognized in 1980, is part of the Three Fire tribes: Odawa, Potawatomi, and Ojibwe. Conservation Resource Alliance is a river and wildlife restoration not for profit organization with over 50 years of experience in boots-on-the-ground conservation efforts. Both Grand Traverse Band and Conservation Resource Alliance's service area resides on the ancestral and current lands of the Three Fire tribes.

CRA is fortunate to be serving a part of the geographic location of the Great Lakes Region. CRA's service area encompasses 13 to 15 watersheds and counties along the eastern shoreline of Lake Michigan during any given 3-year workplan period. CRA workplans' have approximately **30 active wildlife and/or river restoration projects** being implemented at a time. The challenge in rural Northwest Michigan is protecting all lands and waters that feed our Great Lakes with current and emerging issues on the rise. These include but are not limited to; severe weather events, increased flooding, high-water levels, decrease in indicator wildlife and aquatic life species, imbalance of primary food chains, and disconnection of aquatic and terrestrial corridors.

Conservation Resource Alliance recognizes collaboration is key to successful projects and does not complete any project alone. CRA has been witness and a recipient of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act with over \$4.6 million of support in over a decade. This support has leveraged a minimum of \$2.1 million in non-federal impact to Northern Michigan. The success of these projects in relation to natural processes, ecological uplift, resilience to severe weather events, habitat improvement for plants, wildlife, and aquatic life, increased recreational activities and protection of these ecosystems are evident in the following ecological outcomes achieved in this time period.

Ecological Outcomes:



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- **500 miles of river habitat improved** for plants, wildlife, and aquatic life,
- **10,000 linear feet of river and riverbank** improved through native vegetation plantings and instream wood cover,
- **750 miles of rivers and tributaries** restored for fish and aquatic life,
- **2,000 acres of wetlands and uplands** restored,
- **4,000 tons of sediment** reduced annually from entering waterways.

The Great Lakes Wildlife and Restoration Act is a partner to the Tribal Stream and Michigan Fruitbelt Collaborative, a collaborative supported by the USDA NRCS Farm Bill's Resource Conservation Partnership Program and multiple state, local, private, tribal, and federal programs. GLFWRA funds have assisted in filling the gap on some of these projects that intertwine land and water conservation. The support through GLFWRA and others has expanded the success and impact of this diverse collaborative and has now received a renewal of \$5.4 million in addition to the original \$8 million provided in the original scope of the collaborative. Partner contributions exceeded the original goal and as of June of 2020, contributions were over \$10 million.

Michigan's coastlines are the heart of the Great Lakes Region. Michigan has an influx of visitors who come to enjoy Michigan's vast rivers, lakes, forests, and beaches in all seasons. The economy is dependent on tourism with over 106 million people visiting Michigan in 2020 and spending over \$18.8 billion. Coastlines are habitat to a variety of endangered and threatened wildlife, plant, and aquatic life species. These coastlines are also culturally significant to the Three Fire tribes providing tribal sacred medicines, utilitarian fibers and plants, and habitat to many of our relations. Coastlines are the first line of defense to high water levels, flooding, and often have high quality marshes and swales that assist in controlling peak discharges.

Authorization of the FWS Coastal Program could mean more emphasis and protection on these vital interfaces between land and water. Current coastline federal funding is mostly focused on ocean shorelines while the Great Lakes coastlines are often overlooked. Due to emerging issues such as increased algal blooms and invasive species, warmer lake levels, less ice cover, and the Great Lake coastlines being the first defense to severe weather, the opportunities for the Fish and Wildlife Service to lead these coastline conservation efforts and science is now. This authorization could also expand the relations with sovereign nations, local communities, and public by recognizing the importance and showing the support of these pristine pockets of protection, we call Michigan's coastline.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written and verbal testimony in support of authorization and reauthorization of H.R. 4092 and 5973, consecutively.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kira Davis, CRA Program Director