

Data Sharing System Narrative

The AOC Coordinators Forum and the AOC Partners understand that achieving the delisting of the St. Louis River AOC will require an integrated partnership between several agencies that currently possess resource management responsibilities. If this is to be accomplished in an efficient manner, a sound strategy must be developed to process, integrate and store data in a way that it can be used to develop AOC strategies and that is accessible to all stakeholders. This narrative will describe the Sediment Characterization Project, the Data System Development Project and the Partner Integration Strategy.

Currently, sediment contamination data is being evaluated through funds from an EPA-GLNPO grant. The “Sediment Characterization Project” uses standardized AOC-wide screening evaluation methods, which follow protocols from the Minnesota Remedial Assessment Team (MNRAT) and Wisconsin Sediment Assessment Team (WISAT). Data reporting and presentations will focus on:

- 1) Informing AOC delisting priorities
- 2) Support development of “project-area” based recommendation memorandums following color determinations of “red”, “yellow”, and “green”. These summaries are based on the protocols established by the State remedial teams following regulatory contaminant risk assessment.

The outcome of this work plan will be an AOC-wide characterization of sediment contamination that will inform and prioritize necessary actions to achieve BUI removal and eventual AOC delisting. Sediment assessment results will be summarized for defined geographic and project areas within the AOC. The data will be summarized and stored in a format that will allow access for all AOC Partners.

The Data System Development Project will produce a high quality sediment and biological data storage system that will be accessible to AOC Partners. The project identifies information gaps and makes recommendations that will standardize an archival/retrieval data system that is both AOC specific and amendable to host systems within Federal Agencies. Regionally, a shared data system will help inform the decision process to successfully implement AOC-wide Remedial and Restoration objectives. The Data System is being developed in partnership with EPA and they are being requested to provide the AOC Partners with funds to support a 3 year transition as the system is made operational. The system may be maintained and operated by the Lake Superior NERR. The Sediment Characterization and Data System databases will provide AOC Partners and other stakeholders a tool that possesses the required detail to make project level decision that will be necessary to achieve the defined objectives of the delisting process.

The AOC partnerships that currently exist were described thoroughly in the Partnership Narrative. The AOC Coordinators believe that the addition of a strong federal partner will result in the ability to efficiently implement the prioritized list of actions defined in the BUI blueprints and move the AOC toward recovery. If MDNR is awarded this grant, they will develop a strategy to integrate NOAA into the implementation strategy of the SLRRI. Although the structure of this relationship will most probably depend on NOAA’s capacity to participate as a non-local partner, MDNR will facilitate the level coordination that is required by NOAA.