

**1998 General Motors Settlement**  
**Saginaw River and Bay Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration**  
**(NRDAR)**  
**2018 Restoration Planning**

**The 1998 GM Settlement - Background:**

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In 1998, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the State of Michigan, and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, together acting as Trustees for natural resources in the Saginaw River and Bay, negotiated a settlement for natural resource damages with the General Motors Corporation and the cities of Bay City and Saginaw. The settlement provided for substantial cleanup of contamination resulting from the release of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), restoration of fish and wildlife habitats in the Saginaw River and Bay, and improved public access to natural resources. Many projects have been accomplished, but over \$5 million remains to be spent.

**Elements of the 1998 Settlement:**

**Dredging (\$10.9M)** - removal of 342,433 cubic yards of contaminated sediments in the Saginaw River:

- ✓ removal of approximately 6,000 pounds of PCBs, completed in July 2001

**Land Acquisition (\$7.7M)** - over 1,670 acres acquired and placed in public ownership in 1999, including:

- ✓ most of Big and Little Charity Islands as part of Michigan Islands National Wildlife Refuge
- ✓ parcels added to Tobico Marsh Unit of the Bay City State Recreation Area, Wigwam Bay State Wildlife Area, Quanicassee State Wildlife Area, Fish Point State Wildlife Area, and Wildfowl Bay State Wildlife Area
- ✓ 110 acres to the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe at the mouth of the Saginaw River

**Public Access to Natural Resources (\$3.0M)** – public access improvements and outreach, including:

- ✓ Green Point Environmental Learning Center – a 99-year rent-free lease, with an option to renew for the same 99-year period rent-free, from the City of Saginaw to the USFWS (Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge) starting in 1999 for the Center and an associated 80 acres of adjacent habitats. Dedicated funding for restoration at Green Point.
- ✓ Edward M. Golson Jr. Boat Launch constructed in 2001- 2002 and operated by Bay City
- ✓ Cass Avenue Boat Launch constructed in 2001-2002 and operated by the Bay City
- ✓ Jones Road Boat Launch enhanced in 2001-2002 and transferred to Hampton Township

**Resource Restoration and Protection (\$4.6M)** – restoration and monitoring, including:

- ✓ restoration on 391 acres of coastal wetlands and lakeplain prairie habitats
- ✓ improved hydrology in Tobico Marsh within the Bay City State Recreation Area
- ✓ monitoring of contamination in caged fish in the Saginaw River every 5 years
- ✓ monitoring of the health of fish-eating birds in Saginaw Bay

### Restoration Planning - Updates for Stakeholders:

- Restoration planning was recently initiated with the reconvening of the Saginaw River and Bay Trustee Council, which is comprised of representatives from the Trustee Agencies.
- The Trustee Agencies working on behalf of the public include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the Michigan Department of Attorney General, and the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe.
- Substantial funding remains available at the direction of the Trustee Agencies for restoration actions consistent with the 1998 Consent Judgment. Approximately \$5.7 M remains available.
- The Consent Judgment identifies the appropriate uses of the remaining funding:
  - ✓ future monitoring, modeling, and studies to determine the effectiveness of dredging and restoration,
  - ✓ additional activities associated with dredging or disposal of contaminated sediments, including at the Saginaw Bay Confined Disposal Facility (CDF),
  - ✓ purchase and restoration of lands within the Saginaw Bay watershed,
  - ✓ and, natural resource restoration projects designed to protect, restore, replace, enhance or acquire equivalent natural resources in the area.
- The development of a restoration plan is a regulatory requirement that must be completed prior to allocation of any funding for project implementation.
- In addition, stakeholders must be provided the opportunity to contribute to the development of restoration plans. The Trustee Agencies for the Saginaw River and Bay NRDAR strongly support stakeholder engagement in the planning process.
- The Trustees, in considering restoration actions implemented following the 1998 settlement, believe it may be appropriate to consider funding stewardship actions intended to ensure the continued benefit of projects implemented following the 1998 settlement.
- The Trustees also anticipate that they will look to stakeholders to contribute to the development of restoration proposals in addition to the stewardship actions the Trustee Council will consider.
- The Trustees expect that they will convene stakeholders in 2019 to better inform the development of a restoration plan for the Saginaw River and Bay NRDAR effort.

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For additional information, or to suggest restoration alternatives for the Trustees to consider as they move forward in the planning process, please contact:

Clark D. McCreedy, SR&B Case Manager  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Michigan Ecological Services Field Office  
2651 Coolidge Road, Suite 101  
East Lansing, MI 48823

517.351.8273  
clark\_mccreedy@fws.gov