

Restore the Greatness A Year of Progress



Great Lakes
Commission
des Grands Lacs

2003 Annual Report



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To our French-speaking readers

The Great Lakes Commission, in cooperation with Québec's Ministère des Relations Internationales, has translated selected portions of its 2003 Annual Report for your convenience. You will find the text on the Great Lakes Commission's web site at www.glc.org.

A nos lecteurs Francophones

La Commission des Grands Lacs a traduit pour vous, en collaboration avec le Ministère des Relations Internationales du Québec, certaines sections choisies de ce rapport annuel de l'année 2003. Vous trouverez ces informations sur le site Internet de la Commission des Grands Lacs, à l'adresse www.glc.org.

Great Lakes Commission 2003 Annual Report

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A Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system that offers a prosperous economy, a healthy environment and a high quality of life for its citizens by applying sustainable development principles in the use, management and protection of water, land and other natural resources.

Our Vision

The Great Lakes Commission is a binational public agency dedicated to the use, management and protection of the water, land and other natural resources of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system. In partnership with the eight Great Lakes states and provinces of Ontario and Québec, the Commission applies sustainable development principles in addressing issues of resource management, environmental protection, transportation and sustainable development. The Commission provides accurate and objective information on public policy issues; an effective forum for developing and coordinating public policy; and a unified, systemwide voice to advocate member interests.

Our Mission

2003 Board of Directors



Chair
Samuel W. Speck
Ohio



Vice Chair
Rep. Thomas E. Huntley
Minnesota



Immediate Past Chair
Nathaniel E. Robinson
Wisconsin



Frank L. Kudrna
Illinois



John R. Goss
Indiana



Ken DeBeaussaert
Michigan

About the Commission

The Great Lakes Commission was established in 1955 via U.S. federal and state law to “promote the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes basin.” With membership consisting of the eight Great Lakes states, and associate member status for the provinces of Ontario and Québec, the Commission pursues three primary functions: communications, policy research and analysis, and advocacy.

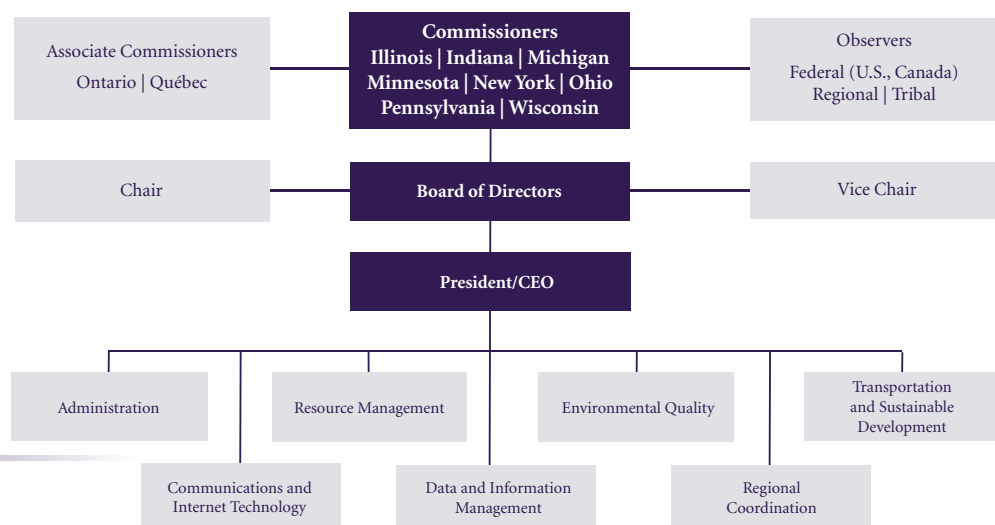
The Commission addresses a range of issues involving environmental protection, resource management, transportation and sustainable economic development. All activities are directed at realizing the vision of a prosperous economy, a healthy environment, and a high quality of life for citizens of the region.

Each member jurisdiction is represented by a delegation consisting of three to five members who are legislators, senior agency officials or appointees of the respective governor or premier. A board of directors, consisting of the chairs of each delegation, is the Commission’s executive body.

In carrying out its initiatives, the Commission works in close cooperation with many partner organizations, including U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, binational institutions, tribal/First Nation governments and other regional interests. Representatives appointed by partner entities participate extensively in Commission activities through a formal Observer program.

The Commission is supported by a growing and experienced professional staff in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Understanding your Commission





Erin M. Crotty
New York



William J. Carr
Ontario



Cathleen Curran Myers
Pennsylvania



Yvan Bédard
Québec
(through 10/03)



Great Lakes, great challenges



Samuel W. Speck, Chair, Great Lakes Commission

Progress. You're either moving forward, or falling back. Nothing stands still.

This year, there is no question that progress has been made in our efforts to restore, protect and manage our precious natural resources. And there is no question that the Great Lakes Commission has played a pivotal role on this region's path to environmental and economic prosperity. As I enter my second term as chair of the Commission, I look back on a productive year in which we did make a difference! However, I also look forward. Many challenges and opportunities await us, and we are well-positioned to meet them with conviction.

Sam Speck is director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Contact him at sam.speck@dnr.state.oh.us

Mention any critical public policy issue this region faced in 2003, and you will find the Great Lakes Commission there: as a leader, a partner, a researcher, a facilitator and an advocate. Our long-standing plea to "Restore the Greatness!" has resonated throughout the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence community. The notion of a large-scale restoration and protection initiative is taking hold and a foundation is being laid. Our governors have formulated restoration priorities, our congressional delegation is shaping legislation, and many agencies and organizations are orienting their own planning processes around this common theme.

"Our long-standing plea to 'Restore the Greatness!' has resonated throughout the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence community."

We will work diligently throughout 2004 – and beyond – to shape and advance these initiatives until our objectives are achieved. This annual report shows that our work is well under way: the Commission was "down in the trenches" all year with dozens of initiatives addressing the goals of its "Restore the Greatness!" campaign.

Time is of the essence. We can't ask Asian carp and other invasive species to wait at the door while we tend to other matters. A thirsty world won't stand aside while we decide how we're going to safeguard our water resources. Our economic competitors won't cut us any slack while we summon the will to shore up the foundation of our regional economy.

Next year, the Great Lakes Commission will celebrate 50 years of outstanding service to its membership and to the people of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region. As we enter our next half-century, we need to set our goals at a level worthy of the resource we are responsible for. We need to think big. We need to secure a large-scale restoration program for the lakes. We need a strengthened legal regime to protect our water resources. We need legislation and action to control the biological pollution of invasive species. And, we need to remember that environmental and economic well-being must go hand in hand. In short, we need to move boldly forward to "Restore the Greatness!"

If we don't do it, who will?

Samuel W. Speck

2003 Commissioners and Alternates



Illinois

- **Frank Kudrna (Chair), Kudrna & Associates. Ltd.**
- Joel Brunsvold, Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources
- Ned Dikmen, Great Lakes Boating Magazine
- Anthony Ianello, Illinois Intl. Port District
- Lt. Gov. Patrick Quinn

Alternates

- Dan Injerd, Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources
- Donald Vonnahme, Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources

Indiana

- **John Goss (Chair), Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources**
- Lori Kaplan, Indiana Department of Environmental Management
- Peter McCarthy, Indiana's Intl. Port/Burns Harbor at Portage (*retired*)
- Gerry Nannenga, Gov. appointee
- Ray Sierra, Intl. Longshoremen's Assoc.

Alternate

- Stephen Lucas, Natural Resources Commission

Michigan

- **Ken DeBeussaert (Chair), Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality**
- Hon. Patricia Birkholz, State Senator
- Lieutenant Governor John D. Cherry, Jr.
- Hon. Mike Cox, Attorney General

Alternate

- Michael Leffler, Asst. Attorney General

Minnesota

- **Hon. Thomas Huntley (Chair), State Representative**
- Hon. Cal Larson, State Senator
- Hon. Peter Nelson, State Representative
- Ed Oliver, Oliver Financial
- Hon. Ann Rest, State Senator

Alternates

- Henry Hanka, National Scenic Byways Resource Center
- Hon. Sheila Kiscaden, State Senator

New York

- **Erin Crotty (Chair), New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation**
- Tom McAuslan, Port of Oswego Authority

- John Francis O'Mara, Gov. appointee

Alternates

- Gerald Mikol, New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation
- Donald Zelazny, New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation

Ohio

- **Samuel Speck (Chair), Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources**
- Hon. Robert Gardner, State Senator
- Christopher Jones, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

Alternates

- James Weakley, Lake Carriers' Assoc.
- Jeffrey Busch, Ohio Lake Erie Commission

Ontario

- **William Carr (Chair), Ministry of Economic Development and Trade**
- David de Launay, Ministry of Natural Resources
- Elizabeth Janz, Ministry of the Environment
- Jim Whitestone, Ministry of Transportation

Alternates

- Paula Thompson, Ministry of Natural Resources
- Bill Raney, Ministry of Transportation

Pennsylvania

- **Cathleen Curran Myers (Chair), Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection**
- Sandy Smith, Erie Sand Steamship Co.

Alternates

- John Booser, Office for River Basin Cooperation
- Lori Boughton, Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection

Québec

- **Yvan Bédard (Chair), Government of Québec (through 10/03)**
- Marcel Gaucher, Ministry of the Environment
- André Meloche, Ministry of Transportation

Alternates

- Louise Lapierre, Ministry of the Environment
- Chantal Ouellet, Ministry of Transportation

Wisconsin

- **Nathaniel E. Robinson (Chair), Wisconsin Technical College System**
- Todd Amb, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources
- William Carey, Gov. appointee

Observers

- Stephen Brandt, Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Kevin Brown, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
- Leon Carl, Great Lakes Science Center, U.S. Geological Survey
- Charles Ehler, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, NOAA
- Christopher Goddard, Great Lakes Fishery Commission
- Gary Gulezian, Great Lakes National Program Office, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Scott Hoese, Great Lakes Committee, National Assoc. of Conservation Districts
- Gerry Jackson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Albert Jacques, St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corp.

- Gail Krantzberg, International Joint Commission
- Tony MacDonald, Coastal States Organization
- Jan Miller, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- David Naftzger, Council of Great Lakes Governors
- Jim Nicholas, U.S. Geological Survey
- Carl Richards, Great Lakes Sea Grant Network
- Mike Ripley, Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority
- Radm. Ronald Silva, Ninth District, U.S. Coast Guard
- Sheila Tooze, Canadian Embassy
- Gary Vequist, National Park Service
- Patrick Wilkey, U.S. Dept. of Energy

A quick look back, a long look forward



Mike Donahue is President/CEO of the Great Lakes Commission and ex-officio member of its Board of Directors. Contact him at mdonahue@glc.org

Michael J. Donahue, President/CEO

Great Lakes governance is a patchwork quilt of agencies and organizations that come in all shapes, sizes and textures. Mention a specific issue or management function and, chances are, some component of this rich institutional fabric will have it covered. Start talking holistically, though, and the fabric threatens to unravel.

That's where the Great Lakes Commission comes in. For almost 50 years it has been a common thread that helps its member jurisdictions – and the larger Great Lakes-St. Lawrence community – harmonize their respective efforts to achieve a shared vision of environmental and economic prosperity.

The Commission's enabling legislation, the Great Lakes Basin Compact, is a remarkable law that established an equally remarkable organization. Just imagine how "revolutionary" our founders were a half century ago! They created an agency where hydrologic boundaries take precedence over geopolitical ones ... where the interconnectedness of environmental and economic goals is recognized and celebrated ... where partnerships are the rule, not the exception ... and where sound science, objective analysis and aggressive advocacy are pursued hand-in-hand to effect change.

That's precisely what we did in 2003. Our research, policy analysis, communications and advocacy efforts centered around our call to "Restore the Greatness!" In concert with our partners, we worked relentlessly to advance cleanup efforts at toxic hot spots. We developed programs – and lobbied for laws – to shut the door on invasive species. We disbursed millions of dollars in grants to address nonpoint source pollution problems on land, in the air and in the water. We formed a binational coalition to restore and conserve wetlands and critical coastal habitat. We laid the groundwork for a science-based approach to water resource management. We employed our technical capabilities to develop decision support systems for the leading issues of the day. We took the notion of sustainability and gave it real-world applications by advancing environmentally sound recreational and commercial maritime transportation. Finally, we packaged it all together by reaffirming our long-standing call for a large-scale ecosystem restoration and protection program.

"Restoring the Great Lakes and securing their environmental and economic prosperity is a work in progress."

The pages of this annual report are a testament to the vision and leadership of our Commissioners, the commitment of our many partners, and the professionalism of our outstanding staff.

As we approach our 50-year milestone, we can look back with satisfaction, but only briefly. Restoring the Great Lakes and securing their environmental and economic prosperity is a work in progress. Much has been accomplished, but much more needs to be done.

The next half century? We're ready!

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Michael J. Donahue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael J. Donahue, Ph.D.

Program Areas

Administration

Goal: To enhance the Commission’s leadership role in regional coordination, policy development and advocacy through efficient, cost-effective and responsive service to its members and the larger Great Lakes-St. Lawrence community

The Administration Program provides an environment in which Commission members, Observers, partners and staff work collegially to address the goals of the organization under the terms of the Great Lakes Basin Compact. Program efforts ensure that the organization is well-funded, efficiently managed, professionally staffed, and fully responsive to member priorities through vibrant research, policy development, communications and advocacy initiatives. Specific responsibilities include coordinating all aspects of revenue generation, financial management, program development, meeting planning and conduct, organizational publicity, and member/constituent support services.

President/CEO: Mike Donahue, mdonahue@glc.org

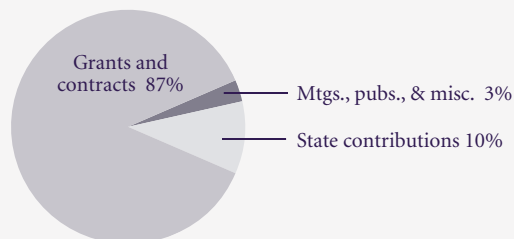
Selected accomplishments

- Managed the largest budget in the Commission’s 48-year history
- Provided a positive “return on investment,” with 45 percent of total Commission budget returned to member jurisdictions
- Broadened funding base through creative partnerships with federal agencies and other organizations
- Processed more than 100 grants and contracts, both incoming and outgoing
- Initiated Strategic Plan update to prepare for future challenges and opportunities
- Laid groundwork for 50th anniversary celebration in 2005
- Supported Commission and Board of Directors priorities under leadership of Chair Sam Speck and Vice Chair Tom Huntley

Revenues and expenses: Fiscal Year 2003

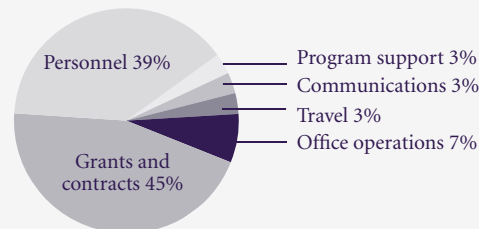
Revenues

Grants and contracts	\$4,094,237
State contributions	\$480,000
Meetings, publications, & misc.	\$134,371
Total	\$4,708,608



Expenses

Grants and contracts	\$2,088,303
Personnel	\$1,853,137
Office operations	\$320,498
Travel	\$150,739
Communications	\$125,379
Program support	\$143,775
Total:	\$4,681,831



Revenues over expenses (\$26,777) were placed in a reserve fund for contingencies and future use.



Resource Management

Goal: To promote the informed use, management and protection of the water, land, air and natural resources of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system

The Resource Management Program contributes to the sustainable use and conservation of the region's natural resources through multiple projects and regional services. Working with scores of project partners throughout the public and private sectors, program efforts are directed at identifying regional priorities, developing policy, conducting and coordinating research, and sharing information on a broad range of resource management and protection initiatives. Program manager: Tom Crane, tcrane@glc.org

Selected accomplishments

- Directed nearly \$1.9 million in conservation grants to local authorities under the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control
- Published educational brochure on the economic and environmental costs of erosion and sedimentation
- Surveyed conservation practices among regional water suppliers as part of a "tool kit" for water conservation
- Advised the U.S. Coast Guard on the development of ballast water discharge standards for invasive species control
- Completed in-depth report on Great Lakes water resource management, with findings and recommendations for implementing the 2001 Great Lakes Charter Annex
- Inventoried and analyzed information on Great Lakes biohydrologic resources and identified unmet data needs
- Led efforts to refine a model rapid response plan for Great Lakes aquatic invasions
- Assisted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in the development of sediment transport models for Great Lakes tributaries in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan

Environmental Quality

Goal: To restore and maintain a healthy environment by promoting the cleanup of contaminated sites, protecting high-quality areas and ensuring a strong foundation of scientific research and monitoring

The Environmental Quality Program supports efforts to restore beneficial uses in Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs) and other degraded areas; strengthen environmental monitoring programs; improve management of coastal wetlands; and protect high-quality areas. Program staff employ cutting-edge information technologies to advance project goals, and leverage and coordinate the resources and expertise of public agencies and other stakeholders to achieve a healthy and sustainable Great Lakes ecosystem. Program manager: Matt Doss, mdoss@glc.org

Selected accomplishments

- Developed a monitoring inventory and strategic plan for the Lake St. Clair watershed
- Built a framework for an inventory of monitoring programs in the Great Lakes basin
- Facilitated a peer review evaluation of Michigan's fish contaminant trend monitoring program
- Compiled a wetlands inventory and identified methodologies for reporting on key indicators for the Great Lakes coastal wetlands monitoring program
- Completed a comprehensive management plan for Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River
- Assisted U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) in implementing the Great Lakes Legacy Act, which provides funding for cleaning up contaminated sediments in AOCs
- Provided outreach and support services to assist Remedial Action Plan (RAP) participants in restoring AOCs
- Collaborated on a pilot project to facilitate early detection and monitoring of aquatic nuisance species in Lake Michigan

Transportation and Sustainable Development

Goal: To promote sustainable, water resource-based economic activity and the use, development and maintenance of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence transportation system



The Transportation and Sustainable Development Program focuses on economic activity in the Great Lakes region and its relationship to the environment. Primary areas of interest are maritime transportation, recreational boating, and land use and conservation, all pursued under the guiding principles of sustainable development. Program staff have extensive experience in Great Lakes policy development and maritime issues, and wide-ranging contacts with the region's maritime, policy and natural resource communities. Program manager: Steve Thorp, sthorp@glc.org

Selected accomplishments

- Established a Great Lakes ports and harbors specialist position through an agreement with NOAA
- With binational partners, promoted "short sea shipping" as a strategy to relieve congestion on land routes
- Assisted Great Lakes ports and operators in meeting new maritime security requirements
- Compiled a Geographic Information System database for Lake St. Clair and developed decision support tools for coastal habitat conservation and restoration
- Developed a regional framework for evaluating and testing dredged material for upland beneficial uses
- Conducted the first of a series of state brownfields-greenfields policy roundtables
- Assisted in the development and implementation of basinwide ecosystem indicators for the State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC)
- Provided co-secretariat support for the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors
- Facilitated the operations of the Great Lakes Dredging Team

Regional Coordination

Goal: To strengthen the collective Great Lakes management effort by providing regional leadership, generating consensus on regional priorities among diverse interests and building partnerships for decisive regional action

The Regional Coordination Program carries out the Commission's mandate for regional advocacy, as embodied in the Great Lakes Basin Compact, our enabling legislation. This includes building consensus among members; forming coalitions with regional, national and international partners; and presenting recommendations to regional and national leadership. Program staff have extensive experience in shaping legislation and bringing resource management issues to the attention of elected officials and other decisionmakers. Program manager: Jon MacDonagh-Dumler, jonmacd@glc.org

Selected accomplishments

- Developed and advanced blueprint for ecosystem restoration and protection (*The Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity*)
- Presented congressional testimony advancing member priorities
- Initiated a series of regional workshops in partnership with Sea Grant programs and the Council of Great Lakes Governors to identify and advance ecosystem restoration priorities
- Co-hosted annual Great Lakes Day events in Washington for members of Congress, their staff and regional leadership
- Co-hosted Great Lakes Odyssey II, a binational tour acquainting congressional staff with Great Lakes issues
- Formulated draft strategic plan identifying priorities for Great Lakes restoration, protection and management with a focus on roles for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Shared lessons learned from Great Lakes management at international forums in Otsu, Japan, and Burlington, VT.
- Facilitated the participation of visiting fellows from the Baltic Sea region in the World Large Lakes Conference (Chicago) and sediment toxicity training at U.S. EPA laboratories

Data and Information Management

Goal: To provide the data, information and technical support processes needed for informed decisionmaking on a range of public policy issues

The Data and Information Management Program promotes the development and application of decision support systems and procedures, including database systems, regional networks, information inventories, geographic information systems (GIS) and related tools. The program facilitates regional GIS coordination to benefit Great Lakes coastal wetlands studies, biological and hydrological monitoring programs, multimedia pollution studies, emergency response planning and regional water quantity and quality management. Program manager: Roger Gauthier, gauthier@glc.org

Selected accomplishments

- Mapped areas vulnerable to the effects of toxic spills for U.S. EPA's area contingency planning initiative
- Compiled environmental, hydrologic and cultural data for inclusion in the Lake Michigan Online Atlas
- Updated the regional inventory of toxic air emissions in the Great Lakes region
- Supported air research and information exchange among scientists, managers and policymakers through the Great Lakes Air Deposition (GLAD) grant program
- Developed integrated Internet mapping tools and a document management system for the International Joint Commission's Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study
- Initiated design of a regional association for the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS) to integrate data collection, analysis and product development across the region
- Initiated a Great Lakes regional data exchange agreement to improve distribution of environmental data among state, provincial and federal agencies

Communications and Internet Technology

Goal: To promote awareness and active participation in public policy decisionmaking through the application of communications techniques and technologies

The Communications and Internet Technology (CIT) Program oversees the writing, design and marketing of all Commission products, both online and traditional print publications. This includes the Commission's annual report, bimonthly *Advisor* newsletter and its entire suite of web sites. Primary among these is the Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN), the region's premier source for Great Lakes information. Through their training in journalism, print/web design and data management, CIT staff provide Commission-wide editing and design services.

Program manager: Christine Manninen, manninen@glc.org

Selected accomplishments

- Developed BeachCast, offering an online source for Great Lakes beach advisories and monitoring information
- Hosted a regional forum to discuss new strategic directions for GLIN
- Celebrated the 10th anniversary of GLIN, including design of an interactive, multimedia program highlighting the project's history and features
- Designed online meeting registration sites for numerous large-scale Great Lakes events, including the inaugural Great Lakes Sustainability Conference
- Developed a "Current Lake Conditions" section on GLIN, which will be expanded through a NOAA-funded Great Lakes Observing System initiative
- Awarded the sixth Carol Ratza Memorial Scholarship to Kevin Bennardo at Miami University of Ohio



Advocacy Efforts

An effective voice for our membership

The Great Lakes Commission looks out for the best interests of the region, providing its member jurisdictions with a unified, well-respected and highly influential voice on the pressing issues of the day. This voice takes many forms, ranging from expert testimony and congressional consultations to drafting legislation and lobbying for appropriations. This voice also carries in many directions, to Capitol Hill and Parliament Hill, to our state and provincial leaders, to our mayors, and to all who establish or influence policy.

“We are trying to protect 20 percent of the world’s fresh surface water.”

– Chair Sam Speck, testifying before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Aug. 25, 2003

The centerpiece of the Commission’s advocacy efforts is its annual *Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity*. This document, a descriptive listing of U.S. federal legislative and appropriations priorities, provides a blueprint for a range of advocacy efforts. It offers a vision for the Great Lakes ecosystem, accompanied by a series of priorities and specific strategic actions for achieving them.

Released annually at “Great Lakes Day in Washington” events, the *Great Lakes Program* is subsequently conveyed to the entire Great Lakes Congressional Delegation, key committee leadership, governors and state legislators, partners, and all others in a position to work together to advance shared priorities.

The origin of this comprehensive document dates back to 2000, when members of Congress urged the Commission to package its legislative and appropriations priorities around common, mutually reinforcing themes that would promote environmental and economic prosperity. The Commission membership responded with the first iteration of the *Great Lakes Program* and, in so doing, launched its campaign to “Restore the Greatness!”

The *Great Lakes Program* is built around a series of seven themes, or priorities, that collectively contribute to the restoration, protection and sustainable use of the region’s natural assets.

- Cleaning up toxic hot spots
- Shutting the door on invasive species
- Controlling nonpoint source pollution
- Restoring and conserving wetlands and critical coastal habitat
- Ensuring the sustainable use of our water resources
- Strengthening our decision support capability
- Enhancing the commercial and recreational value of our waterways

The Commission recognizes that ecosystem restoration is not a new concept for the Great Lakes, but has been under way for years. In fact, restoration programs have fueled the recovery of the lakes since they were declared “dead or dying” just a few decades ago.

But progress has been slow and uneven, characterized by fits and starts. It has been piecemeal and largely crisis-oriented, a “Band-Aid” approach that responds to individual ailments rather than a comprehensive regimen that restores – and maintains – the health of the entire system.



The centerpiece of the Commission's advocacy efforts is its annual Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity.

Building upon a multitude of existing federally authorized programs – as well as new-start initiatives – the Commission has made its plea to “Restore the Greatness!” This has featured a call for federal legislation that ties a comprehensive planning process to large-

scale, multiyear appropriations to address restoration and protection priorities. In 2003, Commission members and staff worked closely with congressional offices to begin shaping such an initiative. Over that time, the Commission also supported the Council of Great Lakes Governors and partnered with a multitude of other agencies and organizations as regional interest in a restoration initiative gained momentum.



Translating priorities to action took on many forms in 2003. For example:

- Chair Sam Speck testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, speaking to the importance of state leadership in water resource management decisions
- Board member Frank Kudrna testified before the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, calling for full recognition of the Great Lakes and other freshwater resources in national policy
- President/CEO Mike Donahue provided testimony to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, urging that the *Great Lakes Program* be used as a basis for developing a comprehensive Great Lakes ecosystem restoration initiative

In addition to these advocacy efforts, the Commission also:

- Urged the U.S. and Canadian governments to undertake a comprehensive review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement in light of current restoration priorities and unmet needs
- Lobbied for provisions that advance resource management and sustainable economic goals under the John Glenn Great Lakes Basin Program of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999
- Joined with many parties to press for passage of the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act
- Lobbied for additional federal funds to support restoration efforts in Great Lakes Areas of Concern under the Great Lakes Legacy Act

Advancing Our Priorities

restore

The *Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity* is a blueprint for advocacy, but it is also much more. In 2003, the Great Lakes Commission engaged in dozens of projects that advanced *Great Lakes Program* priorities, a clear demonstration that the Commission and its member states are ready and willing to meet their obligations in a shared federal/state initiative. The following pages highlight just a few of the initiatives that the Commission – and its many valued partners – undertook in 2003 to “Restore the Greatness!”

Cleaning up toxic hot spots



toxic

Contaminated sediments are a persistent source of toxic pollution to the Great Lakes at each of the 31 U.S. and binational Areas of Concern (AOCs). They contribute to numerous beneficial use impairments in the AOCs, including fish consumption advisories, beach closures, and restrictions on dredging.

Toxins are also an obstacle to rehabilitating abandoned or decaying urban and industrial areas known as brownfields, whose redevelopment can enhance tax bases and employment, and relieve development pressures on green spaces. Research also shows that cleaning up contaminated sediments in local water bodies can increase property values by more than 40 percent.

The Great Lakes Commission has taken a leadership role in communicating funding and technical needs for cleaning up and delisting AOCs to state and federal legislators. The Commission also is assisting U.S. EPA in implementing the Great Lakes Legacy Act, which authorizes funding for cleaning up contaminated sediments in Great Lakes AOCs. Forums organized by the Commission inform stakeholders of the Act's provisions and facilitate state and local government participation in remediation efforts.

AOC restoration efforts are guided by state and local Remedial Action Plan (RAP) groups. The Commission is providing RAP practitioners with tools and methodologies for restoring beneficial uses and developing measurable targets to assess progress in meeting cleanup goals. Partners in these efforts include U.S. EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO), the International Joint Commission (IJC), Michigan's Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) and local RAP groups.

The Commission is providing RAP practitioners with tools and methodologies for restoring beneficial uses in Areas of Concern.

The Commission supports Michigan's SPAC in advancing cleanup efforts in that state's 14 AOCs, coordinating activities among federal, state and local participants, and identifying needed assistance. This has included project planning; outreach to state and federal legislators; administering grant support for local RAP groups; identifying research, monitoring and public outreach needs; and facilitating communication among partner agencies. The Commission also assists the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' RAP program by working with RAP participants to develop projects and secure funding.

To advance brownfields cleanup and redevelopment, and the associated protection of open spaces known as greenfields, the Commission initiated a series of state policy roundtables. These bring together senior state officials, state and federal legislative aides, and representatives of key stakeholder groups to explore strategies for redeveloping older urban areas while preserving outlying agricultural lands and open spaces.

Shutting the door on invasive species

invasive

Invasive species are a growing and potentially devastating threat to the economy and environment of the Great Lakes region. They represent a form of biological pollution that preys upon and displaces native animals and plants, reduces biodiversity, limits water use activities, and damages infrastructure. The cost of these impairments is estimated to be as high as \$5.0 billion over a 10-year period if corrective measures are not taken.

Working with the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) and other partners, the Great Lakes Commission is playing an instrumental role in facilitating and shaping efforts to mitigate the threat from invasive species. Through the Great Lakes Panel, funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Commission cultivates relationships among a wide range of interests with a stake in the issue. In so doing, Commission efforts cut across multiple jurisdictions, resulting in collaborative efforts to address the problem.

Working with the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, the Commission is playing an instrumental role in efforts to mitigate the threat from invasive species.

Among these efforts is a pilot project to develop an early detection and monitoring system to help contain new invasions before they become established. Similarly, the Commission is assisting in the development of a regional model for rapid response planning for Great Lakes aquatic invasions. The model plan will provide resource managers with the tools needed to limit the spread of newly introduced invasive species before their populations spread beyond the point of feasible eradication and control. Both projects are funded by U.S. EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO).

Ballast water discharges from oceangoing vessels are a major vector of ANS introduction. The Commission developed a position statement on ballast water practices and presented it to the U.S. Coast Guard during public hearings on ballast water discharge standards.

The Commission is also playing a key role in the development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) database model for mapping and tracking the spread of seven established invasive species populations within the state of Michigan. Funded by the Michigan Great Lakes Protection Fund, this Internet-based database will help resource managers effectively target resources to limit the further spread of these populations and serve as a model for applications elsewhere in the basin.

Education and outreach efforts are supported through a long-term grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), providing for the production of the Great Lakes Panel's quarterly newsletter, *ANS Update*, which highlights emerging policy, scientific and technical developments.



Controlling nonpoint source pollution

pollution

Nonpoint sources, including urban and agricultural runoff, and air deposition of toxic chemicals, are the leading contributors of pollutants to the Great Lakes. Hundreds of millions of tons of topsoil erode into Great Lakes waterways each year, often carrying fertilizers, pesticides and other contaminants. This runoff also clogs waterways, smothers aquatic habitats and imposes economic burdens related to dredging, water treatment, flooding and soil loss. Meanwhile, airborne deposition contributes millions of tons of pollutants each year and is the leading source of mercury to the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control is one of the Great Lakes Commission's primary vehicles for addressing nonpoint pollution. Directing nearly \$1.9 million in grants to local conservation programs in 2003, the Basin Program helps reduce soil erosion and sediment loadings to the Great Lakes, their connecting channels and tributaries. Program partners include the Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Hundreds of millions of tons of topsoil erode into Great Lakes waterways each year.

The Basin Program's primary outreach vehicle is *Keeping it On the Land*, a quarterly publication produced by the Commission. In addition, the Commission collaborated with the Michigan Sea Grant College Program to produce and distribute 8,000 copies of a full-color brochure and poster on the causes and economic and environmental costs of sedimentation.

A related initiative was the Ohio Watershed Management Training Project. A joint effort of the Commission and the Ohio EPA, the project provided technical assistance, outreach training and education for local watershed groups.

The Great Lakes Tributary Modeling Program contributes to the understanding of sedimentation through the development and application of sediment transport models in priority Great Lakes tributaries. Coordinated by the Corps of Engineers, computer models were completed in 2003 for the Little Calumet, Cuyahoga, Sandusky and Grand river watersheds.

As part of its efforts to address air pollution and deposition, the Commission produces the annual Regional Air Toxic Emissions Inventory. This project, begun in 1987, compiles and standardizes data on point and nonpoint emissions collected by the Great Lakes states and the province of Ontario, and makes it available to researchers and policymakers.

In 2003, the Commission assumed management of the U.S. EPA's Great Lakes Air Deposition (GLAD) Program. GLAD promotes scientific research on emissions, atmospheric dispersion, deposition and ecological effects resulting from point and nonpoint sources within and outside the region. Approximately \$1.2 million in grants are to be disbursed under this program in 2004.



Restoring and conserving wetlands and critical coastal habitat

habitat

Wetlands and coastal marshes provide critical habitat for fish and wildlife, help store and cycle nutrients, prevent erosion of soil and shorelines, and provide tremendous recreational opportunities. Similarly, the loss of small streams and associated floodplains impairs critical habitat and compromises ecological and economic benefits.

Through its staff support for the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium, the Great Lakes Commission is helping develop a basinwide coastal wetlands monitoring program. With funding from U.S. EPA, the Consortium is completing a classified wetlands inventory, evaluating remote monitoring techniques, and finalizing methodologies for reporting on key indicators of wetland health. Meetings have also begun with state and provincial officials to develop an implementation strategy.

The wetlands of the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair are among the most biologically productive areas in the Great Lakes, of significant importance to the overall ecosystem. Working in concert with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and a broad range of partners, the Commission is leading a binational project to identify environmental stresses and develop a comprehensive management plan for these vital resources.

The Commission is leading a binational project to develop a comprehensive management plan for Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River.

Related initiatives include the development of an online inventory of Lake St. Clair monitoring programs and the identification of monitoring gaps. Working with federal, state, provincial and local authorities, this project is leading to the development of a strategic monitoring plan to meet regional needs.

The Commission is also developing a Geographic Information System (GIS) database of the lake's coastal habitats, in cooperation with NOAA, and developing decision support tools for use in a conservation and restoration plan for those habitats.

To protect against the threat of toxic spills in wetlands, coastal habitats and other susceptible areas, the Commission's Area Contingency Planning project has produced an online atlas of GIS-based maps providing a wide range of information useful to hazardous spill responders and planners. Produced in association with U.S. EPA and the U.S. Geological Survey, the Inland Sensitivity Atlas details potential spill sources, environmentally important areas, habitats of endangered and threatened species, water supplies, economically vulnerable areas, and other significant sites and features.

Dredging is an essential activity in Great Lakes harbors and shipping channels, but concerns exist over its effects on biological resources, including coastal wetlands. Working through the Great Lakes Dredging Team, the Commission is helping establish a regional process for identifying "environmental windows," times when dredging and sediment disposal activities can be conducted with minimal impact.



Ensuring the sustainable use of our water resources



resources

More than any other factor, the Great Lakes region is defined by its water resources. With the greatest abundance of freshwater on the face of the earth, its residents share in a wealth unlike any other. The waters of the Great Lakes basin support a nearly endless range of aquatic biota and wildlife, recreational opportunities, industry and agriculture, as well as the individual needs of the millions who live there.

Annex 2001 of the Great Lakes Charter establishes a framework for the protection, sustainable use and enhancement of the region's water resources. The Commission is playing a major role in Annex implementation and, over the past year, saw the completion of its Water Resources Management Decision Support System project. Supported by the Great Lakes Protection Fund, this two-year effort identified unmet needs related to Great Lakes water resources management, water use and ecological impacts.

Building upon this effort, the ongoing Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Biohydrologic Information project is developing inventories of biohydrologic data, identifying opportunities to improve the region's biohydrologic information base and assessing the federal role in managing such information. This project responds to provisions of the John Glenn Great Lakes Basin Program, authorized in the 1999 Water Resources Development Act.

Also supporting Annex 2001 implementation is the ongoing management of a Great Lakes Regional Water Use Database, which annually provides information on water withdrawals, diversions and consumptive uses. In addition, Commission staff are developing a "tool kit" for water conservation, based on an assessment of best conservation practices by regional water suppliers. The Great Lakes Protection Fund is supporting this project.

Related to these efforts, the Commission is helping develop a water resources management plan for Isle Royale National Park, categorizing the park's water resources and suggesting measures for their protection.

The Commission also assisted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in developing a draft strategic plan to address current and emerging regional needs. The study was authorized in the John Glenn Great Lakes Basin Program of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

Commission staff are developing a "tool kit" for water conservation, based on an assessment of best conservation practices.

To provide a much-needed mechanism for sharing water resources information, the Commission is working with a wide range of binational partners to complete a comprehensive inventory of environmental monitoring programs in the region. The Great Lakes Basin Monitoring Inventory will take the form of a web-based searchable database that will improve coordination, collaboration and data sharing among regional entities.

A persistent problem in recent years has been Great Lakes beach closings prompted by high bacteria counts. The Commission-developed BeachCast program provides beach users with ready access to beach health advisories via a dedicated web site, along with information on weather, monitoring programs and more.

Strengthening our decision support capability

decision

Scientifically sound data, information and analysis provide the foundation for informed policy and resource management. The Great Lakes Commission places a premium on efforts to obtain quality data on Great Lakes indicators, facilitate regional data access and exchange, promote awareness of Great Lakes issues, and distribute Great Lakes information.

Toward this end, the Commission has assumed a lead role in the development of the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS), which will provide real-time access to critical data. A regional node of NOAA's Integrated Ocean Observing System, GLOS will provide access to physical, chemical and biological data currently collected by multiple entities throughout the region.

GLOS will build upon the NOAA-funded "Current Lake Conditions" project, which provides Internet access to real-time information on weather, water levels, water temperatures, wave heights, boating safety and more, via the Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN). A Commission-managed Internet service, GLIN also provides daily news updates and e-communication tools, and responds annually to thousands of public inquiries regarding the region's environment, economy and related issues.

The Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS) will provide real-time access to critical Great Lakes data.

Working with the Lake Michigan Monitoring Coordination Council, the Commission is developing a coordinated tributary monitoring initiative that will gage pollutant and nutrient loads to Lake Michigan. Funding is provided by U.S. EPA – GLNPO.

The Commission assisted the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality in improving its fish contaminant trend monitoring program by facilitating a peer review assessment, convening regional experts to examine the program, and offering conclusions and recommendations.

Science vessels play an important role in Great Lakes research and monitoring efforts, collecting the raw data upon which our understanding of the lakes is based. To enhance the effectiveness of these vessels, the Commission, in partnership with the IJC and other organizations, convenes managers and crews of the Great Lakes science vessel fleet annually for training and to coordinate schedules, operations, maintenance and monitoring activities.

The Commission also is furthering regional data exchange among federal, state and provincial agencies through information management support for the IJC's Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study. The Commission's work facilitates public input on the five-year study, which is assessing the criteria used to regulate outflows from Lake Ontario through the St. Lawrence River.



Enhancing the commercial and recreational value of our waterways

value

Great Lakes waterborne transportation is the foundation upon which our regional economy was built. To prosper, we must continue to avail ourselves of the natural assets and advantages of the system, both recreational and commercial, in a manner that respects the system's ecological integrity. The Great Lakes Commission plays a leadership role in ensuring that our waterways are used in a productive and sustainable manner.

Dredging is critical for maintaining harbors and shipping channels. However, options for disposal of dredged sediments are limited and costly. As facilitator of the Great Lakes Dredging Team, the Commission leads efforts to develop a regional framework for evaluating the suitability of dredged material for beneficial uses, including upland areas such as land reclamation, soil enrichment, construction aggregate and more.

Recreational boating is a major element of the Great Lakes economy. To assess its impact, the Commission initiated a study under the provisions of the John Glenn Great Lakes Basin Program, authorized in the 1999 Water Resources Development Act.

Maritime transportation offers advantages in fuel efficiency, safety and emissions over rail and highway modes. It also offers the potential to relieve congestion on land routes. Toward this end, the Commission participated in initiatives by the U.S. Maritime Administration and Transport

Canada to promote "short sea shipping" among Great Lakes ports as an alternative to hauling cargoes overland. In addition, the Commission initiated a study to quantify the benefits of maritime transportation compared to land-based modes.

Recreational boating is a major element of the Great Lakes economy.

The Maritime Security Act of 2002 established new requirements for Great Lakes ports and operators. The Commission assisted in meeting those requirements through its participation in the Great Lakes Waterway Management Forum Subcommittee on Security. The Commission also entered into an agreement with NOAA to establish a Great Lakes ports and harbors specialist position, providing a much-expanded impact on issues affecting the maritime community and its role in environmental protection, resource management and sustainable economic activity.

The St. Lawrence Seaway has been a crucial element of the region's maritime system and overall economy since it opened in 1959. In cooperation with U.S. and Canadian transportation and environmental agencies, the Commission is assembling environmental and economic data needed for an objective assessment of the Seaway's current conditions and options for the future.

Finally, in its role as nonfederal sponsor of the Soo Locks Replacement Project, the Commission is completing a cooperative agreement for the project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is continuing to press for nonfederal matching fund commitments necessary to begin construction.



Upcoming Initiatives – 2004

Administration

- Complete strategic plan and associated work plan to showcase and coordinate initiatives
- Enhance Ontario and Québec roles and membership status
- Secure multiple large-scale, multiyear funding commitments for member priorities
- Raise the profile and impact of the Commission among regional leadership, elected officials and broader constituency
- Direct additional resources and priority focus to sustainability initiatives and associated environment/economy linkages
- Finalize plans and strategy for a co-location facility to house the Commission and other Great Lakes agencies

Resource Management

- Assess state aquatic nuisance species management plans and identify actions needed to advance regional prevention and control goals
- Finalize biohydrologic report with recommendations for a federal role in supporting science-based decisions on Great Lakes water withdrawals
- Complete water resources management plan for Isle Royale National Park
- Distribute approximately \$1.9 million in grants for local soil erosion and sedimentation control in the Great Lakes states
- Boost information and education activities to increase soil conservation and reduce sedimentation in the Great Lakes basin
- Identify research and management tools to help local practitioners reach sediment reduction goals
- Publish briefing paper on the off-site costs of sedimentation and benefits of erosion control

Environmental Quality

- Complete a comprehensive inventory and assessment of Great Lakes monitoring programs and make the inventory available online in a geographically searchable format
- Complete the development of a suite of indicators for coastal wetlands and prepare a plan for monitoring them
- Support cleanup efforts in Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs) by assisting in the implementation of the Great Lakes Legacy Act and leveraging other resources available for planning and restoration activities.
- Facilitate the development of scientifically sound, measurable restoration targets that enable Remedial Action Plan (RAP) participants to objectively assess progress in restoring beneficial uses in the AOCs
- Assist in implementing a comprehensive management plan for Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River

Transportation and Sustainable Development

- Conduct additional brownfields-greenfields policy roundtables in Great Lakes states
- Complete environmental windows project, establishing a regional process for conducting dredging with minimal risk to biologic resources

- Publish report on the benefits of maritime transportation compared to rail and highway modes
- Assist in binational study of environmental and economic baseline conditions of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence navigation system
- Coordinate and provide secretariat services for the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors and its annual conference
- Publish report on the economic benefits of recreational boating in the Great Lakes

Regional Coordination

- Advocate for legislative and appropriations priorities presented in the *Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity*
- Facilitate review and public comment on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Strategic Plan and prepare a final report
- Advocate for reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act and passage of the National Aquatic Invasive Species Act, among other legislation
- Facilitate Great Lakes restoration priorities workshops and work with governors and congressional leaders to advance priorities

Data and Information Management

- Promote Regional Data Exchange Agreement and expand Internet-based Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping to all of the Great Lakes
- Expand the catalog of regional data holdings in the Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN) Metadata Clearinghouse, in accordance with binational standards
- Publish the 2001 Great Lakes Air Toxic Emissions Inventory report and implement the Centralized Air emission Repository On-Line (CAROL) project
- Complete updates to area contingency planning maps and expand database to include locations of extremely hazardous substances
- Finalize a business plan for the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS) and endorse membership in its regional association

Communications and Internet Technology

- Develop and promote a vision and five-year strategic plan for GLIN
- Host a GLIN regional conference to address unmet e-communication needs of the Great Lakes community
- Publish a brochure to promote the Great Lakes Commission: who we are, and our role in Great Lakes policy and management
- Develop a multifunctional GLIN Daily News headline “tracker” to promote awareness of Great Lakes issues
- Provide communication tools for the Great Lakes Observing System initiative

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Funders and Endowment

American Great Lakes Ports Association
Canadian Consulate General
Canadian Shipowners Association
D.J. Case and Associates
Fisher Consulting
J.F. New and Associates, Inc.
The GLOBE Foundation of Canada
Great Lakes Fishery Commission
Great Lakes Protection Fund
Great Lakes Radio Consortium
International Association of Great Lakes and
St. Lawrence Mayors
International Joint Commission
The Johnson Foundation
The Joyce Foundation
Lake Carriers' Association
LakeNet (Global Environment Facility, The World Bank,
International Lake Environment Committee)
Limno-Tech, Inc.
Macomb, St. Clair and Oakland counties, Michigan
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Michigan Great Lakes Protection Fund

National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Park Service
Coastal Services Center (NOAA)
Michigan Sea Grant College Program
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Ocean Service, Center for Operational
Oceanographic Products and Services (NOAA)
National Sea Grant College Program
Ohio EPA - Division of Surface Water
St. Lawrence Seaway Development Association
St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources
Conservation Service
U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office
U.S. EPA Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
U.S. EPA Office of International Activities
U.S. EPA Region 5
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
University of Michigan
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It's always a great time to become a Friend of the Great Lakes! Your tax-deductible contribution to the Great Lakes Endowment will help the Great Lakes Commission "Restore the Greatness!" The Commission will match your gift dollar-for-dollar, and direct the entire amount to programs that result in a cleaner environment, a prosperous economy and a better quality of life. Visit www.friendsofthegreatlakes.org now to view a list of donors to date and to make your own contribution online! It only takes a minute and you'll receive a complimentary certificate and decal (for auto or boat) to acknowledge your gift.

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