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Comment at [www.glrc.us](http://www.glrc.us)

## Regional Collaboration awaits public comments

The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) – a wide-ranging, cooperative effort to design and implement a strategy for the restoration, protection and sustainable use of the Great Lakes – unveiled its draft plan on July 7 in Duluth, Minn. A 60-day public comment period is occurring now through Sept. 9, 2005.

A new web site, [www.glrc.us](http://www.glrc.us), provides the full text of the draft plan, background information and options for submitting comments.

Eight issue-specific strategy teams developed the proposed action plan over the past seven months. Representing a major milestone for the region, more than 1,500 people representing federal, state, local and tribal governments; nongovernmental entities; and private citizens participated in this process.

Minnesota State Rep. Tom Huntley, Commission chair, was among the guest speakers at the July 7 presentation.

“The Collaboration’s participants have labored hard in crafting this strategy with the assumption

that they would have national support from the President and Congress in its implementation,” Huntley said. “This support cannot be in word only, but must be reflected by action and monetary support at the federal level.”

In May 2004, President Bush issued an Executive Order, which recognized the Great Lakes as a “national treasure” and created a federal Great Lakes Interagency Task Force to improve federal coordination on the Great Lakes. The Order also directed the U.S. EPA Administrator to convene a “regional collaboration of national significance” to develop, by consensus, a national restoration and protection action plan for the Great Lakes.

After extensive discussions, the Interagency Task Force, Council of Great Lakes Governors, Great Lakes Cities Initiative, Native American Tribes and Great Lakes Congressional Task Force signed a declaration and agreed to a framework document that signified the convening of the Collaboration in December 2004. The Collaboration was charged with

developing, by consensus, a strategy and action plan to restore and protect the Great Lakes.

Commissioners and staff have been extremely active in strategy development, from leading strategy teams to drafting and reviewing language and providing technical support. Commissioners, Alternate Commissioners and staff members have served as co-chairs on four of the eight strategy teams and have contributed substantially to the others.

Numerous Great Lakes Commission activities are aimed at achieving each of the governors’ nine priorities. For example, the Commission has provided staff support to the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species since its inception in the early 1990s. Another example is the Great Lakes Information Network, which has been a long-time pioneer in using communications technology to enhance information access and management opportunities for the Great Lakes.

“The people of the eight states bordering the lakes are prepared to



## Get the Picture?

Something that we hope you noticed when you started reading this issue of the *Advisor* newsletter are the major changes to its look and layout. The new *Advisor* is brighter and bolder, with a more free-flowing design that we think not only looks better, but will be more appealing to readers as well.

We've made some changes to content. Our former Point-Counterpoint section is now called Perspectives, reflecting the fact that differing viewpoints on Great Lakes issues need not be diametrically opposed, but rather can contribute unique insights into an issue. In addition, we've added a new feature, the "Commissioners' Corner," where we will invite individual Commissioners to share their insights on key Great Lakes issues. We're placing greater emphasis on feature articles looking at the issues facing the Great Lakes, in addition to our coverage of Commission activities. We've also changed to a quarterly publication schedule, coming out four times a year.

This is also my first column as interim executive director, and I hope to use this forum to convey my perspectives on a variety of topics and issues of interest to the Great Lakes region. In reviewing the changes to the *Advisor*, I began reflecting on the critical importance of effective communications in the work we all do to protect, restore and enhance the precious resources we call the Great Lakes.

A founding principle of the Great Lakes Commission is to "provide 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." During this interim period, the Great Lakes Commission is developing an expanded and comprehensive communications strategy to guide internal and external public relations and advocacy functions. This strategy will allow us to integrate communications functions and tools into all of our programs and will be reflected in our revised strategic plan, now in development.

The need for good communications, especially with the public, has never been quite so important to the Great Lakes region as it is right now. This summer, several critically important documents relating to Great Lakes management and restoration will be released, and the public will be asked to weigh in on them as part of the process to approve or expand these potentially historic agreements. These include the revised draft Annex 2001 Implementing Agreements, the draft report of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration and the International Joint Commission's review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

How well we as a region present these initiatives to the public and listen as it responds to them will be critical to our success in working together to restore the greatness to the Great Lakes. Let's make sure we are speaking clearly and paying attention: that's what a good communications strategy is all about.

Tom Crane  
Interim Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas R. Crane".

"The need for good communications, especially with the public, has never been quite so important to the Great Lakes region as it is right now."

## Commission to mark 50th Anniversary at Annual Meeting

Join us in celebrating the Great Lakes Commission's 50th anniversary at our 2005 Annual Meeting, Sept. 27-29 in Ann Arbor, Mich. In addition to our usual discussions of Great Lakes policy and issues, several special events are planned to mark the occasion, including a fish boil, golf tournament and historical overview. Don't miss it!

For more information or to register online, see [www.glc.org/meeting](http://www.glc.org/meeting). Contact: Tom Crane, [tcrane@glc.org](mailto:tcrane@glc.org)

# Marsh monitoring program to track AOC recoveries

The Great Lakes Commission and Bird Studies Canada have entered into a partnership to track the health and recovery of wetlands in Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOC) by using the latter's Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program.

The Marsh Monitoring Program is a binational marsh bird and amphibian population monitoring initiative that engages volunteer naturalists to measure the status and trends of water-dependent species and their habitats. Five U.S. AOCs have been selected for monitoring under the program for the project's first year: the Rochester Embayment in New

York, the Cuyahoga River in Ohio and Muskegon Lake, White Lake and the Clinton River in Michigan.

A common problem at Great Lakes AOCs is the loss of beneficial uses as a result of degraded aquatic environments. Wetland habitats are one of the most sensitive and critical ecosystem types within AOCs, given their unique relationship and function to sustain water quality and quantity between terrestrial and aquatic environments, and their high capacity to support a diversity and abundance of wildlife. The program will provide a tool for evaluating the success of remediation efforts in AOCs and

monitoring ecosystem health.

Five wetland-related beneficial use impairments will be tracked at each of the selected AOCs. On-site training workshops were held last spring to prepare volunteers to use the Marsh Monitoring Program protocols. An additional five U.S. AOCs are scheduled to be added to the project next year.

Funding is provided by the U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office.

The Great Lakes Marsh Monitoring Program web site is at [www.bsceec.org/mmpmain.html](http://www.bsceec.org/mmpmain.html)

Contact: John Hummer, [jhummer@glc.org](mailto:jhummer@glc.org)

## AOC online library established

The Great Lakes Commission has established an online "virtual library" for information and resources related to Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs). The website, [www.glc.org/rap/resources](http://www.glc.org/rap/resources), was developed under a grant from the U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office.

The "one-stop-shopping" website includes:

- Remedial Action Plan (RAP) documents
- Links to web pages for individual AOCs
- Contact information for individual AOCs
- Delisting resources
- Documentation for AOCs delisted or redesignated in a recovery status
- Workshop proceedings
- Funding sources

Information on the site will be updated and expanded on an ongoing basis.

Contact: John Hummer, [jhummer@glc.org](mailto:jhummer@glc.org)

## Regional Collaboration (cont'd from Page 1)

turn the Regional Collaboration plan into action," Huntley said. "On behalf of these states, the Great Lakes Commission urges the President and Congress to fully support this strategy and to provide the resources to make the vision of a restored Great Lakes a reality."

Public comments will be collected and posted on the [www.glc.org](http://www.glc.org) web site at the end of the comment period for public access.

The final strategy document is scheduled for release in December 2005.

Contact: Christine Manninen, [manninen@glc.org](mailto:manninen@glc.org)

*With Lake Superior behind him, Commission Chair Tom Huntley addresses the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Summit I in Duluth. With him is Duluth Mayor Herb Bergson, host of the event.*



## Lake Erie habitats to be mapped

A unique initiative is underway in the Lake Erie basin to improve the integration of habitat information by generating a standardized habitat map. The project's goals are to (1) verify the utility of establishing a unified classification system for five Lake Erie habitat zones, and (2) use this classification system to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) framework.

Such a system would be highly beneficial to habitat managers in the basin, by establishing a classified inventory of existing habitats that would provide a foundation for making assessments of ecosystem health.

A group of top research scientists and resource managers convened June 6-7 at Ohio State University's F.T. Stone Laboratory at Put-In-Bay, Ohio, to discuss preliminary habitat classifications and the availability of existing information. Summary presentations were delivered on the state of habitat inventory and classification for each of five habitat zones including open lake, coastal margin (nearshore), coastal wetlands,

inland lakes and rivers, and terrestrial habitats. Collaborative groups will be working over the summer to better define habitat zone boundaries, identify and collect needed data, and agree on a standard classification method.

The project team will then develop map products for two pilot watersheds – the Maumee River in Ohio and the Grand River in Ontario. It is anticipated that the results of this work will be used to further habitat mapping in the remaining portion of the Lake Erie basin and eventually throughout the Great Lakes basin.

The project team includes representatives from the Great Lakes Commission, University of Windsor, University of Minnesota-Duluth, Ohio Sea Grant, U.S. Geological Survey, and the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The project is an initiative of the Lake Erie Millennium Network and is funded by the U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office.

For more information, contact Ric Lawson at [rlawson@glc.org](mailto:rlawson@glc.org)



*The Michigan Clean Water Corps held its first training session for volunteer water quality monitors in June on the Tannery Creek near Petoskey. Here, Jo Latimore, a water quality monitoring trainer with the Huron River Watershed Council, checks for signs of invertebrates in the water while Kay Edly, of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), confers with volunteer Terry Stilson of the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly. The program is managed by the Great Lakes Commission and Huron River Watershed Council under the direction of MDEQ. Photo: Anne Sturm, Great Lakes Commission.*

## Nearly 200 turn out for Wisconsin land-use roundtable

More than 190 people came together for the Wisconsin Waterfront Revitalization Conference in April at the Blue Harbor Resort in Sheboygan, Wis. The event was part of the Commission-sponsored Sustainable Land Use Roundtable Series, now making its way around the Great Lakes region.

This event was designed to assist in revitalizing coastal communities through redevelopment of underutilized areas and the protection of natural and coastal resources. The Blue Harbor Resort was chosen because of its location on Lake Michigan and its history as a former coal facility and brownfield. A web broadcast of the panel sessions and copies of the presentations are available

at [www.glc.org/wiconference](http://www.glc.org/wiconference).

Inspired by the 2001 Great Lakes Commission report, *Linking Brownfields Redevelopment and Greenfields Protection for Sustainable Land Use in the Great Lakes Basin*, the Land Use Roundtable Series aims to assist states in advancing the recommendations from that report. Previous roundtables have been held in Michigan and Ohio, with four additional events anticipated over the next two years.

The Pennsylvania Land Use Roundtable will be Sept. 14, 2005, at Pennsylvania State University's Behrend Campus in Erie. An Indiana roundtable will likely focus on the state's Great Lakes coastal areas, while two others are in

the early stages of planning.

Contact: Victoria Pebbles, [vpebbles@glc.org](mailto:vpebbles@glc.org)

### Did you know

The northernmost point in the continental United States isn't in Maine, but Minnesota! The Northwest Angle, which juts into Lake of the Woods, is the only part of the lower 48 states that extends above the 49th Parallel. Source: The Christian Science Monitor

# Basin Program unveils “Stop the Mudness” campaign

Everyone knows mud is dirty. But few realize it’s also one of the main pollutants of the waters of the Great Lakes basin.

Mud – or sediment, to use the technical term – is swept into our lakes and streams from lawns, fields, stream banks and urban areas where it has been carelessly allowed to erode. It suffocates fish by clogging their gills, smothers their nesting areas, hides the food they seek and turns sparkling clear waters a dirty brown. It also bears with it chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides that have been deposited on the land, raises the cost of drinking water treatments and fills in the waterways themselves.

To raise awareness of the damages caused by sedimentation, the Great



“Mudness” logo

Lakes Commission is initiating the “Stop the Mudness!” campaign through its Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

The campaign will feature public service advertisements, press releases, artwork, flyers, a web site and other

educational materials focusing on the environmental and economic harms caused by erosion and sedimentation, and ways to minimize their impacts. Each will bear the “Stop the Mudness” theme and logo, thereby helping to build public recognition of the campaign.

The Great Lakes Basin Program improves Great Lakes water quality by promoting erosion and sediment control and sound land-use practices through demonstration grants, technical assistance and information/education projects in the Great Lakes states. Funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service.

For more information, contact: Gary Overmier, [garyo@glc.org](mailto:garyo@glc.org)

## 2005 Great Lakes Basin Program grant recipients named

Thirty nine projects have been selected by the Great Lakes Commission to share **\$2.2 million in grant funding** under its Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control.

The total is the most annual funding ever awarded under the highly competitive grants program, which is conducted through a cooperative

agreement between the Great Lakes Commission and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service. Grant recipients are selected by the Commission’s Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Task Force, comprised of state and federal officials.

Grants were awarded to projects in all eight Great Lakes states. Proj-

ects range in scale from \$10,400 for a streambank stabilization and public education project at a public park on Michigan’s Rouge River up to \$125,000 to stabilize 12 acres of eroding riverbank and reduce flow velocities that are causing excessive channel downcutting on the north fork of Illinois’ Waukegan River. Summaries of all 39 projects are available in the August 2005 Special Edition of the Great Lakes Basin Program newsletter, *Keeping It On the Land*, available on the program web site, [www.glc.org/basin](http://www.glc.org/basin)

To date, the Basin Program has supported 340 projects and invested nearly \$10 million in water quality improvement efforts, with more than \$5 million in additional nonfederal matching funds applied to the projects. In the process, the program has involved hundreds of community volunteers in watershed improvement projects, improved local ecosystems, and built support for ongoing environmental restoration efforts.

For more information, contact: Gary Overmier, [garyo@glc.org](mailto:garyo@glc.org)

### Firm hired to aid in executive search

The Great Lakes Commission has contracted with Public Sector Consultants, a Lansing, Mich.-based policy research and analysis company, to conduct an organizational assessment of the Commission in preparation for hiring a new executive director.

The assessment will examine the organization’s role in Great Lakes policy and management, consider its strengths, project future challenges, and identify ways to position itself in the evolving framework of Great Lakes institutions. The company will also offer recommendations for the completion of the Commission’s updated strategic plan.

A key component of the process

will be consultations with Commissioners, Commission staff, stakeholders and representatives of U.S. and Canadian federal, state and provincial agencies, research institutions and other entities with responsibilities and interests in the management and/or protection of the Great Lakes ecosystem.

The company will submit its draft report by Aug. 31, 2005.

The Commission’s long-time senior executive, Mike Donahue, departed in February 2005 to take a position in the private sector after nearly two decades of service to the Great Lakes Commission.

For more information, contact: Dave Knight, [dknight@glc.org](mailto:dknight@glc.org)

# Energy issues highlighted at Semiannual Meeting

Though its primary reputation has been as a getaway for honeymooners, the Niagara Falls region is also a major provider of electrical power in North America, and perhaps the most significant historically. So it was appropriate that issues of sustainable energy challenges and opportunities were a major focus at the 2005 Semiannual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission, held May 11-13 in nearby Buffalo, N.Y.

Special sessions addressed the history of power generation in the region, from both U.S. and Canadian perspectives, and detailed some of the prospects for meeting the Great Lakes region's future energy needs. Dick Munson, executive director of the Northeast-Midwest Institute and author of a forthcoming history of the electricity industry, provided a thought-provoking assessment of the current electric energy situation, saying the potential of increased efficiencies and innovation have been

greatly overlooked.

"The U.S. power system, though it is wonderful, is rickety and old," he said, noting that the average U.S. power plant is 50 years old. Meanwhile, he added, policy barriers impede the development of promising innovations in such areas as cogeneration and microgeneration.

Other speakers outlined some of the advances in renewable and clean energy options being pursued in the Great Lakes region, including wind energy, photovoltaics, biodiesel and manure digesters.

The meeting saw the election of a new vice chair of the Commission, Michigan Lt. Gov. John Cherry, who headed the meeting in the absence of Chair Tom Huntley, who was attending a special session of the Minnesota Legislature. Cherry succeeds former Commissioner John Goss of Indiana, who left the Commission after the governorship of his state changed hands in

the November election.

The meeting also saw the adoption of two policy resolutions relating to maritime issues. The first called upon the U.S. Coast Guard to develop a regulatory regime to prevent the introduction of aquatic nuisance species via discharges from NOBOB vessels, i.e., those declaring "no ballast on board" when they enter the Great Lakes. The second resolution advocates equitable and adequate U.S. funding for Great Lakes navigation system maintenance and operations, which on a dollar-per-ton basis, receive less federal funding than nearly every other navigation system in the United States.

The full text of both resolutions is available at: [www.glc.org/about/resolutions](http://www.glc.org/about/resolutions) Annual meeting presentations are available at [www.glc.org/announce/05/05presentations.html](http://www.glc.org/announce/05/05presentations.html)

For more information, contact: Tom Crane, [tcrane@glc.org](mailto:tcrane@glc.org)

## New staff lend their talents to Great Lakes issues

The Great Lakes Commission is pleased to welcome four new staff members, including two Sea Grant Fellows.

Elizabeth Schmidt is a program specialist in the Communications and Internet Technology Program, where she is responsible for designing Commission publications, educational/promotional materials and web sites. Contact: [eschmidt@glc.org](mailto:eschmidt@glc.org)

Pete Giencke is a program specialist in the Data and Information Management Program, where he assists in the development of Internet-based Geographic Information System (GIS) applications for various hydrological, environmental and monitoring system projects. Contact: [pgiencke@glc.org](mailto:pgiencke@glc.org)

Lisa Butch and Elaine Isely are the 2004-2005 Great Lakes Commission-Sea Grant fellows. Butch is working on aquatic nuisance species issues and providing support for the Great Lakes

*New staff, from left: Elaine Isely, Elizabeth Schmidt, Peter Giencke, and Lisa Butch.*



Coastal Wetlands Consortium. She is completing a master's degree in coastal and marine policy and management from the University of Rhode Island. Contact: [lbutch@glc.org](mailto:lbutch@glc.org)

Isely is providing follow-up support for the Great Lakes Restoration

Planning Workshop series conducted in 2004 by the Commission and Sea Grant, and assisting with policy reviews for the Commission's Regional Coordination Program. She is completing a master's degree in biology at Grand Valley State University. Contact: [eisely@glc.org](mailto:eisely@glc.org)

## Easterly appointed to Indiana Delegation

Thomas Easterly, Commissioner of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), has been appointed as a member of his state's delegation to the Great Lakes Commission by Gov. Mitch Daniels.

As head of IDEM, Easterly is responsible for all aspects of the agency, which is charged with protecting, preserving and improving the quality of Indiana's air, water and land. He

has 30 years experience working on environmental issues for both government and industry, including executive positions with Bethlehem Steel and the utility holding company NiSource and as an engineer with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. He is a past president of the Board of Directors of the Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center.



Thomas Easterly

## Dredging team explores beneficial use possibilities

One of the growing challenges in maintenance dredging of Great Lakes shipping channels and harbors is disposing of the resulting material. One way to mitigate the problem is by using dredged material beneficially, such as in beach nourishment, construction aggregate, landscaping, glassmaking, soil enhancement and others.

There are numerous impediments to such uses, however, including transportation costs, lack of established markets, and regulations that tend to treat all dredged material as contaminated waste regardless of content or potential environmental benefits. Addressing such concerns was a major topic of the Commission-sponsored Great Lakes Dredging Team's annual meeting, June 29 in Chicago.

According to latest assessment, about half of Great Lakes dredged material is placed in CDFs, another third is disposed of in the open waters of the lakes, and about 18 percent is used beneficially. Most of the latter (12 percent) goes to beach nourishment, while only about six percent goes to other types of beneficial use. Much of the material currently placed in CDFs or open-water disposal could be used beneficially, if the obstacles could be overcome.

Examples of successful Great Lakes beneficial use projects presented at the Dredging Team meeting were the use of 100,000 tons of Illinois River sediment to provide topsoil for restoring prime lakefront at the former U.S. Steel South Works in Chicago and blending low-toxicity sediment with yard waste to create a commercial topsoil product in Grand Haven, Mich. These case studies are available on the Dredging Team

web site at [www.glc.org/dredging](http://www.glc.org/dredging)

Also at the meeting, the Dredging Team nominated a new state co-chair, Jim Weakley of Ohio, to work alongside federal co-chair Wayne Schloop of the U.S. Army Corps' Detroit District.

Meeting presentations are available on the Dredging Team web site, [www.glc.org/dredging](http://www.glc.org/dredging) Contact: Victoria Pebbles, [vpebbles@glc.org](mailto:vpebbles@glc.org)

### Lt. Gov. Quinn leads Circle Tour journey

*Illinois Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn looks on as Becky Lameka, program specialist with the Great Lakes Commission, offers a few comments regarding the Great Lakes Circle Tour prior to a special trip along the tour's Illinois section in June.*

*Quinn, who chairs the Commission's Illinois Delegation, led a daylong series of bicycle rides, hikes and drives along the state's Great Lakes shoreline to promote the Circle Tour and state and regional tourism. More photos, information at [www.glc.org/announce/05/06circletour.html](http://www.glc.org/announce/05/06circletour.html)*





## Is Lake Huron draining faster?

### Baird report confirms erosion, shoreline impacts...

#### Mary Muter, Georgian Bay Association



Mary Muter is a vice president of the Georgian Bay Association and chairs the Association's environment committee.

#### The issue:

*Have dredging and other human activities affected the water levels of lakes Huron and Michigan?*

The Georgian Bay Association (GBA) represents more than 4,200 families – Canadians and Americans – who have a passionate concern for the environment of Georgian Bay. Our members, most with ties to Georgian Bay that stretch back many generations, understand there are natural rise-and-fall cycles for the Great Lakes. But when Lake Michigan-Huron levels started to decline sharply in 1999, and when Georgian Bay wetlands began converting to grassy meadows, the GBA started asking questions.

We wanted to know why there has been a downward trend in Michigan-Huron levels between 1880-2000 when other Great Lakes experienced either a rising trend or a flat line. Because Michigan-Huron has no control structures at its outflow, we wondered if man-made changes near the mouth of the St. Clair River were having an impact.

We thought we were on to something but needed an expert opinion. The GBA Foundation retained the in-

ternationally respected firm W. F. Baird & Associates to study the outflow. This was a huge \$250,000 undertaking for a relatively small Canadian charity, but the impact of sustained low water levels is enormous because aquatic life forced out of Georgian Bay wetlands cannot find suitable habitat on the adjacent steep granite shorelines.

The final Baird Report was released in December 2004. While it notes that other factors such as post-glacial rebound have an impact on water levels, the report states that shoreline alteration and ongoing erosion in the St. Clair River at the critical point at the outflow of Lake Huron are lowering lake levels significantly. Some of the specifics:

- The International Joint Commission (IJC) has previously stated that changes for seaway navigation lowered Michigan-Huron levels by 40 cm; Baird determined it's closer to 80 cm.

- Since the last seaway dredging in 1970, erosion in the St. Clair River has

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## IJC to study river's impacts on Huron, Michigan

The International Joint Commission (IJC) has announced that it will revise its Upper Great Lakes Study to include an examination of the St. Clair River channel and its impact on water levels in lakes Huron and Michigan.

The action, announced in May, was prompted in large part by the December 2004 release of a privately funded study linking changes in water levels in lakes Huron and Michigan to erosion in the channel of the St. Clair River. The study, conducted by the consulting firm W.F. Baird & Associates at the behest of the Georgian Bay Association Foundation,

suggested such erosion was responsible for a historically observed reduction in the relative water levels of lakes Michigan and Huron compared to lakes St. Clair and Erie.

The study identified dredging of the St. Clair River and shoreline alterations in Lake Huron as possible factors. A discussion of the issues involved is offered in the two Perspective commentaries on this page.

The U.S. House of Representatives recently approved legislation that would authorize the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to measure erosion in the St. Clair River and construct a three-di-

mensional model of water flow in the river. As of press time, the bill was under consideration by the Senate.

The IJC's original Upper Great Lakes Plan of Study, submitted to the U.S. and Canadian governments in 2002, provided a plan to review orders for Lake Superior outflow regulation and consequently water levels impacts downstream through Lake Erie. The revision will take into account lessons learned from the IJC's ongoing study of the regulation of Lake Ontario and the international section of the St. Lawrence River.

*The views expressed are those of the authors or the organizations they represent alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the Great Lakes Commission or its member jurisdictions.*

## ...but many questions remain unanswered

Recent studies have noted that the difference in water levels between Lake Michigan-Huron and the lower lakes is becoming smaller over time. This has led to the question of increased St. Clair River flows. Many experts agree that the difference between water levels on Lake Michigan-Huron and the lower lakes is getting smaller, but there is some disagreement on why this is happening. The problem is complex and requires the evaluation of several factors and ongoing monitoring.

The Earth's crust in some parts of the Great Lakes is still rebounding from the weight of the glaciers. The Georgian Bay area has one of the highest rebound rates, ranging from 7 to 12 inches per century. This has an impact on where the current water level meets the shoreline. As the Earth's crust is rising, the water level appears to be receding, when in fact it may not be. This issue may also be impacting Lake Erie water levels. The relationship between measured water levels and differing rates of

rebound across the basin needs detailed technical analyses.

Investigations need to be made into the role of changes in the water supply (precipitation and evaporation) to the upper and lower lakes over time. The Lake Erie basin may be getting wetter in relation to the Michigan-Huron basin. This change in the supply of water to the lakes can also have an impact on the relative difference between their water levels.

The last major dredging project in the St. Clair River was completed in 1962. Studies completed at that time determined that there would be an impact on upstream water levels and that the system would reach a new equilibrium. Comparisons of historic river bottom data show some areas where the river is getting shallower and some areas where it is getting deeper over time. Ongoing erosion has not been sufficiently documented, nor can it be linked to dredging operations at this time.

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## Scott Thieme, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



*Scott J. Thieme, P.E., is chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Great Lakes Hydraulics and Hydrology Office in Detroit.*

## Revised Annex agreements released for public review

The revised Annex 2001 Implementing Agreements have been released by the Great Lakes governors and premiers and are now available for public comment through Aug. 29, 2005.

As an annex to the Great Lakes Charter, the draft agreements are designed to strengthen the management and protection of the Great Lakes. Key elements include:

- A ban on diversions of water with limited exceptions
- Each of the Great Lakes states and the provinces would implement common decisionmaking standards governing new or increased water use proposals

- More of the decisionmaking process for in-basin water uses would take place at the state and provincial level rather than at the regional level

- A procedure for regional review of the implementation of the agreements and resolution of disputes

- Strengthened commitments to reduce demand for water and improve efficient use of water through requiring conservation by current and future water users

The first draft of the agreements generated more than 10,000 public comments last summer following their release. The changes to the revised draft

agreements reflect many of the changes and concerns raised by the public.

Following the conclusion of the current 60-day public comment period, the Great Lakes governors and premiers will seek consensus on finalizing the agreements. Once finalized, the documents will provide a framework for each of the eight Great Lakes states and the provinces of Ontario and Québec to pass laws that will protect the Great Lakes basin.

The revised drafts and other information, including instructions for posting comments, are available through [www.cglg.org/projects/water](http://www.cglg.org/projects/water)



## Great Lakes Calendar

### Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Public Meetings

July 28-Aug. 30, 2005, various locations  
Contact: Nancy Guiden, 312-353-5006 or visit [www.glrc.us](http://www.glrc.us)

### Soo Locks Sesquicentennial Closing Ceremonies

September 2, 2005, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.  
Contact: Soo Locks Visitors Center Association, 906-632-6361 or visit [www.saultstemarie.com/pages/soo\\_locks.html](http://www.saultstemarie.com/pages/soo_locks.html)

### Pennsylvania Land Use Roundtable

Sept. 14, 2005, Erie, Pa.  
Contact: Victoria Pebbles, 734-971-9135, [vpebbles@glc.org](mailto:vpebbles@glc.org)

### Lake St. Clair Biennial Conference

Sept. 21-22, 2005, Wallaceburg, Ontario.  
Contact: Greg Mayne, 905-336-6021, [greg.mayne@ec.gc.ca](mailto:greg.mayne@ec.gc.ca)

### 2005 Annual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission and 50th Anniversary Celebration

Sept. 27-29, 2005, Ann Arbor, Mich.  
Contact: Christine Manninen, 734-971-9135, [manninen@glc.org](mailto:manninen@glc.org)

### Seventh Symposium on Off Flavours in the Aquatic Environment

October 2-7, 2005, Cornwall, Ontario  
Contact: Christina Collard, 613-936-6620, [ccollard@riverinstitute.com](mailto:ccollard@riverinstitute.com)

### 2006 Great Lakes Regional Data Exchange Conference

April 4-6, 2006, Rochester, N.Y.  
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## State AGs oppose ballast bill

The attorneys general of six Great Lakes states have joined together in voicing their objections to pending legislation in the U.S. Senate that they say would impinge upon state efforts to control invasive species.

In a July 20 letter, the attorneys general of Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin expressed to the U.S. Senate their opposition to Senate Bill 363, the "Ballast Water Management Act of 2005." Among their objections, they say the bill would eliminate the authority of U.S. EPA to regulate ballast water under the Clean Water Act; prevent states from establishing their own, stricter ballast water standards; and allow "no ballast on board" (NOBOB) vessels to continue to avoid regulation.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, would cement authority for ballast water regulation under the U.S. Coast Guard, which has been responsible for most regulation to date. It also would establish national standards for ballast water regulation that are in harmony with international standards established last year by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The S. 363 standards are based on those established under the interna-

tional treaty, but with stricter standards. The legislation has attracted support from many in the shipping industry because it offers a consistent approach to international regulation.

The Great Lakes Commission, in a policy resolution adopted at its 2005 Semiannual Meeting, has called upon the U.S. Coast Guard to develop a regulatory regime to address NOBOB vessels and urged a collaborative approach in standardizing ballast water management standards among the states and provinces of the Great Lakes region. (See story, page 6)

Opponents of the bill contend that the current regulatory regime under the Coast Guard has been ineffective. A U.S. District Court ruled in March that U.S. EPA must regulate ballast water under the Clean Water Act; subsequently, the six state attorneys general successfully petitioned to be allowed to participate in the case's enforcement actions.

S. 363 is one of several pieces of invasive species legislation before Congress this year; another is the National Invasive Species Act of 2005 (S. 770 and H.R. 1591), which is a broader measure addressing multiple aspects of invasive species management, including ballast water regulation.

## Scott Thieme (cont'd from Page 9)

From 1968 to 1998, water levels were above average on Lake Michigan-Huron for all but four years in the late 1980s, and it set two record high levels during that time, first in 1974 then again at a higher level in 1986. Levels declined below long-term averages in 2000 due to factors such as decreased precipitation and increased evaporation. This recent natural fluctuation toward lower levels has caused many to

seek reasons outside of natural influences.

The Great Lakes community is committed to studying the issues of a perceived drop in the water levels of Lake Michigan-Huron relative to lakes St. Clair and Erie. These issues are part of a complex, dynamic system and all aspects need to be thoroughly investigated and monitored into the future.



*The Soo Locks Administration Building, between the Poe and MacArthur locks, is decked out for the Engineer's Day celebration June 24, the first of the summer-long observations of the locks' 150th anniversary this summer.*

## Soo Locks mark 150th anniversary

The world-famous Soo Locks, first opened in 1855, are celebrating their 150th anniversary this year with events all summer long at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. The June 24 kickoff celebration provided free public access to the locks for up-close viewing of passing ships, as well as a variety of historical displays. The festivities will culminate Sept. 2 with an anniversary ball with governors and other dignitaries.

The locks allow vessels to traverse the 21-foot drop in elevation on the St. Marys River between Lake Superior and Lake Huron. The five locks – four American and one Canadian – ship through more cargo on an annual basis than the Panama Canal. For more information, visit [www.saultstemarie.com](http://www.saultstemarie.com)

## Mary Muter (cont'd from Page 9)

lowered Michigan-Huron levels by approximately 30 cm.; by comparison, the Chicago diversion has lowered Michigan-Huron levels by 6.4 centimeters since 1970.

- The ongoing erosion is resulting in a daily diversion of 845 million gallons.

(The full Baird Report can be downloaded from the GBA website at [www.georgianbay.ca](http://www.georgianbay.ca))

GBA presented these findings to the IJC, Environment Canada, shippers and agencies on both sides of the border. The IJC said this level of work was unheard of by such a small non-governmental group. The IJC announced in May that as a result of the Baird findings, it was revising its Upper Great Lakes Plan of Study to investigate the Michigan-Huron outflow and deter-

mine the best mitigation methods.

The Baird findings should change forever how government agencies monitor Michigan-Huron water levels. At a time when eight U.S. states, Ontario and Quebec are negotiating the Annex agreement for future use of Great Lakes waters, it's important that the amount of this precious resource we still have is better understood.

## Where in the Great Lakes?



Can you identify this Great Lakes landmark? If you think you know, e-mail your answer, along with your name, address and phone number to [kirkh@glc.org](mailto:kirkh@glc.org) or mail it to the *Advisor* at the address on the back page. All correct responses received by Sept. 23, 2005 will be entered into a drawing. The winner will receive his/her choice of a Great Lakes Commission 50th anniversary t-shirt or a \$10 credit toward the purchase of any Commission publication.

*Photo: Jeff Gunderson*

Last issue's winner was Julie Letterhos, Ohio EPA Lake Erie program coordinator, who identified this photo of Put-In-Bay taken from the top of the Perry Memorial. Thanks to everyone who entered! Photo: Kirk Haverkamp.



# Commissioners' Corner



## Floating an energy saving idea

This summer's ballooning gasoline prices have focused renewed attention on the need for energy efficiency. That's why a pair of new reports on Great Lakes shipping are so welcome. These reports, the Commission's own updated Modal Shift Study and a white paper from the Association of Great Lakes Ports, document the significant fuel savings offered by Great Lakes waterborne transportation compared to land-based modes.

Early humans discovered that it was far easier to move a heavy load if you could float it on water. These days, the efficiencies offered by waterborne transport are still nothing short of astonishing. One gallon of fuel is sufficient to move a ton of goods approximately 60 miles by truck. Rail transport offers greater efficiency, moving a ton 200 miles on that same gallon of fuel. But a Great Lakes freighter can move that ton of freight nearly 1,000 miles!

Waterborne transport offers other benefits and efficiencies as well. Burning less fuel means fewer pollutants released into our atmosphere, including those linked to climate change. Moving goods by water can also help reduce congestion and wear on our highways, along with their staggering maintenance and construction costs. The rate of accidents and hazardous spills for waterborne transportation is roughly one and two percent that of land-based modes, respectively, and since lake freighters don't require roads, they don't require the environmental degradation and loss of land that occurs when new highways are built.

What they do require, however, is well-maintained ports, shipping channels and navigation aids. These aren't cheap – until you compare them to the staggering amounts we spend subsidizing the highways, bridges and other land-based transportation infrastructure. Then they seem like a bargain – and they are.

The Hon. Thomas E. Huntley, Chair, Great Lakes Commission

### ADVISOR

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