



Influencing Great Lakes Policy

The Commission's enabling legislation, the Great Lakes Basin Compact, empowers the Commission to recommend policies, laws, ordinances and regulations relating to the development, use and conservation of the basin's water resources. Toward that end, the Commission carries out a vigorous advocacy program that includes building consensus among member states; presenting advice and recommendations to regional and national leadership; and forming coalitions with regional, binational and international partners. In addition, the Commission plays a leading role in policy development, bringing together decisionmakers, researchers and others to examine underlying issues and propose policy solutions. In 2004, those efforts included the following:

Great Lakes Day in Washington: Getting the Attention We Deserve

The Great Lakes Commission, along with the Northeast-Midwest Institute, sponsors the annual Great Lakes Day in Washington, widely regarded as the year's premier Great Lakes policy event. The 2004 event was one of the most successful ever, with a record attendance of more than 140 Great Lakes leaders, including many members of Congress and key aides. Speakers included Sen. Mike DeWine (R-OH), Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Rep. Tom Reynolds (R-NY) and Cleveland Mayor Jane Campbell. Commission Chair Sam Speck, accompanied by Vice Chair Tom Huntley, presented the legislative and appropriations priorities of the Commission membership, and joined with other speakers in calling for a unified approach to ecosystem restoration, protection and sustainable use. Later, senior officials and key aides provided detailed discussions of Great Lakes issues at a briefing sponsored by the Commission.

www.glc.org/greatlakesday

The Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity

The annual *Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity* summarizes the federal legislative and appropriations priorities of the Commission's member states and provides a blueprint for its advocacy efforts each year. Built around goals which are essential to the restoration, protection and sustainable use of the natural resources of the Great Lakes basin, the *Great Lakes Program* identifies specific measures the Commission recommends to Congress in support of those goals and is unveiled each year at Great Lakes Day in Washington (see above). To strengthen the region's advocacy position, the Commission moved in 2004 to harmonize its restoration priorities with those of the Council of Great Lakes Governors, and the 2005 *Great Lakes Program* will reflect those common objectives.

www.glc.org/restore

After 30 Years, a Fresh Look at a Landmark Study

In 1972, the International Joint Commission organized the first truly comprehensive effort to address the connection between land use and water quality in the binational Great Lakes region: the Pollution from Land Use Activities Reference Group (PLUARG) study. To assess the current state of nonpoint source pollution and control programs and changes in land-use activities since then, the Commission convened a workshop in November 2004, bringing together Great Lakes agency officials, researchers and others involved in the issue. Participants identified significant issues and unmet needs and discussed opportunities for advancing a regional agenda for land-use management and nonpoint source pollution control. Workshop findings and recommendations are being presented to Great Lakes policymakers and public agencies.

www.glc.org/postpluarg

Great Lakes Sustainable Land Use Roundtable Series

The Commission is conducting a series of state policy roundtables to promote links between brownfields redevelopment and greenfields protection. These roundtables build upon regional policy analysis, previously conducted by the Commission, on strengthening the links between urban revitalization and open space protection. Each roundtable is crafted to meet the individual needs of the host state and build upon progress already made there, while sharing information on policy options and ways to make urban revitalization and open space protection mutually supportive. The Commission assisted three Great Lakes states in planning land-use roundtables to take place in 2005. An Ohio roundtable will focus on developing indicators for the state's balanced growth program; one in Wisconsin will address coastal community revitalization; and planning has begun for a Pennsylvania event.

www.glc.org/landuse

Additional Accomplishments

- Engaged in direct communication with members of Congress and their legislative and appropriations committees through letters, briefings and testimony to advance *Great Lakes Program* priorities
- Coordinated Great Lakes regional efforts to analyze and comment on the Preliminary Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and ensured that the report recognized the national significance of the Great Lakes
- Prepared a Great Lakes Monitoring Gap Analysis report that addresses monitoring gaps and overlaps and includes monitoring policy recommendations
- Promoted efforts to strengthen partnerships among federal, state and local agencies involved in the Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs) program
- Prepared educational materials and technical reports on other resource management issues for use by regional and national policymakers

Regional Initiative: Annex 2001

In anticipation of growing demands for water in the 21st century, the Great Lakes Charter Annex 2001, an addendum to the Great Lakes Charter of 1985, was developed. Endorsed by the Great Lakes governors and premiers, Annex 2001 was designed to update the Great Lakes regional water management system and ensure the Great Lakes are protected, conserved, restored and improved for future generations. Draft implementation agreements were released in mid-2004 to high public interest and continue to be refined using input provided during the ensuing review period. Great Lakes Commission support for the process literally began with signing of the original charter and, in recent years, has consisted of policy research and advice, decision support system development, bihydrological inventory work, and technical analyses on topics such as water conservation practices and policies.

www.cglg.org/projects/water



Protecting the Environment

The Great Lakes Commission has a significant presence in environmental protection and restoration, supporting and coordinating a variety of initiatives to directly benefit the environment. These include assistance to local conservation organizations, organizing groups of volunteers, developing tools for responding to environmental threats, developing guidelines for environmentally friendly practices and supporting cleanup efforts at contaminated sites. Examples of these efforts in 2004 included:

Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control

The Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control supports efforts to improve water quality by reducing the amount of soil and associated nutrients and contaminants that enter the waters of the Great Lakes basin. A federal/state partnership managed by the Commission, the program provided \$1.9 million in grants to 48 large- and small-scale projects in 2004, with recipients in all eight Great Lakes states. These included efforts to limit erosion and sedimentation; strengthen local soil and sediment control programs; and raise awareness of the damage caused by erosion and sedimentation and ways to limit them. The Basin Program publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Keeping It On the Land*, which reaches 2,300 recipients in the soil and water conservation community. The program also distributed approximately 8,000 full-color posters illustrating best management practices for reducing erosion and sedimentation.

www.glc.org/basin

Michigan Clean Water Corps

The Commission is working with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to establish the Michigan Clean Water Corps – *MiCorps*. Established by an executive order of Gov. Jennifer Granholm, *MiCorps* is organizing the efforts of volunteer monitoring groups in tracking water quality around the state. Working in partnership with the Huron River Watershed Council, the Commission is organizing and training volunteers; implementing quality assurance practices; facilitating data reporting and information sharing; and providing a forum for communication and support among volunteer monitoring groups. The Commission has established a *MiCorps* web site and logo, solicited proposals for community-based stream monitoring initiatives, surveyed monitoring groups, and developed criteria for inclusion in the *MiCorps* program. Ultimately, *MiCorps* could serve as a model for a larger, Great Lakes volunteer monitoring network.

www.micorps.net

Rapid Response Plan for Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions

To help prevent and control new outbreaks of aquatic invasive species, the Commission worked with the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species to develop a model rapid response plan to anticipate, prevent and respond to new Great Lakes aquatic invasions before they can spread. The model plan outlines institutional arrangements and protocols needed to quickly identify and assess new threats, determine and implement appropriate control measures, and conduct related outreach and public education efforts. A “test run” of the model plan was conducted in July 2004, in cooperation with the Michigan DEQ Office of the Great Lakes, using a hypothetical invasion by hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), a nonindigenous plant considered a potential invader of state waters. Results of that workshop are being used to finalize the model, which will then be made available for implementation.

www.glc.org/ans/initiatives

Inland Sensitivity Atlas

Since 1992, the Commission has provided GIS mapping support to the U.S. EPA Region 5 and the Inland Area Planning Committee to develop area and regional contingency plans for responding to hazardous spills. The Commission has compiled data on environmentally, economically and culturally sensitive areas located within Region 5 jurisdiction, with special emphasis on areas that are susceptible to oil and hazardous material spills. The project involves identification and mapping of all major pipelines, transportation corridors and other potential spill sources, as well as natural resources and sensitive areas such as surface water intakes, marinas and riparian properties. In 2004, the Commission finished production of high-precision atlases for its assigned geography and began preparations for the first cycle of updates to key areas.

www.glc.org/spills/products.html

Additional Accomplishments

- Published the inaugural edition of *Clearing the Air*, a bulletin on air toxic deposition in the Great Lakes region
- Worked with the Great Lakes Dredging Team to develop a process to determine “environmental windows” when dredging activities will have minimal adverse ecological effects
- Published a summary and status report on Lakewide Management Plans in the Great Lakes
- Oversaw development of the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Inventory, a comprehensive, binational register of wetland boundaries



Building a Sustainable Economy

The regional economy is inextricably tied to the water and related natural resources of the Great Lakes basin. Communities, industries and agriculture require reliable supplies of quality surface and groundwater to meet their needs. Great Lakes maritime shipping plays a vital role in manufacturing and trade. Hydropower helps provide for the region's energy needs, and recreational uses – including boating, fishing or simply vacationing at the shore – represent a growing, multibillion-dollar industry all their own. Meeting the wide-ranging needs of these many users while protecting and preserving the resources for future generations – the concept of “sustainability” – is a significant challenge and one to which the Great Lakes Commission is committed.



Great Lakes Recreational Boating Economic Impact Study

Recreational boating in the Great Lakes generates an enormous economic impact within the region, meaning that recreational harbors merit serious consideration for ongoing maintenance. But the actual dollar figures and jobs generated by recreational boating on a basin-wide scale have never been documented to any degree of accuracy. Together with the National Recreational Marine Research Center at Michigan State University, the Commission is conducting the first study to portray the regional impact of Great Lakes recreational boating in its entirety, including boater spending patterns and volumes, the contributions to state economies by marinas and charter fishing operators, and the dollars and jobs generated by Great Lakes watercraft manufacturers. The first phase of the study was completed in 2004, with additional elements and enhancements being added in 2005.

NOAA Great Lakes Service Center

The Great Lakes Commission entered into an agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Services Center in 2004 to establish the NOAA Great Lakes Service Center. The Service Center coordinates regional needs assessments, outreach activities, and training and technical assistance addressing coastal management within the region's eight states. The center's activities will also be coordinated with relevant partners in Ontario and Québec. One goal of the Great Lakes Services Center will be to integrate NOAA scientific and technical expertise, including experience from other port ranges, with state and local capabilities to address issues of concern in the Great Lakes. Among these are matters affecting marine transportation, water-based recreation, and port authorities' diverse stewardship and economic development responsibilities.

Benefits of the Marine Transportation Mode

An update to the Commission's 1993 study, *Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Commerce: Safety, Energy and Environmental Implications of Modal Shifts*, is currently being conducted. A centerpiece of the study, as with the original, is a series of movement scenarios typical to Great Lakes/Seaway trade in which rail, truck and marine modes are compared on the basis of fuel use, emissions and risk of accidents, areas where the original study demonstrated significant advantages for marine transportation modes. The study also features a case study reflecting emerging interest in the Great Lakes marine mode for passenger travel and an analysis of land-use implications of modal shifts.

Regional Guidance for Dredged Material Beneficial Use

A significant problem in navigation channel maintenance dredging is overcoming the logistical, environmental, social and legal obstacles to disposing of the resulting material. To address that need, as identified by the Great Lakes Dredging Team's Beneficial Use Task Force, the Commission published a guide showing ways that much of that material can be put to productive use in upland areas. Intended for dredged material managers, regulators and other interested parties, *Testing and Evaluating Dredged Material for Upland Beneficial Uses: a Regional Framework for the Great Lakes*, provides guidance on how to identify and implement appropriate upland beneficial projects for different types of material and under various circumstances. A separate annotated bibliography serves as a companion document with more than 200 references.

www.glc.org/dredging

Additional Accomplishments

- Assisted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in preparing a needs analysis for a new large Soo Lock, which is crucial to the future and security of Great Lakes marine transportation
- Engaged as a liaison with the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Seaway maritime community in the development of the Great Lakes Observing System, which includes meteorological monitors and aids to navigation
- Provided technical and secretariat services for the Great Lakes Dredging Team, a state/federal partnership that resolves issues related to navigational dredging
- Completed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Strategic Plan Report under the John Glenn Great Lakes Basin Program, outlining proposals for Great Lakes programs and authorities
- Provided secretariat services for the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors and its annual conference

Regional Initiative: Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway Study

The binational Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway navigation system is a key component of North America's transportation infrastructure, serving some 15 major international ports and 50 regional ports on both sides of the border. But the system is aging, with many components well beyond their design lives. In May 2003, the U.S. and Canadian governments initiated a study of the seaway system to assess its maintenance and operational needs. Managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Transport Canada, the study is assessing the economic, environmental and engineering factors associated with the current and future needs of the system. The Great Lakes Commission and St. Lawrence Economic Development Council (SODES) were contracted to obtain stakeholder input on the study, and conducted a series of five public consultation sessions during summer 2004, the results of which were submitted to the project's management team.

www.glsis-study.com

Supporting Science and Research

The foundation for effective natural resources management is sound science and research. Understanding the dynamics of natural systems and the broad range of variables those systems are subject to is essential to making good policy decisions and allocating resources to address challenges. In collaboration with both public and private partners, the Great Lakes Commission plays an active role in coordinating and supporting natural resources research and monitoring efforts in the Great Lakes region. Examples of such efforts in 2004 included the following:

Great Lakes Observing System

The Commission is coordinating the development of the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS), which will provide centralized access to a variety of real-time and historical Great Lakes data. GLOS will bring together data collected by numerous agencies and organizations on climate, meteorology, chemistry, geology, biology and human activities affecting the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system. GLOS is one of 11 regional nodes being developed as part of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) covering the nation's coastal areas. It is designed to meet the needs of many user communities, including resource managers, researchers, educators, commercial shippers, recreational boaters, beach users and homeland security interests, among others. A draft business plan for the system was completed by a regional steering committee in late 2004 and a regional association to operate GLOS will be chartered in 2005.

www.glc.org/glos

Great Lakes Tributary Modeling

In support of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Great Lakes Tributary Modeling Program, the Commission is assisting with the development of sediment transport models and science-based predictive tools. These are designed to enable state and local resource agencies to quantify the effects of land-use activities and development upon soil erosion and sedimentation. Commission contributions in 2004 included planning and conducting two technical stakeholder meetings for projects within the watersheds of Pennsylvania's Mill and Cascade creeks and Michigan's Sebawaing River. Other initiatives included a regional workshop addressing sediment control research, approaches and needs, and opportunities to coordinate sedimentation reduction efforts in the Great Lakes region. A second workshop focused on watershed planning and the development and use of geographic information system (GIS)-based decision support tools.

www.glc.org/tributary



Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat Assessment

The Commission and NOAA are nearing the conclusion of a multiyear collaborative research, data collection and analysis effort to develop a comprehensive assessment of Lake St. Clair's coastal habitat. Focusing on a 10-mile buffer around the lake, the Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat Assessment describes the area's natural communities, both historical and surviving, and provides recommendations for the latter's conservation and restoration. The region is home to several globally imperiled natural communities – including lakeplain prairie, lakeplain oak savanna and Great Lakes marsh – as well as a number of rare and endangered species. A GIS-based Integrated Coastal Management Tool was developed to allow users to evaluate the possible impacts of various management decisions, such as a proposed development, mitigation or conservation activity. A final report will be released in early 2005.

www.glc.org/habitat

Coastal Wetlands

The Commission supports a regional approach to coastal wetlands monitoring by coordinating the work of the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium. Consisting of approximately two dozen U.S. and Canadian science and policy experts, the Consortium is developing a long-term monitoring program for Great Lakes coastal wetlands. In 2004, the Consortium released the first-ever binational inventory of these wetlands. Classified by type, the inventory will enable resource managers to assess the quantity and quality of Great Lakes coastal wetlands over time, by using it in combination with remote sensing techniques. Consortium investigators also developed several indices of biotic integrity for coastal wetlands and delivered the first comprehensive report on the status and trends of Great Lakes coastal wetlands at the biennial State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference.

www.glc.org/wetlands

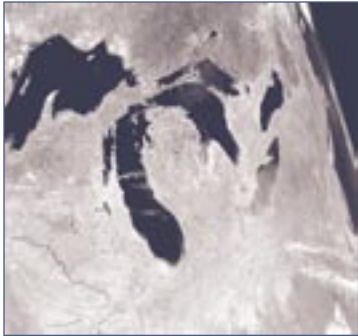
Additional Accomplishments

- Managed the regional Great Lakes Air Deposition (GLAD) grants program, funding research on air-deposited persistent bioaccumulative toxics in the binational Great Lakes region
- Completed an annual inventory of point, area and mobile source air emissions, including information on 213 pollutants, under the Great Lakes Regional Air Toxic Emissions Inventory
- Coordinated development of a multiagency tributary monitoring exercise for the Lake Michigan basin to take place in 2005
- Supported students interested in electronic communications technology and its applications in the Great Lakes region through the annual Carol A. Ratza Memorial Scholarship



Developing Public Information Tools

Sound science and successful natural resources management depend on good data and information. To assist researchers, policymakers and the public in obtaining and sharing the information they need, and in getting a handle on the sometimes overwhelming flood of data now available, the Great Lakes Commission devotes significant resources to the development of public information tools. These tools – which include Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Internet portals, publications and others – bring together data and information from disparate sources into cohesive, accessible formats and frequently provide for sharing information among users. The following are examples of such efforts in 2004:



Online Geographic Information Systems

The Commission is leading regional efforts to design, implement and maintain Internet-based GIS applications. Among these is the Centralized Air Repository OnLine (CAROL) web portal, which provides access to Great Lakes toxic air emissions data. Designed to allow a wide range of users to obtain data in a form and at a level appropriate to their needs, CAROL illustrates the geographic distribution of up to 213 toxic compounds released into the atmosphere within the region, using data collected by the Great Lakes states and province of Ontario. Another web portal developed and being refined by Commission staff serves the needs of the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study (LOSLRS, see sidebar). The application catalogs information generated by the study and allows users to search for the data they require.

<http://mds.glc.org/carol>

<http://mds.glc.org/loslrs/mapper.php>

Great Lakes Monitoring Inventory

The Commission continues to improve access to monitoring information by producing the first-ever binational monitoring inventory for the Great Lakes. Building on previous inventory efforts focused on Lake Michigan and Lake St. Clair, the Commission collected and analyzed information from more than 540 monitoring programs from all branches of government and from nongovernmental organizations across the Great Lakes region. The inventory is being customized for access over the Internet, allowing users to easily search for monitoring programs that address a specific geographic area or individual pollutant. Using the monitoring inventory, the Commission assessed gaps in the overall Great Lakes monitoring regime and is preparing policy recommendations to strengthen and better coordinate Great Lakes monitoring programs. A draft of this report has been completed and will be published in 2005.

www.glc.org/monitoring/greatlakes

GIS Assessment of Nonindigenous Invasive Species

To support ongoing efforts in advancing the prevention and control of Great Lakes aquatic invasions, the Commission has produced a collection of online tools to collate, document and disseminate geographic information on eight key aquatic invasive species known to have invaded Michigan waters. Information on these species has been compiled into a database and summarized using a GIS for distribution via the Internet. To allow for ease of use and enhanced coordination among resource managers, the site is designed to allow users to explore infestations by species, county and watershed, and view species-specific animated maps showing the development of known infestations over time. Users may download GIS data and species abstracts. Though developed for Michigan waters, the project has the potential to serve as a model for other Great Lakes watersheds as well.

www.glin.net/envt/flora-fauna/invasive/mapping.html

Water Conservation Toolkit

A water conservation toolkit was developed by the Commission in 2004 to provide guidance to Great Lakes states and provinces in developing water conservation programs. The toolkit is one of a series of Great Lakes Protection Fund projects undertaken by the Commission to provide practical and scientific support toward the implementation of Annex 2001 of the Great Lakes Charter, including measures to promote the efficient use and conservation of the waters of the Great Lakes basin. The toolkit includes an assessment of current water conservation practices in the public supply sector, a case study analysis of best water conservation practices in the region, a summary of best conservation practices elsewhere in the world, a review of best conservation technologies, and a look at the implementation of comprehensive water conservation programs around the world.

www.glc.org/wateruse/conservation

Additional Accomplishments

- Completed a draft assessment of available biohydrological information on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in support of Annex 2001 implementation
- Established an Internet-based “virtual library” of Remedial Action Plan (RAP) resources, including RAP documents, technical materials, funding sources, contacts and other information
- Published and began implementing a five-year strategic plan for the Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN)
- Developed a dynamic GLIN Daily News headline “tracker” – a free service – to promote awareness of Great Lakes daily news and current conditions
- Procured, installed and implemented a dedicated GIS server to enhance GLIN
- Enhanced the Great Lakes Information Network Data Access (GLINDA) clearinghouse node as part of the U.S. Spatial Data Infrastructure

Regional Initiative: Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study

The Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River study was initiated by the International Joint Commission to re-evaluate the procedures and criteria used to regulate outflows from the lake through the river, in response to concerns over environmental impacts and evolving human uses of the system. Now completing its fourth year, the five-year study takes into account impacts on shoreline property, recreational boating and environmental sustainability, as well as the historic considerations of commercial navigation, hydropower production and domestic water supply. The Great Lakes Commission is providing comprehensive information support to the study’s board, technical working groups and stakeholder advisory group. Draft recommendations are to be released in 2005. www.losl.org

Bringing People Together

One of the Great Lakes Commission's most significant roles is that of convener, bringing together experts and stakeholders to address the challenges facing the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system. These events include conferences to share the latest data and information on cutting-edge topics; workshops to develop strategies and approaches for tackling an issue; hearings to gather public input on an issue of concern; and discussions among public officials on matters under their jurisdiction. Examples of such efforts over the past year included the following:

Great Lakes Regional Data Exchange Conference

Emerging technologies have generated a flood of Great Lakes-related data in a wide variety of formats, including research and monitoring inventories, collaborative regional mapping applications, data clearinghouses, and related decision support tools. Successful Great Lakes management requires that rapid advances in this field are well-coordinated and standardized. Toward this end, the Commission hosted the inaugural Great Lakes Regional Data Exchange (RDX) Conference Oct. 26-28, 2004, in Detroit, Mich. RDX provided a diverse set of more than 150 stakeholders with a forum to discuss the future of collaborative data and information management across the Great Lakes region. Conference presentations, proceedings and recommendations will be published online and on CD-ROM. The RDX Conference is envisioned as a biennial event.

<http://rdx.glc.org>

Restoring Great Lakes Areas of Concern

Advancing efforts to restore Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs) is a long-standing priority for the Great Lakes Commission. The Commission has taken the lead in coordinating and assisting the many stakeholders involved in the AOCs by convening training workshops, developing informational resources, highlighting funding opportunities, and facilitating communication among partner agencies. Working with local Remedial Action Plan (RAP) groups developing cleanup plans for individual AOCs, the Commission provides tools and methodologies for restoring beneficial uses and assists in developing measurable targets to assess progress in meeting cleanup goals. It also administers funding and provides outreach services for RAP groups. As part of its advocacy mission, the Commission continues to communicate funding and technical needs for the AOCs to state and federal legislators, with a major focus on the Great Lakes Legacy Act. The Commission also supports the Statewide Public Advisory Council for Michigan's AOC Program.

www.glc.org/spac



Restoration Workshops: Developing a Blueprint for Change

Shaping and advancing priorities for ecosystem restoration was a major theme in 2004, and the focus of a partnership between the Great Lakes Commission, Great Lakes Sea Grant programs and Council of Great Lakes Governors. A series of seven stakeholder workshops was held throughout the region, drawing approximately 700 stakeholders with a range of opinions but a shared objective: the restoration, protection and sustainable use of the greatest system of fresh water on the face of the earth. The workshops focused on nine priorities advanced by the region's governors, which participants helped relate to state-specific and local needs. Workshop outcomes, including a synthesis statement and associated research, are being broadly disseminated, with a special focus on participants in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration process.

www.glc.org/restwkslp

Baltic Sea-Great Lakes Collaboration

The Great Lakes and the Baltic Sea region face many of the same issues when it comes to the threat posed by aquatic nuisance species. To address these challenges, the Great Lakes Commission organized and hosted the Baltic Sea-Great Lakes Workshop on Aquatic Invasive Species in April 2004, with participants from the United States, Canada, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. Participants discussed research and management approaches and identified opportunities for multilateral cooperation that could leverage funding in both the Baltic and Great Lakes regions. Future cooperative efforts could help develop early detection, warning and vulnerability assessment tools and identify other areas for scientific and management exchange.

Additional Accomplishments

- Provided secretariat support for the Lake Michigan Monitoring Coordination Council, a federal, state and tribal initiative focusing on tributary and nonindigenous species monitoring
- Provided an ongoing forum for the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium, a binational group that is developing a long-term monitoring program for Great Lakes coastal wetlands
- Invited the Helsinki Commission to join with the Great Lakes Commission in an official relationship as an Observer organization

Regional Initiative: Great Lakes Regional Collaboration

The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration was established by the presidential Executive Order of May 18, 2004, which called for a collaborative process to yield a strategy to achieve common restoration goals. More than 300 elected officials, policy leaders and stakeholders convened in Chicago on Dec. 3, 2004, to get the process under way. A series of broadly endorsed restoration priorities, articulated by the region's governors, provide the organizing themes for the effort. Eight teams, involving hundreds of stakeholders from within and outside government, are working to develop the strategy, which will focus on guiding restoration, protection and sustainable use initiatives well into the future. The Great Lakes Commission is proud to be signatory to the associated Great Lakes Declaration, and has staff members assigned to all eight strategy teams to provide technical, policy and research support.

www.epa.gov/greatlakes/collaboration