



From left: Dan Eichinger, alternate Commissioner, Michigan; Ken DeBeaussaert, delegation chair, Michigan; Michel Lafleur, delegation chair, Québec; Michigan Lt. Gov. John Cherry, chair; Todd Ambs, delegation chair, Wisconsin; Cathy Curran Myers, delegation chair, Pennsylvania; Kari Evans, delegation chair, Indiana; Don Zelazny, associate Commissioner, New York; and Tim Eder, executive director.

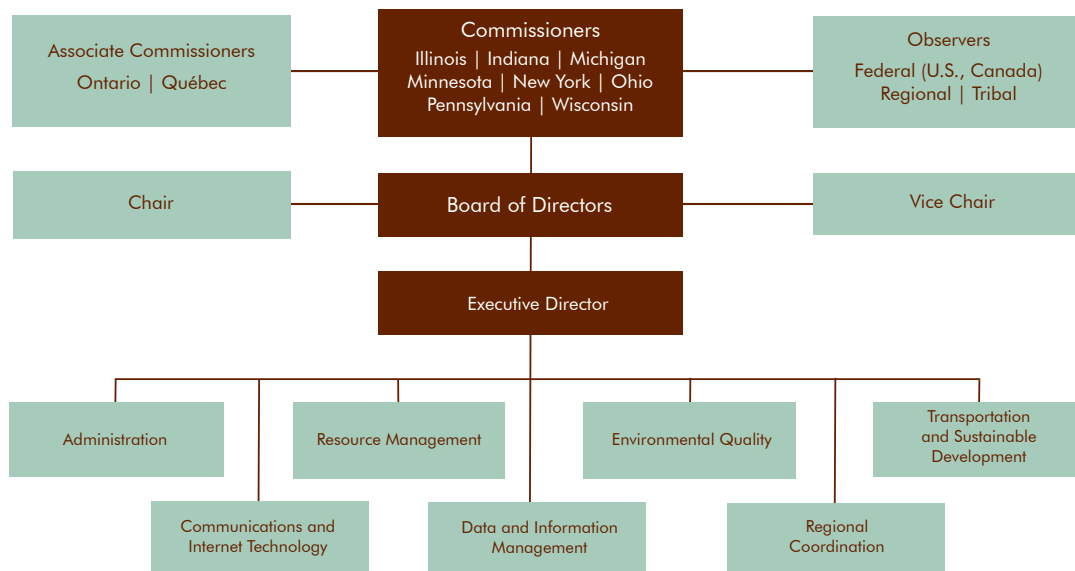
Commission Board and Structure

“By virtue of its charter and history, the Great Lakes Commission is uniquely positioned to play a critical role as a key source of information, mediator of conflicts and builder of consensus on Great Lakes issues.” -

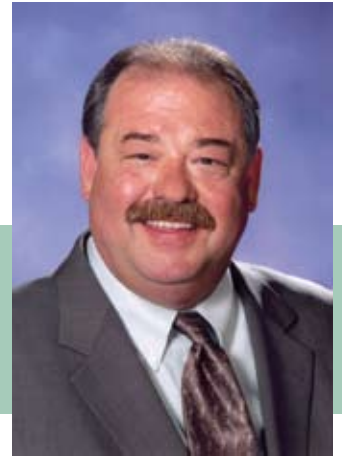
Dr. Sam Speck, past director, Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources and chair, Great Lakes Commission (2002-04)

Board of Directors

- Chair: Lt. Gov. John Cherry, Michigan
- Vice Chair: Lt. Gov. Patrick Quinn, Illinois
- Immediate Past Chair: State Rep. Thomas Huntley, Minnesota
- Kari Evans, Indiana
- Ken DeBeaussaert, Michigan
- Denise Sheehan, New York
- Sean Logan, Ohio
- Bill Carr, Ontario
- Cathy Curran Myers, Pennsylvania
- Michel Lafleur, Québec
- Todd Ambs, Wisconsin



“...the Great Lakes Commission will bring new energy to finding and creating strategic partnerships among citizens, stakeholders, industry and governments.”



Finding Common Ground

Michigan Lt. Gov. John Cherry Chair, Great Lakes Commission

I am truly humbled and honored to serve as the chair of the Great Lakes Commission. For over 50 years, the Commission has effected change, led opinion, and been an immovable ally for our Great Lakes.

The Commission, Member states, and our treasured natural resources owe a debt to my predecessor, Tom Huntley, for his wisdom and leadership during our time of transition. Tom's calming stewardship of the organization has enabled the Commission to review its priorities internally while never losing sight of our overall mission.

It is appropriate then, as we write the last chapter on 2006 to turn our view forward to 2007. As we enter the new year, we do so with a great sense of urgency and an even greater sense of optimism. With work already underway in the 110th Congress, the Commission will pursue an aggressive agenda to complete and fully fund key Great Lakes priorities.

To that end, the entire Great Lakes community should seek full partnership with the Congress and the President in implementing and fully funding the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy. This strategy, a blueprint for rehabilitating our Great Lakes, must move beyond the conceptual and become the tangible. Additionally, the Commission will call for increased focus on a comprehensive solution to the problem of aquatic invasive species – long overdue at the federal level.

To earn consensus and key victories on solutions to the most critical areas of need, the Great Lakes Commission will bring new energy to finding and creating strategic partnerships among citizens, stakeholders, industry and governments. We will seek to show that advocating on behalf of the Great Lakes is not a competitive marketplace, but a collective one.

Though there is a great deal of work to be done this year I am more convinced than ever that the Great Lakes Commission will find common ground for our common cause.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "John D. Cherry, Jr." The signature is fluid and cursive.

John D. Cherry, Jr.

“...there may be no other organization as well-suited as the Commission to tackle the problem of invasive species.”



Challenges and Opportunities

Tim Eder
Executive Director

Every so often, organizations like the Great Lakes Commission go through natural evolutions. Though change can be disconcerting, it can also be a time for reinvigoration or, as Stephen Covey put it, “sharpening the saw.”

The year 2006 was a time of transition for the Great Lakes Commission. Following my hiring in July, the Board of Directors immediately launched a strategic planning process that is defining our niche among other regional organizations and reaffirming our role as a regional leader in the areas of communication and education, information integration and reporting, facilitation and consensus building, and policy coordination and advocacy.

Our greatest strength as an organization is our foundation in state and federal law as an agency of the eight Great Lakes states. This one central theme is the basis for all our strategic planning. Along with Associate Members Ontario and Québec, our eight Member states are our source of credibility, influence and power. We have strong and healthy partnerships with federal agencies, nongovernment groups and our official Observers. We have a tremendously talented and experienced staff. Our financial footing is solid. But it is our Members – the Great Lakes states and provinces – that make up the 10 points on the cutting edge of our “saw.” Without the active engagement of our Members, the Commission would be just another Great Lakes interest group.

As we look ahead in 2007, the challenges we face are complex. Perhaps none is more demanding and intractable than that of invasive species, which seriously threatens both the future of foreign shipping on the lakes and the prospects for a healthy and diverse web of fish and wildlife. This has also been a particularly difficult issue for the Commission to address in the past, owing to its history and mandate. But the same factors that have made ballast water a difficult issue for the Commission to address in the past also create a unique opportunity. With our Member states’ interests in both the economic advantages of maritime commerce and their interests in ecological health and tourism, there may be no other organization as well-suited as the Commission to tackle the problem of invasive species.

In 2007 the Commission is confronting this challenge head-on by bringing together representatives of the maritime industry, other stakeholders and our Member states and provinces in a way that builds on the core strengths of our plan and the strength of our Members. Each has their own views of the issue and of what ought to be done. Our task is to help meld these views together into a single vision – a vision of a Great Lakes both healthy and prosperous, protected from invasive species and with a vibrant maritime economy. Doing so will be a huge challenge but represents a great opportunity, as well. Let’s make the most of it.


Tim A. Eder

The work of the Great Lakes Commission is greatly influenced by major regional initiatives now underway to address the challenges facing the Great Lakes. To a large extent, these play a major role in defining the regional agenda and outlining the issues to be addressed by the Commission and its partners. Among them:

“The Great Lakes form a single, interconnected watershed. Most of the challenges to their ecology do not respect national boundaries and, therefore, must be addressed by taking an ecosystem approach.” - Dennis Schornack, Chair, U.S. Section, International Joint Commission

Major Regional Initiatives

Great Lakes Regional Collaboration

The recommendations of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration were hailed at their release in December 2005 as offering a comprehensive strategy for the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes. However, with the notable exception of the reauthorization of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act, few elements of the strategy were enacted in 2006. With the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation gaining significant clout at the committee level in the new Congress, prospects for Regional Collaboration legislation may be more favorable in 2007 and the Commission and its partners will be working diligently to secure passage of those bills.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) represent one of the greatest and most difficult challenges facing the Great Lakes. The Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal dispersal barrier, designed to protect the Great Lakes from Asian carp and other invaders, has been a top regional priority for most of this decade. However, the enabling legislation has been caught up in the reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act, which has stalled in the past several sessions of Congress. The Commission will be strongly supporting stand-alone legislation in 2007 to authorize and fund the barrier. More recently, the Great Ships Initiative, a \$3.5 million research effort to develop effective ballast water treatments to prevent the introduction and spread of AIS, was initiated in July 2006. The project is co-managed by the Northeast-Midwest Institute and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, with research based at the University of Wisconsin-Superior's Lake Superior Research Institute.

Great Lakes Water Management

Efforts to develop new and more effective regional agreements to cooperatively manage the waters of the Great Lakes and preserve and protect them for future generations bore fruit with the adoption of the Annex 2001 Implementing Agreements in December 2005. Enabling legislation has been introduced in some Great Lakes state and provincial legislatures; the Commission has called upon all Member states and provinces, as well as the U.S. Congress, to enact the necessary legislation to put them into effect.

Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Review

Last updated in 1987, the U.S.-Canadian Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement provides the framework for binational cooperation on the cleanup and restoration of the Great Lakes. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Environment Canada, in collaboration with the International Joint Commission, are currently reviewing the agreement to determine any need for modifications. A key issue is whether the agreement should focus narrowly on water quality, or evolve into a binational framework for ecosystem management. The two agencies are expected to issue their recommendations in mid-2007.

