



Great Lakes
Commission
des Grands Lacs

Semi-Annual Meeting

***A Regional Policy for Removal of
Impoundments in the Great Lakes Basin***

Sheboygan, Wisconsin

May 2-4, 2006

□ Background

- Commission directive in October 2005
 - Over 18,600 dams are regulated in the 8 Great Lakes states
 - More than half are outside the basin
 - Indeterminate number of small head dams
 - Many dams are obsolete and are safety hazards
 - 120 dams have been removed in the 8 Great Lakes states, with PA, WI and MI being leaders
 - The MI DNR and USGS have developed innovative GIS tools
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Ecological, Economic and Social Impacts

- **Dams alter flow characteristics**
 - **Dams restrict fish passage**
 - **Riverine ecology may not be reversible**
 - **Dam removal provides improved diversity**
 - **Dam removal can cause:**
 - changes in wetlands**
 - accessibility to upstream habitat**
 - including access by invasive species**
 - affect sediment transport**
 - **Economic and social benefits are well documented
predictable**
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□ Priority Needs

- Development of comprehensive databases of existing dams
 - Document impacts of dam removals
 - Promote state/provincial information exchange
 - Conduct monitoring program before, during and after dam removal (USGS)
 - Research on cumulative effects of multiple dam removals
 - Develop methodologies for prioritizing lakewide dam removal
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Prospective GLC Roles

- **Advocate for USGS funding to conduct watershed modeling**
 - **Advocate for WRDA authorization and appropriations to provide USACE assistance to municipalities**
 - **Direct staff to facilitate:**
 - Information sharing about options and likely impacts**
 - Coordination with existing lakewide councils**
 - Develop state/provincial Dam Removal Task Force**
 - **Communicate success stories**
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