

**Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat Project Management Team
Summary of January 14, 2003 Conference Call**

<http://www.glc.org/habitat/>

Call Participants

Tonya Harrington, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Collete Luff, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Roger Nanney, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
Jody Willis, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Jeff Adkins, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Coastal Services Center
Alyssa Olson Callahan, TPMC-NOAA Coastal Services Center
Robert McGuinn, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Coastal Services Center
Roger Eberhardt, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Maureen Kay Houghton, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Ernie Kafcas, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Bob Hass, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Mike Thomas, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Tamara Gomer, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Geoffrey Donaldson, St. Clair Co. Metropolitan Planning Commission
Bill Parkus, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
Mark Richardson, Macomb County Prosecutor's Office
Matthew Child, Essex Region Conservation Authority
Dean Jacobs, Walpole Island Heritage Center
Patricia Chow-Frasier, McMaster University
John Paskus, Michigan Natural Features Inventory
Victoria Pebbles, Great Lakes Commission
Tom Rayburn, Great Lakes Commission

Summary of Discussion

Participants were asked to identify themselves, their agency and their professional capacity or interest related to Lake St. Clair coastal habitat.

Great Lakes Commission (GLC) staff provided an overview of the project, including purpose, methodology and timeline (see project web site for details www.glc.org/habitat/). The project management infrastructure was described, including the Project Management Team (PMT), the Advisory Committee and a decision support system (DSS) work group. The latter will work primarily with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Coastal Services Center (CSC) to design the integrated coastal management (ICM) tool. It was noted that additional workgroups may be established as necessary for the project.

The PMT will be actively involved in developing project products. A Listserv for the PMT has been established and is accessible by all members. The address is: habitat@great-lakes.net

Commission staff then described the key outcomes of the project. First is a Lake St. Clair coastal habitat **web site**. The web site will serve two main purposes: to educate web site visitors (from the general public to school teacher to local officials) about Lake St. Clair coastal habitat and as a means for featuring and distributing other project products (*e.g.*, ICM tool, GIS data) that can be accessed and used by local and state resource management practitioners. The web site may also link to other information that is relevant but may not be part of this project, such as initiatives underway among PMT members.

A series of **GIS data layers** is another key project product. The GLC will work with the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) and NOAA CSC to compile a series of data layers related to the coastal habitats, community types, unique and rare species, and conservation and restoration activities within the **1 mile inland perimeter of Lake St. Clair**. MNFI staff described their data layers and tools that will be developed for the project. PMT members will have an important role in sharing data and information gathered and maintained by their respective agencies and organizations with project staff. This will help ensure the completeness and usefulness of the GIS layers. A GIS data survey was sent to the PMT and responses are requested by February 14, 2003.

NOAA CSC staff provided an overview of their lead role in the design and development of the **ICM decision support tool**. NOAA CSC staff noted that the tool will be driven by what is deemed most useful to local stakeholders and decisionmakers. PMT members were asked to volunteer or nominate someone else within their agency/organization to participate on the DSS work group.

The final project product is a **draft coastal habitat management plan** for Lake St. Clair. Commission staff will have the lead on this project element. The draft plan will be developed based on the information and data gathered through other project tasks. As with other project elements, PMT members will have an important role in determining the form and content of the draft plan.

PMT members were asked to comment on projects, activities and initiatives that were relevant to this coastal habitat project.

Key discussion points were as follows.

- Environment Canada's Environmental Sensitivity Atlas and NOAA's Environmental Sensitivity Index Maps were mentioned and Commission staff noted that data were already part of GLC data files to be incorporated into this effort. In addition, Commission staff also collect and maintain complementary data for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Inland Sensitivity Atlas Series.
- It was suggested that the ICM tool could assist local planning efforts by incorporating local planning activities to date to help forecast impacts of land use decisionmaking on coastal habitat. While there are not adequate resources to evaluate all local plans around

Lake St. Clair, several efforts to analyze multiple local plans have already been undertaken and could be pieced together for purposes of evaluating the entire lake coastal area. Relevant efforts on the U.S. side have been undertaken by SEMCOG and St. Clair County MPC. It was noted that we would probably have to look to individual counties on the Canadian side: Essex, Kent, and Lambton.

- The adequacy of data related to submergent vegetation in Lake St. Clair was raised, given that the project will include data and information on nearshore habitat. Anchor Bay and History Harbor (?) were two potential sources of such data. **My notes show that the Corps had surveyed data available for Anchor Bay and that Dean Jacobs also had data related to Walpole Island. I could find no evidence of a “History Harbor” in Lake St. Clair.**
- Recovery strategies for species at risk have been developed by Walpole Island
- Ray Fahlsing and Mark McKay were noted as additional MDNR contacts with potentially relevant GIS data

Next Steps

- Commission staff will evaluate GIS data survey results and follow-up with PMT members individually to obtain data/information
- Project updates and milestones featured online at www.glc.org/habitat
- Establish DSS work group—explore options; identify goals and objectives of ICM tool
- Begin development of habitat web site (project outcome)
- Plan for in-person meeting in spring; will communicate via Listserv