

Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat Assessment: with recommendations for conservation and restoration planning

Table of Contents

∞ Acknowledgements	i
∞ Table of Contents	ii
∞ Table of Figures	vi
∞ Executive Summary	ix
∞ Preface	1
∞ I. Background	1
A. A Regional Partnership Approach	3
B. Overview of Socio-Economic History of Lake St. Clair	5
C. Overview of Natural History of Lake St. Clair	8
∞ II. Socioeconomic Characterization	13
A. Political Jurisdictions and Institutions	13
1. United States/Michigan	
2. Canada / Ontario	
3. Walpole Island First Nation	
B. Population and Growth/Migration	20
C. Economic Profile	27
D. Land Use	31
1. Planning Framework	
2. Land Use Trends	
∞ III. Physical Characterization	49
A. Climate	49
B. Geology/Geography	50
C. Hydrology	52
D. Land cover	53
E. Water Clarity and Lake St. Clair Substrate	60

∞	IV. Major Ecosystem and Habitat Types of Lake St. Clair	63
	A. Uplands	64
	1. High Intensity Developed Land	
	2. Low Intensity Developed Land	
	3. Cultivated land	
	4. Grassland	
	a. Cultural grasslands and old fields	
	b. Lakeplain prairie (mesic sand)	
	5. Deciduous Forest	
	a. Dry mesic southern forest	
	b. Mesic southern forest	
	c. Lakeplain oak opening / oak savannah	
	6. Evergreen Forest	
	7. Mixed Forest	
	8. Scrub/Shrub	
	B. Wetlands and Deepwater Habitat	82
	1. Unconsolidated Shore (beach, flat, bar)	
	2. Palustrine Emergent Wetland	
	a. Inland marsh (palustrine proper)	
	b. Lakeplain prairie (wet and wet-mesic)	
	c. Great lakes marsh (lacustrine)	
	3. Palustrine Forested Wetland	
	a. Southern swamp	
	b. Southern floodplain forest	
	4. Palustrine Scrub/Shrub Wetland	
	a. Palustrine (proper) scrub/shrub	
	b. Lacustrine scrub/shrub	
	c. Riverine scrub/shrub	
	5. Open Water	
	a. Lacustrine (basin > 8 hectares)	
	b. Riverine	
	6. Palustrine aquatic beds	
	a. Palustrine (proper) aquatic beds	
	b. Lacustrine aquatic beds	
	c. Riverine aquatic beds	
∞	V. System Stressors and Specific Responses	109
	A. Land Development and Urban Expansion	109
	1. Urban Expansion	
	2. Stormwater	
	3. Habitat Fragmentation and Destruction	
	4. Fire Suppression	
	5. Agriculture	
	6. Soil Erosion and Sedimentation	
	B. Altered Hydrology	117

1. Water Level Changes	
2. Draining	
3. Filling and Dredging	
4. Diking and Breakwalls	
C. Contaminants	121
1. Nutrient Loadings	
2. Toxic Contamination	
3. Sediment Contamination	
D. Shoreline Modification, Shipping and Boating	127
1. Vegetation Removal	
2. Shoreline Hardening	
3. Vessel Activity and Marina Development	
E. Invasive Species	131
1. Aquatic and Wetland Invasives	
2. Terrestrial Invasives	
3. Potential Invasives of the Lake St. Clair Region	
4. Key Programs	
F. Natural Disturbances	143
1. Ice Storms	
2. Wildfire	
3. Flooding	
4. Windthrow	
5. Great Lakes Water Level Fluctuations	
VI. Overarching Responses to Stressors	157
A. Existing Habitat and Land Management Programs	158
1. Walpole Island First Nation	
2. Public Land Management Programs	
3. Aquatic Habitats	
4. Land Acquisition	
5. Conservancies	
6. Watershed-based Organizations	
7. Programs for Private Landowners	
8. Training, Technical Assistance and Additional Resources for Public and Private Habitat Projects	
B. Inventory and Monitoring Tools	176
1. Lake St. Clair Monitoring Inventory	
2. Michigan Natural Features Inventory	
3. Ontario Natural Heritage Information Centre	
4. USGS Great Lakes Gap Analysis Program	
C. Local Planning Tools for Protecting Habitat	181
1. Community Master Plans	
2. Local Ordinances	
3. Watershed Planning	

4. Regional Planning Process

∞ VII. New Management Tools for Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat

- Restoration and Conservation 189
 - A. C-CAP Products and Application** 190
 - 1. Development of C-CAP
 - 2. Limitations of C-CAP
 - 3. Examples of C-CAP Protocol Application Nationwide
 - B. Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) Tool** 195
 - C. Potential Conservation Area Analysis** 198
 - 1. Element Occurrence Models
 - a. Methodology
 - b. Element occurrence frequency
 - c. Element occurrence probability model
 - d. Biodiversity value model
 - 2. Potential Conservation Areas
 - a. Process for delineating and ranking potential conservation/natural areas
 - b. Priority rankings for Michigan
 - c. Priority rankings for Ontario
 - d. Potential conservation areas map and recommendations

∞ VIII. Protection and Restoration Recommendations and Guidelines 215

- A. Guidelines for Conservation and Restoration** 216
- B. Setting Conservation and Restoration Targets:**
 - The Coarse Filter - Fine Filter Approach** 218
- C. Recommendations** 225
 - 1. Maintain and Restore Adequate Representation of Native Biodiversity
 - 2. Maintain and Restore Landscape Integrity (Supporting Landscape)
 - 3. Manage Widespread Threats/Stressors
 - 4. Assess Current Management and Status

∞ Appendix A. Project Management Team

∞ Appendix B. Lake St. Clair Coastal Habitat Project Advisory Committee