

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Implementation of the Lake St. Clair Canadian Watershed Management Plan**

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Lake St. Clair forms part of the international boundary water between Canada and the United States. Its management is complex with responsibilities lying with Canadian and U.S. federal governments, the Province of Ontario, the State of Michigan, First Nations, and local governments. The efforts of many government programs over the last 30 years have improved the environmental health of Lake St. Clair and its adjacent watersheds. However, management programs typically have focused on specific pollution sources and habitat conservation issues, rather than the entire Lake St. Clair ecosystem. An important goal of the management plan is to provide a focus on Lake St. Clair and its adjacent lands as a whole rather than a sum of its parts.

In 2002, using the Four Agency Letter of Commitment as a conduit into the Canadian agencies, the Lake St. Clair Canadian Watershed Coordination Council, led by Environment Canada, contributed summarized technical information to the U.S. ACE for inclusion in the Lake St. Clair and St. Clair River Comprehensive Management Plan. The Lake St. Clair Canadian Watershed Coordination Council is comprised of agencies with a responsibility for the environmental health of the Canadian portion of the Lake St. Clair watershed.

The Lake St. Clair Canadian Watershed Coordination Council recognized that while the effects of management actions can impact the entire Lake St. Clair ecosystem, Canadians can only manage actions within the Canadian watershed. In order to determine what remedial or program actions were needed, the Lake St. Clair Canadian Watershed Coordination Council first needed to document the current state of the Canadian watershed. Only after the current state of the watershed was described could management issues be identified and recommendations developed.

The approach for the Canadian watershed management plan involved three steps:

1. Determine the state of the ecosystem in the Canadian portion of the Lake St. Clair watershed and identify management issues (completed in 2004)
2. Complete a comprehensive consultation of responsible government agencies, First Nations, landowners, and interested non-government organizations to solicit comments on the management issues identified and on possible management recommendations, (completed in 2005) and
3. Develop a Canadian watershed management plan including an implementation plan (completed in 2007).

While this approach focused on the needs of the Canadian Lake St. Clair watershed, the Council recognizes that communication and partnerships with the U.S. Lake St. Clair Watershed Coordination Council will be needed to ensure that the entire Lake St. Clair ecosystem is managed cooperatively.

With the completion of the Canadian Watershed Management Plan, the next step is to begin identifying the mechanisms by which the Plan will be implemented and identifying key partners for each recommendation in the Management Plan.