

## Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River Management Plan

### **Project Management Team**

*Sept. 25, 2001*

*Macomb County Health Department*

*Mt. Clemens, Michigan*

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

On September 25, 2001 the first meeting of the Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River Project Management Team was held at the offices of the Macomb County Health Department in Mt. Clemens, Michigan. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the development of a binational management plan for Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River, as authorized in Section 426 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999. Specific objectives included outlining the study processes, establishing the plan's scope and content, and coordinating contributions from U.S., Canadian, and tribal/First Nation authorities.

The meeting program included presentations from the Army Corps of Engineers, the project's Congressional sponsor and the Great Lakes Commission, the project coordinator. These presentations provided important background information on the plan's authorization and requirements. In addition, the Great Lakes Commission reviewed existing planning efforts currently underway in the area as well as the methods and schedule for developing the plan.

This report was compiled by the Great Lakes Commission, which convened and facilitated the meeting as part of its responsibilities as coordinator of the management plan effort. Below is a summary of 1) program presentations; 2) comments and recommendations; 3) contributions from participating agencies; and 4) action items and next steps.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Perspectives from the Congressional Sponsor**

*Ed Bruley, Administrative Assistant, Congressman David Bonior*

Ed Bruley, administrative assistant to Congressman David Bonior, was invited to present the Congressman's perspective on the Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River management plan. Congressman Bonior sponsored the authorizing language for the plan in the Water Resources Development Act of 1999.

According to Bruley, the driving force behind the plan was concern over the lack of a single entity responsible for managing Lake St. Clair. There are many programs and projects operating independently to manage the lake's resources, but these are not coordinated in an integrated manner. He stressed the importance of creating linkages among these various entities. In addition, he emphasized the need to heighten the visibility of the lake at the federal level; Lake St. Clair is often left out of discussions concerning the Great Lakes.

Bruley outlined several necessary characteristics of the plan. He said that it should be practical and pragmatic – "not just another study." It should be doable, achievable, and include manageable steps. In addition, the plan must identify the people and entities that will be responsible for carrying out the recommendations. It is important to structure the plan in a way that will ensure its implementation, including identifying personnel needs and costs.

Finally, Bruley highlighted the importance of including all relevant stakeholders in the planning process, including government entities and private citizens. The plan should be locally-based to ensure buy-in and support. The plan should be used as a tool to get the public involved in addressing lake-wide issues, and should be designed in a way that is clear and comprehensible to all involved.

## **Review of Project Authorization and Requirements for the Army Corps of Engineers**

*Colette Luff, Principal Planner and Tonya Harrington, Economist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District (Presentation overheads are available upon request. Contact Matt Doss, [mdoss@glc.org](mailto:mdoss@glc.org), 734-665-9135.)*

Colette Luff reviewed the role of the Army Corps of Engineers as the federal agency authorized in Section 426 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 to oversee the Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River management plan. Luff presented a detailed overview of the Corps' mission, programs and projects. Next, she described how the Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River fits into the mission and scope of the Corps. She concluded by outlining expected results and next steps. Tonya Harrington then provided a brief overview of "defining federal interest," a key component of the Corps' Civil Works Program.

Luff first described in detail the Corps major programmatic area: 1) Civil Works Program; 2) Continuing Authorities Program; 3) Technical Assistance Program; and 4) Interagency and Intergovernmental Support Program. She next discussed how the Lake St. Clair management plan fits into these diverse programs. The plan's authorizing legislation calls for the following: identification of causes and sources of environmental degradation; monitoring of contamination levels; and dissemination of information to public authorities and others. In addition, it requires that the plan be developed in coordination with state and local governments and appropriate federal and provincial authorities.

In an effort to meet the legislative requirements, the Corps, in cooperation with the Great Lakes Commission and other relevant stakeholders, is conducting a "reconnaissance level study" to 1) investigate environmental stress on system; 2) determine management goals and objectives; 3) evaluate ongoing management activities; and 4) develop recommendations for management priorities. The study effort will produce a management plan for Lake St. Clair that may, in part, be outside the scope of the Corps' mission. In addition, the study will identify any water resource solutions and activities that fit within Corps mission and program areas and help determine "next steps" for the Corps' involvement in the management and restoration of Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River.

## **Review of Current or Planned Management Initiatives in the Study Area**

*Matt Doss, Program Manager, Great Lakes Commission (Presentation overheads are available upon request. Contact Matt Doss, [mdoss@glc.org](mailto:mdoss@glc.org), 734-665-9135.)*

Matt Doss provided an overview of important management initiatives and research efforts currently underway or planned in the Lake St. Clair region. The objective of this review was to inform participants of the numerous programs and activities currently dedicated to Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River management. Doss stressed that, while there are numerous successful programs and initiatives already in place, there is a need to integrate existing efforts into a single comprehensive framework. In order to be most effective, these initiatives would benefit from integration across jurisdictions and between the United States and Canada. He emphasized that this plan would not be a duplication of existing efforts. Rather, it will provide a mechanism to showcase and highlight those activities currently underway. In addition, it can serve to synthesize existing efforts by coordinating goals and priorities.

## **Study Goals, Methods and Schedule**

*Matt Doss, Program Manager, Great Lakes Commission (Presentation overheads are available upon request. Contact Matt Doss, [mdoss@glc.org](mailto:mdoss@glc.org), 734-665-9135.)*

In this session, Matt Doss outlined the goals, methods and schedule for developing and implementing the plan. Prospective study goals include:

- Synthesize, integrate and promote existing studies, plans and recommendations;
- Outline a cohesive, ecosystem-based management framework;
- Generate consensus on management priorities;

- Identify authorities and funding mechanisms;
- Catalyze and leverage local activism; and
- Contribute to a binational Lake St. Clair management initiative.

Doss then outlined prospective methods for plan development. The plan is to be developed in cooperation with U.S. and Canadian federal and state/provincial agencies, tribal/First Nation authorities, local authorities and the public. The Great Lakes Commission and the Army Corps of Engineers will coordinate the overall project. The project management structure consists of four components: 1) the Project Management Team; 2) Technical Work Groups; 3) a Management Plan Advisory Committee; and 4) the Secretariat and Consultants.

The Project Management Team (PMT) consists of federal, state, provincial and local agencies and tribal authorities. The PMT members will serve as a representative of their agency and a point of contact for soliciting staff participation and expertise to contribute to various components of the plan. The Technical Work Groups will oversee drafting of specific sections of the plan. The Management Plan Advisory Committee will comment on and review the plan. Participation on this committee will include public and private stakeholders from the Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River region and participation is open to anyone who is interested. In addition, members of this committee are welcome to serve on the Technical Work Groups.

The tentative schedule, outlined by Doss, is as follows:

September:	Convene Project Management Team and Management Plan Advisory Committee
Sept. – Jan.:	Technical Work Groups meet
February:	Preliminary draft plan completed
May:	Final draft plan completed, “State of the Lake” conference held
August:	Final plan completed

## **COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***1. What role should the management play in the binational Lake St. Clair River community?***

- The plan should create awareness; be a tool for advocacy and public outreach and education; and drive prioritization for funding. It should be practical and pragmatic, serving as a vision for the region.
- This plan should not duplicate existing programs. It should be a value-added document that showcases current planning efforts in the region. Everyone involved can use this as a guidance document to support their efforts and benchmark success.
- As a congressionally authorized plan, this will bring stature within the government and help promote and support efforts in the region.
- The plan should integrate existing efforts. There are numerous programs and projects in place on Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair river, but these efforts are not tied together effectively. This plan can help coordinate these various programs into a single concerted effort.

### ***2. What should be the planning framework; structure and content; and scope and level of detail of the plan?***

#### *Planning Framework*

- There were two general models proposed for the planning framework. These two models, which are not mutually exclusive, are:

- 1) Identify a series of goals and measurable objectives; identify strategies, actions, and/or recommendations to address goals and objectives; and identify responsible parties to address recommendations.
  - 2) Identify issues, goals, what's currently happening, what needs to happen, and what it takes to get what we need. This approach would determine gaps in existing management programs in the region and identify strategies to address those gaps.
- There was some discussion regarding the use of “beneficial use impairments,” or BUIs, in the plan. Some were concerned that this might determine the planning framework. It was suggested that including BUIs would increase eligibility for funding opportunities. Another suggestion was to use the language of BUIs, but not use it as a framework.
  - Many participants emphasized that the plan should be a preliminary step in developing a long-term management strategy for Lake St. Clair and the St. Clair River. As one participant stated, “If the plan includes actions, we need to first know where we are at. I see this as a ‘get started’ document that gets people working toward the same goals. It could set parameters of where, what, and who, and package that all together, and design it so that it can be added to over time.”
  - Many participants emphasized the importance of including the public in the plan development process.

#### *Structure and Content*

- For each issue or topic area, identify management institutions and processes.
- For each issue of topic area, include monitoring and evaluation.
- It was suggested that the content areas be lumped into smaller categories to reduce workload and to make the plan appear more manageable to the reader. An alternative suggestion was to develop a set of “public purposes” such as “swimmable, fishable, drinkable” (although more specific than these), and address categories under these purposes.
- Specific recommendations were made concerning which topic areas to include in the plan. Additional topic areas include, 1) nonpoint source pollution; 2) mapping; 3) tourism; 4) economics; 5) fish consumption; 6) spill response; and 7) demographic information (perhaps in the overview section). In addition, add information about Walpole Island Aboriginal Title Legislation in the Introduction / Background section.

#### *Scope and Level of Detail*

- The plan does not need to be an extensive document. Rather, it should be brief and concise, “a quick read.” It was suggested that it would require no more than approximately five pages to cover each issue or topic area.
- How specific should the objectives be? Some participants felt that they do not need to be as specific as, “reducing X pollutant by Y%,” but they could be as specific as, “this agency should do this...” This would identify gaps in institutional activity.

Others thought that they do not need to be as specific as, “this agency needs to do this.” But the plan could be used to present to agencies and ask them, “what are you doing to meet this goal?”

Others felt the plan should fall somewhere in between. It should not just state that there is a need or a gap, but describe what kind of need exists. As one participant said, “Perhaps it’s too ambitious to be prescribe who does what, but we can speak to mechanisms to move toward that.”

One participant recommended to be as specific as possible. “The strength of the recommendations will be limited by the strength of the goals and objectives.” Others added that these goals and objectives need to be broadly supported by the Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River Community, and that developing these can be a difficult task.

- Some participants were concerned about including the St. Clair River in the management plan. It was explained that it must be included because it is in the plan’s authorizing legislation. Although it would be easier and less complex to not include the river, it does not make sense politically and socially to separate the river and the lake. It was recommended that the plan rely as much as possible on work done for the St. Clair River Remedial Action Plan (RAP).

### **AGENCY CONTRIBUTIONS**

One objective of the meeting was to coordinate contributions to the management plan from members of the Project Management Team. Each representative was asked to identify the issue areas in which their agency could provide leadership and/or expertise. A summary of each agency’s area(s) of expertise are listed in Appendix A.

### **ACTION ITEMS AND NEXT STEPS**

The Project Management Team will:

- 1) Advise the Great Lakes Commission on additional representatives to include on the Project Management Team and the Advisory Committee.

The Great Lakes Commission will:

- 1) Develop a listserv;
- 2) Develop a website;
- 3) Begin a literature review on Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River; and
- 4) Send invitations to the Advisory Committee and plan for the next management plan meeting, which tentatively was scheduled for Monday, November 19.

## **AGENCY EXPERTISE**

*Issue areas in which participating agencies can provide leadership and/or expertise in developing the Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River management plan*

<b>Issue Area</b>	<b>Lead Agencies</b>
Pollutant Sources and Loadings	U.S. EPA; Ontario Ministry of the Environment; MDEQ; Canadian Conservation Authorities; Macomb County Water Quality Board; NRCS (esp. uplands nonpoint sources); St. Clair County Health Department
Habitat, Wetlands, and Biological Resources	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (wetlands); Great Lakes Commission; U.S. EPA; Canadian Conservation Authorities; NRCS (wetlands); National Park Service; U.S. Coast Guard (aquatic nuisance species prevention); MDNR, Fisheries Division and Wildlife Division
Lake Levels and Hydrology	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Canadian Conservation Authorities
Land Use and Coastal Management	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Coastal); U.S. EPA; Canadian Conservation Authorities; NRCS (Land Use – Agricultural and Urban); MDNR Wildlife Division; National Park Service; St. Clair County (County Planning and Land Use)
Dredging and Sediment Management	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Great Lakes Commission; U.S. EPA; Ontario Ministry of the Environment; MDEQ; NRCS (Sediment Management)
Fisheries Management	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. EPA; Fisheries and Oceans Canada; Canadian Conservation Authorities; OMNR; MDNR Fisheries Division
Aquatic Plant Management	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. EPA; OMNR; MDNR Fisheries Division; MDNR Wildlife Division
Recreational Boating, Commercial Navigation and Tourism	Great Lakes Commission; Canadian Coast Guard; NPS; U.S. Coast Guard (Commercial Navigation); MDNR Wildlife Division
Human Health, Beach Closures, and Drinking Water	U.S. EPA; Canadian Conservation Authorities; Macomb County Water Quality Board (Beach Closures and Drinking Water); National Park Service; St. Clair County Health Department; MDNR Fisheries Division (Fish Consumption); Macomb County (Beach Closures)
Stormwater and Wastewater Management	U.S. EPA; Ontario Ministry of the Environment; MDEQ; SEMCOG; Canadian Conservation Authorities; St. Clair Water Quality Board (CSOs); NRCS (Land Application); MDNR Wildlife Division
Monitoring and Data Management	U.S. EPA; MDEQ; Canadian Conservation Authorities; Macomb County Water Quality Board (Monitoring); St. Clair County Health Department
Research, Policy, Institutions, Processes, and Public Participation	Great Lakes Commission, U.S. EPA; Canadian Conservation Authorities; Bill Smith
Conclusions and Recommendations	Great Lakes Commission
Management Plan Implementation and Evaluation	U.S. EPA; Bill Smith
Secretariat	Great Lakes Commission
Demographics	SEMCOG
Mapping, GIS	Canadian Conservation Authorities

## **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

### ***Lake St. Clair/St. Clair River Management Plan Project Management Team Meeting September 25, 2001***

Ed Bruley	<i>Office of Congressman David Bonior</i>
Ralph Coe	<i>St. Clair Region Conservation Authority</i>
Matthew Child	<i>Essex Region Conservation Authority</i>
Jerry DeMaire	<i>Macomb County Water Quality Board</i>
Mike Donahue	<i>Great Lakes Commission</i>
Geoff Donaldson	<i>St. Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission</i>
Matt Doss	<i>Great Lakes Commission</i>
Jim Francis	<i>Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources, Fisheries Division</i>
Tonya Harrington	<i>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Detroit District</i>
Vicky Hartingh	<i>Macomb County Health Dept.</i>
Chuck Hersey	<i>Southeast Michigan Council of Governments</i>
Gary Johnson	<i>Ontario Ministry of the Environment</i>
Albert Jones	<i>USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service</i>
Colette Luff	<i>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Detroit District</i>
Doug Martz	<i>Macomb County Water Quality Board</i>
Elizabeth Moore	<i>Great Lakes Commission</i>
Ralph Moore	<i>National Park Service</i>
Joanne Munroe	<i>Canadian Coast Guard – Sarnia</i>
Dennis O’Mara	<i>U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Safety Office, Detroit</i>
Art Ostaszewski	<i>Michigan Dept. of Environmental Quality, SWQD</i>
Bill Parkus	<i>Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)</i>
Harry Salisbury	<i>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Detroit District</i>
Ken Schmidt	<i>Essex Region Conservation Authority</i>
Jim Selegean	<i>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Detroit District</i>
Bill Smith	<i>Clinton River AOC PAC / Macomb County Water Quality Board</i>
Gary Towns	<i>Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources, Fisheries Division</i>
Ian Wilcox	<i>Upper Thames Conservation Authority</i>
Mike Williams	<i>Walpole Island First Nation</i>