
Preface

This report presents the research, findings and recommendations resulting from the project, *Toward a Water Resources Management Decision Support System for the Great Lakes* (WRMDSS), supported by the Great Lakes Protection Fund and authored by the Great Lakes Commission and its collaborators. The objective was to compile and synthesize information on the status of Great Lakes water resources, current uses, and ecological impacts of water withdrawals. In so doing, it lays the foundation for the development of a regional water resources management decision support system that will facilitate scientifically sound decisionmaking.

The Commission's involvement in this project reflects its long-term interest in Great Lakes water resources management activities consistent with its mandate to "promote the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes basin" (Article I, Great Lakes Basin Compact).

This report has benefitted from the significant input and collaboration of numerous partners that comprised a Project Management Team (PMT), three technical subcommittees (TSCs) and a Stakeholders Advisory Committee (SAC). The findings and recommendations of this report address data and information gaps and needs, and provide valuable information for guiding the next steps in the process of developing a decision support system. The recommendations presented in the report were developed by the TSCs and the Great Lakes Commission staff, and received the general concurrence of the PMT and SAC members.

The Commission's work, which began in August 2000, has supported the ongoing efforts of the Great Lakes governors and premiers who, in 1999, established principles to guide development of a water resources management framework for the region. These principles were further developed in 2001, after the commencement of the WRMDSS project, through the June 2001 signing of the Great Lakes Charter Annex. This report provides regional leaders with much of the needed information for Charter Annex implementation.

This report, and the project's many associated components, provide a wealth of information about the water resources and associated policies related to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system. Report appendices, which include technical reports generated by the project, are attached in CD-ROM form and are available at www.glc.org/wateruse/wrmdss.html.

Acknowledgments

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The Commission further acknowledges the work of the following individuals for their leadership and contributions to the final report and other project products: Richard S. Bartz, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, who served as Project Management Team Chair; Wendy Leger, Environment Canada, who co-chaired the Ecological Impacts Technical Subcommittee with me; Thomas Crane, Great Lakes Commission, who served as chair of the Water Withdrawal and Use Technical Subcommittee; and James Nicholas, U.S. Geological Survey, who served as chair of the Status Assessment of Water Resources Technical Subcommittee.

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Sincerely,



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