



# Blue Accounting

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Every day, leaders across the Great Lakes basin make strategic decisions intended to enhance the quality and sustainability of the Great Lakes ecosystem. These decisions set priorities and allocate resources to drive adaptive management programs that support desired sociocultural, economic, and environmental outcomes.

## A Great Lakes Information Gap

There is an information gap between the decisions Great Lakes leaders make and the results of the programs they influence. As a region, our desired outcomes are not always aligned and we lack a process to measure the combined effects of the many adaptive management programs.

To be effective decision-makers, Great Lakes leaders need answers:

- What are the common desired outcomes for the Great Lakes region?
- What are the best strategies and actions to achieve those outcomes?
- Are we making progress against these outcomes?
- Are we receiving the expected returns on our investments?

Blue Accounting is specifically designed to answer these questions by providing an online information platform and associated program of services that builds upon and complements the extensive data collection and management programs already in place across the Great Lakes.

## Blue Accounting Measures Progress Toward Desired Outcomes

Blue Accounting will bring the right information to the right people at the right time to support collaborative efforts to sustain and enhance the Great Lakes.

Responding to a call from the Great Lakes Governors and Premier of Ontario in 2013, the Great Lakes Commission brought together a group of regional leaders to address the information gap. They called for a new information strategy to support strategic decision-making across the Great Lakes. Their report sets out nine desired outcomes for the Great Lakes spanning social values, sustainable human uses, and healthy aquatic ecosystems.

The Blue Accounting program, led by the Great Lakes Commission in partnership with The Nature Conservancy, will bring together key stakeholders in prominent Great Lakes issue areas to help them:

- Create sets of shared basin-wide goals for the desired outcomes.
- Identify strategic actions and metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of investments and programs.
- Determine the data necessary to support the metrics.
- Make investments in regional information management and delivery infrastructure to effectively and efficiently track and report progress towards goals.

### **The Great Lakes Commission and The Nature Conservancy Partnership**

In support of Blue Accounting, the Great Lakes Commission and The Nature Conservancy have entered into a partnership to deliver an online information management system for regional leaders. The GLC's well-established Great Lakes Information Network and the Conservancy's innovative Great Lakes Inform will allow these two organizations to deliver an information management system for regional leaders. These systems serve resource managers, policy makers, and the public in the Great Lakes basin by providing up to date and relevant Great Lakes information and decision-making resources.

Together, the GLC and the Conservancy will provide information management services that complement existing Great Lakes information platforms by consolidating information around the Blue Accounting desired outcomes. These services will support adaptive management programs and basin-wide efforts to protect and harness the value of the Great Lakes for economic and social development. The partnership will support the integration of existing data and information platforms to provide rapid and efficient delivery of the metrics envisioned by the Blue Accounting strategy.

### **The Blue Accounting Advisory Committee**

An Advisory Committee has been established to guide the development of Great Lakes Blue Accounting. This committee includes leaders and thinkers in water and information strategy from government, industry, NGOs, and academia across the Great Lakes basin.

Members of the advisory committee:

**Jon Allan**, Michigan Office of the Great Lakes  
**Joel Brammeier**, Alliance for the Great Lakes  
**Kathy Buckner**, Council of Great Lakes Industries  
**Cameron Davis**, formerly of US EPA  
**Kent Herrick**, Herrick Foundation  
**Dick Hibma**, Conservation Ontario  
**Bob Lambe**, Great Lakes Fishery Commission

**David McLean**, Dow Chemical  
**Sam Passmore**, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
**Jennifer Read**, University of Michigan Water Center  
**John Rogner**, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
**Dave Ullrich**, Great Lakes and St Lawrence Cities Initiative

### **Support for Blue Accounting**

Blue Accounting is receiving broad support from across the basin, including a cornerstone \$4 million grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and additional support from the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation and the Joyce Foundation.