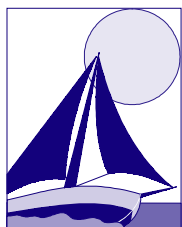


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## Guest editorial

# One lake's problems mirror larger pollution issues facing Great Lakes region

By Rep. William Callahan, Member, Michigan Delegation to the Great Lakes Commission

**L**ake St. Clair, as many of you know, has numerous problems. Even though this is just one lake—and not even one of the Great Lakes—its problems are symptomatic of the larger pollution issues facing the Great Lakes region. One of the biggest problems facing Lake St. Clair is combined sewer overflow and high bacteria counts, which have resulted in closed beaches during the summer season.

Lake St. Clair is of particular importance to the state of Michigan, with 60 percent of southeast Michigan's drinking water derived from it. Also found in the Lake St. Clair system are numerous beaches, fishing, boating and other recreational and wildlife opportunities.

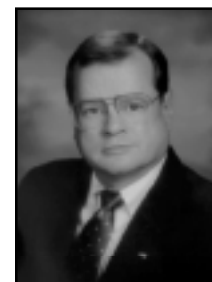
It is easy to identify that there is pollution in a body of water, especially when there are as many problems as we've had with Lake St. Clair. The "closed beach" signs along our shoreline in Macomb County bluntly show the public the severity of the problems. But identifying pollution sources and developing solutions to the problems are much more difficult and involved processes.

I worked closely with 30 other members of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Lake St. Clair, which was formed in 1997 to address pollution problems in the area. The commission's subgroups investigated discharges into the Clinton and St. Clair rivers; agricultural and residential runoff, including pesticides and fertilizers; sewage treatment and storm water concerns; and biological contaminants. Some of the Blue Ribbon Commission's important recommendations in its final report were

- Better enforcement of existing state and local water pollution laws;
- Public education on the causes and effects of water pollution;
- Encouragement of environmentally sensitive land use;
- Inspection of septic fields;
- Continuous in-stream monitoring programs; and
- Examination of ballast water and its impact on the increase of exotic species.

The report was a good first step, but we need to generate public support and financial resources and foster a sense of cooperation throughout the local, state and federal levels to accomplish our goals.

In addition to participating on the Blue Ribbon Commission, I developed two pieces of legislation to help reduce pollution. These bills had overwhelming support in both



**We have long pointed to industrial waste and other pollution as the sources of all water quality problems. However, this is not the case. Agriculture runoff and storm sewers have tremendous impacts on our water...**

*Continued on page 9*

• The ADVISOR is published bimonthly by the Great Lakes Commission •

*The Great Lakes Commission is an eight-state compact agency established in 1955*

*"to promote the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes basin."*

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## Great Lakes Commission

*The Great Lakes Commission, an eight-state compact agency founded in state and federal law and dedicated to the use, management and protection of the water resources of the Great Lakes basin, provides leadership in the implementation of principles of sustainable development throughout the basin. In partnership with the Great Lakes states, the Commission addresses issues of resource management, environmental protection, transportation and economic development by serving as an accurate and objective source of information; an effective forum for the development and coordination of public policy; and an active and committed advocate of basin interests.*

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## Surprised again!

In the last *ADVISOR*, my comments focused on the short-lived designation of Lake Champlain as a Great Lake. And, alluding to the unsettling precedent that such a designation would establish, I called for renewed vigilance to protect our resources from ill-advised "surprises" that threaten the integrity of the lakes or the infrastructure that has evolved to manage them. The proverbial ink on my column had not yet dried when the Great Lakes policy community was surprised again.

I speak, of course, of a permit the Ontario government recently granted to a Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, company that planned to export Lake Superior water to prospective markets in Asia (see related story on page 7). Like the Lake Champlain designation, the permit action prompted a swift outcry from Great Lakes governors, members of Congress and many interest groups. Like the Lake Champlain issue, the proposal was short-lived; the permit revocation process was underway within weeks of issuance. And, like the Lake Champlain designation, a battle has been won but the war is not over.

The issue touches on the very foundation of ecosystem integrity and economic well-being; on our ability, as stewards of the resource, to maintain control over the future of the region's greatest natural asset. This recent incident has highlighted, once again, inadequacies in the current binational water resource management regime.

Alarm over such a permit is well-founded. It sets a dangerous legal precedent that could leave the region vulnerable to much larger schemes in the future. It ignores the cumulative impacts that occur if such a scheme is found to be commercially viable and leads to a new export industry. Even more alarming is the fact that the per-

mit action took the Great Lakes policy community by surprise. Interjurisdictional notification and consultation were entirely lacking.

To be fair, it appears that no treaties, laws or agreements were violated when the permit was approved. The permit process essentially "fell through

the cracks." In so doing, it highlighted an immediate need to harmonize management approaches in all jurisdictions and provide the ammu-

nition needed to oppose and prevent irresponsible use of the resource.

I believe that three actions are warranted in the immediate future. First, the states and provinces must move decisively to develop and implement a Great Lakes water resources management program to avoid our historic crisis response approach to diversion and consumptive use proposals. Such a program was called for in the 1985 Great Lakes Charter and, 13 years later, has yet to be developed.

Second, we must review the current management regime for addressing such issues to determine whether our current set of treaty, legislative and agreement-based arrangements adequately address current and future needs.

And finally, I believe that a truly binational Great Lakes Commission with full, voting provincial membership could help avoid the type of surprise experienced with the Lake Superior diversion permit. Open and ongoing dialogue among all basin jurisdictions is perhaps the most effective tool we can employ for improved water resources management.

Interjurisdictional relations in the Great Lakes basin are the envy of North America and beyond. When the political will and motivation to strengthen binational water resources management is present, we can't help but succeed.

### Commission News and Views

By Michael J. Donahue, Ph.D.  
Executive Director





## Commission promotes legislative and appropriations priorities

A 26-point statement of federal legislative and appropriations priorities, accepted by the Great Lakes Commission on April 2, provides the basis for an aggressive advocacy strategy for the second session of the 105th U.S. Congress. Adopted by unanimous action of the eight Great Lakes states, the statement addresses legislative and funding needs in the areas of research and management institutions, resource management and environmental protection programs, and maritime transportation and other infrastructure needs.

One statement calls for federal legislation to amend the Great Lakes Basin Compact and, in so doing, clears the way for provincial membership on the Great Lakes Commission. Rep. James Oberstar (D-MN) has responded by introducing such an amendment in the form of H.R. 3458. In other actions, the Commission has directed correspondence to

- The chair and Great Lakes members of the House Energy and Water Development subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations to endorse Water Resources Development Act appropriations, and to support MOU implementation and Chicago Harbor leakage control associated with the Lake Michigan diversion at Chicago;
- The chair and Great Lakes members of the House Committee on

Transportation and Infrastructure, as well as all Great Lakes senators, to endorse the Binational Great Lakes Seaway Enhancement Act of 1998 (H.R. 3147), to consult with the Commission on proposed changes to the Harbor Maintenance Tax, to support funding and operation of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Mackinaw*, to oppose navigational assistance and ice-breaking user fees, and to support a waiver of the interest requirement for the nonfederal cost share of a new Soo Lock;

- The chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee and all Great Lakes senators to oppose prospective U.S.-Canada border control measures; and
- The chair and Great Lakes members of the House and Senate Appropriations committees to support funding and implementation of the National Invasive Species Act.

Additionally, Commission Executive Director Mike Donahue testified in support of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act reauthorization at the House Subcommittee on Fisheries hearing on June 18.

The entire Commission policy statement was presented to all members of the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation in early April. Advocacy of the statement's elements will continue for the duration of the 105th Congress. Contact: Mike Donahue, [mdonahue@glc.org](mailto:mdonahue@glc.org).

## Interstate river basin organizations join forces

Thanks to the leadership of Commission Vice Chair Irene Brooks, interstate river basin organizations are joining forces to strengthen their individual and collective role in regional and national water resources policy formulation and implementation.

Brooks sponsored a June 2 coordination meeting in Harrisburg, Penn., that brought together the executive directors of leading regional organizations throughout the Great Lakes, Mid-Atlantic and New England regions. Organizations represented included the Great Lakes Commission; the Susquehanna, Delaware, Potomac and Ohio river basin commissions; the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission; and the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission. Also participating were Jim Seif, secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; and Richard Munson, executive director of the Northeast-Midwest Institute.

The directors discussed strategies to raise their profile in Washington, ensure continued federal financial support and involvement in their initiatives, and identify and act on policy issues of common concern to all such organizations.

"This meeting marks the beginning of both increased interstate and inter-basin coordination," Brooks said.

Brooks and Great Lakes Commission Executive Director Mike Donahue both serve on a new Standing Committee on Interstate River Basin Organizations, affiliated with the Interstate Council on Water Policy. Among others, the committee is charged with developing a "basin water resources management" theme for the ICWP annual meeting in Seattle this fall. Contact: Mike Donahue, [mdonahue@glc.org](mailto:mdonahue@glc.org).

### Annual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission

*Hosted by the Commission's New York Delegation*

**October 19-20, 1998**

**Buffalo, New York**

The meeting will be followed by the **State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference** (Oct. 21-23 in Buffalo). On Oct. 20, the Commission and SOLEC will hold a joint opening reception. For more information, contact Dr. Michael Donahue at 734-665-9135 or visit the Commission's home page at [www.glc.org](http://www.glc.org) for future details.



## Beneficial use: Dredging up new alternatives at a regional workshop

Low-cost solutions for the environmentally responsible and socially acceptable management of dredged material is a priority for the Great Lakes Dredging Team, a federal/state partnership led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with technical support from the Great Lakes Commission. The beneficial use approach focuses on dredged material as a resource as opposed to a waste. Beneficial uses of dredged material include beach nourishment, habitat restoration, landscaping, road construction fill, strip mine restoration, daily cover for landfills, and many others.

A regional workshop on beneficial use, planned for Sept. 15-16 in Toledo, Ohio, will include case studies from projects around the Great Lakes, discussions of the obstacles limiting beneficial use and approaches to overcome them.

The workshop will be held in conjunction with the next meeting of the Great Lakes Dredging Team on Sept. 16-17 and is one component of a major soil erosion and sediment control conference (see boxed announcement below). Contact: Steve Thorp, sthorp@glc.org.



*Keeping it on the Land  
...and Out of the Water*

### Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Techniques for the Great Lakes Basin

Sept. 16-18, 1998  
Radisson Hotel • Toledo, Ohio

Featuring presentations on federal initiatives affecting resource conservation efforts in the Great Lakes basin and techniques for reducing nonpoint source pollution in both rural and urban environments.

For more information, contact Matt Doss, Great Lakes Commission, 734-665-9135, mdoss@glc.org.

## U.S. EPA to fund PACs

### Michigan RAP leaders gather for summit meeting

At a recent RAP Summit for Michigan's Areas of Concern, U.S. EPA announced that it would make funding available to each Public Advisory Council to support baseline operations.

"U.S. EPA remains committed to the RAPs," says Margaret Guerriero, manager of the Lake Superior Regional Team at U.S. EPA Region 5. "Local leadership, however, will continue to be a vital component of the RAP process."

Guerriero emphasized that the long-term plans being developed will help ensure that continued, reliable funding is available for PACs to coordinate the RAP process at the local level.

The May 8-9 RAP Summit brought together leaders from Michigan's 14 AOCs to discuss challenges facing their Remedial Action Plans, learn about funding opportunities for RAP activities and share ideas and success stories.

Staff from the Michigan Department

of Environmental Quality and U.S. EPA also were on hand to receive input and discuss plans for Michigan's RAPs and Lakewide Management Plans. Both agencies are developing long-term plans for the RAPs and LaMPs, and the meeting provided an opportunity for PAC members and other local RAP participants to contribute to this planning process.

Major priorities that emerged from the discussions included raising public awareness, involving local governments, coordinating agency programs, exchanging information, building partnerships and, above all, funding remediation activities.

The summit was sponsored by the Statewide Public Advisory Council for Michigan's Areas of Concern Program, with staff support provided by the Great Lakes Commission. Contact: Matt Doss, mdoss@glc.org.

## GLSPI discusses Natural Resource Damage Assessments

In the aftermath of a spill, a regulatory tool called the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) is designed to restore the injured environment to pre-spill conditions as rapidly as possible. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (Superfund) and the Oil Pollution Act authorize NRDA when there is a release of hazardous substances or oil. A federal natural resources trustee, a state agency official and an oil company representative discussed this process at a May 28-29 meeting of the Great Lakes Spill Protection Initiative (GLSPI).

The panel of presenters included T.J. Miller, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Daniel Holler, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection; and Rees Madsen, BP Oil.

Under federal law, the NRDA process allows federal and state governments and federally recognized Indian tribes to act as trustees for natural resources on behalf of the public and to pursue damages for

injuries to natural resources caused by release of oil or hazardous substances.

"Not every spill merits a NRDA. Measurable injury directly related to the oil spill has to exist. Natural recovery should be considered," said Madsen in his presentation. "Assessments, when appropriate, must be compensatory and not punitive. The purpose of NRDA is restoration of injured resources, not collection of dollars to support other programs."

Madsen conceded that industry has worries about the NRDA process.

"Companies are concerned about potential lack of cooperation between responsible parties and trustees in spill situations," Madsen said, "and about the possibility that NRDA can produce a situation of 'unlimited' liability."

The GLSPI is a Great Lakes Commission-staffed partnership between the Great Lakes states, federal agencies and several petroleum companies in the region. Contact: Tom Crane, tcrane@glc.org.

## Maumee, Saginaw and Nemadji rivers to receive sediment transport modeling funds

Three Great Lakes tributaries will receive federal funds for sediment transport modeling, thanks to FY1998 appropriations under Section 516 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996. The three tributaries—Maumee River in Ohio, Saginaw River in Michigan and Nemadji River in Minnesota—were among 15 priority sites identified at a User's Workshop hosted by the Great Lakes Commission in Ann Arbor, Mich., on April 29-30.

Approximately \$120,000 will be allocated for model development at each tributary, with work to be accomplished by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its contractors. The models, to be completed in early 1999, will assist resource managers and policymakers in soil erosion and sediment control, remediation and dredging efforts.

The User's Workshop followed a mid-March Technical Workshop at which modelers from state and fed-

eral agencies and academia identified more than two dozen models (hydrologic, hydraulic, sediment transport, contaminant) along with their data requirements, capabilities and applications.

Section 516 of WRDA directs the Corps to develop such models for Great Lakes tributaries that discharge to federal navigation channels or Areas of Concern.

The Great Lakes Commission is providing technical assistance to the Corps and will prepare a multiyear plan that identifies and characterizes the various models, presents state-generated priorities, and documents the importance of such models as a decision-support system for cost-effective resource management. The Commission has urged Congress to appropriate \$1 million in FY1999 to continue and expand the effort to other priority tributaries. Contact: Mike Donahue, [mdonahue@glc.org](mailto:mdonahue@glc.org).

## Commission to upgrade regional water use database

The Great Lakes Commission plans to upgrade its binational Great Lakes Regional Water Use Database to enhance the region's ability to query, manipulate and display Great Lakes water use data.

The database includes information for nine categories of use including public supply, self supply-domestic and self supply-irrigation. In addition to water use categories, database users can access water use information by jurisdiction and by lake basin.

"The upgraded system will feature a new database management program," says Alternate Commissioner Daniel Injerd, chief of the Lake Michigan Management Section, Office of Water Resources, Illinois DNR. "It will include all relevant functions of the old system plus new features such as data visualization and a user-friendly graphic interface."

The Regional Water Use Database has been operational since 1988. The Great

Lakes Commission coordinated its design with leadership from the Council of Great Lakes Governors' Water Resources Management Committee and the U.S. Geological Survey. The Commission serves as the database repository.

"Refining and expanding the database is necessary to ensure that it can support other Great Lakes Charter-driven initiatives such as development of a basinwide water resources management program, water use forecasting techniques and regional water conservation programs," says Commissioner Tracy Mehan, director of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Office of the Great Lakes.

The database upgrade will occur during the summer with plans to unveil the new system at the Commission's 1998 Annual Meeting, scheduled for October 19-20 in Buffalo, N.Y. Contact: Tom Crane, [tcrane@glc.org](mailto:tcrane@glc.org).

## Mayors to gather July 8-10 in Windsor



Mayors from the binational Great Lakes region will meet July 8-10 in

Windsor, Ontario, to discuss issues such as cooperation and competition between border cities, emerging urban issues and the local impacts of climate change.

Windsor Mayor Michael Hurst and Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer will co-host this year's conference, which features several prominent speakers including Herb Gray, deputy prime minister of Canada; William Glaub, president and chief executive officer of Chrysler Canada; the Hon. Norman Sterling, Ontario Minister of the Environment; and the Hon. Tony Clement, Ontario Minister of Transportation.

Eight mayors representing waterfront border cities located across from each other will address the topic "Border Cities: Competition or Cooperation?" Another mayors panel, moderated by Ken Greenberg, one of Canada's leading "new urbanism" consultants, will feature a discussion of regional urban issues.

Other sessions will focus on global climate change and the Kyoto Summit; contaminated sediments cleanup; the U.S. Harbor Maintenance Tax; U.S. and Canadian Coast Guard cost recovery; the St. Lawrence Seaway; and immigration reform legislation affecting the border between the United States and Canada.

The Mayors' Conference was established by the International Great Lakes Maritime Forum, a Great Lakes state and provincial partnership co-chaired by Frank Kudrna, chair of the Illinois delegation to the Great Lakes Commission. The Commission, in cooperation with the St. Lawrence Economic Development Council, provides secretarial services to the mayors. Contact: Windsor Mayor's Office, 519-255-6315; or Steve Thorp, [sthorp@glc.org](mailto:sthorp@glc.org).

# Commission Briefs

*Paraguay and Bolivia benefit from Great Lakes information sharing*

## GLIN used as model for South American watershed

The Great Lakes Information Network is once again providing inspiration for other regions of the world with shared watersheds. In May, Christine Manninen, GLIN project manager, traveled to Asunción, Paraguay, and Santa Cruz, Bolivia, to speak about the Great Lakes online partnership as part of an Organization of American States-funded mission.

The OAS is partnering with the United Nations Environment Program and the World Bank on a Global Environment Facility (GEF) proposal for development of a hydrological information system for the Upper Paraguay River Basin. Emulating GLIN, the goal of the project is to develop and test a prototype river basin information system that can be widely applied to support decisionmaking related to water resources management.

The Upper Paraguay River Basin at present does not have a multi-jurisdictional institution (like the Great Lakes Commission) that can serve as a focal point for the devel-

opment of such a system.

"While the GLIN model does not solve the problem of developing a multinational approach to decision-making and water management in the basin," says Jorge Rucks, Division II chief, OAS Unit of Sustainable Development and Environment, "it does provide a model for sharing data among the basin countries, which could eventually lead to such cooperation."

The transboundary basin of the Upper Paraguay River, shared by Brazil, Bolivia and Paraguay, is part of the Plata Basin that drains nearly one-fifth of the South American continent to the Atlantic Ocean. The Upper Paraguay River Basin incorporates the headwaters of the Plata Basin and one of the world's great wetlands, the Pantanal.

"The networking project envisioned for the Upper Paraguay River Basin provides a unique opportunity for information sharing between water management organizations, water user associations, state and municipal authorities, nongovernmental or-



Paraguay's Maria del Carmen Alvarez with OAS' David Moody.

ganizations, the private sector and the general public," says OAS' David Moody.

Moody noted that GLIN's international outreach efforts benefit the Great Lakes as much as the other nations because the information exchange and dialogue help the network to refine its own services within the Great Lakes basin.

The GEF proposal is being developed in consultation with Commission staff and will provide support for GLIN maintenance and expansion. Contact: Christine Manninen, manninen@glc.org.

## Seeing the benefits of waterborne commerce

Great Lakes waterborne commerce is a largely invisible industry, and its benefits need to be better marketed. This was one of many recommendations offered at an April 30 listening session sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation in Cleveland, Ohio. The meeting addressed the future needs of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway transportation system.

A Great Lakes Commission study in the early 1990s revealed that water transport, when compared with trucking and rail transport, is clearly superior in terms of fuel use, emissions generation and safety. Industry representatives at the session acknowledged the advantages of waterborne commerce and agreed to strengthen

publicity efforts.

Concern also was expressed that the federal government's role in funding and maintaining navigation infrastructure is declining. The establishment of a harbor maintenance user fee in the 1980s and efforts to impose Coast Guard cost recovery over the past decade have caused alarm among commercial and recreational navigation interests. Several participants criticized the apparent backtracking of longstanding federal commitments in this area, as well as the implications for competitive balance among the freight transportation modes.

Steve Thorp, manager of the Transportation and Economic Development Program at the Commission, stressed the

importance of a federal commitment to maintain commercial and recreational harbors in the Great Lakes at a roundtable discussion.

A national conference will be held in the fall to address key maritime issues identified in the seven regional listening sessions.

Contact: U.S. Coast Guard Waterways Management Directorate, 202-267-6164; or the Maritime Administration's Office of Ports and Domestic Shipping, 202-366-4357.





## Water export proposal prompts regional outcry

A water withdrawal permit issued to a Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, company has sparked international debate and renewed concern over the vulnerability of the Great Lakes to harmful, out-of-basin diversions. Issued on March 31 by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, the permit allowed the Nova Group to withdraw up to 780 million gallons (3 billion liters) of Lake Superior water over the next five years with plans to export to Asia.

The permit action, which involved no consultation with other Great Lakes jurisdictions, prompted an immediate and vocal outcry by Great Lakes agencies, governors, environmental groups, and state and federal legislators. The Great Lakes Commission contacted the region's governors and legislators, noting that the permit action may set a dangerous precedent that will leave the Great Lakes vulnerable to larger scale diversions of this nature.

Michigan's Gov. John Engler urged the Canadian federal government to give the water export proposal the "utmost scrutiny." Rep. Bart Stupak

(D-MI) joined Ontario New Democratic Party leader Howard Hampton in signing a joint letter demanding that Ontario Premier Mike Harris revoke the permit. A bipartisan group from the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation introduced a U.S. House resolution asking the president and U.S. Senate to block the sale of Great Lakes water. Great Lakes United, a binational coalition of environmental groups, voiced concern over the action's legal precedent and future environmental implications.

The public clamor prompted Ontario Minister of the Environment Norm Sterling to initiate action to cancel the permit.

"I do not support the export or diversion of Ontario's water resources from the Great Lakes basin and I never have," said Sterling in a May 14 news release. "Ontario is determined to make certain that water from the Great Lakes never appears on anyone's commodity trading board."

While the Nova Group proposal appears to have been abandoned, the in-



cident has prompted a flurry of activity to address inadequacies in the binational framework for water quantity management. Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy has asked the International Joint Commission to review the proposal in the context of the 1909 International Boundary Waters Treaty. Canadian federal legislators are considering legislation to ban water exports, and several of their U.S. counterparts are investigating the advisability to do the same. The Great Lakes Commission has renewed its call to develop and implement a Great Lakes Water Resources Management Program, as called for in the 1985 Great Lakes Charter. Contact: Mike Donahue, [mdonahue@glc.org](mailto:mdonahue@glc.org).

## Drought mitigation workshop points to the need for more planning

Summertime brings days at the beach, camping by quiet lakes and lots of sunshine. Unfortunately, warmer days can also bring potential conditions for drought. In order to be prepared for the next drought, agency and university representatives from six of the eight Great Lakes states participated in a May 12-14 drought planning workshop along with representatives from 12 other states, Washington D.C., Mexico and Australia. Tom Crane, manager of the Resource Management and Environmental Quality Program, represented the Great Lakes Commission. The use of indices to help predict drought, drought impacts, public participation in the planning process, available federal resources, and the reduction of drought risks were

among the issues discussed.

"The drought that gripped the Southwest and southern Great plains states in 1996 was the most recent reminder of the nation's vulnerability to drought," said Donald Wilhite, director of the National Drought Mitigation Center. "Although drought is a common feature in the West, it also is a normal part of the climate of each region of the United States. People, especially planners, tend to forget this."

Drought also struck the Southeast in 1986, the West from 1987 to 1992 and the Northeast in 1995. The Midwest and Plains states, including most of the Great Lakes region, last experienced severe drought in 1988-89.

"Experiences from each of these

droughts reinforce the need for advance planning," Wilhite said. "Even though drought is a slow-onset disaster, it is difficult to respond quickly to reduce the effects of drought unless a contingency plan is already in place."

Workshop participants focused on how to develop a drought plan and discussed specific planning needs with professionals who have coped with recent droughts.

This workshop, hosted by the National Drought Mitigation Center of Lincoln, Neb., was the fourth in a series of regional workshops on drought preparedness sponsored by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the National Governors' Association. Contact: Tom Crane, [tcrane@glc.org](mailto:tcrane@glc.org).

# Around the Lakes

Blue Ribbon Commission makes impact

## Locally driven initiative to improve Lake St. Clair

"Today we begin to clean the lake."

John Hertel's first words to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Lake St. Clair were both inspiring and prophetic. After six months of hard work, the group issued an action plan in August 1997 that has made an impact on policies and procedures regarding the health of the lake.

Hertel watched for years as the water quality of Lake St. Clair declined. When he became chair of the Macomb County (MI) Board of Commissioners, his first priority was to clean the lake. He established the Blue Ribbon Commission to accept responsibility for environmental action at a local level. The group's final report cited monitoring, education, voluntary action and enforcement as its four key elements.

Since the commission's report was released, Macomb County has hired a special prosecutor who deals exclusively with environmental issues and a Surface Water Improvement Team has been created to search for illegal sewer taps, failed septic systems, industrial polluters and other violations of public health laws.

According to Hertel, the state of Michigan has agreed to clean up the watershed if state voters pass an upcoming bond issue. The federal government also has increased its involvement in Lake St. Clair clean-up and has established a water quality monitoring station that uses bluegills as indicators.

The county is in the process of creating a Water Quality Board, made up of three elected officials and six private citizens. The board's primary task is to protect Lake St. Clair by working cooperatively with counties and other interest groups to monitor facilities and procedures and create educational programs.

In mid-May, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sponsored a meeting between Blue Ribbon commissioners and representatives from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Environment Canada and other Canadian interest groups to discuss binational solutions to Lake St. Clair's problems. The meeting gave participants the opportunity to make important contacts within other groups invested in Lake St. Clair's future.

"The Blue Ribbon Commission's report has opened up both sides to sitting down and getting things done by working together," says Russell LaBarge, chair of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

Contact: Russell LaBarge, 810-777-3377.



Heart-shaped and shallow, Lake St. Clair is the smallest lake in the Great Lakes system. Because the lake is so shallow, a shipping channel must periodically be dredged to ensure bottom clearance for large ships.

The northeastern portion of Lake St. Clair is an extensive delta system, the largest within the Great Lakes. The Michigan portion of the delta has been urbanized, while Ontario has set aside much of the wetlands as the Walpole Indian Reservation. Wetland loss from urban and recreational encroachment continues to be a problem on the U.S. side; and in Ontario, many of the wetland areas have been wiped out by agricultural drainage.

Map credit: L. Beer, Great Lakes Commission

### Lake St. Clair Facts

<b>Water surface area</b>	
U.S.	162 mi <sup>2</sup> (420 km <sup>2</sup> )
Canada	268 mi <sup>2</sup> (694 km <sup>2</sup> )
<b>Maximum depth</b>	
21 ft (6.4 m)*	
<b>Average depth</b>	
10 ft (3 m)	
<b>Shoreline length</b>	
U.S.	
Mainland	59 mi (95 km)
Islands	84 mi (135 km)
Canada	
Mainland	71 mi (114 km)
Islands	43 mi (69 km)
<b>Drainage basin</b>	
4890 mi <sup>2</sup> (12,616 km <sup>2</sup> )	

\*Deepest measurement outside dredged navigation channel, which has a depth of 27 ft (8.2 m)

**Reference:** *Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair Handbook* (1993), edited by Stanley J. Bolsenga and Charles E. Herdendorf, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, Mich.



## Institute focuses on legal aspects of Great Lakes management

The Legal Institute of the Great Lakes, based at the University of Toledo College of Law, has established an annual Great Lakes Law, Science and Policy Conference. The first such event, "Environmental Protection in the Great Lakes: Current Realities and Future Directions," was held May 21-22 at Maumee Bay State Park in Oregon, Ohio.

More than 40 speakers drawn from public agencies, industry and environmental organizations addressed the legal aspects of topics ranging from point and nonpoint source pollution, air quality and human health to environmental justice and wetlands development. Also featured was a retrospective on Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement implementation and a keynote address titled "Our Environmental

Destiny" by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

LIGL also has launched the *Toledo Journal of Great Lakes'*

*Law, Science and Policy*, with the inaugural issue featuring articles by Illinois Commissioner Norm Sims ("An Economic Developer Looks at Sustainability") and Great Lakes Commission Executive Director Mike Donahue ("Strengthening the Binational Management Effort: The Great Lakes Commission's Provincial Membership Initiative").

Donahue and Michigan Alternate Commissioner Mike Leffler serve on LIGL's Advisory Board.

Contact: Michael Kadens, 419-530-2876, [ligl@utoledo.edu](mailto:ligl@utoledo.edu).



## Four seaway ports earn Pacesetter Awards

Four Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway ports have earned the annual U.S. Seaway Port Pacesetter Award: the Detroit/Wayne County (MI) Port Authority, the Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority, the Brown County (WI) Port of Green Bay and the Port of Oswego (NY) Authority. The award is presented to U.S. Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway ports that increased their overseas cargo tonnage during the 1997 navigation season.

"The seaway recorded its fourth consecutive strong cargo performance in 1997, and much of the credit for this must go to the very successful marketing efforts of our port officials," said David Sanders, acting administrator of the U.S. Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation.

Great Lakes Commissioner Tom McAuslan from New York is the Executive Director of the Port of Oswego Authority. Contact: Dennis Deuschl, 202-366-0110.

### Guest editorial, continued from page 1

the Michigan House and Senate and were signed into law earlier this year by Gov. Engler.

Under Michigan law, any municipality that discharges untreated sewage from a combined sewer system must contact the Department of Environmental Quality, newspapers and all affected municipalities. Under my first bill, Public Act 3 of 1998, the municipality must make the required notifications immediately if the sewage has not received all the treatment available under ordinary dry weather conditions.

Under Public Act 3, the municipality also must pay for *E.coli* testing each time a discharge of untreated sewage occurs and give the results to the health departments of all affected counties.

To further protect public health and safety, Public Act 4 of 1998 prohibits eaves troughs and roof downspouts that collect storm water from being di-

rectly connected to combined sewer systems.

We have long pointed to industrial waste and other pollution as the sources of all water quality problems. However, this is not the case. Agriculture runoff and storm sewers have tremendous impacts on our water and are issues that must be addressed. We allow municipalities to discharge sewage when wet weather leads to a combined sewer overflow. This overflow has an adverse effect on water quality and public health and must be monitored.

Although I had Lake St. Clair in mind when I introduced this legislation, its benefits will be felt throughout the state and the Great Lakes region. In Michigan, local municipalities will now monitor their sewer systems and hopefully reduce the level of pollution in local lakes, which means cleaner water will find its way into the Great Lakes.

Lake St. Clair and its problems are more than just part of a Michigan issue. The problems we have in Lake St. Clair are happening throughout the Great Lakes region. I hope the efforts we have made will benefit high-pollution waters throughout the area. Pollution doesn't just stay in one place. If Lake St. Clair, or any small river or lake near the Great Lakes, becomes polluted, the contaminants will eventually run into the Great Lakes and affect the health and safety of all residents.

We should not be content until we have safe drinking water, water that we can fish and swim in, exotic species under control, and sensible land-use strategies to safeguard the progress we have already made. These are achievable goals that we can and should strive to see become realities for the citizens of the Great Lakes region.

# Around the Lakes

## Exhibit with a conscience focuses on Great Lakes

Landscape painting may not be the most radical form of environmental action, but it offers a beautiful way to raise awareness of the Great Lakes. "EXPEDITION: Great Lakes— The Power of Water" is the latest in a series of traveling environmental exhibitions curated by New York gallery owner Sherry French. Eight artists from around the country have traveled to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River to paint what they see, revealing both beauty and fragility in the landscapes.

French, who creates exhibits around causes she believes in, says a trip to Lake Michigan sparked her interest in the beauty of the Great Lakes.

"I feel strongly that environmental issues in the Great Lakes, like pollution clean-ups, make good news stories,"



*Courtyard* by Michael Schweigart.

French said. "If people work together, the beauty of the landscapes can be preserved."

French also stresses that the Great

Lakes should be recognized for their importance in the early history of the United States; too often they are forgotten behind more prominent landmarks on the east coast.

When choosing artists for the exhibit, French drew from people who were already environmentally conscious. Some had grown up in the Great Lakes region, many had been there vacationing, and all were happy to go back and paint.

The participating artists include George Atkinson, Ahzad Bogosian, John Briggs, Michael Schweigart, Sonya Sklaroff, Michael L. Scott, Robert Van Meter and James Winn. As an environmental statement, the artists show the splendor of the lakes as they exist today.

Michael L. Scott from Ohio has painted his way through much of the terrain around Lake Superior; his favorite area was the Pukaskwa National Park in Canada, where glaciers have left spectacular rock formations.

John Briggs' road trip into the Great Lakes region took him to lakes Michigan, Superior and Huron. Choosing his subjects was not an easy task because he was not familiar with the areas. He followed roads along the lakes and talked to people along the way to find potential subjects.

"Something has to speak to you," Briggs said. "Everybody has a different view of what's beautiful."



John Briggs performed color studies of his subjects to take back to his studio, where he had the time, space and materials to paint. Photo credit: Betty Briggs.

New Jersey realist Robert Van Meter and his wife hiked and canoed their way through Pictured Rocks National Seashore on Lake Superior, the Apostle Islands in Wisconsin and Voyageurs National Park in Minnesota, to name a few of their many destinations.

Many of the artists and their accompanying family members have kept written and photographic journals of their travels, which will be part of the show's display.

The "Great Lakes —The Power of Water" exhibit will open in the Sherry French Gallery, New York, in October 1998. In 1999, the show will spend the week of the Presidential State of the Union Address in the Senate Russell Rotunda in Washington, D.C., before moving on to galleries and museums in Michigan. Contact: Sherry French, 212-247-2457.

## Sustainable coastal communities the focus of workshop series

A Sept. 16-17, 1998, workshop in Traverse City, Mich., will bring together local officials to examine the opportunities and obstacles associated with issues facing the Grand Traverse Bay watershed. Three major issues—intergovernmental coordination, watershed management, and open space and agricultural preservation—will be addressed at the workshop, sponsored by the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Initiative and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Great Lakes Commission staff members Mike Donahue and

Victoria Pebbles serve on the event's planning committee.

"Our goals are to foster stronger working relationships between local officials and to establish a coordinated process for sustainable development," says Chris Wright, executive director of the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Initiative.

At a planning workshop in May, attendees learned about New Designs for Growth, a northwest Michigan business-led initiative to advance more efficient land-use patterns; a quality of life indexing process; and a Michigan State Uni-

versity study to develop a model that shows the ecosystem impacts of land-use change. Ways to promote sustainable coastal development also were discussed.

Traverse City was selected as the pilot location because of its sustainable development-related initiatives already underway. NOAA plans to sponsor similar workshops in other U.S. regions.

Contact: Kenneth Walker, NOAA, OCRM, 301-713-3113 ext. 157, kenneth.walker@noaa.gov; or Chris Wright, Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Initiative, 616-935-1514.

## The Poe Lock at 30

By Albert G. Ballert

Director of Research, Emeritus;  
Great Lakes Commission

It was on Aug. 27, 1968, that Lake Superior waters first flowed into the new Poe Lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. Construction of the \$40 million facility began in August 1964 after demolition of the original Poe Lock, which was used from 1896 to 1961. The locks were named in honor of Gen. Orlando M. Poe, the Army engineer in charge at the Soo from 1883 to 1896.

The original Sault Ste. Marie system consisted of two 350-foot locks in tandem that went into service on June 15, 1855. It was owned by the state of Michigan and was transferred to the federal government in 1881.

The new Poe accommodates ships



The Poe Lock on June 15, 1968.



During 1968, when the Poe was being tested, the only commercial vessel transit was made by the downbound *Philip R. Clarke*. This vessel also made the first transit at the dedication and opening of the Poe on June 26, 1969. Photo credits: A. Ballert.

up to 1000 feet long by 105 feet wide, with a draft up to 30 feet. Raising or lowering the lock water level for vessel passages requires about 12 to 14 minutes. Prior to the creation of the Poe, the MacArthur Lock limited vessel dimensions to 730 feet by 75 feet.

From 1972 to 1981, construction was completed on 13 Great Lakes vessels that reached the 1,000-foot mark. The first of these super-lakers through the Poe was the *Stewart J. Cort*, which passed upbound in May 1972.

During the most recent navigation season, the Poe Lock was in service from March 25, 1997, to January 15, 1998. During the 297 days, 4,493 vessel passages brought 67.5 million tons of cargo through the Poe Lock.

## Nationwide global climate change assessment

The Clinton Administration is in the midst of a two-year, nationwide assessment of climate change, variability and associated impacts on the nation's economy, agriculture, water availability and quality of life. The U.S. Global Change Research Program is sponsoring a series of 18 regional workshops that will culminate in the release of a national assessment in 1999.

More than 200 participants convened May 4-7 in Ann Arbor, Mich., for the Upper Great Lakes Region Workshop. Plenary sessions focused on climate change and variability at the global, national and regional levels, with an emphasis on ecological, human health and economic implications. Commission Executive Director Mike Donahue served on the planning committee and chaired a session on governance/education.

Participant input addressed water resources, land ecology, health, climate, economy/commerce, agriculture, water ecology, governance and education. Session findings will be incorporated into a final report to the U.S. Global Change Research Program, which will help shape administration policy, including its response to the Kyoto Climate Change Summit. Contact: Peter J. Sousounis, University of Michigan, 734-936-0488, sousou@umich.edu.

## Clean Water Action Plan: A cooperative, watershed-based approach

Great Lakes water quality was the focal point when the Administration's nationwide Clean Water Action Plan tour visited Chicago in May. The action plan, announced last October on the 25th anniversary of the passage of the U.S. Clean Water Act, offers a blueprint for protecting and restoring the nation's water resources into the next century.

The Clean Water Action Plan features a cooperative, watershed-based approach to water quality improvements. In addition to refocusing and coordinating existing federal efforts, it offers new initiatives to reduce

public health threats, improve the stewardship of natural resources, strengthen nonpoint source pollution controls and enhance public access to water quality information.

The Chicago meeting, one of seven events planned nationwide, featured presentations by Brig. Gen. Hans Van Winkle (USACE Great Lakes and Ohio River Division), U.S. EPA Administrator Carol Browner and Jim Lyons, Asst. Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Breakout sessions solicited stakeholder input on unified watershed

assessment, animal farming operations, federal lands, monitoring, research, coastal protection, wetlands, stewardship incentives, polluted runoff, and standards and enforcement. The meeting was coordinated by the USACE Great Lakes and Ohio River Division. Contact: Jan Miller, jan.a.miller@usace.army.mil.

Copies of the plan are available from U.S. EPA's National Center for Environmental Publications and Information (1-800-490-9198) or online at <http://www.epa.gov/cleanwater>.



# Great Lakes Calendar

*This calendar is a compilation of selected events of interest to the Commission. Further details and a more extensive calendar are available online via the Great Lakes Information Network ([www.great-lakes.net](http://www.great-lakes.net)). We encourage your input to the calendar. If you know of an event you'd like us to include, please contact Lara Slee, ADVISOR editor, at 734-665-9135; [lslee@glc.org](mailto:lslee@glc.org).*

## Commission events

### July

**8-10 12<sup>th</sup> International Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Mayors' Conference.** Windsor, Ontario. Contact: Steve Thorp, [sthorp@glc.org](mailto:sthorp@glc.org).

### September

**15-16 Beneficial Use of Dredged Material Workshop.** Toledo, OH. Contact: Steve Thorp, [sthorp@glc.org](mailto:sthorp@glc.org).

**16-17 Great Lakes Dredging Team Meeting.** Toledo, OH. Contact: Steve Thorp, [sthorp@glc.org](mailto:sthorp@glc.org).

**16-18 Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Techniques for the Great Lakes Basin.** Toledo, OH. Contact: Matt Doss, [mdoss@glc.org](mailto:mdoss@glc.org).

### October

**19-20 Annual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission.** Buffalo, NY. Contact: Mike Donahue, [mdonahue@glc.org](mailto:mdonahue@glc.org).

### December

**9-10 Great Lakes GIS Online Workshop.** The University of Chicago Gleacher Center; Chicago, IL. Contact: Julie Wagemakers, [juliew@glc.org](mailto:juliew@glc.org).

## Basin events

### July

**11 The Great Lakes Celebrate the International Year of the Ocean.** Sarnia, Ontario. Contact: Patricia MacDonald, 613-990-0414, [macdonaldp@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:macdonaldp@dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

**20-21 Workshop on Great Lakes Natural Coastal Hazards to Development.** Milwaukee, WI. Contact: Phil Keillor, 608-263-5133, [jkeillor@seagrant.wisc.edu](mailto:jkeillor@seagrant.wisc.edu).

**22 National Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force.** Arlington, VA. Contact: Bob Peoples, 703-358-2025, [robert\\_peoples@fws.gov](mailto:robert_peoples@fws.gov).

**23-24 Workshop on Great Lakes Natural Coastal Hazards to Development.** Superior, WI. Contact: Phil Keillor, 608-263-5133, [jkeillor@seagrant.wisc.edu](mailto:jkeillor@seagrant.wisc.edu).

### August

**13 Exotic Species Day Camp.** Chicago, IL. Contact: Robin Goettel, 217-333-9448, [goettel@uiuc.edu](mailto:goettel@uiuc.edu).

**29-Sept. 21 Coastweeks '98: Ohio Celebrates Lake Erie.** Contact: Ohio Lake Erie Office, 419-245-2514, [oleo@www.epa.state.oh.us](mailto:oleo@www.epa.state.oh.us).

**30-Sept. 3 Coastal Zone Canada.** Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Contact: CZC98, Institute of Ocean Sciences, 250-363-6479 (fax), [czc98@ios.bc.ca](mailto:czc98@ios.bc.ca).

### September

**24 Ohio Lake Erie Conference.** Ashtabula, OH. Contact: Ohio Lake Erie Office, 419-245-2514, [oleo@www.epa.state.oh.us](mailto:oleo@www.epa.state.oh.us).

**25-26 Areas of Concern Workshop: Transferring Successful Strategies and Techniques.** Hammond, IN. Contact: Bruce Kirschner, 313-226-2170 ext. 6710, [kirschnerb@ijc.wincom.net](mailto:kirschnerb@ijc.wincom.net).

### October

**21-23 State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC 98).** Buffalo, NY. Contact: Paul Horvatin, 312-353-3612, [horvatin.paul@epamail.epa.gov](mailto:horvatin.paul@epamail.epa.gov).

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