



Advisor

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2003 Semiannual Meeting in Indianapolis

Advancing environmental, economic prosperity

"Restore the Greatness!" was the theme of the 2003 Semiannual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission. And few places could have more fully evoked that theme than the host city of Indianapolis.

Commissioners and other attendees at the April 15-17 meeting saw a classic Rust Belt city that in recent years has been transformed into a model of environmental and economic prosperity with a high quality of life for area residents. The location provided a potent symbol of what the Commission and its partners are working to achieve for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system.

"Indiana has a big stake in the Great Lakes, even though we don't have many miles of shoreline," said John Goss, chair of the host Indiana Delegation and director of the state's Department of Natural Resources, in his welcoming remarks.

He noted that the state's Lake Michigan shore is going through a difficult time of transition, as the needs of steel and other industries change and beaches, marinas and other recreational uses come to play a more important role in the area's economy. In making that transition, he added, the state will certainly be relying on the expertise of the Great Lakes Commission in getting through these challenging times.

It's a role the Commission is well suited for, as reflected by Chair Sam Speck in his address to the assembled group.

"We're right on target in focusing on some of the leading policy issues of the day," he said. Among these, he noted, is the Commission's role in helping to implement sound water management through the Annex 2001 process; developing restoration principles that are helping to advance the efforts of the Great Lakes governors and others; combating aquatic nuisance species; advocating for reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), and other efforts that reflect the Commission's unique mission and capabilities.

"No other organization is more needed now for the Great Lakes than this organization and what it can accomplish," Speck said. "It is a strong, growing, vibrant organization targeting the interface between science, policy and resource management."

Reflecting the "Restore the Greatness!" theme, a key session focused on efforts to develop a comprehensive Great Lakes Restoration Plan. Lessons learned from the Florida Everglades and Chesapeake Bay were shared by Nanciann Regalado, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville (Fla.) District and Carin Bisland of the

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Commission Chair Sam Speck

The Advisor is published bimonthly by the Great Lakes Commission. The Great Lakes Commission is a binational agency established in 1955 to promote the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of the water and related natural resources of the Great Lakes basin and St. Lawrence River.

"No other organization is more needed now for the Great Lakes than this organization and what it can accomplish. It is a strong, growing, vibrant organization targeting the interface between science, policy and resource management"
-Chair Sam Speck

Commission News & Views

From the desk of the president/CEO...

Great Lakes Commission

The Great Lakes Commission is a binational public agency dedicated to the use, management and protection of the water, land and other natural resources of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system. In partnership with the eight Great Lakes states and provinces of Ontario and Québec, the Commission applies sustainable development principles in addressing issues of resource management, environmental protection, transportation and sustainable development. The Commission provides accurate and objective information on public policy issues; an effective forum for developing and coordinating public policy; and a unified, systemwide voice to advocate member interests.

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Cover photo: Marblehead lighthouse on Lake Erie, Kirk Haverkamp

Sometimes good is better than perfect

Water resources planning is both an art and a science, and the literature abounds with various models for turning ideas into actions. At one end of the continuum are those who subscribe to the “rational-comprehensive” model, the notion that we can think broadly, establish all-encompassing goals, and achieve sweeping change in an orderly, well-defined process.

At the other end are those who resign themselves to the “disjointed incrementalism” school of thought; the idea that change will take place in bits and pieces and fits and starts, in the absence of a grand design. In my thinking, the former are dreamers and the latter are fatalists. Somewhere in the middle is reality.

When it comes to pursuing a grand plan for the Great Lakes ecosystem, we must avoid a combination of these two extremes that might be termed “disjointed comprehensiveness.” In brief, this suggests a scenario where competing plans are pursued along separate tracks in the hope that they will all arrive at the same end point at the same time. In the case of this hybrid model, the whole is much less than the sum of its parts. It simply won't work.

From my experience in large-scale planning and other lessons learned, there are some irrefutable realities that must be addressed in developing a restoration plan. Any such plan must reflect the priorities of the region's governors; be based on sound science; have the backing of relevant congressional delegations; enjoy popular support among stakeholders; build upon existing programs, authorities and institutions; include measurable goals; and establish clear lines of accountability for implementation. Furthermore, it must be a dynamic, evolving process that need not be perfect in the eyes of all who subscribe to it. Yale economist Charles Lindblom termed this the “sci-

ence of muddling through,” which might just be the desired mid-point of the planning continuum.

The validity of these essential planning ingredients was affirmed at the Great Lakes Commission's recent meeting in Indianapolis by guest speakers from both the Everglades and Chesapeake Bay initiatives. While the ecosystem management needs of these two regions are very different from those of the Great Lakes, it's clear that principles of sound planning transcend any such differences.

“Most of the pieces of the puzzle are already scattered about; the next step is to assemble them into a picture that works for all.”

Here in the Great Lakes basin, we may surprise ourselves by the amount of material we already have in hand to contribute to the “grand plan.” Many agencies and organizations have been involved in restoration efforts for years. There is no shortage of success stories out there, nor of planning initiatives and documents. Most of the pieces of the puzzle are already scattered about; the next step is to assemble them into a picture that works for all.

General George Patton once said that “a good plan violently executed today is far better than a perfect plan executed tomorrow.” While I certainly don't advocate violence in our civil world of basin planning, I think he's on to something.



Michael J. Donahue, Ph.D.

Board, White House officials explore restoration strategies

Aggressive advocacy of member priorities and a stronger role in shaping the Bush administration's agenda were at the top of the list when the Commission's Board of Directors met March 19 in Washington, D.C.

The board met with two senior staff of the president's Council on Environmental Quality, Chair Jim Connaughton and Associate Director Bill Leary, for an encouraging discussion of Great Lakes restoration and protection efforts. The Commission's *2003 Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity* was well-received, with indications that it could provide a basis for an administration-led restoration and protection initiative.

Maj. Gen. Robert Griffin, director of civil works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was also on hand to discuss Corps/Commission

partnerships and common interests.

In other matters, the board approved an \$8.1 million budget for FY2004, reflecting a 23 percent increase over the current year and the Commission's largest ever, thanks to a number of new, large-scale initiatives addressing member priorities. President/CEO Mike Donahue outlined staff and capacity expansions supporting those efforts.

The board also approved the next steps in the Commission's Annex 2001 decision support work; called for outreach efforts aimed at new governors, legislators and Commissioners; agreed to undertake a mid-point assessment of the organization's five-year Strategic Plan; and reaffirmed a commitment to focus on opportunities that add value to regional initiatives.

Contact: Mike Donahue, mdonahue@glc.org

Roundtable promotes brownfields-greenfields linkages

A Commission-sponsored roundtable, held in recent months at Michigan State University, could prove to be a model for identifying effective and achievable strategies to promote brownfields redevelopment and greenfields protection.

The roundtable brought together nearly 50 senior state agency officials, state and federal legislative aides, and representatives of key Michigan associations and organizations to explore strategies for redeveloping older urban areas while protecting outlying agricultural lands and open spaces. A collaborative effort by the Great Lakes Commission, U.S. EPA and the Victor Institute, the event exemplified Michigan's leadership in addressing this issue, a pressing environmental and socioeconomic problem facing Great Lakes states and the nation at large.

"The roundtable was an important step in emphasizing the fundamental linkages between protection of greenfields and redevelopment of brownfields, which are necessary to move forward with effective strategies in Michigan," said Dr. Phil Davis, director of the Victor Institute at Michigan State University.

Through a series of interactive exercises, participants evaluated and prioritized a list of 16 strategies for promoting the twin goals, ranking them by importance and achievability. Four emerged at the top of the list:

- State planning goals
- Development of comprehensive local plans
- Comprehensive farmland protection
- Property abandonment reform

The Great Lakes Commission believes the Michigan roundtable can be a model for similar efforts in other Great Lakes jurisdictions and invites other agencies and organizations to join in organizing such events.

Contact: Victoria Pebbles, vpebbles@glc.org

Register now! Moving Toward a Sustainable Great Lakes

*Don't miss this important event! To be held June 25-26 at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., this conference will explore how to integrate environmental, social, and economic issues in order to secure a sustainable future for the Great Lakes and will help to foster relationships among all sectors of the Great Lakes community. Co-sponsored by the Great Lakes Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. For more information or to register online, visit www.glc.org/sustainable
Contact: Marquetta Davis, davisma@tetrattech-ffx.com*



Commission President/CEO Mike Donahue, left, and Senior Project Manager Victoria Pebbles, present brownfields-greenfields options for discussion at Michigan roundtable.

Annual Meeting of the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors

June 16-18, 2003
St. Catharines, Ontario

IAGLR and 10th World Lakes Conference

June 22-26, 2003
Chicago, Ill.

Moving Toward a Sustainable Great Lakes

June 25-26, 2003
Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

Annual Meeting of the Great Lakes Commission

Oct. 1-3, 2003
Chicago, Ill.

mark your calendar

Science vessel group establishes formal identity

A group that has been promoting the coordinated management and use of Great Lakes science vessels for the past six years has formally established an organization. The Great Lakes Association of Science Ships (GLASS), consisting of vessel operators, managers and scientists, was formed at the 7th Annual Great Lakes Science Vessel Coordination Workshop, held March 13-14 in Windsor, Ontario.

The group – including more than two dozen boat captains, crew members, facilities managers and scientists – will focus on three main areas in 2003-04:

1) Advocacy efforts, including strengthening relationships with partners and customers

2) Vessel utilization and standards development, including scheduling, equipment and safety issues

3) A captains and crew forum to address personnel issues

The science vessel coordination effort was established in 1997 and is a consortium of agencies, universities, institutes and companies with an interest in the Great Lakes science vessel fleet. Staff support is provided primarily by the International Joint Commission and the Great Lakes Commission under the auspices of the Council of Great Lakes Research Managers.

Contacts: Tom Crane, tcrane@glc.org or Mark Burrows, burrowsm@windsor.ijc.org

“Latest and greatest” approaches to AOC restoration

The latest technologies and management approaches for restoring Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs) were presented to local AOC managers and others at a workshop organized by the Commission late last year.

Focusing on innovations in assessment, monitoring and restoration of Great Lakes AOCs, the workshop helped provide those responsible for restoring Michigan AOCs with the tools, techniques and technologies needed to do their job. Held at Saginaw Valley State University and sponsored by Michigan’s Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC), it drew well over 100

AOC representatives; federal, state and provincial agency staff; and other interested parties.

More than two dozen U.S. and Canadian resource managers discussed their efforts to address AOC beneficial use impairments related to water quality, fish, wildlife and contaminated sediments. Of particular interest were case studies of restoration and cleanup efforts at the Presque Isle Bay (Pennsylvania) and Severn Sound (Ontario) AOCs.

The workshop proceedings are available at www.glc.org/spac/proceedings. Contact: John Hummer, jhummer@glc.org

State senator goes to bat for Michigan’s Areas of Concern

With a baseball bat in hand, Michigan state Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom (R-Muskegon) called on the state legislature and other partners to “hit a home run” and clean up and delist Michigan’s Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOC).

Sen. Van Woerkom was a featured speaker at the sixth annual Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) legislative briefing in Lansing. Coordinated by the Great Lakes Commission, the March 19 event was attended by more than 75 legislators, staff and AOC representatives.

Just prior to the briefing, Sen. Van Woerkom

had introduced a state Senate resolution calling on Congress to fully fund the Great Lakes Legacy Act, which authorizes \$270 million to clean up Great Lakes AOCs.

The highlight of the briefing was the SPAC’s “Action Agenda for Restoring Michigan’s Great Lakes Toxic Hot Spots,” a series of strategic priorities for accelerating progress in cleaning up Michigan’s 14 AOCs. The action agenda document and other council materials are available on the SPAC web site at www.glc.org/spac. Contact: Matt Doss, mdoss@glc.org

Great Lakes legislative forum urged

A call for the creation of a forum to bring together state and provincial legislators from throughout the Great Lakes to advance regional interests highlighted a series of policy actions adopted at April's Semiannual Meeting.

The resolution, a response to the growing and critical importance of state and provincial legislators in regional governance, was among seven action items Commissioners approved. It sets the stage for the Great Lakes Commission to collaborate with the Council of State Governments in facilitating cross-jurisdiction policy deliberations on regional issues.

Other resolutions, all adopted by unanimous vote, were:

- A call for Congress and the President to fully fund the Great Lakes Legacy Act at its authorized level of \$54 million annually to support the remediation of contaminated sediments at Great Lakes Areas of Concern
- An endorsement of the Commission's recently completed Water Resources Management Decision Support System (WRMDSS) report, and a call for implementing its findings and recommendations in a timely manner (see story, page 7)
- A call for Congress and relevant federal agencies to fully recognize the stature of the Great Lakes as freshwater inland seas and to support

enhanced ecosystem research and resource management efforts

- A call for Great Lakes states and provinces to standardize decision support tools in order to facilitate the ready exchange of data and a commitment by the Commission to assist in such efforts

- A call for enhanced federal funding for Great Lakes states to implement maritime and related homeland security plans

- A call for Congress to provide sufficient appropriations to support dredging and other maintenance of recreational boating harbors, as merited by the crucial role they play in the regional economy

For the complete text of all resolutions, visit www.glc.org/about/resolutions.

Contact: Mike Donahue, mdonahue@glc.org



Thomas Dammrich, second from right, president of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), presents Commission officials at the 2003 Semiannual Meeting with a \$25,000 NMMA donation to the Great Lakes Endowment to support the research, policy development and advocacy efforts of the Great Lakes Commission. With Dammrich are, from left, Commission Chair Sam Speck; Commissioner Ned Dikmen of Illinois, publisher of Great Lakes Boating Magazine; Dammrich; and Commission President/CEO Mike Donahue.

2003 Semiannual Meeting (continued from page 1)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program.

Another major session explored efforts to improve the health of Great Lakes beaches and protect the public through monitoring and public notification programs. Also, the effects of key national and regional leadership changes, along with their potential influence on setting Great Lakes priorities and building partnerships were examined.

Keynote speaker Thomas Dammrich, president/CEO of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA), spoke on the role that recreational boating plays in support-

ing the regional economy, and of the importance of maintaining recreational harbors and related infrastructure that boaters rely on. He also presented a \$25,000 donation from the NMMA to the Great Lakes Endowment.

Also at the meeting, Commissioners welcomed a large number of new colleagues and adopted seven resolutions establishing policy positions on important Great Lakes issues (see stories, this page and page 8).

Contact: Mike Donahue, mdonahue@glc.org.



Judy O'Bannon, First Lady of Indiana, receives a copy of Pierre Berton's pictorial of the Great Lakes from Commissioner John Goss, chair of the Indiana Delegation and director of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. O'Bannon gave the keynote address at the 2003 Semiannual Meeting dinner.

Commission renews call to “Restore the Greatness”

Saying that it's time to give the Great Lakes their due, Commission Chair Sam Speck released the Commission's 2003 *Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity* to members of Congress and regional leaders March 20 at Great Lakes Day in Washington.

“The Great Lakes are the centerpiece of the largest freshwater system on the face of the Earth; they hold the key to the economic prosperity, environmental health and quality of life of tens of millions of residents,” Speck told the assembled group. “But the ‘greatness’ of this binational resource has been compromised by a legacy of misuse and abuse.”

The *Great Lakes Program*, he continued, is the Commission's response to that legacy. First introduced in 2001 and now in its third iteration, the *Great Lakes Program* (see insert at right) sets forth the Commission's recommendations for specific legislation and appropriations needed to address seven key Great Lakes priorities identified by its membership:

- Cleaning up toxic hot spots
- Shutting the door on invasive species
- Controlling nonpoint source pollution
- Restoring and conserving wetlands and critical coastal habitat
- Ensuring the sustainable use of our water resources
- Strengthening our decision support capability
- Enhancing the commercial and recreational value of our waterways

The *Great Lakes Program* is widely regarded as an important step toward the development of a large-scale, long-term Great Lakes Restoration

Plan. Such a consensus-based plan can yield a detailed blueprint of unprecedented scope to guide state/federal/stakeholder partnerships for years into the future.

Nearly 150 officials, including members of congress, their staffs, senior officials of state, federal and provincial agencies and others from the Great Lakes community were on hand for the event, which began with the Great Lakes Congressional Breakfast. Co-sponsored by the Commission and the Northeast-Midwest Institute, the breakfast featured an address by Rep. Steven LaTourette (R-Ohio), co-chair of the Great Lakes Congressional Task Force, who outlined the major challenges facing the region.

The breakfast was followed by the Great Lakes Issues Briefing, sponsored by the Commission, where regional issues were addressed in greater detail. Christopher Jones, chair of the Council of Great Lakes Governors' Restoration Task Force, discussed restoration priorities and planning initiatives of the Great Lakes governors. Chair Speck followed with a briefing on efforts to implement Annex 2001 to the Great Lakes Charter to safeguard the region's water resources.

Representatives of U.S. EPA and Environment Canada discussed the international implications and obligations inherent in managing the Great Lakes, and congressional staff members outlined key issues being addressed by the House, Senate and Great Lakes Congressional Task Force.

Additional copies of the *Great Lakes Program* are available from the Commission or online at www.glc.org/restore. Contact: Mike Donahue, mdonahue@glc.org

Graphic designer, student associate join Commission

Shannon Glutting has been hired as the Commission's new web and print designer. She graduated in April from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the School of Art and Design. Glutting will be responsible for developing attractive and effective designs for Commission publications, educational/promotional materials, and web sites. Contact:

glutting@glc.org

Also, Meghan Cauzillo has joined the Commission as a student research associate. A master's student in the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and the Environment, she is assisting with Great Lakes Basin Program activities. Contact: meghanc@glc.org

DID YOU KNOW

The Great Lakes have 10,900 miles of shoreline in the United States and Canada. Including connecting channels and islands, that's equal to almost 44 percent of the circumference of the Earth! Michigan's Great Lakes coastline alone totals 3,288 miles, more than any state but Alaska. — Source: Michigan Sea Grant

Water resources project report now available!

The Great Lakes Commission has released the final report of its Water Resources Management Decision Support System (WRMDSS) project. The product of an intensive, three-year effort, the report presents findings and recommendations to lay the foundation for a system to guide water use decisions in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system, as called for in Annex 2001 to the Great Lakes Charter. The project was undertaken at the request of the region's governors and premiers and was supported by the Great Lakes Protection Fund.

Titled "Toward a Water Resources Management Decision Support System for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin," the report reflects the consensus of a project management team and a larger stakeholders advisory committee consisting of federal, state and provincial resource managers, scientists and researchers, representatives of the environmental and business communities, and others with expertise in Great Lakes water use.

The report presents 39 recommendations, many related to research needs. Among others, it calls for an improved understanding of the Great Lakes basin's physical and biological components, better awareness of current resource uses, adapting current monitoring and modeling to the needs of Annex 2001, using modeling and data collection to gain a better understanding

of ecosystem responses to water withdrawals, and conducting research on water conservation and resource improvement standards in order to support Annex 2001 development and implementation.

The report makes a few general conclusions regarding the cumulative effects of water withdrawals, the visibility of such effects, and the potential of changes in climate, land use and other factors to alter water quantities and flows through the hydrologic system.

The report and an appendix containing all project products are available online at www.glc.org/wateruse/wrmdss or in print form and CD-ROM from the Commission. Contact: Tom Crane, tcrane@glc.org

Outstanding service



Michigan Commissioner Frank D'Itri, left, and Richard (Dick) Bartz, of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), were presented with the Great Lakes Commission's Outstanding Service Award at the 2003 Semiannual Meeting in recognition of their efforts on behalf of the Great Lakes. D'Itri, who recently retired from Michigan State University's Institute of Water Research, was marking his last meeting as a Commissioner, stepping down after many years of service. Bartz, who is assistant chief of the ODNR Division of Water, was honored for his contributions over the past three years as chair of the recently completed Water Resources Management Decision Support System project (story at left).

Workshop presents latest research on mercury's effects

Mercury is widespread and persistent in the Great Lakes ecosystem. It can accumulate in fish and, when they are consumed by humans, can pose health risks, particularly for children and pregnant women. The latest research on the topic was presented at a February workshop, "An Ecosystem Approach to the Health Effects of Mercury in the Great Lakes Basin," held in Windsor, Ontario, with sponsorship by the International Joint Commission (IJC) and the Great Lakes Commission.

Workshop participants concluded there is a need for further efforts to control mercury,

including better targeting of mercury reduction strategies; additional health research, particularly on neurological impacts of mercury; and creative strategies to communicate health risks to consumers.

The workshop presentations will be made available on the IJC web site, www.ijc.org. Papers from the workshop will be published later this year in a special edition of the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

Contact: Michael Gilbertson, GilbertsonM@windsor.ijc.org

Commission Briefs

10 take posts as Commissioners, alternates

The Commission is welcoming a number of new faces into its midst with the appointment of a large slate of new Commissioners and alternates. Changes wrought by the 2002 elections and in a number of the region's other leadership positions in recent months have brought about a

substantial number of new appointments to the Commission.

Among them is Cathleen Curran Meyers, newly appointed as both chair of the Pennsylvania

Delegation and executive director of the Office for River Basin Cooperation in the state's Department of Environmental Protection. In both capacities she succeeds former Commission Chair Irene Brooks (1999-2001), who accepted an appointment to the International Joint Commission last fall.

Michigan has two new Commissioners, state Atty. Gen. Mike Cox and state Sen. Patricia Birkholz; Cox takes the seat formerly held by current Gov. Jennifer Granholm, while Birkholz replaces Sen. Walter North.

In Minnesota, former state Sen. Ed Oliver, previously an Alternate, and state Rep. Peter Nelson have been appointed Commissioners. Also newly appointed is Wisconsin's Todd Ambs, administrator of the Division of Water in the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

In Québec, Marcel Gaucher, interim director of the Intergovernmental Division, Ministry of the Environment, has been appointed Associate Commissioner.

John Booser, associate director of Pennsylvania's Office for River Basin Cooperation, and Lori Boughton, chief of the state's Office of the Great Lakes, were appointed Alternate Commissioners. James Weakley, president of the Lake Carriers' Association, has been appointed Alternate Commissioner from Ohio.

The Commission also welcomes several new Observers: Kevin Brown, of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture National Resources Conservation Service; Leon Carl, of the U.S. Geological Survey's Great Lakes Science Center; and Scott Hoese, of the National Association of Conservation Districts.

Contact: Mike Donahue, mdonahue@glc.org.



Some of the Commission's recent appointees join Chair Sam Speck at the Semiannual Meeting in Indianapolis. From left, Commissioner Cathleen Curran Meyers, chair of the Pennsylvania Delegation; Commissioner Ed Oliver, Minnesota; Speck; Alternate Commissioner James Weakley, Ohio; Commissioner Patricia Birkholz, Michigan; Commissioner Todd Ambs, Wisconsin; and Alternate Commissioner John Booser, Pennsylvania.

Commission advocacy pays off

With the release of the Commission's 2003 *Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity*, it's appropriate to note some of the more notable successes of advocacy efforts based on last year's *Great Lakes Program*.

One of the most significant was last fall's passage of the Great Lakes Legacy Act authorizing \$270 million over five years to clean up Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs), a longtime Commission priority.

Other enacted priorities from the 2002 *Great Lakes Program* include authorization of the Great

Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, with record funding of \$2.5 million for FY2003. The Commission will continue to advocate for full funding at the program's authorized level of \$5 million annually.

The Great Lakes also received \$2.0 million under the FY2003 Omnibus Bill to continue the maintenance and upgrade of the Great Lakes water level observation network.

For these and many other advocacy outcomes, contact: Jon MacDonagh-Dumler, jonmacd@glc.org.

Will EPA's new trading policy improve water quality?

POINT
POINT

A flexible tool – Mark S. Kieser

Water quality trading is a flexible tool offering a mechanism to achieve additional environment benefits when used in conjunction with our traditional command and control approaches. A permitted wastewater treatment plant facing high costs to accommodate new growth can “trade” for discharge reduction credits with another source having lower costs (e.g., an agricultural producer implementing conservation practices). A portion of the reductions traded are explicitly retired, which addresses uncertainty and results in a net reduction of pollutants (nitrogen, phosphorus, sediments) discharged to the receiving water.

Over a decade in the making, EPA's Final Water Quality Trading Policy identifies the purpose, objectives and limitations of these and other trading opportunities. By design, the policy is not prescriptive, but flexible, allowing states, interstate agencies and tribes to develop their own trading programs that meet Clean Water Act (CWA) requirements and localized needs.

Trading has been criticized as a “license to pollute,” with critics saying that it creates local “hot-spots,” is a rollback of regulations, an attempt to replace traditional permitting authorities and that it should not occur unless there are existing caps on discharges (e.g., TMDLs). In my seven years of trading policy and program implementation experience, trading has been a “bottom up” process where diverse local stakeholder groups have defined how trading can best serve their needs while explicitly avoiding these long-standing criticisms through local program design.

Additionally, there is no evidence to suggest these criticisms are substantiated from the more than 50 pilot trading programs or projects conducted to date. EPA has drawn upon these demonstrations to formulate trading policy consistent with the CWA that addresses commonly leveled concerns and still allows flexibility to meet local needs. Though this debate will continue, experience and this policy will guide the development of sound trading programs.



Mark S. Kieser is chair of the Environmental Trading Network, a national clearing-house, and a senior scientist with Kieser & Associates, an environmental science and engineering firm in Kalamazoo, Mich. He served on the state of Michigan Water Quality Trading Workgroup, which produced the first statewide trading rules in the United States.

Good concept, bad implementation – Andy Buchsbaum

Water quality trading, done right, can be an excellent tool to reduce pollution in the nation's waterways faster and more cheaply. Trading allows regulated point source dischargers (e.g., industrial outfalls) to “buy” pollutant reductions from dischargers that are not regulated (non-point sources, such as runoff). Well-designed trading programs can protect people and wildlife while saving money: note the cap-and-trade programs under the Clean Air Act and local water quality trading programs like the Kalamazoo River's.

The challenge is to do it right, and that is where the EPA's new trading policy falls woefully short. EPA's program allows trades of real reductions from point sources for ill-defined, uncertain reductions from non-point sources. Although a number of mechanisms are available to ensure that traded reductions are real (trading ratios, defined pollution quantification

methods), it fails to use them. The result: many dischargers will “game” the system by claiming paper reductions.

For impaired waterways, it gets worse: the EPA policy is cap-and-trade without the cap. Because it allows trading without first setting a cap on the pollution allowed in the waterway, there's little to stop water quality from worsening.

Finally, the EPA policy allows (and in fact funds) the trading of toxic pollution, which can easily lead to toxic hotspots where there are none now.

Despite our nation's water pollution problems, experts agree that the Clean Water Act is one of the most effective anti-pollution programs in the world. Done right, trading can improve the Clean Water Act. But the EPA trading policy has not been done right; on balance, it is likely to leave the nation's waters more polluted than they are now.

counterpoint
counterpoint



Andy Buchsbaum is director of the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Field Office in Ann Arbor, Mich., and previously served as the office's water quality projects manager.

Québec adopts new water policy

Introducing a new vision of water governance for the 21st century, the government of Québec has adopted its first formal water policy. Part of a global movement toward providing better frameworks for water management, it identifies water as a collective resource belonging to Québec society as a whole.

Developed through a five-year process involving extensive public consultation, the policy is based upon three primary issues: recognition of water as a collective heritage of Québécois, protection of public health and aquatic ecosystems, and integrated management of water with a view to sustainable development.

The policy itself consists of five key elements, or orientations:

- Water governance reform
- Continued cleanup and improved manage-

ment of water services

- Integrated management of the St. Lawrence River
- Protection of water quality and aquatic ecosystems
- Promotion of water-related recreational activities

Along with each orientation are a series of various actions they imply, as well as more than 50 commitments that the Québec government has made to carry them out. Among these provisions are reinforcing the province's partnership and involvement with Great Lakes basin organizations, such as the Great Lakes Commission.

The entire policy is available online at www.menv.gouv.qc.ca/eau/politique/index-en.htm

Lake levels expected to drop still further

Water levels are predicted to be much lower on the Great Lakes this summer, a year after they seemed to be on their way back up.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' official forecast predicts that most of the lakes will likely be down about a foot from their mid-summer levels of last year, much to the dismay of navigation interests and recreational boaters. The one exception is Lake Superior, which the Corps expects to be down only 2-4 inches.

Lake St. Clair is also expected to be down by about a foot this summer compared to 2002 levels.

Many thought lake levels were on the rebound last year after hitting their lowest levels since the early 1960s in 2000. However, a lack of rain and snow over most of the Great Lakes basin this past year appears to have stopped the recovery in its tracks.

"It's been pretty dry over the last several months," said Tim Calappi, a physical scientist with the Corps' Detroit District.

Calappi said the lake Michigan and Huron basins have seen below-average precipitation in nine of the last 10 months, while Superior and Ontario have been below average for seven of the last nine. The Lake Erie basin has fared somewhat better but has still been drier than normal.

While last winter's heavy ice cover helped limit some losses to evaporation, Calappi said the effect isn't as great as some believe.

"We don't get complete coverage of the lakes until late February and evaporation is at its peak in early fall," he said.

An unusually wet spring across the basin could help, but even the Corps' most extreme projections do not see levels returning to where they were last summer.

For more information, see the water level forecasts on the Corps' Detroit District web site, www.lre.usace.army.mil/hydro.html

Real-time water levels from individual gauging stations are available at www.great-lakes.net/envt/water/levels/hydro.html

Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity
www.glc.org/restore

2002 Great Lakes Commission Semiannual Meeting resolutions
www.glc.org/about/resolutions

Moving Toward a Sustainable Great Lakes
www.glc.org/sustainable/

Water Resources Management Decision Support System report
www.glc.org/wateruse/wrmdss.html

IAGLR and 10th World Lakes Conference
www.ilec.or.jp/eg

Great Lakes Association of Science Ships (GLASS)
<http://66.216.8.207>

Action Agenda for Restoring Michigan's Great Lakes Toxic Hot Spots
www.glc.org/spac/pdf/actionagenda.pdf

SPAC workshop proceedings
www.glc.org/spac/proceedings

Quebec Water Policy
www.menv.gouv.qc.ca/eau/politique/index-en.htm

Tall Ships Challenge 2003
www.sailtraining.org/tsc2003.htm

Tall ships to return this summer

More than 30 old-style sailing vessels will ply the Great Lakes this summer when the Tall Ships Challenge race series returns to the region.

The tall ships drew big crowds at port visits during their last swing through the Great Lakes in 2001. This year, they'll visit harbor towns from Cleveland to Chicago during a series of races, cruises, rallies and port festivals running from July through August.

Many of the most popular vessels from the 2001 cruise will be back this summer, including Erie's own *U.S. Brig Niagara*, a 199-foot-long reconstruction of Commodore Perry's flagship; the graceful *Pride of Baltimore II*; the three-masted schooner *Denis Sullivan*; and the brigantine *Fair Jeanne*. Many participating vessels are based on the lakes, while others are coming from as far away as India, the

Netherlands, Russia, the Cayman Islands and Chesapeake Bay.



The U.S. Brig Niagara, a faithful reconstruction of Commodore Perry's flagship and the pride of its home port of Erie, Pa., will be among the old-style sailing vessels taking part in the 2003 Tall Ships Challenge on the Great Lakes this summer. Photo courtesy Commonwealth Media Services.

The tall ships will be in Cleveland July 9-13 and in Toledo July 16-20, at festivals coinciding with the Ohio bicentennial. Smaller numbers of vessels will also appear at the Ohio ports of Huron and Sandusky during that time as well. From Toledo, the fleet will race to Chicago, where it will appear from July 30-Aug. 4, then on to Muskegon, where it will be from Aug. 8-10. The final stops will be Bay City, Mich., Aug. 14-17, and Sarnia, Ontario, Aug. 21-24, where the tour will conclude.

Many of the vessels offer training opportunities or have berths available to the public. For more information, visit www.sailtraining.org/tsc2003.htm

Contact: ASTA@sailtraining.org

Great Lakes, global issues

The Great Lakes Commission will sponsor a daylong symposium on the global applications of resource management experiences in the Great Lakes as part of the World Lakes Conference in Chicago, June 22-26. Among other issues, the Tuesday, June 24 symposium will address toxic contamination, aquatic nuisance species, water quality and more. Funding is provided by the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes. For more information, visit: <http://www.ilec.or.jp/eg> or contact Sarah Whitney, swhitney@glc.org

Great Lakes Calendar

Regional Workshop for Establishing Restoration Targets for Great Lakes Areas of Concern

June 6-7, 2003, Romulus, Mich.

Contact: Matt Doss, 734-971-9135, mdoss@glc.org

Annual Meeting of the International Association of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Mayors

June 16-18, 2003, St. Catharines, Ontario.

Contact: Steve Thorp, 734-971-9135, sthorp@glc.org

Lake St. Clair: Restoring the Heart of the Great Lakes

June 17-18, 2003, Port Huron, Mich.

Contact: Matt Doss, 734-971-9135, mdoss@glc.org

IAGLR and 10th World Lakes Conference

June 22-26, 2003, Chicago, Ill.

Contact: Sarah Whitney, 734-971-9135, swhitney@glc.org

Moving Toward a Sustainable Great Lakes

June 25-26, 2003, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

Contact: Mike Donahue, 734-971-9135, mdonahue@glc.org

Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species

July 22-23, 2003, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Contact: Kathe Glassner-Shwayder, 734-971-9135, shwayder@glc.org

ANS Rapid Response Workshop

July 23-24, 2003, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Contact: Kevin Walters, 734-971-9135, kwalters@glc.org

IJC Great Lakes Conference and Biennial Meeting

September 19-20, 2003, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Contact: Jennifer Day, 313-226-2170, dayj@windsor.ijc.org

Further details and a more extensive calendar are available online via the Great Lakes Information Network (www.great-lakes.net). If you have an event you'd like us to include, please contact Kirk Haverkamp at 734-971-9135 or kirkh@glc.org

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If you prefer to read the electronic version of the Advisor online via the Commission's home page (www.glc.org), please let us know and we'll cancel your print subscription.

The Last Word

The power of partnership

Samuel W. Speck, chair, Great Lakes Commission



Sam Speck

One of the pleasures I've had in serving as chair of the Great Lakes Commission has been witnessing our growing partnership with our governors and premiers. Two excellent recent examples come to mind.

We recently released our *2003 Great Lakes Program to Ensure Environmental and Economic Prosperity*, our annual list of legislative and appropriations priorities. The basis of our congressional advocacy efforts, the *Great Lakes Program* is also being drawn upon by the Great Lakes governors and premiers in identifying their own set of restoration priorities. As the governors and premiers move forward, we must be prepared to work together to create a broad consensus of regional parties to support a comprehensive Great Lakes Restoration Plan.

We are also collaborating with our governors and premiers to protect our Great Lakes water resources through the implementation of Annex 2001. At their request, we have compiled and just released an extensive report on the status of Great Lakes water resources, their uses, and the potential impacts of water withdrawals. Such information is crucial to the Annex's goal of a system to guide sound decisions on the uses of Great Lakes water resources.

These are but two examples of the growing partnership between the Commission and our Great Lakes governors and premiers. Together, we can "Restore the Greatness" to the world's greatest system of fresh water, the Great Lakes.

Where in the Great Lakes?




Photo: Jennifer Read

You could win a prize if you can identify the subject of this Great Lakes-St. Lawrence photo! E-mail your answer, along with your name, address and phone number to kirkh@glc.org. You can also call Kirk Haverkamp at 734-971-9135 with your answer or mail it to the Advisor at the address below. All correct responses received by June 6 will be entered into a drawing. The winner will receive his/her choice of a Great Lakes Commission beach towel or a \$10 credit toward the purchase of any Commission publication.

Daniel Fitzpatrick, of Onalaska, Wis., correctly identified this photo of the "Spoonbridge and Cherry" sculpture by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Thank you to all who participated!



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