



# Blue Accounting

## A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO PROTECT, RESTORE AND USE THE GREAT LAKES

[www.blueaccounting.org](http://www.blueaccounting.org)

People, agencies and businesses across **two countries, eight states and two provinces are working to protect, restore and sustainably use the Great Lakes.** Each makes decisions that impact the lakes. Many also collect data on the health of the lakes, economic activity happening on and around the lakes, and the quality of life for the people surrounding them. **To protect and use these shared resources most efficiently and effectively, regional decision-makers need to collaborate to identify shared goals, coordinate their actions and report collectively on progress.**

### ACTIONABLE INFORMATION THROUGH BLUE ACCOUNTING

*Blue Accounting provides a framework for solving the challenges of regional collaboration, coordination and accountability.*

In 2013, the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers called for a smarter and more comprehensive approach to monitoring our Great Lakes water resources. Their resolution led to Blue Accounting, initially co-led by The Nature Conservancy and the Great Lakes Commission. This partnership leveraged the regional history and strengths of both organizations. **The next phase of Blue Accounting is being led by the Great Lakes Commission,** under authority granted to it by the Great Lakes Basin Compact of 1955.

### HOW BLUE ACCOUNTING WORKS


Blue Accounting is intended to facilitate the collaboration of key leaders, experts, and stakeholders to **identify shared goals, track progress toward those goals, and deliver that information to Great Lakes decision-makers, helping them improve how the lakes are managed.** The Blue Accounting information hub ([www.blueaccounting.org](http://www.blueaccounting.org)) aspires to become the “go to” place for tracking key Great Lakes issues.

Currently Blue Accounting projects are exploring: aquatic invasive species, source water, phosphorus control, maritime transportation and coastal wetlands. Each of these complex issues is tied to the social, economic and ecological health of the Great Lakes.

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED

If you are interested in learning more about our issue areas, would like to provide feedback, or want to explore using Blue Accounting for a new issue, please contact Victoria Pebbles, Program Director, at [vpebbles@glc.org](mailto:vpebbles@glc.org).

**Working together, we can improve the decisions we make to ensure the Great Lakes will always be the backbone of our region, supplying fresh water and natural beauty and serving as a powerful economic engine.**



**BLUE ACCOUNTING IN ACTION**

Lake Erie suffers from algal blooms caused, in part, by excess phosphorus. A binational agreement set a shared 40% phosphorus reduction goal. Blue Accounting's ErieStat tracks progress toward the binational shared goal of reducing phosphorus in Lake Erie by 40 percent by reporting how much of the nutrient is entering the lake from select rivers. In 2019, ErieStat will begin tracking investments to reduce phosphorous pollution in Lake Erie.

# BLUE ACCOUNTING AND THE GREAT LAKES

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH FOR A COMPLEX SYSTEM



The Great Lakes provide **DRINKING WATER FOR 48 MILLION PEOPLE**, fuel a **\$5 TRILLION REGIONAL ECONOMY**, and create **AN INVALUABLE SENSE OF HOME AND COMMUNITY** for the basin via their scenic beauty and recreation.



The government agencies of **TWO COUNTRIES, EIGHT STATES, TWO PROVINCES, AND 249 COUNTIES**, as well as hundreds of NGOs and private businesses, make decisions that affect the lakes. **WE MUST WORK TOGETHER TO SUCCEED.**



## Blue Accounting

Blue Accounting, an initiative supported by an online information platform, provides decision-makers with a big picture view of critical Great Lakes issues.



Initially, Blue Accounting is supporting five complex issues:



AQUATIC  
INVASIVE SPECIES



SOURCE  
WATER



PHOSPHORUS  
CONTROL



COASTAL  
WETLANDS



MARITIME  
TRANSPORTATION

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