



2021 Annual Report

Lake Michigan



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Board of Directors list is as of December 2021.

Cover photo: Kewaunee Pierhead Lighthouse on Lake Michigan in Kewaunee, Wisconsin. This page: The Baptism River where it meets Lake Superior at Tettegouche State Park in Silver Bay, Minnesota.



A Message from the Chair and Executive Director

IN 2021, the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) continued more than 65 years of work protecting the economic and ecological resilience of the region, despite challenges presented by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and global economic uncertainty.

We want to extend our gratitude to our Commissioners, Observers, partners and friends for their support over the past year. In this report, we will highlight some of the GLC's accomplishments in 2021 and look forward to 2022 and beyond.

Great Lakes Day goes virtual

In 2021, the evolving coronavirus pandemic led the GLC to organize and execute the first-ever virtual Great Lakes Day. In advance of the annual event, the GLC released its federal priorities, urging the Biden administration and Congress to invest in projects and programs that will protect the lakes and accelerate the national economic recovery. The GLC also led a binational coalition of regional agencies, legislators, local communities, tribes, and business, maritime and environmental groups in releasing shared priorities. On Great Lakes Day, the annual Congressional Breakfast Reception, organized by the GLC and the Northeast-Midwest Institute, featured remarks by the seven chairs of the Congressional Great Lakes Task Force and other regional leaders. More than 500 people registered for the event in a record turnout for the first online edition of the annual event.

Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program celebrates 30th anniversary

The Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program (formerly known as the Great Lakes Basin Program) celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2021. This partnership program between the GLC and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service places federal funds in the hands of local conservation practitioners across the Great Lakes basin. Over the last three decades, this program has prevented millions of pounds of phosphorus and tons of sediment from reaching the Great Lakes. The 2021 grant program awarded more than \$1.5 million to reduce runoff and improve water quality to nine tribal, state, and local governments and nonprofit organizations.

Third annual regional "Landing Blitz" targets invasive species

From June 25 to July 4, 2021, the GLC coordinated the third annual Great Lakes AIS Landing Blitz. This regional event is coordinated annually among state and provincial agencies and educates boaters on how to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS), ways to identify AIS, and how to report an AIS discovery. Each year hundreds of thousands of people across the basin are reached by online and in-person Blitz content, helping to protect the Great Lakes from AIS.

Action Plan sets the stage for growing the Great Lakes Blue Economy

In September 2021, the GLC and partners released an action plan recommending building blocks for growing the Great Lakes basin economy by leveraging the economic potential of the region's freshwater resources. Leaders from more than 50 Great Lakes agencies and organizations, convened by the GLC, developed the action plan as a roadmap for collective action and a challenge to regional decision-makers to take strategic action.

Renewed partnership strengthens federal-state coordination

At our 2021 Annual Meeting, the GLC signed a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to advance mutual goals for Great Lakes conservation, protection, sustainable use and development. This MOU recognizes the GLC's unique ability to ensure that scientific information is brought to policymakers and managers in a timely and effective manner, as well as engage its state and provincial membership to identify priority areas of scientific inquiry. We look forward to continuing our partnership with USGS over the next several years and beyond.

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Lake Ontario



Bluffer's Park and Beach at Scarborough Bluffs on Lake Ontario in Toronto, Ontario.

Collaboration leads to new resources on Great Lakes harmful algal blooms

The Great Lakes HABs Collaborative, coordinated by the GLC and supported through our partnership with USGS, produced several new resources in 2021, including a fact sheet that serves as a guide to roles different government agencies play with respect to harmful algal blooms, and another that identifies current gaps in our understanding of why and where HABs form and persist. The collaborative's work in 2022 will include a new series of fact sheets sharing the latest information on HABs and human health.

New habitat restoration projects break ground

In 2021, the GLC and federal, state and local partners embarked upon projects to restore fish and wildlife habitat at two sites in the Great Lakes basin.

In Illinois, the GLC and a team including Audubon Great Lakes, Forest Preserves of Cook County, the Illinois and Indiana Departments of Natural Resources, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin-

istration (NOAA) broke ground on a project that will restore more than 100 acres of wetlands by reconnecting Powderhorn Lake to Wolf Lake, and ultimately Lake Michigan. In addition to reconnecting water flow, this project will allow fish passage between the lakes, install water control structures to help prevent community flooding, and increase marsh habitat.

In Michigan, the GLC and NOAA partnered with the historic Ford House to launch a study of potential restoration in Ford Cove on Lake St. Clair. More than 99% of the lake's natural shoreline in Michigan's Macomb County has been altered, with only 2,140 linear feet of 31.5 miles remaining in natural condition. This project is anticipated to restore or enhance more than five acres of coastal marsh, eight acres of nearshore habitat, four acres of forested wetland, and one mile of shoreline, and increase resiliency to high water levels and heavy waves.

Advocacy efforts generate success in Washington, significant investments in Great Lakes infrastructure

In 2021, the GLC both passed a resolution encouraging the U.S. Congress and Biden administration to invest in Great Lakes infrastructure, and led a coalition of regional agencies, legislators, mayors, and business and environmental groups in urging Congressional leaders to include key Great Lakes priorities in upcoming legislation.

In December, we celebrated historic investment in longstanding GLC and regional priorities through passage of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The final legislation included \$1 billion for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, which has funded more than 5,000 projects across the Great Lakes since 2010. These projects have cleaned up toxic contamination, restored wetlands, prevented the spread of aquatic invasive species and more. They also produce a substantial return on investment, with a 2018 GLC study showing every dollar spent generating an estimated \$3.35 in additional economic activity.

The GLC will continue its work to advocate for Great Lakes priorities in upcoming legislation, including investments in climate resiliency and Great Lakes icebreaking capacity.

GLC initiates planning for 2022 and beyond

The GLC's current strategic plan expires in 2022 and we recently began our planning process for the next five years. This process will allow us to establish the status of important issues, identify new priorities, and ensure we are fulfilling our unique role in the region.

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Cleveland, Ohio.



As we consider the universe of historic, current and new issues for the GLC, and the strategic value we have the ability to contribute over the next five years, we also want to consider how we best accomplish that work by partnering with others to realize our shared goals. In our next strategic plan, we will look to build new partnerships, strengthen existing collaborations, and expand our engagement efforts.

We encourage our Observers and partners to engage with us we work through this strategic planning process. Your support and partnership are critical to protecting the Great Lakes for generations to come.

In 2022 and beyond, we look forward to working with you to ensure the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River support a healthy environment, vibrant economy and high quality of life for all people and communities in the region.



Todd L. Ambs, Chair



Erika S. Jensen, Executive Director



Lake Erie

Financials

Overall, the GLC continues to effectively manage its general, restricted and cash reserve funds to achieve the agency's goals and objectives. These figures were confirmed by an independent audit, which is conducted each year to examine the GLC's financial operations.

Fiscal Year 2021

The Great Lakes Commission concluded FY2021 in sound financial condition, with total revenues of \$15.34 million. Total revenues exceeded expenses by 2.23%. The 2021 fiscal year ended June 30, 2021.

Revenues

Grants and contracts	\$ 14,558,421	94.91%
State contributions	688,000	4.49%
Meetings, publications, misc.	14,029	0.09%
Interest income	5,211	0.03%
Change in fair value of investments	74,171	0.48%
TOTAL	\$ 15,339,832	

Expenses

Grants and contracts	\$ 12,721,778	84.83%
Personnel	1,869,620	12.47%
Office operations	359,200	2.40%
Communication	36,009	0.24%
Program activities	9,018	0.06%
Travel	1,865	0.01%
TOTAL	\$ 14,997,490	
Change in net position	\$ 342,342	2.23%



St. Lawrence River

Commissioners and Alternates

As of December 2021.

Delegation chairs are in bold.

Cargo ship on the St. Lawrence River
near Brockville, Ontario.

Illinois

Loren Wobig, Illinois
Dept. of Natural Resources

Stephanie Comer, Comer Family
Foundation

John J. Kim, Illinois Environmental
Protection Agency

Yu-Feng Forrest Lin, Illinois Water
Resources Center, University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

Josina Morita, Metropolitan Water
Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Indiana

Sharon Jackson, Office of the
Governor of Indiana

Steven A. Fisher, American Great Lakes
Ports Association

Kay L. Nelson, Northwest Indiana Forum

Jody W. Peacock, Ports of Indiana

Bruno Pigott, Indiana Dept. of
Environmental Management

Indiana Alternates

Chris Smith, Indiana Dept.
of Natural Resources

Michigan

James Clift, Michigan Dept. of
Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy

Hon. Candice Miller, Macomb County
Public Works

Hon. Dana Nessel, Michigan
Attorney General

Marc E. Smith, National Wildlife Federation

Hon. Rick Snyder

Michigan Alternates

Kara Cook, Office of the Governor
of Michigan

S. Peter Manning, Michigan Dept.
of the Attorney General

Jennifer McKay, Tip of the Mitt
Watershed Council

Minnesota

Hon. Ann Rest, State Senator

Hon. Carrie Ruud, State Senator

Hon. Jennifer Schultz,
State Representative

Hon. Paul Torkelson,
State Representative

Minnesota Alternates

Katrina Kessler, Minnesota
Pollution Control Agency

Deb DeLuca, Duluth Seaway
Port Authority

New York

Basil Seggos, New York State Dept.
of Environmental Conservation

James M. Tierney, New York State Dept.
of Environmental Conservation

Donald E. Zelazny, New York State Dept.
of Environmental Conservation

New York Alternates

Sean Mahar, New York State Dept.
of Environmental Conservation

Eileen Murphy, New York State Dept.
of Environmental Conservation

Ohio

Mary Mertz, Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources

Hon. Theresa Gavarone, State Senator

Hon. Haraz N. Ghanbari, State Representative

Laurie A. Stevenson, Ohio Environmental
Protection Agency

James H. I. Weakley, Lake Carriers'
Association

Ohio Alternates

Mindy Bankey, Ohio Dept. of Natural
Resources

John D. Baker, International
Longshoremen's Association

Tiffani Kavalec, Ohio Environmental
Protection Agency

Eric Peace, Lake Carriers' Association



Ontario

Basia Puszkas, Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs

Craig Brown, Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry

Ian Freeman, Ministry of Transportation

Kelly McAslan, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Chloe Stuart, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Ontario Alternates

Tija Dirks, Ministry of Transportation

Thom Hagerty, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Jennifer Keyes, Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry

Ling Mark, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Trevor Snyder, Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs

Pennsylvania

Timothy J. Bruno, Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection

Hon. Patrick J. Harkins, State Representative

Brenda Sandberg, Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority

Pennsylvania Alternates

Aneca Y. Atkinson, Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection

Hon. Kathy Dahlkemper, Erie County Executive

Québec

Éric Marquis, Québec Government Office in Chicago

Vincent Gagnon-Lefebvre, Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques

Nicole Trépanier, Fednav Limited

Grégory Cloutier, Ministère des Transports

Québec Alternates

Geneviève Désy, Ministère des Transports

Guillaume Dubreuil, Groupe CSL

Jérôme Faivre, Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques

Kerith Iverson, Québec Government Office in Chicago

Frederic Lecomte, Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs

Marissa Gravel-Labelle, Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie

Wisconsin

Noah Roberts, Office of the Governor of Wisconsin

Todd L. Ambs, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources (retired)

Melonee Montano, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission

Wisconsin Alternates

Stephen G. Galarneau, Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources

Dean Haen, Port of Green Bay

GLC Staff

Left to right, back row: Don Leflouria Jr., Eric Brown, Tom Crane, Patrick Canniff, Ceci Weibert, Joe Bertram, Laura Andrews. Middle row: Kate Truitt, Meng Hu, Eric Ellis, Nicole Zacharda, Jill Estrada, Amanda Grimm, Ken Gibbons. Front row: Theresa Gruninger, Beth Wanamaker, Erika Jensen, Samantha Tank. Staff as of December 2021.

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Port Huron, Michigan.

Lake Huron

About the Great Lakes Commission

The Great Lakes Commission is a binational government agency established in 1955 to protect the Great Lakes and the economies and ecosystems they support.

Its membership includes leaders from the eight U.S. states and two Canadian provinces in the Great Lakes basin. The GLC recommends policies and practices to balance the use, development, and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes and brings the region together to work on issues that no single community, state, province, or nation can tackle alone.