



**2022**

# Annual Report



# Board of Directors

**Todd L. Ambs, Chair**

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of Natural Resources (retired)

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Department of Environmental Conservation

**Chloe Stuart**

Assistant Deputy Minister, Land and  
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Environment, Conservation and Parks

**Timothy J. Bruno**

Chief, Office of the Great Lakes, Pennsylvania  
Department of Environmental Protection

**Mario Limoges**

Québec Government Delegate in the Midwest,  
Government of Québec

Board of Directors list is as of December 2022.

Cover photo: Grand Haven South Pierhead Light on  
Lake Michigan in Grand Haven, Michigan. This page:  
Lake Michigan as seen from Grand Rapids, Michigan.





# Highlights and Key Accomplishments

**In 2022,** the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) saw a return to in-person meetings, allowing our commissioners, partners, and staff to reconnect and strengthen relationships that provide the foundation for our work. We also celebrated the 50th anniversaries of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and Clean Water Act — landmark programs that have changed the way we manage and use our water resources. We extend our gratitude to our commissioners, observers, partners, and friends for their continued commitment to our work and their support. In this report, we highlight notable examples of GLC's partnership-based work in 2022.

## A Resilient Great Lakes Basin

Climate change, increased variability of lake levels, and other changing conditions continue to affect the people, places, economy, and environment of the Great Lakes basin. The effects of these changes include increased risks to water quality and supply, agriculture, maritime navigation, infrastructure, people and animals, shorelines and coastal zones, and existing restoration efforts.

Responding to this challenge, the GLC released a forward-looking plan to guide efforts to make the Great Lakes basin more resilient to the effects of climate change. *The Action Plan for a Resilient Great Lakes Basin* was approved at the 2022 Semiannual Meeting held in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The plan was developed by the GLC Standing Committee on Climate Resilience, which includes representatives of local, state, provincial and federal governments, as well as partners from the maritime and nonprofit sectors. It leverages existing regional efforts, as well as supports collaboration among jurisdictions to promote shared learning and create strategic partnerships that will lead to a more resilient and adaptive Great Lakes basin.

## Clean and Safe Water

Through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act, the U.S. federal government is making unprecedented investments in improving water quality and providing safe drinking water for communities. The GLC developed two important resources to assist in the implementation of these programs and to help answer the critical question of how we are doing when it comes to protecting drinking water in the Great Lakes basin.

At the 2022 Annual Meeting, in Erie, Pennsylvania, the GLC approved a blueprint of priority approaches for improving water infrastructure in the basin. *Approaches for Improving Great Lakes Water Infrastructure: A Blueprint* was developed by a regional working group comprised of government and nongovernment representatives. It is intended to support federal and state elected officials, state agency staff, and local leaders seeking to advance water infrastructure projects. The GLC is now collecting success stories from water utilities, governments, and organizations that are putting blueprint approaches into practice.

Through Blue Accounting, the GLC is providing regional stakeholders information on ongoing work to implement source water protection plans, reduce lead in drinking water, and meet treatment requirements for water leaving community water supplies. This information was developed in collaboration with a work group that includes representatives of state, provincial, and federal governments, as well as the academic and nonprofit sectors.

The GLC is also working to reduce the runoff of nutrients that contribute to harmful algal blooms (HABs) in the Great Lakes basin, and helping to coordinate research and information about HABs. In 2022, the Great Lakes HABs Collaborative, coordinated by the GLC, published two fact sheets on human health effects of HABs, and released the HABs Research Mapper. This app will help the research community share their work and direct the water management community to projects of interest.

In 2022, the GLC concluded work on a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative-funded project called Conservation Kick. Conservation Kick developed a process for communities to invest in conservation practices to protect their sources of drinking water. These practices included wetland restoration, grassed waterways, and even a denitrifying bioreactor. Project funding was matched by participating communities in Indiana, New York, and Ohio. Through 10-year contracts between community "buyers" and agricultural "sellers," it's estimated that nearly 1,700 pounds of total phosphorus and 21,000 pounds of nitrogen will stay out of local waterways and the Great Lakes.

Through the longstanding Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program, the GLC awarded more than \$1.2 million to reduce the runoff of sediment, nutrients, and other pollutants into the Great Lakes and their tributaries. Each year, the program provides competitive grants to local, state, and tribal governments and nonprofit organizations to install erosion and nutrient control practices. The program

supports projects not typically funded by other federal cost-share programs, including innovative and unique practices.

## Sustainable and Equitable Water Use

Since 1988, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin jurisdictions have submitted water use data to the GLC, which compiles and summarizes these datasets into an annual report. The 2021 Annual Report of the Great Lakes Regional Water Use Database found that 37.5 billion gallons of water per day were withdrawn from the Great Lakes basin in 2021, representing about a 1% decrease from 2020 withdrawals. Thermoelectric power production, public water supply, and industrial use were the primary use sectors in 2021. Only 5% of the total reported water withdrawn was lost from the basin. Considering both consumptive use and diversions, the basin gained a total of 156 million gallons of water per day in 2021.

## Safe and Reliable Waterways

The GLC continues to advocate for policies and funding that will support a safe and reliable maritime transportation system in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. In 2022, the GLC passed resolutions supporting short-sea shipping and calling for increased icebreaking capacity in the Great Lakes. Also in 2022, Congress passed, and President Biden signed into law, legislation addressing several critical GLC priorities:

the National Defense Authorization Act included authorizations for continuing construction of the new Soo Lock, investments in Great Lakes icebreaking capacity, and an update to a 2007 economic impact study of Great Lakes recreational boating that was co-authored by the GLC.

## Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems

The GLC maintains strong partnerships in the region to protect and restore aquatic ecosystems from the negative impacts of aquatic invasive species (AIS) and habitat degradation. For the fourth year in a row, hundreds of organizations across the region worked together to educate the public about AIS during the annual Great Lakes AIS Landing Blitz. This annual event is hosted by state and provincial agencies with the support of the GLC and partner organizations. Inspectors show boaters how to prevent the spread of AIS, ways to identify AIS, and how to report AIS. In 2022, the GLC also awarded more than \$65,000 in grants to Indigenous Nations and local organizations in the region to participate in the Landing Blitz. This was the first time that competitive grants were available to expand outreach and education efforts.

The GLC released a report on the second phase of its work to stop internet sales of AIS in the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes Detector of Invasive Aquatics in Trade (GLDIATR), uses “web crawling” applications to track the online

sale of priority AIS and support the work of researchers, outreach coordinators, managers, and law enforcement officials. The GLC launched GLDIATR in 2010 and continues to work with partners to combat the trade of AIS over the internet.

Through an ongoing partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the GLC joined local, state, and federal partners to celebrate the groundbreaking of a significant restoration project along the coastline of the Niagara River in Buffalo, New York. The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Centennial Park Shoreline and Aquatic Habitat Project will naturalize approximately 2,500 feet of the park’s failing seawall, significantly improve close to five acres of coastal wetland, and return two acres of historically filled lake bottom back to Lake Erie.

Work was also completed on a project to restore a former confined disposal site in the Maumee Area of Concern in Ohio. The site, known as Penn 7, was historically used for disposal of silt dredged from the Maumee’s shipping channel. A coalition of partners led by the GLC and NOAA restored more than 15 acres of wetland, improved nearly 60 acres of habitat, and better connected the site with the Maumee River. This work has increased birding and fishing opportunities, created a downtown green space, and improved water quality.

The Soo Locks on the St. Marys River in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan





# 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.

## Success in Washington Sets the Stage for Progress in 2023

The efforts of the GLC and its partners once again led to a successful Great Lakes Day in 2022. In addition to the GLC's own set of priorities, the GLC led key regional groups in releasing a joint statement of priority actions for the sixteenth year in a row. While Great Lakes Day was once again held virtually in 2022, the GLC also coordinated and hosted a week of additional priority specific discussions for the first time. Topics included binational coordination, maritime transportation, aquatic invasive species, and coastal resiliency.

At the end of 2022, an omnibus spending bill was approved to fund the federal government for the remainder of the fiscal year. The legislation included funding for programs critical to the Great Lakes region, as well as a first-ever direct appropriation of \$3 million from the federal government to the GLC to enhance regional collaboration between the states and the federal government. Under the guidance of a new strategic plan adopted in early 2023, the GLC looks forward to utilizing this funding to expand state-federal collaboration, enhance regional coordination, and accelerate progress on priorities related to restoration, navigation, and resiliency.

The GLC remains committed to working with its many partners 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. ■

The Thousand Islands region on the St. Lawrence River in Ontario

## Fiscal Year 2022

The Great Lakes Commission concluded FY2022 in sound financial condition, with total revenues of \$7.058 million. Total revenues exceeded expenses by 1.76%. The 2022 fiscal year ended June 30, 2022.

### Revenues

Grants and contracts	\$ 6,378,909	90.38%
State contributions	688,000	9.75%
Meetings, publications, misc.	19,206	0.27%
Interest income	4,112	0.06%
Change in fair value of investments	(32,438)	-0.46%

**TOTAL** **\$ 7,057,789**

### Expenses

Grants and contracts	\$ 4,661,158	67.23%
Personnel	1,811,110	26.12%
Office operations	377,569	5.45%
Travel	30,271	0.44%
Communication	29,392	0.42%
Program activities	24,000	0.35%

**TOTAL** **\$ 6,933,500**

Change in net position \$ 124,289 1.76%



# Commissioners and Alternates

As of December 2022.

Delegation chairs are in bold.

Toronto, Ontario, on Lake 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, Cook County  
Commissioner

## Indiana

**Sharon Jackson**, Office of the  
Governor of Indiana

Vanta Coda III, Ports of Indiana

Steven A. Fisher, American Great Lakes  
Ports Association

Kay L. Nelson, Northwest Indiana Forum

Jody W. Peacock, Ports of Indiana

Brian Rockensuess, Indiana Dept.  
of Environmental Management

### Indiana Alternates

Ryan Mueller, Indiana Dept.  
of Natural Resources

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

Deb DeLuca, Duluth Seaway  
Port Authority

Katrina Kessler, Minnesota  
Pollution Control Agency

## New York

**Basil Seggos**, New York State Dept.  
of Environmental Conservation

Kisha Santiago-Martinez, New York  
State Dept. of State

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

### New York Alternates

Sean Mahar, New York State Dept.  
of Environmental Conservation

## Ohio

**Mary Mertz**, Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources

Hon. Haraz N. Ghanbari, State Representative

Hon. Theresa Gavarone, State Senator

Laurie A. Stevenson, Ohio Environmental  
Protection Agency

James H. I. Weakley, Lake Carriers'  
Association

### Ohio Alternates

John D. Baker, International  
Longshoremen's Association

Mindy Bankey, Ohio Dept. of Natural  
Resources

Tiffani Kavalec, Ohio Environmental  
Protection Agency

Debra DiCianna, Lake Carriers' Association



## Ontario

**Chloe Stuart**, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Craig Brown, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Tija Dirks, Ministry of Transportation

Kelly McAslan, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Basia Puskar, Ontario Cabinet Office

### Ontario Alternates

Jennifer Keyes, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Leo Luong, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Greg Malczewski, Ministry of Transportation

Carolyn O'Neill, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Cale Selby, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

## Pennsylvania

**Timothy J. Bruno**, Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection

Hon. Patrick J. Harkins, State Representative

## Québec

**Mario Limoges**, Québec Government Office in Chicago

Julie Bissonnette, Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs

Grégory Cloutier, Ministère des Transports

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

Guillaum Dubreuil, Groupe CSL

### Québec Alternates

Geneviève Désy, Ministère des Transports

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

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

Kerith Iverson, Québec Government Office in Chicago

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

Nicole Trépanier, Fednav Limited

## Wisconsin

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

Jamie Kuhn, Office of the Governor of Wisconsin

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: Amanda Grimm, Tom Crane, Eric Brown, Connor Roessler, Eric Ellis, Joe Bertram, Don Leflouria Jr., Ceci Weibert, Laura Andrews. Front row: Jill Estrada, Theresa Gruninger, Erika Jensen, Kate Truitt, Nicole Zacharda, Hannah Reynolds, Meng Hu, James Polidori, Beth Wanamaker. Not pictured: Samantha Tank. Staff as of December 2022.

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Erie, Pennsylvania, on Lake Erie

## 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.

