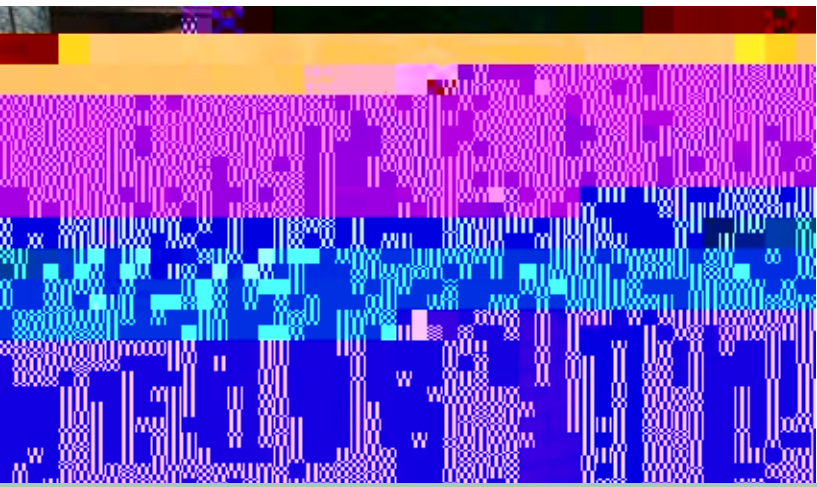


2006 Annual Report



“We have the good fortune to be blessed with the Earth’s greatest freshwater resources. It is both humbling and daunting to know that our actions today must be designed to preserve our water treasure for generations to come.”





From left: Dan Eichinger, alternate Commissioner, Michigan; Ken DeBeussaert, delegation chair, Michigan; Michel Laf eur;

Commission Board and Structure

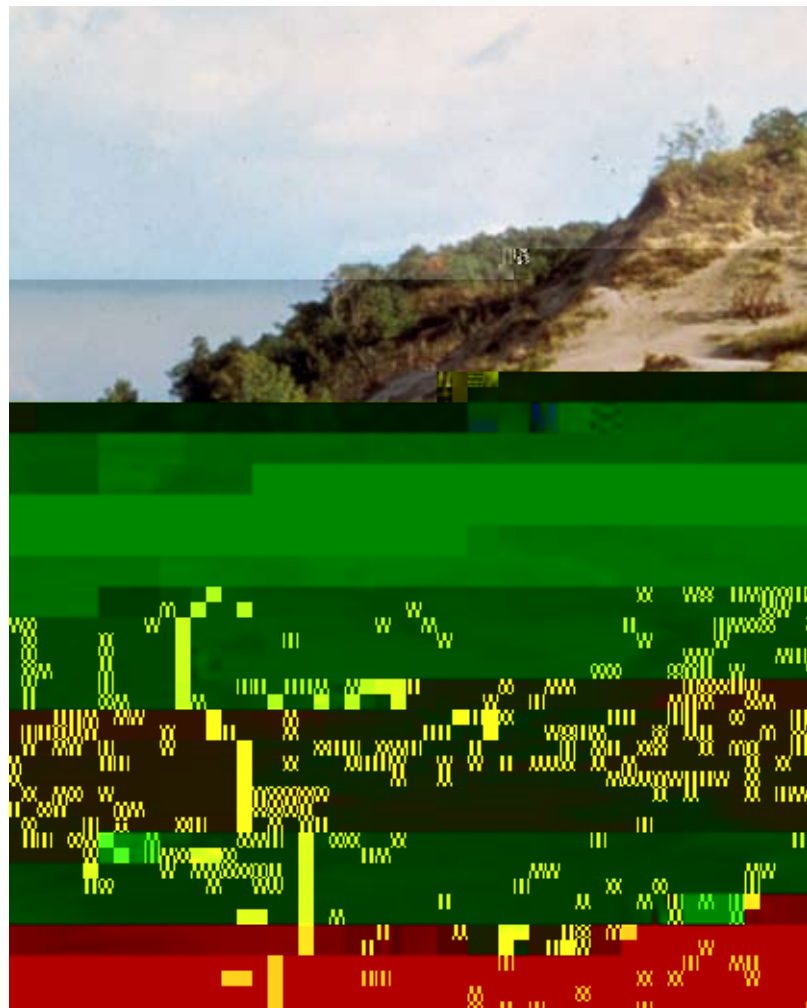
The work of the Great Lakes Commission is greatly influenced by major regional initiatives now underway to address the challenges facing the Great Lakes. To a large extent, these play a major role in defining the regional agenda and outlining the issues to be addressed by the Commission and its partners. Among them:

Dennis Schornack, Chair, U.S. Section,
International Joint Commission

Major Regional Initiatives

Great Lakes Regional Collaboration

The recommendations of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration were hailed at their release in December 2005 as offering a comprehensive strategy for the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes. However, with the notable exception of the reauthorization of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act, few elements of the strategy were enacted in 2006. With the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation gaining significant clout at the committee level in the new Congress, prospects for Regional Collaboration legislation may be more favorable in 2007 and the Commission and its partners will be working

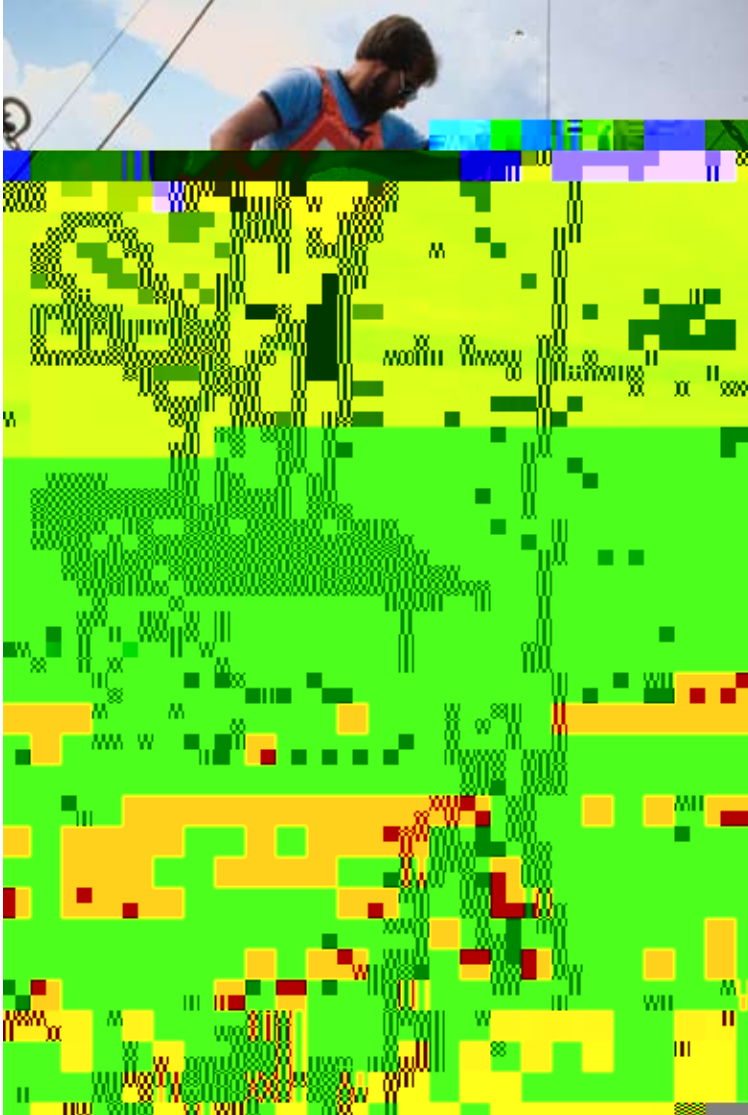


Cathy Curran

Myers, Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection;
chair, Pennsylvania Delegation, Great Lakes Commission

Other Projects

- **Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control** – Worked with the office of U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio 9th) in arranging a media event to raise awareness of the impacts of erosion and sedimentation on water quality in the Great Lakes basin. See www.glc.org/basin
- **“Great Lakes Science Today!”** – Organized a month-long exhibit and associated events with other Ann Arbor-based Great Lakes agencies, hosted by the Ann Arbor Public Library in summer 2006.
- **GLIN Maps and GIS** – Added new capability to discover and acquire geospatial data for areas within the Great Lakes region, and for registered users to upload/publish their own Great Lakes-themed data. See <http://gis.glin.net>
- **Great Lakes Daily News** – Added RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feature to the Commission’s popular GLIN Daily News service, allowing users to automatically update their favorite weblog, e-mail program or handheld device with Daily News content. See www.glin.net/news
- **Advisor** – Published quarterly newsletter covering the activities of the Great Lakes Commission and examining matters of regional importance. See www.glc.org/advisor
- **Media advisories** – Issued approximately three dozen press releases and other announcements calling attention to Commission news, funding opportunities and related Great Lakes issues. See www.glc.org/announce



Dr. Gail Krantzberg, McMaster University; member, GLOS Board of Directors

With the rapid growth and development of new and more powerful tools for gathering, processing and communicating data, information management has been an increasingly important endeavor for the Commission. The Commission researches, collects, organizes and makes accessible data and information about the Great Lakes that is relevant to our Member states and provinces and to others in the Great Lakes region. Decisionmakers rely on such data maintained by the Commission to support planning, resource management and other activities. Examples of 2006 Commission activities supporting this function include the following:

Information Integration and Reporting

Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium

Great Lakes coastal wetlands are a vital part of the Great Lakes ecosystem and provide many benefits. However, there is little basinwide data available for assessing their ecological health. To address this need, the Commission, with funding from the U.S. EPA Great Lakes National Program Office, convened the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium to expand monitoring and reporting capabilities for Great Lakes coastal wetlands under the U.S.-Canada Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Consisting of U.S. and Canadian science and policy experts, the Consortium is working with the University of Minnesota-Duluth – Natural Resources Research Institute and other partners to develop a set of indicators and metrics to assess the condition and overall status and trends of Great Lakes coastal wetlands. An inventory and classification system for Great Lakes coastal wetlands was developed in 2004. Together, these will form the basis of a long-term monitoring plan for Great Lakes coastal wetlands, due to be released in fall 2007. See www.glc.org/wetlands or contact: John Hummer, jhummer@glc.org.

Great Lakes Observing System

Since 2003, the Great Lakes Commission has spearheaded development and secured funding for the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS). This large, multifaceted initiative is dedicated to providing public access to critical, real-time and historical information about the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence River and interconnecting waterways for use in managing, safeguarding and understanding these immensely valuable binational resources.

A nonprofit GLOS Regional Association (GLOS-RA) governs and guides the system to ensure that stakeholder needs are met and that optimal information-gathering tools are in place and secure. The GLOS-RA is one of 11 regional associations in the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System, all of which seek to benefit ecosystem protection, sustainable resource use, commercial and recreational navigation, human health, natural hazard preparedness, homeland security and climate change prediction.

Under the guidance of the Commission, the GLOS-RA established itself as a nonprofit organization in 2006, elected an inaugural board of directors and held its first annual meeting. GLOS is currently seeking funding to implement specific projects related to monitoring (open water, nearshore, interconnecting waterways, atmospheric), remote sensing, modeling and forecasting, education and outreach, and information integration. See www.glos.us or contact: Roger Gauthier, gauthier@glc.org.

Other Projects

- **Great Lakes Regional Water Use Database** – Compiles and distributes annual water use withdrawal information provided by the Great Lakes states and provinces in support of the Great Lakes Water Management Initiative. See www.glc.org/wateruse/database
- **Great Lakes Air Deposition (GLAD) program** – Sponsored more than \$1 million in new research endeavors investigating toxic air deposition in the Great Lakes basin, funded by U.S. EPA. See www.glc.org/glad
- **Great Lakes Toxic Air Emissions Inventory** – Released latest compilation of annual data on potentially harmful toxic air emissions in the Great Lakes region, based on data supplied by the Great Lakes states and Ontario. See www.glc.org/air
- **Recreational boating study** – Developing comprehensive picture of the economic impact of recreational boaters using the Great Lakes, through study conducted on behalf of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- **Great Lakes Monitoring Inventory** – Developed inventory of environmental monitoring programs in the Great Lakes basin and an associated analysis of monitoring gaps, funded by the Joyce Foundation. See www.glc.org/monitoring/greatlakes
- **Inland Sensitivity Atlas** – Maintains and updates regional compilation of data to assist in planning for and responding to oil spills, using GIS maps to designate potential spill sources and areas vulnerable to damage. Funded by U.S. EPA Region 5. See www.glc.org/spills

on Aquatic Nuisance Species

The many Great Lakes stakeholders, user groups, researchers and other interested parties not only represent a broad range of viewpoints, but a substantial body of expertise and knowledge, as well. Making effective use of this dispersed knowledge and finding common ground among these views is one of the essential challenges of Great Lakes management and protection. Toward this end, the Commission convenes and leads multistakeholder forums, projects and activities on matters of importance to the Great Lakes region. These include events where emerging issues and ideas are identified, leading research is presented, conflicting views are shared and debated, and consensus is sought around potential solutions. Examples of 2006 Commission activities supporting this function include the following:

Facilitation and Consensus Building

Great Lakes coastal needs assessment

To help ensure more effective management and protection of coastal areas across the Great Lakes, the Commission and the NOAA Coastal Services Center conducted an assessment of regional needs in this area. The study focused on three areas of emerging or growing importance in Great Lakes coastal regions: ports and navigation, coastal community development, and data/information integration and distribution. A work plan, building on the complementary strengths of the two organizations, was also devised to help meet these needs. The work plan calls for greater coordination between state coastal managers and the Commission; enhanced web-based information on coastal programs and management tools; training opportunities to increase the use of existing coastal management tools; improved coordination of data management and distribution; and improving the resiliency of coastal communities in the face of unanticipated events such as severe storms, flooding or infrastructure failure. See www.glc.org/regionalneeds or contact: Victoria Pebbles, vpebbles@glc.org.

Policy Coordination and Advocacy

Great Lakes Legislative Priorities

Each year the Commission presents to Congress legislative priorities, reflecting a consensus among its Member states on the greatest needs for the lakes, restoration and protection. These are developed in close coordination with key regional stakeholders, principally the Council of Great Lakes Governors. Taken together, these priorities offer a “blueprint” for federal legislation over the coming year to address essential Great Lakes needs and form the foundation for the Commission’s advocacy efforts. Among the significant federal legislative priorities in 2006 were:

- Authorizing and funding the construction and operation of the Asian carp dispersal barriers in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal;

Great Lakes Day in Washington

This high-profile event, typically held in March at the beginning of the annual appropriations cycle, provides a vehicle for introducing the region's Great Lakes legislative priorities to Congress. It also gives Commission representatives an opportunity to meet with their legislators, key policymakers and diverse Great Lakes stakeholders to discuss issues and gain feedback on advancing regional priorities. The 2006 Great Lakes Day in Washington began with a breakfast reception featuring remarks by members of the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation and was followed by a Senate committee hearing on the Regional Collaboration Strategy for Restoring and Protecting the Great Lakes. The afternoon featured coordinated congressional office visits by Commissioners, Commission staff and interested stakeholders to build support for the regional priorities and detail how they relate to individual state needs. See www.glc.org/greatlakesday or contact: Jon MacDonagh-Dumler, jonmacd@glc.org.

Other Projects

- **Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement** – Commissioners and staff took an active role in the formal review of the U.S.-Canadian pact guiding Great Lakes cleanup and restoration efforts, last modified in 1987.
- **Great Lakes Legacy Act** – Helped equip leaders of local Remedial Action Plan (RAP) groups to become effective advocates for funding to restore U.S. Areas of Concern under the Great Lakes Legacy Act.
- **U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy** – Strongly endorsed the panel's recommendations impacting Great Lakes restoration and management, and helped secure the endorsements of key Great Lakes senators for legislation to implement them.
- **Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS)** – Conducted multiple visits with key members of the Great Lakes Congressional Delegation and their staffs to help secure funding for a system to provide critical real-time and historic Great Lakes data and other information.
- **Navigation priorities** – Under the auspices of the Great Lakes Dredging Team, worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to develop a fair and realistic approach to prioritizing navigation system maintenance in a restricted budget environment.





Observers

Canadian Embassy, Sheila Tooze
Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority, Mike Ripley



Program Areas

Communications and Internet Technology

The Communications and Internet Technology Program oversees the writing, design and marketing of all communications products, both online and print. These include the Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN), the region's premier online source for Great Lakes news and information; other web sites and e-bulletins; the quarterly *Advisor* newsletter; media advisories; brochures and other printed matter; and the Commission's annual report. Program manager: Christine Manninen, manninen@glc.org

Data and Information Management

The Data and Information Management Program promotes the development and application of decision support systems and procedures, including databases, regional networks, information inventories, geographic information systems (GIS) and related tools for use by Great Lakes environmental managers, researchers and decisionmakers. Program manager: Roger Gauthier, gauthier@glc.org

Environmental Quality

The Environmental Quality Program supports efforts to achieve a healthy and sustainable Great Lakes ecosystem. Program staff coordinate the resources and expertise of public agencies and other stakeholders in helping to restore



The Great Lakes Commission was established in 1955 with a mandate to “promote the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes basin.” Founded in state law with U.S. federal consent, with membership consisting of the eight Great Lakes states and associate Member status for the provinces of Ontario and Québec, the Commission pursues four primary functions: communication and education, information integration and reporting, facilitation and consensus building, and policy coordination and advocacy.

Each Member jurisdiction is represented by a delegation consisting of three to five members who are legislators, senior agency officials or appointees of the respective governor or premier. A board of directors, consisting of the chair of each delegation, is the Commission’s executive body.

In carrying out its initiatives, the Commission works in close cooperation with many partner organizations, s inicparPP065.5810 324 576(