

Our Changing Lakes

2007 Annual Report of the Great Lakes Commission



Great Lakes
Commission
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As leaders of efforts to preserve and protect our greatest heritage and one of our nation's most precious natural resources, we find our efforts at a critical crossroads.

While we continue our work to promote a healthy and sustainable economy and restore our Great Lakes environment, our region's economy has gone through dramatic reshuffling and increased diversification in the last decade.

We've also realized that the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin is an ever-evolving system, physically and organically, with or without human med-



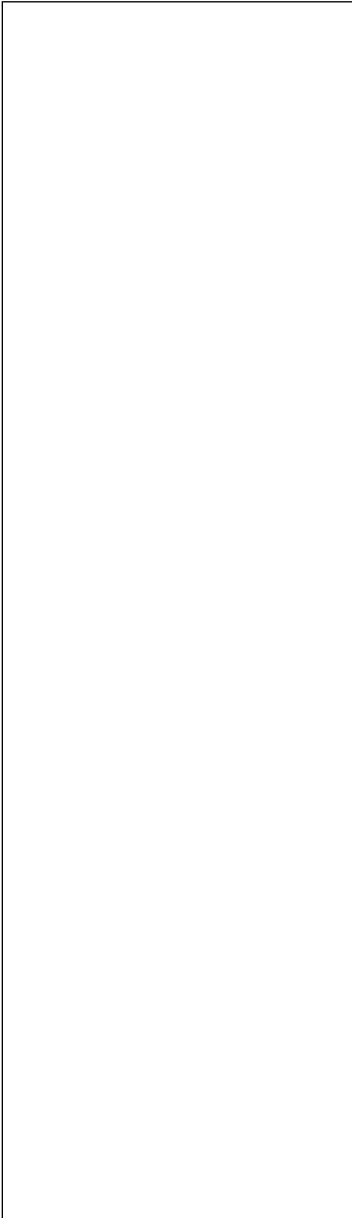
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Advocacy and Legislation

Great Lakes Legislative Priorities (FY 2008)

On an annual basis, the Great Lakes Commission develops and presents to Congress a set of legislative priorities to protect and enhance the quality of our region's environment and economy. The priorities are developed in coordination with other key regional partners, primarily the Council of Great Lakes Governors. The priorities span a number of key issues in the region and, taken together, provide a "blueprint" for Great Lakes restoration and protection. In 2007, the Commission's top priorities focused on stopping the introduction and spread of invasive species and implementing recommendations of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, such as reauthorizing and fully funding the Great Lakes Legacy Act and funding efforts to protect Great Lakes wetlands. Advocacy efforts throughout the year focused on priorities such as:

- Authorization and funding for the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Dispersal Barrier System on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to prevent the Asian carp and other invasive species from entering the Great Lakes;
- Passage of ballast water legislation to ensure commercial vessels visiting Great Lakes ports meet uniform ballast water discharge requirements that protect the lakes from invasive species; and
- Passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which authorizes a number of Great Lakes water and navigation projects consistently supported by the Commission, including a St. Clair River-Lake St. Clair Comprehensive Management Plan; a hydrological study of the St. Clair River;



Other Projects

In February 2007, the Great Lakes Commission convened a meeting of major regional stakeholders to discuss the challenges associated with ballast water and invasive species. The objectives of the meeting were to identify the extent to which consensus currently exists on the issues between stakeholders and the prospects for future collaboration, and to inform the Commission Board of



Directors on how best the Commission's assets should be used to resolve the challenge of ballast water and invasive species. Thirty-eight people, representing states, Ontario, the maritime industry, non-government organizations and tribal fisheries interests, gathered in Detroit to participate in the meeting. Those present agreed on the urgency of the issue and that they should work together to define the solution. Following the meeting, major steps were taken in Congress to resolve the different approaches to ballast water regulation.

The Commission, in conjunction with other regional partners, also conducted a "fly-in" in August to meet with key members of Congress and committee staff in Washington, D.C. The meeting took place during a critical time when there was an opportunity to support the movement of ballast water legislation through Congress.

The Commission worked closely with Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) to ensure that the Basin program be included in the 2007 Farm Bill reauthorization. Office visits were conducted with members of Congress to ensure that the Basin program is included in the Farm Bill reauthorization and to seek an appropriation for the program for FY2008. Letters were sent to members of Congress from the Great Lakes states seeking an appropriation for the Basin program.

Office visits were conducted with members of Congress in efforts to secure authorization and funding for GLOS, which is part of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System. Although the program received some funding for FY 2008, authorization for the program is still pending in Congress.

The Great Lakes Commission furthered efforts to develop a web-based tool to track congressional action related to the region's annual priorities. The tool is available through the Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN) at www.glin.net/legislativepriorities. Information on members of Congress, committees and other relevant legislative information is also included. The tool was released at Great Lakes Day events in 2008.

A new webpage was developed to showcase the policy positions of the Great Lakes Commission. Policy positions summarize the Commission's point of view on a given topic or issue, established through formal actions such as adoption of resolutions, communications to the U.S. Congress and other formal joint action of the Commission membership. Policy positions serve as a reference source for Commission members and other stakeholders to learn about the Commission's past and present positions on issues of regional importance. See www.glc.org/policy or contact: Tim Eder, teder@glc.org

Without Congressional action — unified with what Canada is doing — invasive species will continue to arrive and pose a threat to the viability of the Great Lakes. And the solution will only get more costly to implement.

- The Sheboygan Press, January 23, 2008, Editorial

Aquatic Ecosystems and Biodiversity



Aquatic invasive species (AIS) continue to represent the most critical threat to ecosystem integrity in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin, and thus remain one of the Great Lakes Commission's highest program priorities.

The Commission's efforts toward eliminating the transmittal of AIS in ballast water largely concentrated on advocacy for federal legislation to regulate ballast discharge. To galvanize consensus on this issue, the Commission convened a meeting in early 2007 among its member states and provinces, private industry, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders. As various legislative initiatives were taken up by Congress over the course of the year, the Commission remained closely engaged in the process that, ultimately, led to passage by the House of Representatives of a ballast regulation bill in April 2008.

Continuing its role as administrator for the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, the Commission hosted a major event in 2007 combining the Panel's spring meeting with that of the national Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force. The joint meeting was held in Erie, Pa. The session provided the Great Lakes states an opportunity to address the ANS Task Force regarding the progress and obstacles of state management planning for AIS.

Commission staff worked with the Executive Committee of the Panel in 2007 to form an ad-hoc Committee on Rapid Response and early in the year released the publication "Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions." Distribution of this educational tool has been targeted toward state and federal legislators, as well as other prime user groups from the recreational and commercial sector. Staff are working closely with Panel members to develop an appropriate dissemination strategy and mechanism for feedback. Work has also been initiated with the province of Québec to develop a French translation of the publication. This initiative is being coordinated by project staff with the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs in conjunction with the Commission's Quebec internship program.

The project "A Collaborative Approach to Advance Implementation of State Management Plans for Prevention and Control of ANS in the Great Lakes Region," supporting state ANS management planning efforts was completed in May 2007. The culminating event of this project was an all-day session of the ANS Task Force spring meeting showcasing state management plans in the Great Lakes region with a focus on successes and obstacles in state management planning.

The Commission received funding from the Great Lakes Protection Fund for a new planning project focused on the risks posed by the trade of live organisms. The project seeks to identify and evaluate high-risk commercial pathways contributing to AIS introduction and spread, including the role of aquaculture, live bait, and aquarium and water garden industries, among others. Project findings will be used to develop strategies to reduce the likelihood that invasive species will be introduced or spread through these activities.

The Northeast-Midwest Institute, the Great Lakes Commission, Cornell University and several other partners are collaborating on a new project to address the problem of VHS and other pathogens that could be introduced and/or spread through the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system via ballast water and other pathways. The purposes of the three-year project, funded by the Great Lakes Protection Fund, are to: 1) develop testing/sampling tools such as genetic markers to identify pathogens such as VHS; and 2) develop monitoring protocols to sample fish, water and/or other media in the Great Lakes.

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Protection and restoration of natural coastal wetlands in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system is critical to the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem. This has been a longstanding program priority for the Great Lakes Commission and was articulated once again by the recently drafted Regional Collaboration Strategy.

One Commission-led initiative, the Great Lakes Coastal Wetlands Consortium, reached a significant milestone in 2007 with the completion of a long-term plan to monitor Great Lakes coastal wetlands. The Consortium was formed in 2000 with the Great Lakes Commission as secretariat and a goal of producing a cohesive, long-range wetlands monitoring plan for Great Lakes coastal areas. Since inception of the Consortium, more than 50 organizations have contributed to the plan from initial pilot studies, to development of a Great Lakes coastal wetlands inventory and classification system and drafting of final coastal wetlands monitoring protocols, to the design of a publicly accessible international database. The partners included science and policy experts drawn from key U.S. and Canadian federal, state and provincial agencies, nongovernmental organizations, academia, and members of other interest groups with responsibility for coastal wetlands monitoring.

The project represented nearly seven years of work and produced a plan using a scientifically validated sampling design and suite of indicators and metrics developed by project partners. It includes a thorough cost analysis that describes estimated costs associated with each element of the plan. The document should be of great value and benefit to agencies planning to incorporate coastal wetland monitoring into

Coastal and Terrestrial Habitat

Economy and Society

The Great Lakes Commission's commitment to dynamic, sustainable economic growth in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region is defined in its 2008-2010 Work Plan by four topical areas: ports and navigation; clean

Some of the most pervasive and insidious contributors to decreased water quality in Great Lakes-St. Lawrence waters are nonpoint sources of pollution such as surface runoff and atmospheric deposition. The Commission has long been active in combating nonpoint source pollution through such programs as the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, which has delivered several million dollars of federal funds to projects in all eight Great Lakes states, and the Great Lakes Air Deposition program for addressing deposition of toxic pollutants in the waters of the Great Lakes region.

Mercury is a particularly harmful contaminant moving from the atmosphere into the region's lakes and watercourses and, ultimately, the human food supply through fish. In 2007 the Great Lakes Commission released a new report on how to better understand mercury deposition into the Great Lakes and what can be done to reduce the resulting health risks. Prepared with the help of state environmental protection agencies and other experts, the report offers specific recommendations on analyzing mercury contamination, learning more about how to track it, and how to coordinate existing efforts into a national monitoring program.

The Commission is also heavily involved in monitoring and remediating Areas of Concern (AOCs) in the Great Lakes, designated sites of chronic pollution. The Commission developed and maintains detailed websites on each of the 31 U.S. AOCs in the lakes, as well as a "virtual library" of AOC resources, including AOC contacts, an inventory of delisting targets, reports and conference proceedings, delisting documents, funding sources, and related information.

The Commission works with U.S. EPA and other AOC partners to convene regional conferences for the AOC program, the latest of which was held in June 2007 and attracted more than 170 participants. The Commission maintains a list of AOC contacts as well as a mailing list with all members of local AOC advisory groups. For 14 years the Commission has supported the Statewide Public Advisory Council (SPAC) for Michigan's AOC Program, a coalition of Michigan's 14 AOCs. The Commission assisted the SPAC and the State of Michigan in developing statewide delisting criteria, and is now supporting development of site-specific restoration plans for two fish and wildlife in Michigan's AOCs. The Commission is also assisting U.S. EPA in developing

Water Quality

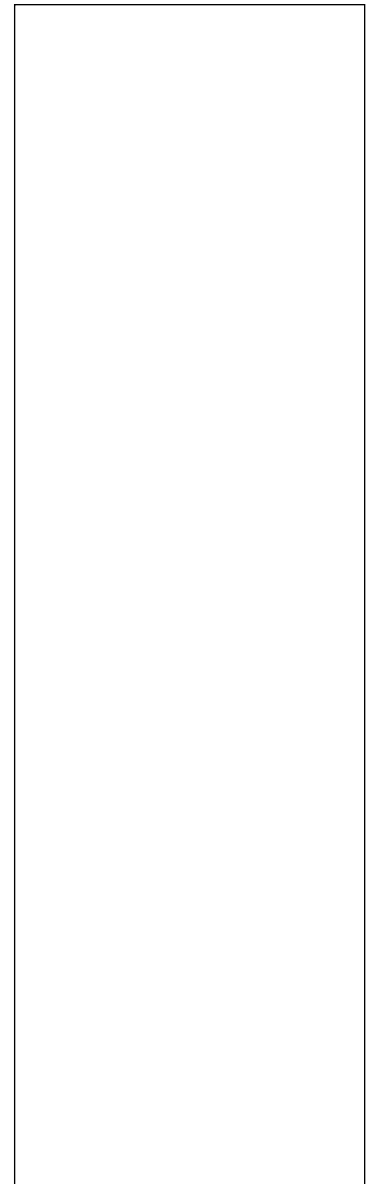
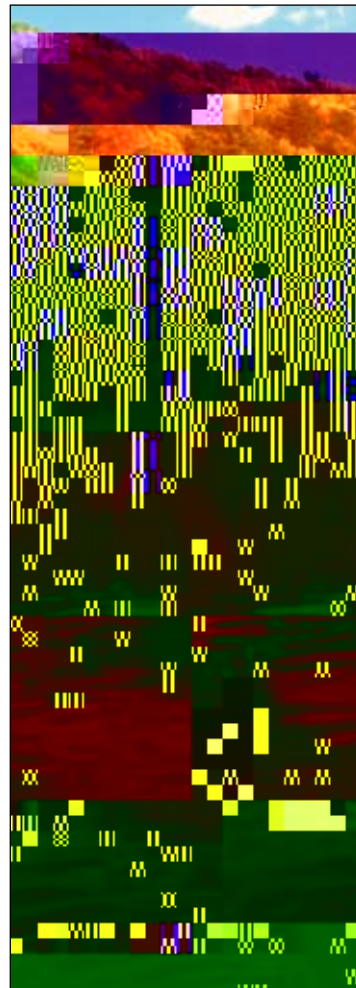
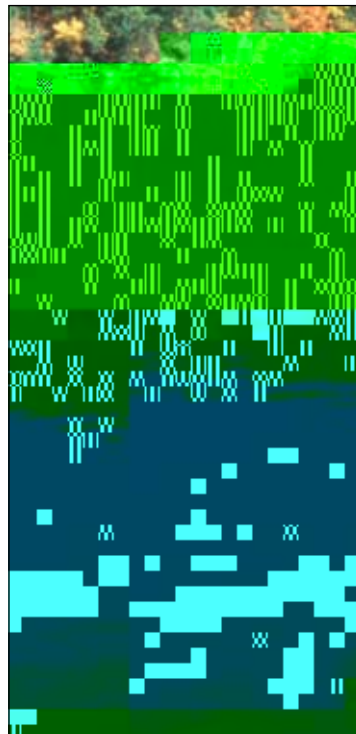
Water Supply

Eight years of low water levels on the Great Lakes have resulted in economic and environmental consequences to the region that are clearly significant, though not yet thoroughly understood. A combination of biological, chemical and physical factors has degraded the ecologic balance of the Great Lakes system, with the current low water conditions amplifying some of these problems. Low water has also impeded commercial navigation and recreational boating on the lakes, two critical sectors of the regional economy.

In 2007, the Commission called for several strategic investments from Congress to help adapt to current conditions on the Great Lakes. A fundamental mandate of the Commission is to foster the informed use, management and protection of Great Lakes water resources. Foremost at the moment are concerns about water withdrawal, consumption, diversion, and export of our vulnerable water resources. The Commission has consistently supported implementation of the provisions of the 1985 Great Lakes Charter and adoption of its successor, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. The Compact is the best means available to assure that water quantity is managed for the long-term benefit of the region's

It is very important for all of us in the Great Lakes Basin, stretching from Minnesota to Montreal, to ensure that our region controls the rules that will govern the use of Great Lakes water.

- Robert Cowles and
John Lehman

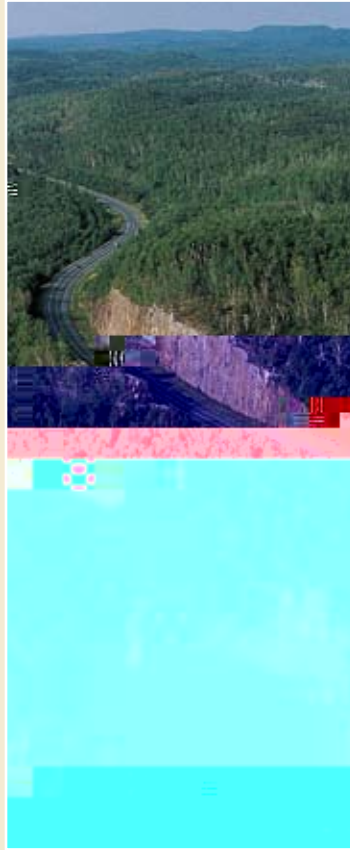


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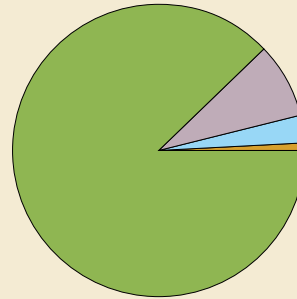
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Revenues

Grants and Contracts	5,338,441
State Contributions	480,000
Interest Income	185,802
Meetings, publications, misc.	33,600
Total	6,037,843

Grants and Contracts, 88.4%



The Great Lakes Commission concluded FY 2007 in sound financial condition, with operating revenues of \$6.04 million.

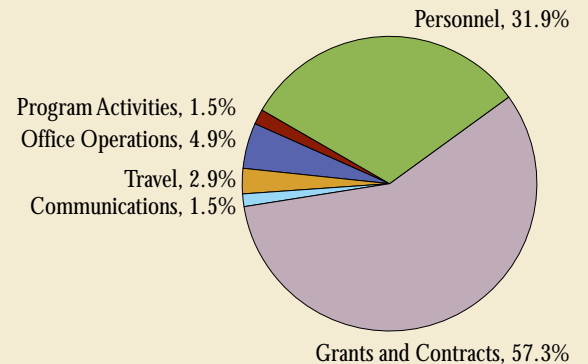
Expenses exceeded revenues by \$90,600, less than 1.5 percent. This was largely due to higher-than-anticipated expenses for personnel and less-than-anticipated indirect cost recovery from project work.

The difference between revenues and expenditures was covered by Great Lakes Commission reserve funds. Overall, the Commission continues to effectively manage its general and restricted funds to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization.

These figures were confirmed by an independent audit, which is conducted each year to examine the Commission's financial operations. The FY 2007 fiscal year ended June 30, 2007.

Expenses

Personnel	1,957,910
Grants and Contracts	3,511,646
Communications	89,468
Travel	180,112
Office Operations	298,930
Program Activities	90,377
Total	6,128,443



Revenues and Expenses: FY 2007

2007 Funders

The great majority of Commission programs and projects are pursued in partnership with other agencies and organizations, and benefit from their funding support. A listing of 2007 funders is provided below. Thanks to all for their assistance!

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
The Environment Report
Government of Québec
Great Lakes Fishery Commission
Great Lakes Protection Fund
Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant
Industrial Economics, Inc.
International Joint Commission
Joyce Foundation
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Michigan Sea Grant
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA),
Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services
NOAA Coastal Services Center
NOAA National Ocean Service/National Marine Fisheries Service
NOAA National Ocean Survey
NOAA National Sea Grant College Program
State of Illinois
State of Indiana
State of Michigan
State of Minnesota
State of New York
State of Ohio
State of Wisconsin
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service,
Eastern Region
USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Energy, National Renewable Energy Laboratory
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), Great Lakes

U.S. EPA, Region 5, Air and Radiological Division
U.S. EPA, Region 5, Superfund Division
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Geological Survey, Federal Geographic Data Committee: National
Spatial Data Infrastructure Cooperative Agreements Program
Wege Foundation

Commissioners and Alternates

Delegation chairs are in **bold**.

Illinois

Lt. Gov. Patrick Quinn (Vice Chair)

Chicago

Jack Lavin, Dept. of Commerce and
Economic Opportunity

Douglas P. Scott, Gov. Appointee

Leslie A. Sgro, Illinois Dept. of Natural
Resources

Alternates

Gary Clark, Illinois Dept. of Natural
Resources

Joe Deal, City of Chicago

Dan Injerd, Illinois Dept. of Natural
Resources

Governor

Indiana

David Phippen, Office of the Governor

Robert E. Carter, Jr., Indiana Dept. of
Natural Resources

Thomas W. Easterly, Indiana Dept. of
Environmental Management

Ron McAhron, Indiana Dept. of Natural
Resources

Jody W. Peacock, Ports of Indiana

Michigan

Lt. Gov. John D. Cherry, Jr. (Chair)

Ken DeBeaussiaert, Michigan Dept. of
Environmental Quality

Hon. Patricia Birkholz, State Senator

Hon. Mike Cox, Attorney General

Curtis Hertel, Detroit/Wayne County Port
Authority

Alternate

Governor

Peter Manning, Dept. of Attorney General

Minnesota

**Hon. Thomas Huntley, State
Representative**

Hon. Bill G. Ingebrigtsen, State Senator

Hon. Morrie Lanning, State Representative

Ed Oliver, Gov. Appointee

Hon. Yvonne Prettner Solon, State Senator

Alternates

Henry Hanka, National Scenic Byways
Resource Center

Dick Lambert, Minnesota Dept. of
Transportation

Cal Larson

New York

**Alexander B. Grannis, New York
State Dept. of Environmental
Conservation**

Michael Elmendorf, Gov. Appointee

John Francis O'Mara, Gov. Appointee

Philip Reed, Gov. Appointee

Alternates

Donald Zelazny, New York State Dept. of

Great Lakes Commission Staff

Seated (left to right): Richard Garcia, Marcia Woodburn, Talusier LaSalle, Hugh Brennan, Eve-Marie Morissette, Hao Zhuang, Matt Doss, Tim Eder, Elizabeth Schmidt, Laura Kaminski, Christine Manninen and Kirk Haverkamp.

Standing (left to right): Nick Schroeck, Mike Schneider, Ron Hasselbring, Devra Polack, Pat Gable, Becky Pearson, Roger Gauthier, Dave Knight, Gary Overmier, Tom Crane, Pete Giencke, Erika Jensen, Kathe Glassner-Shwayder, Victoria Pebbles, Rita Straith and John Hummer.

Observers

Alliance for the Great Lakes, Cameron Davis

Canadian Embassy, Sheila Tooze

Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority, Mike Ripley

Coastal States Organization, Katherine Andrews

Council of Great Lakes Governors, David Naftzger

Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Christopher Goddard

Great Lakes Sea Grant Network, Donald Scavia

Great Lakes United, Jennifer Nalbone

International Joint Commission, Karen Vigmostad

Maritime Administration, Great Lakes Region, Doris Bautch

National Association of Conservation Districts, Tom Middleton

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, Stephen Brandt

NOAA Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, David Kennedy

National Park Service, Gary Vequist

Ninth Coast Guard District, Radm. John E. Crowley, Jr.

St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corp., Terry Johnson, Jr.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jan Miller

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Garry Lee

U.S. Department of Energy, Patrick L. Wilkey

Great Lakes Commission 2007 Annual Report

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Staff and Observers

About the Commission

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, including U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, binational institutions, tribal/First Nation governments and other regional interests. Representatives appointed by partner entities participate extensively in Commission activities through a formal Observer program. The Commission is supported by a professional staff in Ann Arbor, Mich.

