

TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR THE
HUMAN DIMENSIONS TASK GROUP (HDTG) OF
THE LAKE ERIE COMMITTEE (LEC)

Adopted:

TITLE: The Human Dimensions Task Group

BACKGROUND: The formation of a Human Dimensions Task Group (HDTG) is intended to improve the Lake Erie Committee's (LEC) understanding of socio-economic factors that affect the viability of Lake Erie fisheries. Specifically, this information will address the effects of management decisions on the socio-economic aspects of all Lake Erie fisheries and provide guidance for policies that promote sustainable fisheries in concert with the Fish Community Goals and Objectives of the LEC.

MISSION STATEMENT: The HDTG is dedicated to employing the best available science, information, and methods to support inter-jurisdictional management of Lake Erie fisheries under the Joint Strategic Plan. In so doing, the HDTG will adhere to the following principles

- **Sustainability** of a Lake Erie fish community at a level that ensures future fishery benefits to all jurisdictions
- **Promote Wise Use** of specific Lake Erie fish stocks in a manner that accommodates the socio-economic interests of all jurisdictions in concert with stock productivity.
- **Science-based**, quantitative, socio-economic models will be emphasized over conceptual, qualitative, models to the fullest extent possible

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE: To develop a set of indicator metrics that can be used to 1.) Assess the socio-economic status of commercial and recreational fisheries on Lake Erie, 2.) Simulate fishery responses to potential management actions, and 3.) Disseminate information about the socio-economic status of Lake Erie fisheries to the public.

MEMBERSHIP: Qualified candidates to serve on the HDTG will be selected by the STC and LEC from the five Lake Erie fisheries management agencies, other agencies signatory to the Joint Strategic Plan, and non-agency groups, as follows:

Management Agencies:

- Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR)
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR)
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)
- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC).

Other Signatory Agencies:

- Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada (DFO)
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- United States Geological Survey (USGS)
- Great Lakes Fisheries Commission (GLFC)

Non-Agency Groups:

- The scientific and academic community at large

Appointment of all members will be at the discretion and approval of the STC and LEC.

TENETS:

- **Chairperson(s):** The two co-chairpersons, selected by the HDTG and approved by the LEC and Standing Technical Committee (STC) will be one U.S. representative and one Canadian representative. These roles will alternate periodically at the discretion of the HDTG, STC, and LEC. See the LEC Task Group Responsibilities and Membership for further discussion.
- **Cooperation:** The members of the HDTG will share the responsibilities for collecting and collating interagency data, running analyses, producing reports and presentations. Data and intellectual property produced for the HDTG by task group members will be distributed according to the Task Group's Data Sharing Protocol and may only be released by the consent of the originating member and all task group members
- **Objectivity:** The HDTG will maintain objectivity through an emphasis on a scientific approach
- **Transparency:** The members of the HDTG will share information with the STC, LEC and other Task Groups, and will communicate the results and distribute the reports to stakeholders and the public.
- **Science and Technology:** The HDTG will use the latest available techniques to assess the economic and social well-being of Lake Erie fisheries.
- **Restoration and Rehabilitation:** If Lake Erie fish populations are considered degraded or at risk, the HDTG will advise the LEC regarding economic and social impacts and will support efforts to restore and rehabilitate Lake Erie fish populations

CHARGES: Charges are assigned to the HDTG by the STC and LEC to meet the primary objectives and to address specific tasks important to the LEC. On an annual basis, the STC and LEC will determine whether the charges have been completed satisfactorily or if they require further elaboration.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The HDTG will not determine annual recommended allowable harvest levels (RAH) for any fish species in Lake Erie. As charged by the LEC, the HDTG will provide general recommendations regarding the social-economic impacts of a RAH based on current social-economic trends, indices, market values, demographics, and social-economic pressures or threats to the stability of the fisheries resource to support LEC endeavours in TAC management. The methodology used for providing general recommendations must be clearly documented.

REPORTING: One co-chairperson of the HDTG, or designate member, will report formally at the annual meeting of the LEC in the activities of the HDTG. The co-chairpersons of the HDTG or individual Task Group members may be asked to report on critical issues to the Chair and/or LEC membership at other times, including the annual Pre-LEC meeting, seasonal LEC and/or STC business meetings, and other times as necessary. An annual written report summarizing HDTG charges and activities toward those charges will be produced for the LEC, with the scheduled release to the public at the conclusion of the annual LEC meeting.

CONSENSUS APPROACH: HDTG issues will be resolved by consensus of the members. If consensus cannot be achieved on an issue, the issue will be referred to the STC first and then to the LEC for resolution.

DATA SHARING: All data used to create a HDTG report will be shared freely among agencies. All reports will be available to the public online at www.GLFC.org, and through distribution at the annual meeting. Agencies may not share with the public any other agency and/or task group data or intellectual property without the expressed consent of the originating agency and/or the task group.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS: The HDTG meets as deemed necessary by its members, the STC members or the LEC, to address task group charges, with the intent to meet at least twice annually.

SUPPORT: Salary and travelling expenses of the members of the HDTG will be the responsibility of the parent agencies, unless otherwise provided through an arrangement with the GLFC or other external funding source