

A JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries

Cooperation at its Best!



THE GREAT LAKES FISHERY is one of the most important freshwater resources on earth. The lakes offer a fishery worth \$4 billion, provide recreation to 5 million anglers, support 75,000 jobs, and contribute to a rich cultural heritage highly valued by the more than 30 million people who live in the basin.

Sustaining this resource for use today and for future enjoyment depends on cooperative, science-based management.

Many organizations and agencies manage and research the Great Lakes fishery. To better facilitate cooperative fisheries management, the eight states that border the Great Lakes, the Province of Ontario, two intertribal agencies, and several federal agencies are signatory to *A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries*. Implementation of the Plan is accomplished through committees of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, in particular Lake Committees.

Why Do We Need A Joint Strategic Plan?

With several state, provincial, tribal, and federal management agencies on the Great Lakes, the natural tendency is for each jurisdiction to manage its own way, resulting in chaos. Instead, agencies decided to work together through the Joint Strategic Plan. The Plan allows agencies to leverage each others' resources, avoid duplication of effort, avoid working at cross purposes, and share valuable data.

The result is one of the world's finest examples of transboundary cooperation. Through the Plan, agencies express their commitment to cooperation, consensus, and strategic thinking. Because of the Plan, fishery management activities are implemented within an ecosystem context. The resource and the millions of people who use it benefit from this commitment.

more 

Great Lakes Fishery Commission

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Cooperation!

Through the Joint Strategic Plan and the Lake Committee structure, agencies have worked together to manage the Great Lakes fishery in the most cooperative, effective manner possible. A few of the many examples of cooperative initiatives through the Plan include:

- Successful rehabilitation of native species
- Production of world-class research through technical committees
- Disease prevention and management
- Development of common Fish Community Objectives for each lake
- Effective coordination of law enforcement
- Publication of State-of-the-Lake reports
- Sharing of equipment, resources, and data
- Exotic species research and control
- Stocking levels
- Total allowable catch and allocation agreements

Lake Committee Membership by Lake

LAKE SUPERIOR COMMITTEE

Chippewa-Ottawa Treaty Fishery Mgmt. Authority
Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission
Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources
Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources

LAKE MICHIGAN COMMITTEE

Chippewa-Ottawa Treaty Fishery Mgmt. Authority
Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources
Indiana Dept. of Natural Resources
Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources
Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources

LAKE HURON COMMITTEE

Chippewa-Ottawa Treaty Fishery Mgmt. Authority
Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

LAKE ERIE/LAKE ST. CLAIR COMMITTEE

Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources
New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation
Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

LAKE ONTARIO COMMITTEE

New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources



FEDERAL AGENCIES SIGNATORY TO THE PLAN



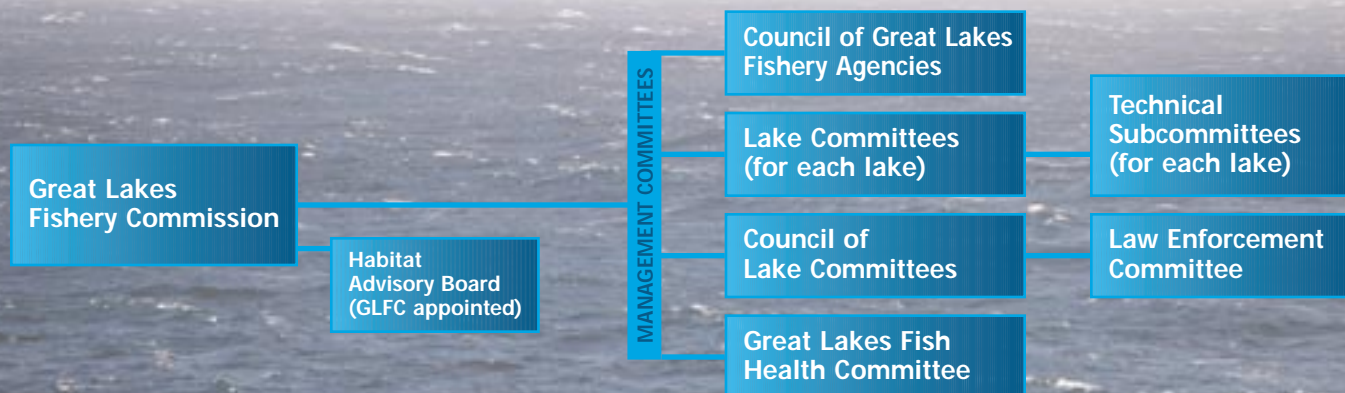
The Great Lakes Fishery Commission was established by Convention between Canada and the United States in 1955 to improve and perpetuate fishery resources.

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Implementing A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries



Strategies for the Joint Strategic Plan

The Joint Strategic Plan is rooted in four strategies for fisheries management:

- 1. Consensus:** Agencies agree through the Plan that consensus on management practices must be reached before initiatives that affect multiple jurisdictions can be initiated. To help achieve consensus, agencies have developed common Fish Community Objectives for each lake. Agencies also agree that any change in fishery management practice that affects other jurisdictions must be agreed to by the other agencies. In the rare instance where consensus cannot be achieved, the Plan contains provisions for conflict resolution.
- 2. Accountability:** Agencies are accountable for implementing the joint decisions made under the Plan, within their own management jurisdiction. To promote accountability, the Plan calls for the production of a decision record (through publication of meeting minutes), agency reports about initiatives on each lake, Lake Committee reports to record actions, and reports of Great Lakes Fishery Commission activities.
- 3. Information Sharing:** Sharing information, staff, and other resources is an efficient way for several jurisdictions to manage a shared resource. The Plan affirms each signatory agency's commitment to establishing common standards for data access, collection, analysis, and sharing.

- 4. Ecosystem Management:** A guiding principle on the Great Lakes is that the resources must be researched and managed as a whole. This is the "ecosystem approach" to management. To facilitate this approach, the Plan links fishery management with environmental interests, it calls upon fishery agencies to coordinate their work with those charged with implementing the *Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement*, and it provides stronger links between agencies and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's Habitat Advisory Board. Through ecosystem management, agencies agree to actively promote the needs of desired fish communities.

In addition, provision is made for Plan governance. Signatories to the Plan created the **Council of Great Lakes Fishery Agencies** in 1997. This committee comprises high-ranking agency personnel to ensure the Plan is implemented, to facilitate communications, and to provide for non-party participation (which includes federal agencies and other institutions).



Under the Plan, agencies work together to generate, publish, and share technical information about the fisheries.

Lake Committees as 'Action Arms' of The Joint Strategic Plan

Lake Committees—made up of state, provincial, and two intertribal fishery agencies—are the “action arms” of the Joint Strategic Plan. Agencies appoint their representatives on Lake Committees.

Each Lake Committee has a technical subcommittee to investigate specific fishery issues. Based on science and technical information from subcommittees and other sources, Lake Committee members develop such things as common Fish Community Objectives, appropriate stocking levels, harvest targets, law enforcement capabilities, and management plans.

Lake Committees provide agencies with a mechanism for day-to-day cooperative management of the fishery. To address issues of concern to the Great Lakes as a whole, Lake Committee members meet as the **Council of Lake Committees**.



PHOTO: U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Technical subcommittee members (for each lake) meet frequently to investigate specific fishery issues, share data, and provide recommendations to agencies.

The Joint Strategic Plan and the Lake Committee process do not bind a particular agency to action, reduce or violate individual agency jurisdiction or mandates, or commit the U.S. and Canadian federal governments to any specific course of action.

OTHER COMMITTEES

The **Great Lakes Fish Health Committee** is a GLFC management committee under the guidance of the Plan which studies issues relating to fish disease spread, prevention, and mitigation. The GLFC's **Habitat Advisory Board**—as called for under the Plan—is made up of government and non-government habitat experts to study and recommend measures for ensuring fish habitat protection.

A Short History of...

COOPERATIVE FISHERY MANAGEMENT

As early as 1937, the Great Lakes states recommended consideration of an interstate compact for bringing about agreements for conservation of their fisheries that included the other Great Lakes fish management authority of the day, the Province of Ontario (1937 New York Conference). Unable to obtain advance Congressional approval for an interstate compact that included a contiguous dominion or its province, and with the sea lamprey invasion underway, state efforts were redirected and the U.S. and Canada signed the 1954 *Convention on Great*



Signers of the 1997 revised Joint Strategic Plan

Lakes Fisheries. The subsequently established Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) increasingly became the forum favored by the fishery agencies to coordinate their research and management. Thus it was in the late 1970s that Great Lakes States again rejected an opportunity to form a U.S.-only coordinating body, this time a Regional Fishery Management Council under the (Magnuson) *Fishery Conservation and Management Act* of 1976. Instead, with their provincial counterparts, U.S. natural

resource agencies requested assistance from the GLFC in drafting a strategic plan in which fishery agencies would formalize their commitment to Lake Committees as their “major action arm”. In 1981 *A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries* was signed by state, federal and provincial fish management agencies. Directors restated their commitment in a 1985 review of the Plan and again in the review completed in 1997. At the invitation of the original signatories,



Art Holder (left) and the Honorable Alan Pope (standing) of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources sign the 1981 Joint Strategic Plan. GLFC Executive Secretary Carlos Fetterolf observes.

the Chippewa-Ottawa Treaty Fishery Management Authority and the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission signed the Plan in 1988, and the U.S. Geological Survey signed in 1997.