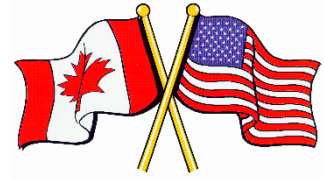




# Committee of Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission



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## **ADVISORS TO THE GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION PASS RESOLUTIONS ADDRESSING GLFC FUNDING, OFFSHORE PRODUCTIVITY, LAKE TROUT STOCKING IN LAKE HURON, AND CANADIAN LEGISLATION**

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN—The U.S. and Canadian Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission) met over Zoom during the Commission’s recent 66<sup>th</sup> annual meeting to discuss a number of issues pertaining to the Great Lakes fishery. The Committee of Advisors is composed of citizens who represent various interests including recreational and commercial fishing, academia, Indigenous governments, municipalities, Conservation Authorities, environmental NGOs, and the public-at-large. Advisors meet regularly to consider issues, share information, and provide input to the Commission about the management of the shared Great Lakes fishery. Often, the committee is able to act as a whole, reflecting the concerns and opinions of advisors from both countries. This year, the committee passed five binational resolutions pertaining to issues affecting the entire basin, described below.

### **1. A Resolution in Support of Restoring the Commission’s Fiduciary Relationship with Global Affairs Canada**

For the past forty years, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, which serves as a contracted agent for the sea lamprey control program, has performed the Commission’s fiduciary function. This dual role has resulted in Canada’s support to the Commission being too narrowly focused on sea lamprey control, while neglecting the other responsibilities of the commission including facilitating fishery management and implementing its research program. The Canadian and U.S. Committee of Advisors passed a joint resolution calling upon the Government of Canada to move the Commission’s fiduciary function from Fisheries and Oceans Canada back to Global Affairs Canada, as it was when the treaty was originally signed in 1955 and the broader treaty commitments were respected. The resolution is available: [http://www.glfc.org/pubs/pdfs/resol2021\\_3.pdf](http://www.glfc.org/pubs/pdfs/resol2021_3.pdf).

### **2. A Resolution in Support of Implementing the Recommendation of the SAB’s Report Entitled Understanding Declining Productivity in the Offshore Regions of the Great Lakes**

In June 2020, the International Joint Commission’s (IJC) Science Advisory Board (SAB) released a ground-breaking report entitled “Understanding Declining Productivity in the Offshore Regions of the Great Lakes”, which discusses the causes of apparent declines in the productivity in offshore regions of the Great Lakes and assesses how these declines are potentially affecting fisheries. The Commission was one of 13 members of a diverse workgroup that provided input to the report. The report presents a number of recommendations, including:

- Further coordination of efforts between water quality and fishery managers is needed to improve knowledge and adaptive management of nutrients in the nearshore and offshore waters of the Great Lakes, given effects on productivity in these areas;
- Targets for phosphorus reductions under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement must appropriately balance potential trade-offs in productivity between nearshore and offshore areas, given the stresses in place; and
- Additional support for applied research, such as experimental approaches to control invasive mussels through the Invasive Mussel Collaborative, is needed.

The Canadian and U.S. Committee of Advisors resolution commends the SAB on the quality of the report and thanks all who contributed. Advisors endorsed the findings and recommendations and called on the Commission to work with the Great Lakes Executive Committee to assist with the development of a standing multi-agency

*The opinions expressed here are those of the independent committee of advisors and not necessarily those of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. The Committee of Advisors consists of both U.S. and Canadian representatives, from indigenous, commercial, recreational, academic, agency, environmental, and public fishery interests in the Great Lakes Basin. Advisors provide advice to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; U.S. advisors are nominated by the State Governors, and appointed by the commission. Canadian advisors are appointed by the commission.*

Cooperative Ecosystem Monitoring and Modeling Advisory Committee, as recommended in the report, to review all components of the report's eleven recommendations and to consider the eight identified knowledge gaps. The joint resolution is available: [http://www.glf.org/pubs/pdfs/resol2021\\_4.pdf](http://www.glf.org/pubs/pdfs/resol2021_4.pdf).

**3. A Resolution Calling for a Review of the Strategy For Lake Trout Stocking and its Implementation In Southern Lake Huron**

In 2018, the Lake Huron Committee made the decision to cease lake trout stocking in the Michigan waters of southern Lake Huron based on declining relative survival of stocked lake trout and positive trends in wild lake trout reproduction. Yet, since that decision, the current level of natural reproduction is lower than needed to replace lost stocking for the fishery and lake trout biomass has steadily declined. The issue of lake trout stocking is complex and there are multiple scientific unknowns, including impacts on commercial fishers, variability in predation pressure and changes in climate. Recognizing these challenges, the Canadian and U.S. Committee of Advisors passed a resolution urging the Lake Huron Committee to review the Strategy for Reducing Lake Trout Stocking in Lake Huron in consultation with the range of stakeholders (e.g. recreational, commercial and Indigenous fishers, science and environmental communities) concerned with the status of the fishery. The resolution is available: [http://www.glf.org/pubs/pdfs/resol2021\\_1.pdf](http://www.glf.org/pubs/pdfs/resol2021_1.pdf).

**4. A Resolution in Support of the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Group, a Subcommittee of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group**

In September 2020 the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Group (GLSLG) was formalized as a subcommittee of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group for a trial period ending September 30, 2021. The intent of the GLSLG, similar to the U.S. Great Lakes Task Force, is to focus the attention of Canada's elected officials on facilitating and promoting cross-border and multi-partisan cooperation on legislative and policy issues relating to the protection of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Noting the successes of the GLSLG during the trial period, the Canadian and U.S. Committee of Advisors passed a resolution calling for the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group to establish the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Group as either a permanent subcommittee or as an independent group when the trial period ends. The resolution also urges the GLSLG seek support from the Government of Canada comparable to that provided through the U.S. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The resolution is available: [http://www.glf.org/pubs/pdfs/resol2021\\_2.pdf](http://www.glf.org/pubs/pdfs/resol2021_2.pdf).

**5. A Resolution regarding the Establishment of a Canada Water Agency**

Water governance in Canada is complex and multi-jurisdictional, currently involving more than twenty federal departments and agencies, as well as the provinces, territories, municipal governments, and Indigenous governments and Treaty Rights. In 2019, the Prime Minister of Canada directed his ministers to create a new Canada Water Agency to coordinate with all involved parties to find ways to keep water safe, clean and well-managed. The Canadian and U.S. Advisors unanimously passed a resolution supporting the creation of a Canada Water Agency, and calling upon the Government of Canada to ensure CWA's mandate is clearly and strongly aligned with fisheries and fish habitat protection and management. The resolution also urges the creation, governance and activities of the CWA be designed to complement and fill gaps in the existing multi-nation management and science governance institutions. The resolution is available: [http://www.glf.org/pubs/pdfs/resol2021\\_5.pdf](http://www.glf.org/pubs/pdfs/resol2021_5.pdf).

Dr. Tom Whillans of Trent University, chair of the Canadian Committee of Advisors, said, "Despite the extreme challenges of this past year, the Committee of Advisors remained engaged on a variety of legislative and environmental issues. The binational support for these five resolutions, including three that are directed to the Government of Canada, reflects the strength of our cross-border relationships, our diverse areas of interest and expertise, and our shared commitment to science-based management."

"All who serve on the Committee of Advisors are dedicated and driven individuals who are deeply committed to strengthening cooperation, enhancing science, and driving needed legislative actions to protect and rehabilitate the Great Lakes and its world-class fishery," said Captain Denny Grinold, chair of the U.S. Committee of Advisors.

"The Great Lakes Fishery Commission values the input and advice from the Committee of Advisors. Commissioners and staff will take appropriate action on these well-conceived resolutions," said Robert Lambe, executive secretary of the Commission.