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GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION HONORS DR. SUZETTE KIMBALL FOR HER DEDICATION TO FOSTERING GREAT LAKES PARTNERSHIPS

***Dr. Kimball, Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, is recognized for her steadfast
commitment to Great Lakes Deepwater Science***

OTTAWA, ONTARIO—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission honored Dr. Suzette Kimball with the C.D. “Buzz” Besadny Award for Fostering Great Lakes Partnerships during the Commission’s recent annual meeting in Ottawa, Ontario. The award, which the Commission presents annually, recognized Dr. Kimball for strengthening the long-standing partnership between the Council of Lake Committees – a group of senior-level fishery managers from each of the Great Lakes jurisdictions – and the U.S. Geological Survey. Dr. Kimball’s contributions to this partnership, primarily carried out through the Deepwater Science Program, began in the early 2000s and has continued ever since.

Commissioner Douglas Stang, Assistant Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, presented Dr. Kimball with the Besadny Award. “Great Lakes fishery management is, indeed, a cooperative endeavor, particularly when it comes to science and information,” said Commissioner Stang. “Managers need data about the status of the fishery and the forage base so that they may make day-to-day management decisions. No one agency or manager has the tools to go at it alone—the ecosystem is simply too large and money is too scarce.”

“The U.S. Geological Survey, which Dr. Kimball heads, is a major player in Great Lakes science,” Stang added. “Among many other things, the U.S. Geological Survey operates a fleet of research vessels that fulfill the federal government’s responsibility to provide forage base information and to improve our understanding of the ecosystem.”

Stang continued: “The 1990s were a difficult time for the Survey’s program. In that era, because of major agency turmoil, the Survey was not meeting its responsibilities—fishery assessments were left undone, the vessel fleet was in disrepair and was unsafe, and two-thirds of the Survey’s Great Lakes Science Center’s staff positions were left vacant. The state and tribal management agencies, through a document called the ‘Blue Ribbon Panel Report,’ presented an ultimatum: either right the Survey’s ship or get out of the way. Dr. Kimball chose to right the ship. The result has been a spectacular recommitment to Great Lakes science and management.”

Stang continued: “What is remarkable about Dr. Kimball’s approach is that she embraced the principles of A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries – a nonbinding consensus-based process developed by the state and tribal management authorities on the lakes – as the key mechanism to fulfill her goal of revitalizing the Survey’s Great Lakes program. For instance, in 2004, she was instrumental in drafting a memorandum of understanding between the Council of Lake Committees and the Survey, which outlined the plan for the Survey to fully staff the scientific teams on the Great Lakes. Subsequently, two

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more 5-year MOUs have been signed and followed through on. Moreover, between 2004 and 2015, she led the charge to replace or renovate four of the five large vessels that operate on the Great Lakes. She would have done all five had the *R/v Kiyi* not been in excellent condition. In doing so, she secured nearly \$20 million in funds at a time when infrastructure funding was not easy to secure. She had the right honor of commissioning the four new or renovated vessels: the *R/v Sturgeon*, the *R/v Muskie*, the *R/v Kaho*, and the *R/v Arcticus*.”

Stang continued: “Dr. Kimball’s has also been a strong advocate for the renovation of the Survey’s Hammond Bay Biological Station—which is a partnership between the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and the U.S. Geological Survey. This renovation will allow for the use of 21st Century technology and will attract top scientists from around the globe.”

“Dr. Kimball’s love for Great Lakes is obvious in her dedication to the partnerships and science that are necessary to effectively manage them. She has already left a lasting legacy and I have a feeling she’s just getting started,” Stang concluded.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is an international organization established by the United States and Canada through the 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. The Commission has the responsibility to support fisheries research, control the invasive sea lamprey in the Great Lakes, and facilitate implementation of A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, a provincial, state, and tribal fisheries management agreement.



Great Lakes Fishery Commission Commissioner Doug Stang presents Dr. Suzette Kimball with the 2016 C.D. Buzz Besadny Award for Fostering Great Lakes Partnerships. The award was presented to Dr. Kimball on June 9, 2016 at the Great Lakes Fishery Commission’s 61st annual meeting held in Ottawa, Ontario. Photo: T. Lawrence, GLFC.