



2012

2015

**Great Lakes
Priorities**



*More than a century of cooperation
protecting the Great Lakes*

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In 1909, visionary leaders signed the Boundary Waters Treaty, creating the International Joint Commission (IJC) to help Canada and the U.S. protect the Great Lakes and other shared waters from coast to coast.

Today, under terms of the Canada-US Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA), the IJC assesses progress and provides expert scientific advice on issues related to restoring and protecting water quality in the Great Lakes.

With professional staff in its Windsor, Ontario Great Lakes Office and section offices in Ottawa and Washington, D.C., the IJC brings together experts from both sides of the border to develop consensus findings and recommendations for governments.

During 2012-2015, work groups will focus on three priorities chosen by the Commission:

- Lake Erie Ecosystem Priority to Reduce Phosphorus and Algal Blooms;
- Assessment of Progress toward Restoring the Great Lakes; and
- Strengthening the Capacity to Deliver Great Lakes Science and Information.



The IJC model of fact finding supported by the efforts of expert task forces has been successful in assisting the governments for more than 100 years!



Left: a map showing the newly harmonized Great Lakes Basin and constituent subbasins within the Great Lakes Drainage Basin.

Data available from www.geobase.com and <http://nationalmap.gov/>
Data coordinated and prepared by the IJC's Transboundary Hydrographic Data Harmonization Task Force.

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Lake Erie Ecosystem Priority to Reduce Phosphorus and Algal Blooms

- Advise governments on the essential elements of a plan to reduce the loading of phosphorus to Lake Erie and to prevent harmful algal blooms.
- Develop a better scientific understanding of causes and controls.
- Make recommendations for needed monitoring systems and best management practices to address agricultural, urban, and industrial sources of nutrient pollution.

Assessment of Progress toward Restoring the Great Lakes

- Examine both human health and environmental indicators to assess progress toward GLWQA objectives.
- Identify gaps in current monitoring programs and recommend needed improvements in monitoring capabilities.
- Develop framework for assessing the effectiveness of programs and other measures implemented by governments to protect and restore the Great Lakes.

Strengthening the Capacity to Deliver Great Lakes Science and Information

- Assess the binational capacity and capability to coordinate and deliver Great Lakes science.
- Identify a common portal to human health and environmental data, demonstrating the benefits of connecting such datasets and improving access.
- Increase the capacity of the IJC to process and distribute GIS/remote sensing information in support of GLWQA reporting requirements.



James Marvin Phelps
Friends of the Detroit River



The Ohio State University,
Ohio Sea Grant College Program

Advisory panels assisting the IJC include:

The Great Lakes Water Quality Board

as the principal advisor to the Commission, brings together policy experts, including top officials from federal, state, provincial and municipal governments with management responsibilities for water quality programs.

The Great Lakes Science Advisory Board

advises the Commission and Water Quality Board and includes subject matter experts drawn from academia, government, industry and nongovernmental organizations.

The Health Professionals Advisory Board

provides advice to the Commission regarding transboundary issues that affect human health.

The International Air Quality Advisory Board

includes experts from governments and academia who identify and provide advice on air pollution issues with transboundary implications, including the Great Lakes.

The Council of Great Lakes Research Managers

provides advice on research, fosters cooperative projects and gives managers of government and academic research institutions a forum to coordinate their Great Lakes research efforts.



For more information, visit www.ijc.org and click the “**Boards**” tab.



James Marvin Phelps
Friends of the Detroit River



Ted Lawrence,
Great Lakes Fishery Commission



A critical function of the IJC is to alert the governments of Canada and the U.S. to emerging problems affecting the physical, chemical or biological integrity of the Great Lakes. For example, starting in 2002, the IJC has been a strong advocate for action to prevent Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes. Ongoing work involves development of a Rapid Response plan to help responsible agencies be prepared if an Asian carp is found in the Great Lakes.

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