

Community Involvement to Strengthen Data Collection

A guidebook for community science in the Great Lakes basin

- **The International Joint Commission (IJC)** helps Canada and the United States prevent and resolve issues over shared waters on 5,525 miles of boundary, including the Great Lakes.
- While community science is one of the solutions to existing data collection needs, there is often a lack of shared understanding and methodology for data collection.
- The IJC **Great Lakes Science Advisory Board's *Great Lakes Community Science Guidebook*** will guide community scientists with best practices and connections to professional science.

Data collection guidance for community science

Standardized community science guidelines can improve Great Lakes science

Researchers and government agencies run environmental monitoring programs across the 95,160 square miles of the Great Lakes and St Lawrence River basin. Community science, also known as citizen science, is monitoring conducted, in whole or in part, by nonprofessional scientists. Community science can help provide data at a fraction of the cost, and generates information that supports future research efforts and management decisions.

While community scientists eager to contribute, data collection efforts could be strengthened by clear, uniform methodologies. The Great Lakes Science Advisory Board's ***Great Lakes Community Science Guidebook*** project aims to provide community scientists with guidance.

About the Project

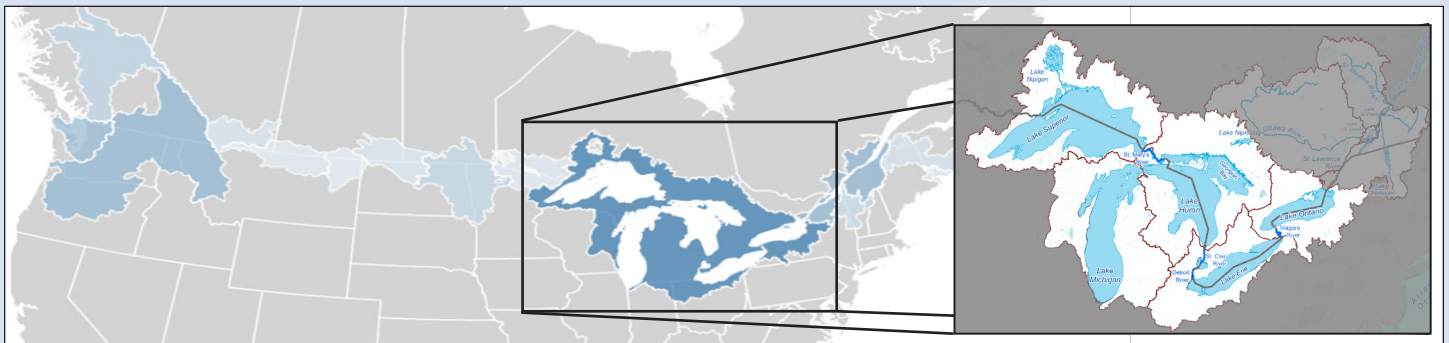
The ***Great Lakes Community Science Guidebook*** will be a user-friendly handbook with tools to develop a robust and reliable community science network. It will be a guide on data collection methods for volunteers and organizations so that end users, including agency and academic researchers, policy makers, nongovernmental organizations and others, can use community science data with confidence.

Scan for more
about this project!



Contact the IJC about this project: mark.burrows@ijc.org

Where will this work impact?



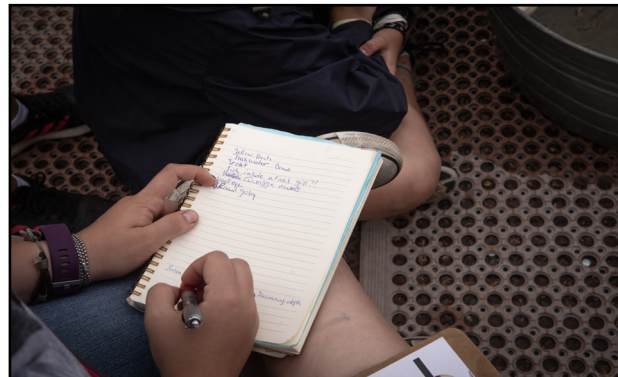
More than a century of cooperation protecting shared waters
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Great Lakes Community Science Guidebook

Great Lakes Science Advisory Board

Prior to developing this *Guidebook*, the Great Lakes Science Advisory Board identified resources and best practices for community science. That research noted that current community science efforts can often become fragmented, issue- or area-specific products that are less accessible to inform decisions about the Great Lakes. Many groups develop their own approaches of data entry, analysis, visualization and reporting using a variety of sources and best practices. Efforts to align community and professional science can ultimately enhance the collective impact of community science. The board's *Great Lakes Community Science Guidebook* will be adaptable to help connect community scientists with practitioners to identify areas of shared interest and promote opportunities for regional collaborations.



A Girl Scout records data on a field trip with the Stone Laboratory at The Ohio State University.

Credit: Ohio SeaGrant

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

Under the Great Lakes Water Quality agreement, the Great Lakes Science Advisory Board advises the IJC on scientific matters related to the Great Lakes basin ecosystem, including advising on how to improve the effectiveness in achieving the Agreement's objectives. The *Great Lakes Community Science Guidebook* aims to improve effectiveness by providing tools to enhance data collection with coordinated community science efforts.

About the International Joint Commission

The IJC was established in 1909 under the Boundary Waters Treaty to help Canada and the United States prevent and resolve disputes over shared waters. The IJC's responsibilities include reporting on progress made by the governments under the 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The Great Lakes Science Advisory Board provides advice and guidance on scientific research to the IJC and its Great Lakes Water Quality Board.

The Great Lakes ...



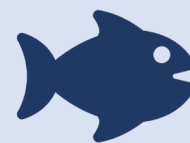
contain roughly
20 percent of the world's
fresh surface water



support a
US\$6 trillion (CAD\$7.5
trillion) regional economy



are a source of
drinking water for
36 million people



are home to
4,000 species of
plants and animals



More than a century of cooperation protecting shared waters

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