

Indigenous Perspectives on Great Lakes Water Quality

Incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge into the IJC's Great Lakes science activities

- 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.
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge describes systems of ecological knowledge held by Indigenous peoples and communities about their environments.
- The **Great Lakes Science Advisory Board's** project is *Bridging Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western Science* across the IJC's Great Lakes water quality activities.

Strengthening advice with diverse perspectives

IJC seeks to better integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge in its Great Lakes work

Over generations, Indigenous peoples have developed an understanding of the land, water and relationships that exist on it. Referred to as “Indigenous Knowledge” or “Traditional Ecological Knowledge,” its focus on relationships and responsibilities is contrasted with Western science which focuses on evidence, laws and rights. Research, policy and engagement activities are increasingly exploring and adopting how Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western science can be complimentary systems.

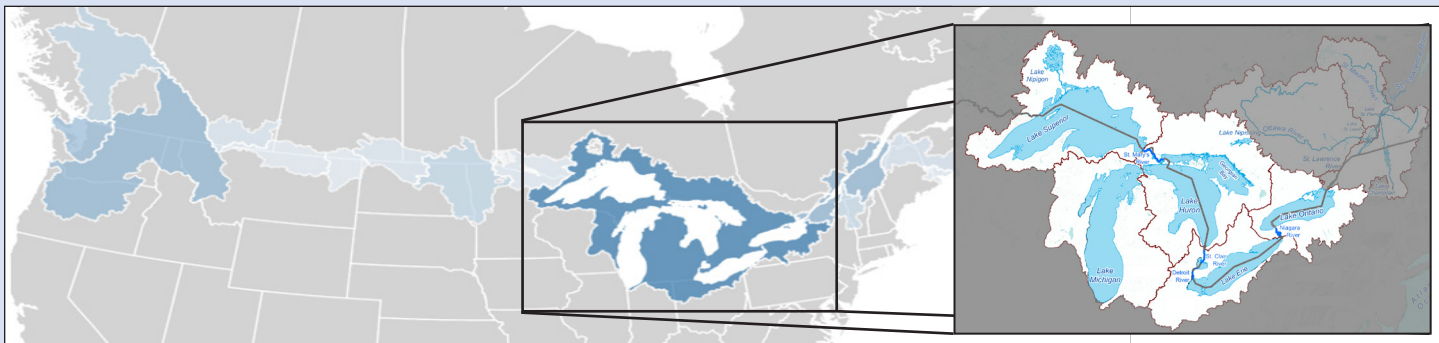
To guide the IJC's Great Lakes work, the Great Lake Science Advisory Board's *Bridging Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western Science* project is developing a framework to encourage and guide the integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge into its science-based studies and advice under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

About the Project

The Great Lakes Science Advisory Board is scoping opportunities for integrating Traditional Ecological Knowledge into its scientific projects. The outcomes from the board's guidance for IJC's Great Lakes work could be applied to other frameworks or serve as an example of a framework used to bridge systems of knowledge.

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Where will this work impact?



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Bridging Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Western Science

Great Lakes Science Advisory Board

The Great Lakes Science Advisory Board is engaging First Nations and Tribes in the Great Lakes region to identify:

- Examples of success,
- Issues or barriers that may negatively impact the protection of Indigenous Knowledge, and
- Protections for the “data sovereignty” of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and other Indigenous knowledges.

This project also will create a framework for bridging gaps between Traditional Ecological Knowledge with ongoing IJC science activities and other projects, such as the *Great Lakes Science Plan*.

This project will include incorporating advice from First Nations and Tribes about how to integrate such knowledge into assessments, evaluations, and recommendations as well as enhancing IJC outreach and engagement with First Nations, Métis and Tribes across the continent’s boundary waters.

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

Under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, the IJC provides advice to the federal governments of Canada and the United States on the social, economic and environmental issues related to Great Lakes water quality. The inclusion of Traditional Ecological Knowledge into the IJC’s science-based advice provides an opportunity to strengthen the advice the IJC provides to governments.

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 the Great Lakes Water Quality Board.

Scan for more
about this project!



The Great Lakes ...



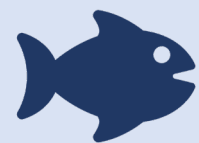
*contain roughly
20 percent of the world’s
fresh surface water*



*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*



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