



**IJC Science Advisory Board – Science Priority Committee
Fifty-seventh Meeting
Meeting Summary**

April 14, 2025 – 1:00pm – 4:00pm Eastern Time

U.S. Members	Canadian Members	Commission Staff
Lucinda Johnson (Co-Chair)	Gail Krantzberg (Co-Chair)	Matthew Child (Secretary)
Donna Kashian	Jérôme Marty	Jo Werba
Laura Johnson	Maggie Xenopoulos	Rachel Wyatt (virtual)
Margaret Noodin	Karen Kidd	Antonette Arvai (virtual)
Marta Venier	Nandita Basu	
Drew Gronewold	Mike McKay	
Jim Hood (virtual)	Roy Brouwer	

1. Welcome and Introductions

The U.S. Co-Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and round table introductions were completed. A special welcome was extended to new members Roy Brouwer and Jim Hood, and it was acknowledged that Mike McKay will assume the Canadian Co-Chair duties effective July 10, 2025.

The February 13, 2025 meeting record was acknowledged. The meeting agenda was approved by consensus.

2. Ongoing Project Updates

Microplastics Monitoring & Risk Assessment (Karen Kidd)

The final project report was transmitted to governments in November, 2024. A public webinar was held on February 12, 2025 that was attended by approximately 450 people. Since that time core team members have completed several media interviews and invited presentations to various audiences.

Great Lakes Winter Science (Maggie Xenopoulos)

Project reporting was recently approved by Commissioners and is expected to be transmitted to the Parties in the coming days. Public dissemination activities are on hold until after the Canadian federal election period. A public webinar is tentatively scheduled for May 15 at 1pm.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (Jérôme Marty & Margaret Noodin)

Due to unforeseen circumstances project report preparation has been delayed, but it is expected to resume soon. An internal report to the Commission will be produced which will address opportunities for honouring both Indigenous and western science in the development of IJC advice. The Indigenous engagements held as part of the project have providing many insights including the difficulty of generalizing findings across Indigenous communities, and the role of non-Indigenous peoples in Indigenous engagements.

Great Lakes Science Plan (Gail Krantzberg)

A two-day workshop on Centers of Excellence and workforce development was held recently and will inform preparation of the Science Plan. The role of Centers of Excellence is expected to vary depending on an individual Center's purpose and function; in some cases a Center may focus on administering competitive and merit-based grants, while in other cases it may do much of the work directly. It was also acknowledged that in some cases existing Centers or Institutes could be reimagined as a Center of Excellence. It was noted that the Science Advisory Board meeting will include discussion about the Science Plan project.

Great Lakes Early Warning System (Lucinda Johnson)

A contractor was recently selected and a project kick-off meeting has been scheduled for later in April. The project will be co-chaired by the SPC (Lucinda Johnson) and RCC (Sergio Paulo).

3. Future Work Plans

Further to earlier directions provided by the GLRO Director, the SAB is being encouraged to develop its new work plan(s) so that they are ready when project funding becomes available.

Nandita Basu and Laura Johnson discussed the draft work plan titled "Science for Water and Climate Solutions". The work plan proposes to assess the efficacy of agricultural and urban beneficial management practices from a regional perspective. The project will apply a solutions-oriented lens and includes an exploration of the disconnect between modeled and observed nutrient reductions associated with various beneficial management practices across different landscapes. The work plan will address several questions including: What are the practices being used from a regional perspective? What are the costs? What are their efficacies?

It was noted that the work plan is well timed given the extensive investments on nutrient mitigation through Canada's Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative and the U.S. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. It was also noted that the work plan is quite ambitious as presently conceived and could be reworked as a two-phase project.

There was general agreement that the work plan should be refined to reflect Board discussions, and that opportunities for a discussion between the project co-leads and Annex 4 (Nutrients) should be explored to ensure the relevance of the proposed work.

4. Strategic Items

Triennial Assessment of Progress

Staff offered introductory remarks about the 2026 Triennial Assessment of Progress report preparation process, and the results of the priority topics questionnaire that several Board members participated in. It was clarified that each of the advisory boards (WQB, SAB, HPAB) will be having preliminary discussions in the coming weeks, and the Board Co-Chairs will meet to compare notes and hopefully converge on a small number of topics that can be recommended to Commissioners by the end of May, 2025 for inclusion in the TAP 2026 report. Those topics could address one or more Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement General Objectives and/or be cross-cutting.

Through discussion, the following TAP report topics were preliminarily identified as priorities by the SPC, and they will be discussed further with the Advisory Board Co-Chairs and reported during the IJC Spring Semi-Annual Appearance:

- Source water protection / source control
- Importance of monitoring and ensuring accessibility and availability of data (including insights from recent Science Plan workshops)
- Importance of access to harmonized and centralized data in supporting forecasting to ensure safety and security

Benefits of Binational Cooperation

During these uncertain times, it will be helpful for IJC to clearly articulate the benefits and importance of binational and multinational cooperation in protecting and restoring Great Lakes water quality. Through discussions several reasons to maintain and strengthen cooperation were discussed:

- The lakes are a system and require a systems approach which cannot be achieved unless science and management actions are coordinated across the basin and its jurisdictions.
- Coordination improves the effectiveness of federal government investments and makes all residents safer (e.g., drinkability, fishability, swimmability), stronger (e.g., protects infrastructure and communities from flooding and erosion) and prosperous (e.g., sustains and grows the third largest economy in the world).
- There are many examples of coordination being essential for reducing risks e.g., Huron-Erie corridor drinking water early warning system requires facilities on both sides of the border to report contaminant releases so that water purification plants can adjust their operations as required.
- Canada-U.S. cooperation over the last 50 years has clearly demonstrated improvements to both water quality and ecosystem health (through the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement) and water quantity, levels and flows (through the Coordinating Committee on Great Lakes Basic Hydraulics and Hydrology).
- There is a strong business case for coordination because it reduces redundancies and increases efficiency. This applies to many sectors including water resources management, and at many scales (e.g., watershed to basin scales).

- Scenario analysis can be a helpful tool to understand the impacts of cooperation or lack thereof – think about a model that does not include cooperation and what are the consequences?

SAB-SPC Appearance

The draft Appearance slide deck was reviewed, and several adjustments were made. Project co-leads have until April 28 to make final adjustments to their project slides.

5. Other Business & Adjournment

The IJC will have good visibility at the upcoming International Association for Great Lakes Research annual conference including Commissioner Chiblow as a keynote speaker, the SAB's Great Lakes Science Plan mini-workshop, and HPAB sessions on wild rice, and climate change and human health indicators.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

*Meeting record prepared by Matthew Child and reviewed by Lucinda Johnson and Gail Krantzberg.
Please forward any errors or omissions to matthew.child@ijc.org*