



**IJC Science Advisory Board – Science Priority Committee  
Forty-eighth Meeting  
Meeting Summary**

**September 15, 2023 – 2:00-3:30pm Eastern Daylight Time**

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<b>U.S. Members</b>	<b>Canadian Members</b>	<b>Commission Staff</b>
Lucinda Johnson (Co-Chair)	Gail Krantzberg (Co-Chair)	Matthew Child (Secretary)
Donna Kashian	John Livernois	Oliver Dumville
Drew Gronewold	Jerome Marty	Li Wang
Margaret Noodin	Mike McKay	Mark Burrows
Laura Johnson	Karen Kidd	Rajendra Poudel
	Nandita Basu	Raj Bejankiwar
		Allison Voglesong Zejnati
		Rachel Wyatt
		Sandi Svoboda
		Heather Stirratt

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Regrets: Joe DePinto, Bob Sterner, Maggie Xenopoulos

Guest: Jen Vanator

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The U.S. Co-Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Round table introductions were completed; a special welcome was extended to new members Dr. Laura Johnson and Dr. Margaret Noodin. The June 28, 2023 meeting record was acknowledged. The meeting agenda was approved by consensus.

**2. Status of Other Board Projects that have SPC Participation**

RCC Nutrients Adaptive Management (John Livernois)

The project report was recently approved by the Commission and has been transmitted to the Parties. The report is complementary to the SPC's Nutrients Synthesis project and the release of both reports is being coordinated and aligned. A webinar to promote both reports is scheduled for September 25, 2023. In response to a question, it was clarified that webinar invitations have been extended to the IJC mailing list and the Annex 2 (Lakewide Management) and Annex 4 (Nutrients) leads.

WQB Great Lakes Horizons (Lucinda Johnson)

The contractor report has been finalized, which presents four scenarios outlining different possible futures for the Great Lakes region based on underlying drivers, trends and trajectories. In spring,

2023 Commissioners approved follow-up activities which include hiring a communications contractor to help translate the four outcomes and their underlying drivers into communications products and tools that can be used to facilitate dialogue and engage with a variety of audiences.

#### WQB Climate Adaptation (Jerome Marty)

The project will develop a toolkit for small and medium-sized communities and is designed to be complementary to other resources. The project was recently featured during a presentation at the Partners in Action conference held in Minnesota. In response to a question, it was clarified that the project focuses on all communities, including but not limited to Indigenous communities. It was also noted that the USGS Midwest Climate Adaptation Science Center is initiating a project on best practices for adaptation planning, and the WQB work group should be made aware of this complementary effort.

#### HPAB Microbial Study (Mike McKay)

The project is inspired by an early-1900s IJC assessment of microbial pollution across the transboundary, including the Great Lakes. The project is assessing approaches to apply modern molecular and genomics methods including microbial source tracking, harmful algal blooms and metagenomics. Separate workshops have been held for each of the three topics, and the project report is undergoing final HPAB review. In spring, 2023 Commissioners approved a Phase 2 project that includes a pilot study for Lake St. Clair. A project work group and associated technical committee is currently being formed to guide the Phase 2 project. The three-year project will develop a network of labs and standardize analytical approaches and sample processing.

#### HPAB Fish Consumption (Karen Kidd)

The project focuses on fish consumption advisories in the St. Lawrence River Area of Concern, and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne in particular. Two workshops have been held and workshop reports have been prepared. A final project report is in preparation.

### **3. Advancing New Board Projects**

A status update was provided on the three SPC projects approved by Commissioners in April, 2023:

- i. The Great Lakes Science Plan request-for-proposal has been sent to qualified bidders by the U.S. Department of State; a contractor is expected to be in place by September 30, 2023. A project Collaborative (i.e., work group) Terms of Reference has been prepared and invitations to join the Collaborative will be sent to Board members and external invitees by the GLRO Director in the coming days.
- ii. The Great Lakes Atlas Scoping project team has developed a project Statement of Work that will be sent to qualified bidders by the U.S. Department of State early in the next fiscal year, which begins October 1, 2023.
- iii. The Traditional Ecological Knowledge project will focus on additional community listening sessions, which will be supported through the Canadian procurement system. It was suggested that SPC may benefit from Indigenous and TEK awareness training.

In response to a question, it was clarified that the prospect of a U.S. government shutdown is not expected to affect IJC directly, but it may affect federal agencies whose work the IJC depends upon

e.g., SAB-RCC member agencies. It was also clarified that the recent cybersecurity incident affecting IJC may delay contractor procurement through the Canadian system, but the situation should be resolved soon.

Several new project ideas were preliminarily discussed:

- i. Lucinda Johnson noted that a key recommendation of the GLEWS Phase 2 project is to complete a pilot project to demonstrate the identified early warning system framework. A working session will be held in Ottawa on the afternoon of October 18 to develop the pilot concept further.  
**Action:** SPC members who are interested in contributing to a GLEWS pilot project are asked to self-identify.
- ii. Drew Gronewold suggested more can be done to make connections between water quantity (e.g., IJC Boards of Control) and water quality/ecosystem impacts (i.e., Great Lakes Advisory Boards). Good examples already exist within IJC that can be built upon e.g., Great Lakes Adaptive Management Committee. It was noted that a recent paper helps advance connections between hydroclimate patterns and water quality (accessible [here](#)).
- iii. Mike McKay reminded members about the RCC's Connecting Waters report published in 2021, and noted that in July 2023 the Cooperative Institute for Great Lakes Research sponsored a workshop held at Lake Superior State University to discuss a framework for filling connecting waters science gaps and needs, and how connecting waters can be better addressed through existing governance structures e.g., GLWQA Annexes, Cooperative Science and Monitoring Initiative, etc. A potential Phase 2 SAB project could further develop a Connecting Waters Framework, supported by an associated Collaborative.

In the discussion that followed it was clarified that delays in contracting processes for some approved projects (e.g., Great Lakes Atlas Scoping) should not affect allocations for new project work plans developed for the next project cycle.

It was noted that additional project ideas are welcome. There was general agreement that time should be reserved at the October, 2023 in-person meeting to discuss new project ideas further, although the Board should balance new work with an already substantial existing project load.

#### 4. Other Strategic Priorities

Staff provided an update on the 2023 Triennial Assessment of Progress report. The Commission-approved content is currently undergoing final layout and French translation. An embargoed version of the TAP report will be sent to the Parties prior to the IJC Fall Semi-Annual meeting, and a public release with associated webinar is planned for November, 2023.

The International Association for Great Lakes Research 2024 Annual Conference is being held in Windsor, ON from May 20-24, 2024. The call for session abstracts is open, and abstracts are due October 20, 2023. In the discussion that followed it was confirmed that the SAB will submit a Great Lakes Science Plan session abstract. If members are contemplating other abstracts they are requested to let the Secretary know to ensure alignment and coordination.

**Action:** SPC members are requested to advise if they plan on submitting an IAGLR '24 session abstract related to an SAB project to [matthew.child@ijc.org](mailto:matthew.child@ijc.org).

## **5. Fall Semi-Annual Meetings**

The logistics for the IJC Fall Semi-Annual meetings were reviewed. Most members will attend in person; if virtual attendance is anticipated members are requested to contact the Secretary at [matthew.child@ijc.org](mailto:matthew.child@ijc.org).

There was general agreement that having a guest presentation on the Canada Water Agency at the October 17, 2023 SAB meeting is desirable.

Following the Spring 2023 Semi-Annual meeting, Commissioners signaled their preference that the SPC and RCC Appearances avoid overlapping project updates. There was general agreement that moving forward each of the full SAB projects should only be discussed during one of the Appearances, with both work group co-chairs attending.

## **6. Other Business & Adjournment**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:30 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](mailto:matthew.child@ijc.org)*