



2019

2020

ANNUAL

REPORT

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Board of Directors list is as of December 2020.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



For 65 years, the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) has worked to address issues of common concern and develop shared solutions to the region's most difficult issues. The GLC continued this important work in 2019 and 2020 with significant successes and amidst notable events in the agency's history.

In 2019, the GLC celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration of Partnership signed in 1999 by the eight U.S. Great Lakes states and the two Canadian Great Lakes provinces. This important milestone was recognized as part of the GLC's 2019 Annual Meeting in Québec City, and through the passage of a resolution committing the states and provinces "to continuing their work together to accomplish the purposes of the Great Lakes Basin Compact."

In 2020, the world was dramatically impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis has forced us all to adapt our routines and strategize new ways of working together. While this pandemic halted in-person engagement between the GLC and its many stakeholders, the agency expanded its use of technology to advance important binational dialogue on key issues. This effort included hosting the first-ever virtual GLC meetings in May and November 2020.

2020 also brought the departure of Executive Director Darren Nichols. During his time with the GLC, Director Nichols shared his specific experience with interstate compacts and led an effort to better understand the nature and foundations of our agency, as established through the Great Lakes Basin Compact of 1955. Throughout his tenure, he encouraged us to recognize the strength of the commitments made through the Compact. We appreciate his service to the GLC and the Great Lakes basin.

Along with these notable events, we also made meaningful progress on numerous priorities for the Great Lakes states and provinces in 2019 and 2020. On behalf of the agency staff and Great Lakes Commissioners, we are pleased to highlight several major outcomes of our work over the last two years.

A VOICE FOR THE REGION

The GLC continued to provide a forum for the states and provinces to convene, share information, and speak with a common voice on regional priorities. Our top regional priorities are communicated to the U.S. Congress and presidential administration annually and include reducing the threat of harmful algae; building needed maritime navigation infrastructure; preventing damaging invasive species from entering the Great Lakes; building resilient coastal communities; and protecting and ensuring clean drinking water for all citizens across the basin.

Each year, the key event of our advocacy efforts is Great Lakes Day in Washington, D.C. Alongside our partners at the Northeast-Midwest Institute, the GLC welcomed more than two hundred Great Lakes leaders and twenty members of Congress to the 2020 Great Lakes Day Congressional Breakfast Reception in February. In addition, the GLC continued to facilitate a binational coalition of regional agencies, legislators, local communities, tribes, and business and environmental groups to establish shared priorities for restoring the Great Lakes and supporting the region's economy. This work contributed to several important legislative wins at the end of 2020, including reauthorization and increased funding for the bipartisan Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

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INFORMING REGIONAL DECISION-MAKING

The GLC expanded its commitment to providing relevant and timely data and information to Great Lakes leaders through our Blue Accounting initiative, which tracks the region's progress toward shared goals. In 2019, the GLC committed to becoming the permanent host for Blue Accounting, and throughout 2020, worked toward integrating Blue Accounting into agency operations and identifying opportunities to build on its success. Going forward, the GLC will strive to strengthen Blue Accounting's impact with elected and high-level appointed officials by providing trusted information on progress, along with context to identify jurisdictions' unique approaches to Great Lakes issues. The GLC also recognizes and appreciates the support of The Nature Conservancy, which has invested significant resources in Blue Accounting since its inception.

SUPPORTING RESTORATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

The GLC continues to build capacity and connect resources to partners at the state and local level. Through the Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions program, the GLC matched communities with experience in green infrastructure with those just getting started. These mentoring relationships helped to build confidence in innovative approaches for stormwater management and create a network of practitioners across the Great Lakes basin. Through small grants, the project also helped communities overcome barriers to adopting green infrastructure practices for stormwater management.

The GLC established a new regional partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to support habitat restoration in Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs) and other priority watersheds. Awards under the new partnership will continue to address AOC needs in Michigan, Ohio, and in New York along the Niagara River AOC, as well as priority coastal areas in Michigan along Lake St. Clair and in Illinois near the Calumet River.

Over its nearly 30-year history, the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program has provided funding for tribal, state, and local units of government and nonprofit organizations working to reduce the impacts of sediment and nutrient loss on the basin's waterways. In 2019 and 2020, new grants were awarded to partners for 22 projects across the basin.

COLLABORATING TO SOLVE COMPLEX ISSUES

The GLC recognizes that no one group, state, or even country can protect the lakes alone. Over the course of 2019 and 2020, the agency continued to serve the region as a trusted convener, bringing together multiple partners to address shared problems and develop collaborative solutions. The GLC worked with its member states and provinces, the U.S. and Canadian governments, tribes and First Nations, communities, conservation groups, industry, and others to tackle critical issues facing the lakes. Such forums include the Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative, Invasive Mussel Collaborative, Harmful Algae Blooms Collaborative, the Great Lakes Dredging Team, and the Great Lakes Stormwater Collaborative.

A new and important area of focus for the GLC is identifying opportunities to support and advance a healthy and resilient Great Lakes region. The GLC began taking concrete steps toward a more resilient future in 2019, when it convened Commissioners from all eight U.S. Great Lakes states and both Canadian Great Lakes provinces to develop a list of recommended actions to address basinwide resilience. In January 2020, the Commission adopted these recommendations, including establishing a standing committee on climate resilience comprised of experts and decision-makers from across the region. The concept of resilience touches on numerous aspects of our environment, economy, and communities, and work on this issue is already underway in each of the Great Lakes states and provinces and by many of our partners. The GLC is committed to helping coordinate those efforts and leverage our collective expertise for the benefit of the entire region. The outcome of this work will be a joint action plan for Great Lakes basin resilience.

LOOKING AHEAD

The GLC is committed to its role as a trusted partner that convenes leaders, experts and stakeholders invested in sustainable management of Great Lakes water resources. We will build on our past successes and continue to work collaboratively with our many partners to solve complex problems and ensure that the Great Lakes remain a valuable resource for the diversity of people and communities across the region.



Sharon Jackson, Chair



Erika S. Jensen, Interim Executive Director



FINANCIALS

Overall, the GLC continues to effectively manage its general, restricted and cash reserve funds to achieve the agency’s goals and objectives. These figures were confirmed by an independent audit, which is conducted each year to examine the GLC’s financial operations.

FISCAL YEAR 2019

The Great Lakes Commission concluded FY2019 in sound financial condition, with total revenues of \$8.975 million. Total expenses exceeded revenues by 3.97 percent. The 2019 fiscal year ended June 30, 2019.

REVENUES

Grants and contracts	\$ 8,384,181	93.42%
State contributions	480,000	5.35%
Meetings, publications, misc.	49,026	0.55%
Interest income	18,933	0.21%
Change in fair value of investments	42,746	0.48%
TOTAL	\$ 8,974,886	

EXPENSES

Grants and contracts	\$ 6,261,999	67.11%
Personnel	2,379,502	25.50%
Office operations	392,016	4.20%
Program activities	126,596	1.36%
Travel	115,273	1.24%
Communication	55,747	0.60%
TOTAL	\$ 9,331,133	
Change in net position	(\$ 356,247)	-3.97%

FISCAL YEAR 2020

The Great Lakes Commission concluded FY2020 in sound financial condition, with total revenues of \$7.138 million. Total expenses exceeded revenues by 6.16 percent. The 2020 fiscal year ended June 30, 2020.

REVENUES

Grants and contracts	\$ 6,612,692	92.64%
State contributions	480,000	6.72%
Meetings, publications, misc.	15,823	0.22%
Interest income	8,915	0.12%
Change in fair value of investments	20,951	0.29%
TOTAL	\$ 7,138,381	

EXPENSES

Grants and contracts	\$ 4,557,408	60.14%
Personnel	2,394,796	31.60%
Office operations	406,078	5.36%
Travel	111,054	1.47%
Program activities	60,007	0.79%
Communications	49,018	0.65%
TOTAL	\$ 7,578,361	
Change in net position	(\$ 439,980)	-6.16%



COMMISSIONERS, ALTERNATES AND OBSERVERS

As of December 2020. Delegation chairs are in bold.

ILLINOIS

Loren Wobig, Illinois
Dept. of Natural Resources

Stephanie Comer, Comer Family
Foundation

John J. Kim, Illinois Environmental
Protection Agency

Yu-Feng Forrest Lin, Illinois Water
Resources Center, University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

Josina Morita, Metropolitan Water
Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

INDIANA

Sharon Jackson, Office of the
Governor of Indiana

Steven A. Fisher, American Great Lakes
Ports Association

Kay L. Nelson, Northwest Indiana Forum

Jody W. Peacock, Ports of Indiana

Bruno Pigott, Indiana Dept. of
Environmental Management

INDIANA ALTERNATES

John Davis, Indiana Dept.
of Natural Resources

Chris Smith, Indiana Dept.
of Natural Resources

MICHIGAN

James Clift, Michigan Dept. of
Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy

Hon. Candice Miller, Macomb County
Public Works

Hon. Dana Nessel, Michigan
Attorney General

Marc E. Smith, National Wildlife Federation

Hon. Rick Snyder

MICHIGAN ALTERNATES

Kara Cook, Office of the Governor
of Michigan

Stanley Pruss, Michigan Dept. of
the Attorney General

S. Peter Manning, Michigan Dept. of
the Attorney General

Jennifer McKay, Tip of the Mitt
Watershed Council

MINNESOTA

Laura Bishop, Minnesota
Pollution Control Agency

Hon. Ann Rest, State Senator

Hon. Carrie Ruud, State Senator

Hon. Jennifer Schultz, State
Representative

Hon. Paul Torkelson, State Representative

MINNESOTA ALTERNATES

Katrina Kessler, Minnesota
Pollution Control Agency

Deb DeLuca, Duluth Seaway Port Authority

NEW YORK

Basil Seggos, New York State Dept.
of Environmental Conservation

James M. Tierney, New York State Dept.
of Environmental Conservation

Donald E. Zelazny, New York State Dept.
of Environmental Conservation

NEW YORK ALTERNATES

Sean Mahar, New York State Dept.
of Environmental Conservation

Eileen Murphy, New York State Dept.
of Environmental Conservation

OHIO

Mary Mertz, Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources

Hon. John Eklund, State Senator

Hon. Haraz N. Ghanbari, State Representative

Laurie A. Stevenson, Ohio Environmental
Protection Agency

James H. I. Weakley, Lake Carriers'
Association

OHIO ALTERNATES

Mindy Bankey, Ohio Dept. of Natural
Resources

John D. Baker, International
Longshoremen's Association

Tiffani Kavalec, Ohio Environmental
Protection Agency

Thomas Rayburn, Lake Carriers'
Association



ONTARIO

Ranissah Samah, Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs
 Craig Brown, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
 Ian Freeman, Ministry of Transportation
 Kelly McAslan, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
 Chloe Stuart, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

ONTARIO ALTERNATES

Tija Dirks, Ministry of Transportation
 Thom Hagerty, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
 Jennifer Keyes, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
 Ling Mark, Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
 Trevor Snyder, Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs

PENNSYLVANIA

Timothy J. Bruno, Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection
 Hon. Patrick J. Harkins, State Representative
 Brenda Sandberg, Erie-Western Pennsylvania Port Authority

PENNSYLVANIA ALTERNATES

Aneca Y. Atkinson, Pennsylvania Dept. of Environmental Protection
 Hon. Kathy Dahlkemper, Erie County Executive

QUÉBEC

Martine Hébert, Québec Government Office in Chicago
 Vincent Gagnon-Lefebvre, Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques
 Nicole Trépanier, Fednav Limited

QUÉBEC ALTERNATES

Guillaum Dubreuil, Groupe CSL
 Jérôme Faivre, Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques
 Kerith Iverson, Québec Government Office in Chicago
 Frederic Lecomte, Ministère des Forêts, de la Faune et des Parcs
 Denis Simard, Ministère des Transports

WISCONSIN

Noah Roberts, Office of the Governor of Wisconsin
 Todd Ambs, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
 Melonee Montano, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission

WISCONSIN ALTERNATES

Stephen G. Galarneau, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

GLC STAFF

Left to right, top to bottom: Tom Crane, Eric Brown, Erika Jensen, Jill Estrada, Ceci Weibert, Don Leflouria Jr., Nicole Zacharda, Eric Ellis, Beth Wanamaker, Samantha Tank, Joe Bertram, Meng Hu, Laura Andrews, Patrick Canniff, Ned Willig, Margo Davis, Evan Fischer, Ken Gibbons. Not pictured: Pat Gable, Siyu Fan. Staff included as of December 2020.

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ABOUT THE GLC

The Great Lakes Commission is a binational government agency established in 1955 to protect the Great Lakes and the economies and ecosystems they support.

Its membership includes leaders from the eight U.S. states and two Canadian provinces in the Great Lakes basin. The GLC recommends policies and practices to balance the use, development, and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes and brings the region together to work on issues that no single community, state, province, or nation can tackle alone.

