

Building on a strong foundation

Thomas E. Huntley, Chair, Great Lakes Commission

What an honor it is to be elected chair of the Great Lakes Commission! It is an exciting time for this great organization as we look back on a half century of accomplishment, and look forward to the challenges and opportunities the next half century will bring.

My first order of business is to thank my predecessor, Sam Speck, for his vision and leadership as chair the past two years. This region's greatest natural resource is its people, and my colleagues on the Commission are testament to the commitment and capabilities that have made this organization what it is today.

As we enter 2005, we have a strong foundation on which to build. Our funding base, our financial reserves, our revenue streams and our in-house technical capabilities have never been greater. A spirit of regional collaboration has blossomed. And, coupled with the energy and vitality of our members and many partners, our recipe for continued success is firmly in place.

We are also fortunate to have an exceptionally talented professional staff, many of whom are noted experts in their own right. The Commission's capabilities in Internet technology, GIS and related tools, decision support systems, environmental and economic analysis, and facilitation and policy analysis, among many others, are recognized well beyond the confines of the Great Lakes basin. The pages of this annual report provide the evidence, highlighting innovative programs and projects that, simply put, this region cannot do without.

My goal, as I stated upon assuming the chairmanship, is to make a great organization greater. To do so, I'll be focusing on three areas in 2005. Working with my colleagues and professional staff, we will strengthen member involvement in all aspects of Commission operations, tapping their individual and collective potential through a new committee structure, delegation meetings and project-specific involvement. Working with our governors and many regional partners, we will elevate our profile in Washington and send a clear and effective message that this region's priorities must be addressed. Finally, working within the entire Great Lakes community, we will move the concept of "sustainability" into action, celebrating and advancing our core mission of a clean environment and a strong economy.

Let's make our 50th anniversary a year to remember. Let's make this happen!



Thomas E. Huntley, Ph.D.



Thomas E. Huntley is a member of the Minnesota Legislature. Contact him at rep.thomas.huntley@house.leg.state.mn.us

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Who We Are

The Great Lakes Commission was established in 1955 and is founded in U.S. federal and state law with a mandate to “promote the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes basin.” With membership consisting of the eight Great Lakes states, and associate member status for the provinces of Ontario and Québec, the Commission pursues three primary functions: communications, policy research and analysis, and advocacy.

The Commission addresses a range of issues involving environmental protection, resource management, transportation and sustainable economic development. All activities are directed at realizing the vision of a prosperous economy, a healthy environment and a high quality of life for citizens of the region.

Each member jurisdiction is represented by a delegation consisting of three to five members who are legislators, senior agency officials or appointees of the respective governor or premier. A board of directors, consisting of the chairs of each delegation, is the Commission’s executive body.

In carrying out its initiatives, the Commission works in close cooperation with many partner organizations, including U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, binational institutions, tribal/First Nation governments and other regional interests. Representatives appointed by partner entities participate extensively in Commission activities through a formal Observer program.

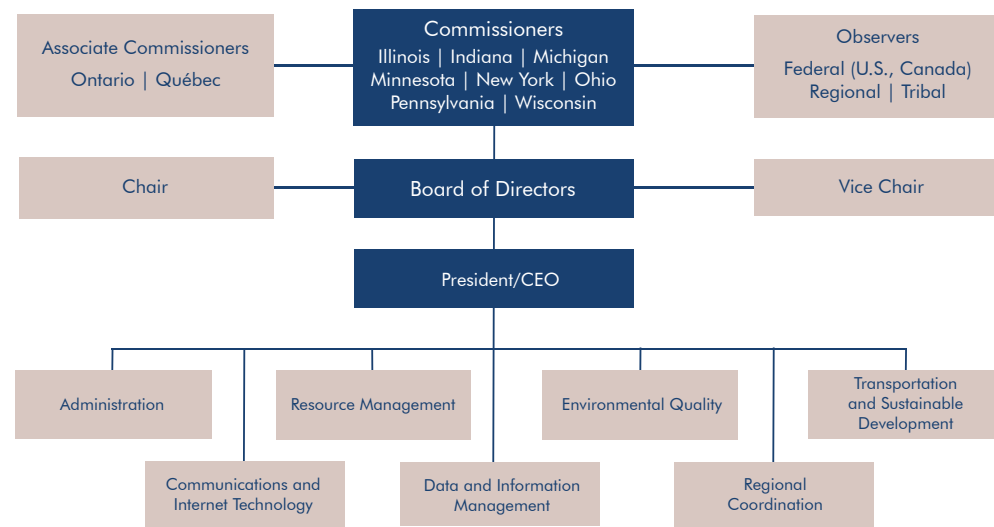
The Commission is supported by a growing and experienced professional staff in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Our vision

A Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system that offers a prosperous economy, a healthy environment and a high quality of life for its citizens by applying sustainable development principles in the use, management and protection of water, land and other natural resources.



Commission Structure



Inventing our future

Michael J. Donahue, President/CEO

The first few months of every New Year typically find my desk awash in annual reports. If you're like me, most receive only a cursory review before being neatly filed away for future reference. This one, however, deserves your careful attention: 2004 was an extraordinary year for the Great Lakes and for the Great Lakes Commission!

I've always found it ironic that the Great Lakes are a dominant feature in satellite images of the Earth, yet here on the ground, they have managed to evade the "radar screen" of national and binational priorities for decades. All this began to change over the last 12 months. We've seen a flurry of large-scale legislative proposals in Washington and in the region, a glint of hope with respect to federal appropriations, presidential executive orders that have jump-started a Great Lakes Regional Collaboration and a national ocean/freshwater policy initiative, and political leadership at all levels that has embraced the notion of "stewardship" and established plans to exercise it. The Great Lakes have truly been rediscovered!

While the story is far from finished, these developments are gratifying to the extended Great Lakes Commission family, which has labored with quiet (and sometimes not so quiet!) efficiency to put the lakes "on the map."

In 2004, the Great Lakes Commission did what it does best: promote sound public policy on a range of issues that speak to the notion of sustainability (i.e., the integration of environmental and economic goals to meet the needs of current and future generations). As an honest broker of research, we generated the data and information critical to a range of policy decisions. As a convener, we worked hard to bring distinct communities together, through forums and consensus-building, to forge a single Great Lakes community. As a partner, we joined with our colleagues within and outside government to strengthen and accelerate our shared journey toward ecosystem restoration, protection and sustainable use. Finally, as an advocate, we brought forward the priorities of our membership, shaping and harmonizing a single regional message with unprecedented impact. The pages of this annual report offer specific examples of such efforts, as well as a preview of things to come.

Alan Kay, whose genius helped usher us into the computer age, once said "The best way to predict the future is to invent it." These words ring true for the future of Great Lakes governance and the role the Great Lakes Commission must play to "invent" (or at least guide us toward) that future. It is up to us – all of us – to translate the grand pronouncements, plans and promises into measurable "on the water" outcomes. What a welcome challenge as we begin our next 50 years of service to this great region and its people!



Michael J. Donahue, Ph.D.



Michael J. Donahue is president/CEO of the Great Lakes Commission and ex-officio member of its Board of Directors. Contact him at mdonahue@glc.org

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2004 Board of Directors



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Minnesota



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John Goss
Indiana



Immediate Past Chair
Sam Speck
Ohio



Patrick Quinn
Illinois



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Administration

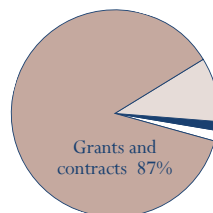
The Administration Program provides an environment in which Commission members, Observers, partners and staff work collegially to address the goals of the organization under the terms of the Great Lakes Basin Compact. Program efforts ensure that the organization is well-funded, efficiently managed, professionally staffed, and fully responsive to member priorities through vibrant research, policy development, communications and advocacy initiatives. Program staff have expertise and responsibilities in coordinating all aspects of revenue generation, financial management, program development, meeting planning and conduct, organizational publicity, and member/constituent support services. President/CEO: Mike Donahue, mdonahue@glc.org

Selected accomplishments

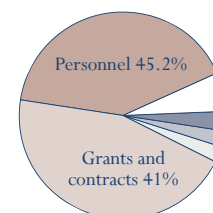
- Managed the largest budget in the Commission's 49-year history
- Attained record levels for revenue streams and reserve funds
- Returned 40 percent of total revenues to member jurisdictions
- Achieved a 17:1 ratio in leveraging member dues to support priorities
- Processed more than 150 grants and contracts, both incoming and outgoing
- Continued excellence in project management and efficient/effective delivery of products
- Secured new independent auditor and achieved another "clean bill of financial health"
- Established new committees to enhance commissioner involvement in priority-setting, policy analysis, research and advocacy
- Welcomed new leadership via Thomas Huntley (Chair) and John Goss (Vice Chair)

Revenues and expenses: Fiscal Year 2004

Revenues		Expenses	
Grants and contracts	\$4,049,570	Personnel	\$2,070,311
State contributions	\$480,000	Grants and contracts	\$1,874,363
Interest income	\$70,729	Office operations	\$273,436
Meetings, publications and misc.	\$68,232	Travel	\$144,697
Total	\$4,668,531	Communications	\$108,289
		Program activities	\$106,398
		Total:	\$4,577,494



State contributions 10%
Interest income. 1.5%
Mtgs., pubs. and misc. 1.5%



Office operations 6%
Travel 3.2%
Communications 2.3%
Program activities 2.3%

Revenues over expenses (\$91,037) were placed in a reserve fund for contingencies and future use.

Program Areas

Resource Management

The Resource Management Program contributes to the sustainable use and conservation of the region's natural resources through multiple projects and regional services. Working with scores of project partners throughout the public and private sectors, program efforts are directed at identifying regional priorities, developing policy, conducting and coordinating research, and sharing information on a broad range of resource management and protection initiatives. Program manager: Tom Crane, tcrane@glc.org

Environmental Quality

The Environmental Quality Program supports efforts to restore beneficial uses in Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOCs) and other degraded areas; strengthen environmental monitoring programs; improve management of coastal wetlands; and protect high-quality areas. Program staff employ cutting-edge information technologies to advance project goals, and leverage and coordinate the resources and expertise of public agencies and other stakeholders to achieve a healthy and sustainable Great Lakes ecosystem. Program manager: Matt Doss, mdoss@glc.org

Transportation and Sustainable Development

The Transportation and Sustainable Development Program focuses on economic activity in the Great Lakes region and its relationship to the environment. Primary areas of interest are maritime transportation, recreational boating, and land use and conservation, all pursued under the guiding principles of sustainable development. Program staff have extensive experience in Great Lakes policy development and maritime issues, and wide-ranging contacts with the region's maritime, policy and natural resource communities. Program manager: Dave Knight, dknight@glc.org; associate program manager: Victoria Pebbles, vpebbles@glc.org

Regional Coordination

The Regional Coordination Program carries out the Commission's mandate for regional advocacy as embodied in its enabling legislation, the Great Lakes Basin Compact. This includes building consensus among members; forming coalitions with regional, national and international partners; and presenting recommendations to regional and national leadership. Program staff have considerable experience in shaping legislation, analyzing policy and bringing critical regional issues to the attention of elected officials and other decisionmakers. Program manager: Jon MacDonagh-Dumler, jonmacd@glc.org

Communications and Internet Technology

The Communications and Internet Technology Program oversees the writing, design and marketing of all Commission products, both online and print publications. Among these are the Commission's annual report, bimonthly *Advisor* newsletter, media advisories and web sites, including the Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN), the region's premier source for Great Lakes news and information. Program staff have training and experience in journalism, print/web design and data management. Program manager: Christine Manninen, manninen@glc.org

Data and Information Management

The Data and Information Management Program promotes the development and application of decision support systems and procedures, including databases, regional networks, information inventories, geographic information systems (GIS) and related tools. The program facilitates regional GIS coordination to benefit Great Lakes coastal wetlands studies, biological and hydrological monitoring programs, multimedia pollution studies, emergency response planning, and regional water quantity and quality management. Program manager: Roger Gauthier, gauthier@glc.org

2004 Board of Directors

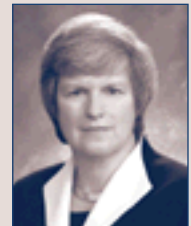
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Cathleen Curran Myers
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Michel Lafleur
Québec



Todd Ambs
Wisconsin

