3. Conclusion

The air regulatory agencies in the eight Great Lakes states and province of Ontario agree that a collaborative effort is vital to successfully implementing an annual inventory of airborne toxic pollutant emissions for the Great Lakes region. They have been working cooperatively towards this goal since 1989.

The emissions inventory will assist in the successful implementation of key provisions of the Great Lakes Toxic Substances Control Agreement, signed by the Great Lakes governors and premiers in 1986. In addition, this work is consistent with the state activities for the implementation of the Urban Area Source Program required under sections 112(c) and 112(k) under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and the assessment of atmospheric deposition to the Great Lakes under the efforts of the U.S. EPA's Great Waters Program.

The emphasis of this project was to prepare a reliable and technically accurate inventory of estimated emissions for the 82 target compounds in the Great Lakes region and not a set of individual state/provincial inventories. As a regional effort, a high level of coordination was necessary to ensure consistency. The project team established Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) criteria to provide an accurate and useful summary of toxic air emissions at the regional level. The QA/QC plan outlines procedures to maximize the quality and accuracy of the regional inventory's data and estimates. Once a quality controlled and quality assured emissions inventory has been established, regional scientists and researchers can begin to work separately and in concert to define and regulate sources; evaluate control technology; establish guidelines for siting new facilities; and reduce airborne deposition of persistent toxic chemicals to the Great Lakes.

The overall benefit of maintaining an annual inventory of air toxic emission sources ultimately belongs to organizations that are able to use the data. The 1997 inventory data, as well as the 1993 and 1996 inventories, will be made available to researchers and interested parties from the U.S. EPA's GLNPO server.

Finally, the next phase of project development will include online access to the compiled inventory of toxic emissions from point, area and mobile sources via the Great Lakes Information Network and enhanced data access from RAPIDS. While in GLIN, one will be able to use an Internet Geographic Information System to cartographically view the toxic air emissions for the Great Lakes region. Enhancements to RAPIDS will enable raw emissions data to be exported in formats compatible to a variety of analytical programs. Using established dissemination functions as a tool, decision makers and the general public will be able to make better informed decisions that help reduce toxic pollution, protect and restore habitats and support intergovernmental partnerships. Timely access to a comprehensive inventory will provide the foundation for sound public policy decisions.