

**Great Lakes Water Quality Board  
208<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**Summary of Discussion**

May 14, 2020 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM ET  
Virtual Meeting

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**U.S. Member Participants**

Jon Allan (Co-Chair)  
George Elmaraghy  
Frank Ettawageshik  
Steve Galarneau  
George Heartwell  
Brandon Hofmeister  
Sara Hudson  
Elizabeth Kirkwood  
Kelsey Leonard  
Monica Lewis-Patrick  
Joe Tomandl III

**U.S. Member Regrets**

Sandy Bihn  
Christopher Korleski

**Invited Speakers and Guests**

Mahsa Banadaki – College for Creative Studies  
Lisa Brush – Great Lakes Islands Alliance  
Sally Erickson Wilson – College for Creative Studies  
Wei Huang – College for Creative Studies  
Branko Kerkez – University of Michigan  
Ian Lambert – College for Creative Studies  
Emily Marquette – College for Creative Studies  
Burkhard Mausberg – Environmental Advocate  
Guy Meadows – Michigan Technological University  
Kelli Paige – Great Lakes Observing System  
Matthew Strong – College for Creative Studies  
Ed Verhamme - LimnoTech

**Members of Public**

Fe de Leon – Canadian Environmental Law Association

**Commission Staff**

Raj Bejankiwar – Great Lakes Regional Office  
David Burden – Great Lakes Regional Office (Director)  
Matthew Child – Great Lakes Regional Office  
Ryan Graydon – Great Lakes Regional Office  
Allison Voglesong Zejnati – Great Lakes Regional Office  
John Wilson – Great Lakes Regional Office

**Commission Liaisons**

Victor Serveiss – U.S. Section  
Paul Allen – Canadian Section

**Secretariat**

Antonette Arvai – Great Lakes Regional Office

**Canadian Member Participants**

Gayle Wood (Co-Chair)  
Sandra Cooper  
Mark Fisher  
Michael Goffin  
François Houde  
John Jackson  
Carolyn Johns  
Irving Leblanc  
Ling Mark  
Mark Mattson  
Chris McLaughlin  
Chris Paci

**Canadian Member Regrets**

Mark Wales

**1. Welcome and Introductions (Co-Chairs)**

The co-chairs welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting of the board, which replaced the originally scheduled in-person meeting, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. New members, George Elmaraghy, Sara Hudson, Carolyn Johns and Chris Paci were recognized and welcomed to their first meeting. Members and other participants identified themselves, including member of the public Fe de Leon.

**2. Review and Approval of Agenda (Co-Chairs)**

The agenda was reviewed and approved with no additions or changes.

**3. Co-Chairs' Update (Co-Chairs)**

The co-chairs have been providing regular written updates to members, since January 2020, to ensure timely communication of co-chair activities relevant to board operations. Members indicated that they appreciate the updates to understand the evolution of board activities, in keeping up-to-date on activities and staying connected between meetings. The update included items on calls with other advisory board co-chairs and continued cross-board collaboration efforts.

**4. Board Project Updates (G. Wood)**

Members were provided a written update, in advance of the meeting, on board projects and activities. Members were provided an opportunity to ask questions about the updates.

***Nuclear Decommissioning Project***

In late February the work group met in Petosky, MI to visit the decommissioned Big Rock Point nuclear plant and to hold a panel discussion with invited members of the local Indigenous community and other community leaders, to gather lessons learned from the decommissioning process. The work group has also developed a nuclear issues summary document to help guide the development of report recommendations. Board members have been requested to provide feedback on this document. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, an expert workshop originally scheduled for the spring of 2020 has been postponed to a virtual session in early fall. The project is expected to be completed, with a board report to the Commission, in December 2020.

***Manure Management Project***

Two webinars have been held to receive feedback and answer questions on the board's report findings and recommendations – one with invited agricultural and environmental non-government organizations, the other a public, open webinar. A third and final webinar will be scheduled with invited government agencies and regulators in mid-summer. The feedback from these webinars will be summarized in a report to the Commission to help consider next steps for additional work or the development of potential IJC recommendations to government.

***Wetlands***

In December 2019 a letter was sent to the Great Lakes Coastal Assembly requesting feedback on critical questions that arose from the board's 2018-19 wetlands work. The Coastal Assembly has responded positively to the letter. A formal response is expected in late July, which will inform the WQB's next steps and/or any potential further engagement with the Coastal Assembly.

The board was notified that their 2020 work plan projects were approved by the Commission. The board will begin forming work groups to implement their projects - *Third Binational Poll, Envisioning Our Great Lakes Future: Scenarios, Opportunities, Threats and Responsive Governance* and *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement*.

**ACTION ITEM:** Board Secretary to circulate the nuclear work group's *Nuclear Issues Summary* document to members for their feedback.

**ACTION ITEM:** WQB Co-Chairs will follow-up with members, as needed, on work group formation and next steps for the implementation of recently approved project work plans.

**5. Presentation: Increasing Awareness of the Great Lakes on the Canadian Side**

Burkhard Mausberg, environmental advocate, gave a presentation on a Canadian initiative to raise awareness of the Great Lakes' value in order to galvanize actions to celebrate and protect them. Key highlights from the presentation and subsequent discussion included:

- The need to create an emotional connection between people and the lakes to spur action to protect/preserve them
- Changing public opinion requires significant costs and time; there is not dedicated funding/resources for this
- First Nations, tribes, and Métis are stewards for the environment and already have a strong connection to the lakes; they have lessons/learnings that should be captured in such work
- Need to promote the holistic value of the lakes and how they work for us – culturally, economically, environmentally

**6. Watching Briefs (G. Wood)**

The WQB may develop a watching brief(s) to keep abreast of events and developments on a particular issue that impacts (or could impact) the waters of the Great Lakes. Previously, direction and oversight of watching briefs was provided by the standing work groups of the board, but the board has recently shifted to more project based groups. As a result, an updated procedure for maintaining watching briefs was developed and discussed by the board. It was suggested the document include criteria to guide decisions around the creation and completion of watching briefs as well as decision to elevate to a project or more in-depth investigation.

**ACTION ITEM:** Board Secretary will work with co-chairs to revise the watching brief document based on member comments by the next WQB meeting in July.

**7. Presentation: Zebra Glass (BioDesign Challenge)**

Graduate students from the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, MI, Emily Marquette, Mahsa Banadaki and Wei Huang, gave a presentation on a materials design approach to mitigate an invasive species, through the use of zebra and quagga mussels in the production of glass products.

Key highlights from their presentation and subsequent discussion included:

- Efforts to remediate mussels has been largely unsuccessful and costly; this material design approach transforms an ecological threat into a valued, usable resource
- Sand and zebra/quagga shells from the Great Lakes are used to create glass that is regionally specific, visually representing the spectrum of ecology and chemistry in the region
- An opportunity to focus on these species as an abundant, sustainable resource that creates local connections and awareness of native ecosystems

Members found the project innovative and interesting and wish to be kept updated on its progression.

**8. Panel Discussion: The Importance of Monitoring and Sensor Systems in the Great Lakes**

A panel discussion was held on the importance of monitoring, sensing and surveillance systems to characterize and communicate Great Lakes conditions and inform actions to address changes. This is a key topic that has also been identified by the IJC's Great Lakes advisory boards' co-chairs as an issue of importance to communicate to Commissioners. Each of the four panelists provided a brief presentation of their work, followed by discussion. The four panelists included Ed Verhamme (LimnoTech), Dr. Branko Kerkez (University of Michigan), Dr. Guy Meadows (Great Lakes Research

Center Michigan Technological University), and Kelli Paige (Great Lakes Observing System). Key highlights from the panel discussion included:

- To manage the Great Lakes, need to understand the system now and into the future - how do we create and expand upon the monitoring and surveillance systems over the years?
- Examples of how real-time data can be used:
  - o Measuring rainfall, pipe flow, soil dampness, etc. to control pipe valves and pumps to prevent downstream flooding
  - o Early warning system for microcystin in source waters to direct drinking water treatment
  - o Monitoring wind and water levels to alert for potential flooding
- Challenges to implementing and/or maintaining real-time monitoring networks and systems include, staying abreast of new and changing technologies for monitoring a large-scale system; ensuring adequate funding increases that are commensurate with modernization needs of real-time monitoring systems; and requirements/regulations for in-person sample collection, which hinder the use of real-time, remote monitoring.
- The WQB can use its voice to, elevate the profile of monitoring needs in the Great Lakes; build awareness of monitoring needs and challenges; and help organizations, like GLOS, strengthen their position.

#### **9. Presentation: Great Lakes Islands Alliance**

Lisa Brush, with The Stewardship Network, provided a presentation on the Great Lakes Islands Alliance (GLIA), an organization that supports and advocates for healthy, sustainable island communities. Key highlights from her presentation and subsequent discussion included:

- GLIA started three years ago to encourage relationship building, address challenges that are facing the islands
- Islanders have a unique culture and face unique challenges on a range of issues; water quality and quantity issues can be disproportionately devastating to island communities vs. mainland communities (e.g. shoreline erosion)
- Islands are isolated, with fewer organizations and partners to support them and so their voices are often not heard when decisions are made
- GLIA would like to connect with the IJC to learn more about each other and how to work together

#### **10. Great Lakes Issues**

In advance of the meeting a whitepaper produced by Northland College entitled *Water Quality Concerns on the South Shore of Lake Superior: What Might They Tell Us About the Future of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement?* was provided to members. The whitepaper highlights water quality concerns voiced during a public engagement session held by the IJC as part of their series of triennial assessment of progress public meetings held in 2019. The paper further discusses how the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement may need to be revised in light of the voiced concerns. The board discussed how this paper may be used to inform their upcoming work on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary review of the Agreement.

An additional issue was brought forward around drinking water accessibility and affordability for at-risk communities (e.g. low-income, First Nations, Tribes, etc.). It was suggested the board consider developing a watching brief on the issue.

#### **11. Schedule of 2020 WQB Meetings**

The schedule for remaining WQB meetings for the 2020 was reviewed:

- **209th Meeting:** July 29 @ 2:30 – 4:00 PM Eastern - Teleconference

- **210th Meeting:** Week of October 19-23 (October 21 TBC) – Ottawa, ON in conjunction with the IJC Fall Semi-Annual Meeting

Members will be notified of the October meeting date as soon as the IJC Fall Semi-Annual Meeting schedule is confirmed. No decisions have been made at this time whether the IJC's Fall Semi-Annual Meeting will remain in-person or be held as a virtual session.

## **12. Public Comments and Closing Remarks**

No members of the public were present at the end of the meeting. The co-chairs thanked members for their virtual participation for the duration of the call. The co-chairs further expressed their hope to see everyone in-person in October.