



**IJC Science Advisory Board – Science Priority Committee
Fiftieth Meeting
Meeting Summary**

January 5, 2024 – 12:30-2:00pm Eastern Time

U.S. Members	Canadian Members	Commission Staff
Lucinda Johnson (Co-Chair)	Gail Krantzberg (Co-Chair)	Matthew Child (Secretary)
Donna Kashian	John Livernois	Lyne Sabourin
Drew Gronewold	Jerome Marty	Jo Werba
Laura Johnson	Mike McKay	Heather Stirratt
Joe DePinto	Karen Kidd	Li Wang
Bob Sterner	Nandita Basu	Rachel Wyatt
Margaret Noodin	Maggie Xenopoulos	Rajendra Poudel

Guests: Debbie Lee, Jen Vanator

1. Welcome and Introductions

The U.S. Co-Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and round table introductions were completed. The October 17, 2023 meeting record was acknowledged. The meeting agenda was approved by consensus.

2. Status of Ongoing SPC Projects

Great Lakes Science Plan (Gail Krantzberg)

The process to develop a detailed Science Plan is underway, using the previously completed Science Strategy as a starting point. A project Collaborative has been formed, and they held their inaugural meeting (virtually) last November. An in-person Collaborative meeting is planned for January 24/25, 2024 in Ann Arbor, MI. The primary focus of the upcoming meeting will be to discuss operating principles for the Collaborative, and to map out the sequencing and content of six workshops/convenings that will support development of the Science Plan. An IAGLR 2024 session is also planned.

Great Lakes Early Warning System – Phase 2 (Lucinda Johnson)

The Great Lakes Early Warning System Phase 2 Summary Report and associated contractor report was recently approved by Commissioners for transmittal to the governments and posting to the SAB website. A work plan will be developed that proposes a pilot project to test the organizational approach and decision framework developed in the earlier phases of the project. The draft work

plan will be circulated to members for review prior to the March 15, 2024 work plan submission deadline.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (Jerome Marty)

A listening session was held in September 2022 with the Akwesasne community, and five additional community listening sessions are planned in 2024. Conversations with several communities are underway. Members were also advised about a forthcoming publication on TEK and water quality, which is an output of a UN Water group meeting in September 2023.

Great Lakes Winter Science (Maggie Xenopoulos)

Two virtual project workshops have been held (May and September, 2023) which assessed winter science gaps/needs and research coordination. A third workshop is scheduled for January 31/February 1, 2024 in Windsor, ON that will be held in-person and will synthesize and expand on the findings of the first two workshops. A novel workshop approach is being developed.

Ecosystem Services Valuation – Phase 1 (John Livernois)

The contractor report has been finalized which identifies three potential topics for additional analysis: AOC restoration, coastal wetland restoration and harmful algal blooms. The work group met and determined that coastal wetland restoration is the highest priority, in part due to its linkages with the Agreement. Specific ecosystem services related to coastal wetlands that could be further assessed include bird composition and abundance, nutrient sequestration and coastal resilience. A draft work group report was circulated to the work group for review in December 2023 and comments are due January 17, 2024. The report will be finalized soon thereafter. Through discussion it was noted that there are opportunities for partnerships to advance at least two of the three coastal wetland ecosystem services, and a separate call will be set up to discuss this further.

Action: The draft work group report will be forwarded to Gail, Nandita, Jerome, Lyne and Jo for review.

Microplastics (Karen Kidd)

The project is well underway and so far, the contractor has completed a literature review, and the first of two workshops was held in September 2023 to develop a coordinated monitoring framework. Workshop insights will be used to develop standard operating procedures for various matrices. A second workshop is scheduled for January 17/18, 2024 in Windsor, ON that will focus on ecological risk assessment. A final project report is expected in spring, 2024.

Great Lakes Atlas - Scoping (Lucinda Johnson)

The work plan was approved in 2023 and following some delays the contracting process is underway.

3. Future Work Plans

The Work Plan guidance and format documents circulated with the agenda packet were reviewed. Those documents benefitted from input received during a December 20, 2023 discussion with Advisory Board Co-Chairs. Board work plans are expected to be consistent with the priorities identified in the guidance, and final work plans must be submitted by March 15, 2024.

As discussed during the October 2023 Semi-Annual meeting, a Great Lakes Early Warning System Pilot Project work plan will be developed by the work group Co-Chairs in the coming weeks. A draft will be circulated to the Board for review prior to the deadline.

Debbie Lee from the SAB's Research Coordination Committee joined the meeting to review and discuss the draft work plan *Identifying Tools and Information Available to Assess the Potential for Climate Migration Impacts on Great Lakes Water Quality* that was circulated in the agenda packet. Several points were raised in the discussion that followed:

- The topic is relevant to each of the Great Lakes advisory boards. It was noted that shared interest in the topic could be discussed further during the scheduled January 31, 2024 advisory board Co-Chairs call.
- To keep the scope of the project focused and actionable, it primarily focuses on infrastructure. Agriculture could be explored as a possible phase two study.
- The work plan will focus primarily on water quality (versus water quantity), in part because of the SAB's mandate described in the Agreement. It was observed that changing climate has significant implications for water quality e.g., HAB formation.

There was general agreement that the work plan should be advanced for submission to the Commission.

Action: Members are asked to self-identify for the Climate Migration project work group.

4. Other Strategic Priorities

Membership

Joe DePinto has reached his term limit as an SAB member, and his service to the SAB and IJC was acknowledged. Joe joined the SPC in 2016 following his retirement from a long and illustrious career with LimnoTech, the State University of New York at Buffalo and Clarkson University. The Board has benefitted from Joe's expertise in eutrophication and surface water and watershed modelling, and contaminant fate and transport. Joe participated in many Board projects and co-lead the Declining Offshore Lake Productivity project which resulted in ongoing discussions aimed at improving coordination between water quality and fishery managers, and improving the understanding of ecosystem impacts of nutrients in both nearshore and offshore waters of the Great Lakes. Thank you, Joe!

A suitable candidate to replace the anticipated U.S. vacancy was discussed. There are also three other existing SPC members whose terms are expiring that are eligible for re-appointment; they will be contacted to determine their interest in another term.

IAGLR 2024

The IAGLR Program Committee approved the SAB's Great Lakes Science Plan session, and invitations have been extended to all SAB project co-chairs to submit presentation abstracts for the session. All project co-chairs have confirmed their intent to submit an abstract by the January 12, 2024 deadline. Additional presentation abstracts are expected to be submitted related to the

Global Center for Climate Change Impacts on Transboundary Waters, and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

5. 2024 SPC Meeting Schedule

The proposed 2024 meeting schedule was reviewed. It was confirmed that Indigenous cultural competency training is being planned as part of the Spring Semi-Annual meeting, with details to follow. It was noted that major Great Lakes Indigenous confederacy and cultural groups should be included.

6. Other Business & Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 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*