

**Great Lakes Water Quality Board
215th Meeting**

Summary of Discussion

January 27, 2021 @ 1:30 – 3:00 PM ET
Virtual

U.S. Member Participants

Jon Allan (Co-Chair)
Sandy Bihn
George Elmaraghy
Frank Ettawageshik
Stephen Galarneau
George Heartwell
Brandon Hofmeister
Sara Hudson
Elizabeth Kirkwood
Eileen Murphy
Joe Tomandl III

Canadian Member Participants

Gayle Wood (Co-Chair)
Niharika Bandaru
Mark Fisher
Michael Goffin
John Jackson
Carolyn Johns
Irving Leblanc
Mark Mattson
Chris McLaughlin
Chris Paci
Mark Wales
Chloe Stuart

U.S. Member Regrets

Chris Korleski
Kelsey Leonard
Monica Lewis-Partick

Canadian Member Regrets

François Houde

Observers

Ash Kumar - Environment and Climate Change Canada
James Schardt – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Carla Torchia - Environment and Climate Change Canada
Melanie Ward – Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Invited Guests

Gavin Christie – IJC Science Advisory Board Research Coordination Committee, Canadian Co-Chair
Val Klump – Member of IJC Science Advisory Board Research Coordination Committee
Chris Winslow - IJC Science Advisory Board Research Coordination Committee, U.S. Co-Chair

Commission Staff

David Buden – Director, Great Lakes Regional Office
Mark Burrows – Great Lakes Regional Office
Raj Bejankiwar – Great Lakes Regional Office
Jennifer Boehme – Great Lakes Regional Office
Matthew Child – Great Lakes Regional Office
Rajendra Poudel – Great Lakes Regional Office
Allison Voglesong Zejnati – Great Lakes Regional Office
Li Wang – Great Lakes Regional Office

Commission Liaisons

Paul Allen – Canadian Section Office

Victor Serveiss – U.S. Section Office

Secretariat

Antonette Arvai – Great Lakes Regional Office

Summary of Action Items

Board Secretary will send a calendar meeting notice for a virtual April 2022 WQB meeting.

1. Welcome, Introduction and Indigenous Acknowledgement (Co-Chairs)

The Co-Chairs welcomed everyone to the 215th meeting of the board. The co-chairs acknowledged the traditional First Nations, Tribal and Métis territories on which the meeting was conducted that day, given the virtual gathering of participants from various locations.

2. Co-Chairs' Update (Co-Chairs)

The co-chairs provide monthly written updates to members to ensure timely communication of co-chair activities relevant to board operations. An update of activities that occurred in December 2021 and early January 2022 was provided:

- The IJC's TAP Work Group completed a triennial assessment of progress (TAP) assessment framework, which was approved by Commissioners in early January 2022. The framework outlines an approach to conducting an assessment of progress under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and developing the IJC's TAP reports.
 - The TAP Work group has also identified potential priority topics for inclusion in the TAP 2023 report, for consideration and approval by the Commission.
- Members were reminded that the WQB approved two work plans for the 2022 work cycle – (1) Follow-up and Critical Analyses of the Third Great Lakes Regional Poll Data and (2) Climate Change Adaptation for Community Resilience Across the Great Lakes Region
 - The co-chairs of the advisory boards met in mid-January to discuss the roster of all advisory board work plans, their complementarity to one another and their alignment with Commission priorities.
 - 2022 advisory board work plans are expected to be collectively submitted to Commissioners for approval in early spring 2022.

3. Project Updates (G. Wood)

WQB members were provided an opportunity to ask questions on written project updates provided in advance of the meeting. The leads of the proposed 2022 projects also provided a reminder overview of the work plans. A summary of the project updates and related discussion is provided below.

Follow-up and Critical Analyses of the Third Great Lakes Regional Poll (Proposed 2022 project) (C. Johns)

The WQB's Third Great Lakes Regional Poll report was approved for release by Commissioners in November 2021. The report was posted to the WQB's website along with a media toolkit with key findings and infographics as well as a video of a public webinar held in early December (<https://ijc.org/en/wqb/great-lakes-poll>).

A 2022 work plan has been developed to conduct follow-up analyses of the data from the third Great Lakes poll. The analyses include, trend analysis of the past three polls (2021, 2018, 2015); additional analysis in the

context of other related polls and scholarly research; analyzing poll results and public perceptions on the Great Lakes ecosystem issues related to SOGL and PROP; and deepening understanding of poll results through focus group study and other demographic analyses.

Climate Change Adaptation for Community Resilience Across the Great Lakes Region (*proposed 2022 project*)
(C. McLaughlin & L. Kirkwood))

The WQB's proposed project on climate change adaptation recognizes that there is little on-the-ground support for communities in planning and creating climate change adaptation strategies and plans. This project will define and deliver a package of learning opportunities and planning tools that addresses climate change issues that create common challenges, or opportunities, for communities across the Great Lakes, particularly small to medium-sized communities. As identified in the work plan, there are a number of initiatives being undertaken on climate change and adaptation, both within the IJC and externally. The WQB will coordinate and align their work, to the best extent possible, with others' work. The work plan includes engagement with a number of audiences (e.g., non-government organizations, municipalities, Indigenous communities and organizations, researchers) via a series of online and onsite workshops. Upon approval of the project an important, initial step will be identifying key participants on the project.

Great Lakes Horizons

The project has moved from identifying future drivers of water quality to exploring options for managing these drivers. Two of four small-group scoping sessions have been held virtually with the next two to be held in the coming weeks. Following this, future scenarios hypothetically describing Great Lakes well-being and water quality will be developed.

Manure Management

A Collaborative has been created consisting of ~30 people including farmers, members of local government, agricultural organizations, watershed organizations, academics and corporate representatives. The Collaborative has met three times between October and December 2021, with discussions moderated by a hired facilitator. The meetings focused on developing a list of tasks and deliverables for a consultant to collect and assess information on manure inputs, policies and practices in two Great Lakes subwatersheds. The finalization of the consultant tasks and deliverables, and a subsequent statement of work, is currently underway.

Nuclear Decommissioning

The WQB's *Decommissioning of Nuclear Power Facilities in the Great Lakes Basin* report and accompanying follow-up communications plan was approved for release by Commissioners in mid-January. The communications plan includes activities such as developing a summary video, a public webinar, and by-invitation webinar with government agencies and regulators. The development of the communications products to roll out with the release of the report will take 8-10 weeks, putting the expected public release of the report in early April 2022.

Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement 50th Anniversary Review

The consultant has been conducting stakeholder interviews and completing a literature review concerning the history of the Great lakes Water Quality Agreement. The consultant is expected to provide a draft report to the work group at the end of January 2022.

Watching Briefs

Fossil Fuel Development and Transportation

Recent developments were highlighted that included, updates on the Line 5 litigation and updates on the proposed Line 5 tunnel. Enbridge has stated that it will continue to operate Line 5 until it receives a court order to cease operations.

Great Lakes Nuclear

An update on the timeline for Canada's deep geological repository for spent nuclear fuel was provided. It is expected that one study community will be identified by the end of 2023, with site assessments, environmental assessments and regulatory approvals to be conducted between 2024-2033. Transportation of spent fuel to the DGR is projected to begin between 2040 and 2045.

Microplastics in the Great Lakes

Recent developments were highlighted that included, an announcement by the Government of Canada, in December 2021, that draft regulations prohibiting certain single-use plastics have been published for public comment. It is anticipated the regulations may come into force by the end of 2022.

Great Lakes Coastal Assembly

The WQB continues to be apprised of the work of the Great Lakes Coastal Assembly (GLCA). The board's 2019 work on wetlands served as a catalyst for the GLCA to think more broadly about how to advance and accelerate coastal wetland efforts. The GLCA has developed a draft Coastal Wetland framework to help establish a baseline extent of coastal wetlands, determine targets for coastal wetland conservation, and identify where to focus coastal wetland conservation efforts to achieve targets. NOAA and USFWS have submitted a proposal for GLRI funding to pilot the framework in Lake Erie. Future work includes creation of a steering committee to guide the pilot project. A Great Lakes Coastal Wetland Symposium is being planned for fall 2022 in Sault Ste. Marie, MI.

4. Cross-board Project Updates (*G. Wood*)

Due to time constraints during the meeting agenda, verbal updates were not provided. Members were encouraged to reach out to the individuals who serve as cross-board members to receive an update on those projects that they have an interest in. One of those cross-board projects includes the Science Advisory Board's project on a *Great Lakes Science Plan*. Members received a presentation on this project as part of the subsequent meeting agenda item #5.

5. Presentation: IJC's Science Advisory Board (SAB) Great Lakes Science Plan (*J. Allan*)

The WQB Co-Chairs seek to bring presentations on other board projects so that members can better understand the work of others and where there may be connections with WQB work. Science Advisory Board Research Coordination Committee member Dr. Val Klump (Dean and Professor at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Great Lakes Water Institute) gave a presentation on the SAB's Great Lakes Science Plan project. The WQB received a presentation on the SAB's project during their October 2020 meeting. The SAB's project is nearing completion and an update was provided on the work completed to date and project outcomes.

The project recognizes that a Great Lakes binational science plan is needed to invest in research that will be cost effective; long-lasting; prevent future problems; and eliminate the ongoing need for restoration. Some of the science priorities identified included, understanding short and long-term climate impacts; winter dynamics; changing food web dynamics; quantification of ecosystem services; and application of modern scientific techniques (e.g., remote sensing). Investment priorities included, increased funding for basic science; fostering a workforce to recruit and train scientists; developing and implementing infrastructure for long-term monitoring stations and programs, data management and forecasting systems. A final draft consultant report is expected in the next one to two months.

6. Schedule of WQB Meetings (*J. Allan*)

The WQB's 216th meeting was tentatively scheduled as an in-person meeting in April 2022, to be in conjunction with the IJC's Spring Semi-Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. However, given the continued uncertainty of the COVID-19 situation and potential travel limitations, the WQB meeting will be rescheduled as a 1-day virtual meeting. The remaining meetings for the year were reviewed:

- **217th Meeting** – July 20, 2022 @ 10:00 – 11:30 AM ET
- **218th Meeting** – September 2022, Windsor, ON [Dates TBD]
 - Plan to hold in-person WQB meeting during/near the time of the U.S. and Canadian governments' Great Lakes Public Forum, expected in late September 2022.

Action Item: Board Secretary will send a calendar meeting notice for a virtual April 2022 WQB meeting.

7. Public Comments and Closing Remarks (Co-Chairs)

No members of the public were present. The co-chairs thanked members and others for their participation and their continued hard work on both WQB and cross-board projects.