

Great Lakes Water Quality Board 221st Meeting (virtual)

Summary of Discussion

July 27, 2023

U.S. Member Participants

Jon Allan (Co-Chair)
George Elmaraghy
Frank Ettawageshik
Molly Flanagan
George Hartwell
Brandon Hofmeister
Sara Hudson
Elizabeth Kirkwood
Kelsey Leonard
Eileen Murphy
Shaili Pfeiffer
Joe Tomandl III

U.S. Member Regrets

Chris Korleski
Monica Lewis-Patrick

Canadian Member Participants

Chris McLaughlin (Co-Chair)
Fe de Leon
Carolyn Johns
Jamie Lavigne
Chloe Stuart
Mark Wales
Mark Fisher
Francois Houde
Bonnie Fox

Canadian Member Regrets

Niharika Bandaru
Meredith Brown
Carolyn Dubois
Mike Goffin

Observers

Ash Kumar - Environment and Climate Change Canada
Carla Torchia - Environment and Climate Change Canada
Melanie Ward – Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Invited Guests

Karen Kidd – IJC SAB member
Cherie Hagen - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Liz Berg – US Fish & Wildlife Service

Commission Staff

Heather Stirratt – Director, Great Lakes Regional Office
John Allis – IJC US Section Office
Raj Bejankiwar – Great Lakes Regional Office
Mark Burrows - Great Lakes Regional Office
Li Wang - Great Lakes Regional Office
Antonette Arvai - Great Lakes Regional Office
Matthew Child - Great Lakes Regional Office
John Wilson – Great Lakes Regional Office
Allison Voglesong-Zejnati - Great Lakes Regional Office
Rachel Wyatt - Great Lakes Regional Office

Commission Liaisons

Oliver Dumville – Canadian Section Office
Kathey-Lee Galvin – U.S. Section Office

Secretary

Rajendra Poudel – Great Lakes Regional Office

Thursday July 27, 2023

1. **Welcome, Introduction and Indigenous Acknowledgement** (*Chris M.*)

Co-chair Chris M. welcomed everyone to the 221st meeting of the board and personalized a land acknowledgment based on his own location in Hamilton ON among those in the virtual meeting.

Mark Wales, Canadian board member (Agriculture seat) is departing WQB after serving 9^{1/2} years. Both co-chairs thanked for Mark's outstanding one decade of service to the WQB.

2. **Co-Chairs Update** (*Chris M.*)

Co-chair Jon A. provided brief monthly written updates to members to ensure timely communication of co-chair activities relevant to board operations. A short verbal update was provided by the co-chair during the meeting:

- **Scope of Works** – WQB project work plans were approved by the Commission the week of April 24th, during the IJC Spring Semi-Annual Meeting. This also included approval of the joint SAB-WQB Great Lakes Atlas as a scoping exercise. The scope of works (SOWs) of all approved WQB projects and joint project are under development. The Social Dimensions and Great Lakes Atlas project will begin after October 2023.
- **Triennial Assessment of Progress (TAP) Report** – The TAP report is under review by commissioners.

3. **Project Updates** (*Jon A.*)

WQB members were provided an opportunity to ask questions on written project updates provided in advance of the meeting. Brief verbal updates were also provided on the Great Lakes Regional Poll Data Analysis project and Manure Collaborative initiative. A summary of the project updates and related discussion is provided below.

Great Lakes Regional Poll Data Analysis

The work group (WG) met on June 2nd to discuss the planning of the Fourth Great Lakes Regional Poll project. The WG has created two subcommittees to work on the survey instrument and discuss and provide guidance on the mode(s) of the survey for the Fourth poll. The WG plans to meet a few times during the summer to draft and finalize the statement of work and the request for proposal for the poll. The WG is expecting the actual work on the Fourth Poll by a contractor will begin sometime during the fall of 2023. The WG is also planning a public event/field tour in Ottawa in conjunction with the WQB Meeting in October 2023. On July 25th the WQB co-chairs approved the Great Lakes Regional Poll Data Analytics report as requested by the engagement work group.

Manure Nutrient Management Collaborative

The goal is to have the Collaborative continue operating independently of the IJC/WQB, to act as agents of change and find solutions to improve manure management through changes in land use practices, research, and policy. This is a long-term process and the WQB project team continues to seek potential organizations willing to support the Collaborative's continued operation. The WQB aims to transition the Collaborative to independent operation as soon as possible. The transmittal cover letter has already been developed by Manure Collaborative.

Climate Change Adaptation for Community Resilience Across the Great Lakes Region

This project is being supported by contractors Potomac Hudson Engineering (PHE partnered with Michael Baker International and LimnoTech. The contractor has conducted an extensive literature review to develop top general strategies for climate change adaptation and resilience for communities across the Great Lakes. Effort has been made to engage with wide a range of stakeholders including Indigenous People. The core team of climate change project including WQB member Liz Kirkwood engaged with the Tribes, Metis, and First Nations, WQB board member Frank E. assisted in organizing a meeting with the Indigenous People and

the project team including the contractor. This meeting was held in conjunction with the May 31st meeting of the United Tribes of Michigan in Manistee, MI. Future engagement sessions will be discussed with the contractor team to ensure they contribute to/fit well in the overall project plan and deliverables, and provide a good mix of engagement with key target audiences in both Canada and the U.S.

Social Dimensions

This project will start after October 2023. The scope of work is being prepared and work group calls are regularly scheduled & met. The work group is asking to expand the members in and out of IJC boards.

Great Lakes Horizons

The report was shared with the WQB on June 5th - 15th, 2023, seeking general feedback on the report, and comments related to the next phase of work in socializing and communicating the four scenarios to diverse audiences. The contractor report is being advanced to Commissioners for approval to post on the WQB webpage. The Work Group has begun implementing its Commission approved 2023-24 work plan. This includes hiring a contractor with communications expertise to help translate the four outcomes and their underlying drivers in an understandable and useful manner via communications products and tools that can be used to facilitate dialogues and reflections that engage a variety of audiences. A statement of work has been developed and is being advanced for contracting through the US federal procurement system.

The primary audiences second phase project include: federal, state, and Indigenous Great Lakes policy makers, policy influencers and influential organization such as First Nations or Tribal resource agencies, Great Lakes educators and academia, policy think takes and environmental nongovernment organizations, national and regional media outlets, and community-centric stakeholders. This project is a signature project that is expected to transform the engagement practices and enable to operationalize and contextualize strategies.

4. Presentation: Great Lakes Coastal Assembly - Binational Coastal Assembly Framework (Cherie Hagen, Wisconsin DNR & Liz Berg, US Fish & Wildlife Service)

The Great Lakes Coastal Assembly (GLCA) is a binational voluntary collaborative of 25+ organizations. It works together to align actions around the Great Lakes coastal priorities with shared vision of a resilient system of coastal wetlands that support social, economic, and environmental benefits to the Great Lakes region. The framework consists of GLWQA annex 7, GLRI, LAMPs, state wildlife action plans, and biodiversity conservation strategies. The coastal wetland framework entails binational interest and investment to restore, enhance and protect wetlands. Many plans and partnerships have set priorities to conserve wetlands that need for a comprehensive strategic approach. The GLCA responded to the 2019 WQB letter that is being implemented to conserve the wetlands.

5. Building or curating the body of work & preparation for 2024-25 plans (Jon A.)

Co-chair Jon A. provided a brief overview of completed, ongoing, and new projects from 2021 to 2024/25. The essential idea of curating the body of work is to lead complex processes consistently evolving the process pattern of staying in a longer term such as Horizons project. The WQB follows a linear pattern of workflows such as writing, vetting, and sending to commissioners. The body of work amplifies the notion of building thinktanks, which will create tools and techniques, assessing what they have and what they need to accomplish goals.

Members Frank E., Jamie L., Mark F., Fe De L., Mark W. expressed their high-level thoughts on the curation of the body of work. The value of the works to the public should be transmitted. Member was intrigued by the idea and suggested to incorporate engagement with Indigenous people with specific questions of what has been changed, what are barriers and how to take all of our efforts sustainably. Another member expressed that the transboundary shared governance of water including the restoration efforts. Another member said that the elements of engagement and gaps in public engagement need to be taken into

consideration. Another member advised the board to consider persistent change to which Collaborative as an agent of change. How can the outcomes of a project facilitate change on any issue we are facing today.

6. Cross-board Work – The Great Lakes Atlas Project

The Great Lakes Atlas is a scoping exercise jointly planned by WQB and SAB. This project is not a static piece of work rather it is intended to be an interactive communication tool with huge engagement encapsulating the broad information on spatial-temporal manner. The scope of work is under preparation and the project start date is after October 2023. A work group has been formed and some initial discussions were held on the pathways to move forward.

**7. Presentation: Microplastics in the Great Lakes– Environmental Monitoring & Assessment project
(Karen Kidd, SAB SPC member)**

A presentation on the Microplastics project was provided to board members. The rationale for the project is to follow the 2016 IJC workshop and report with 10 recommendations on microplastics, several initiatives by state, provincial, federal that are leading for a cleaner future and focus on aquatic ecosystems and microplastics. The next step will find recommendations on harmonized methods for a basin-specific monitoring program that can be used to understand temporal trends and biotic exposures. The project also aims to explore quantitative risk assessment and management framework with thresholds to understand potential risks to aquatic and riparian food webs. The expected completion is April 2024. Karen informed the board that SAB has approved WQB member Molly Flannagan to serve as a work group member in SAB Microplastics project.

8. WQB Schedule of 2023 Meetings (Chris M)

The schedule of in-person 222nd WQB meeting will be held in Ottawa on October 17, 2023 in conjunction with IJC Semi-Annual Meeting. The IJC's Fall Semi-Annual Meeting is currently scheduled for the week of October 16th. Members will be given an update when a meeting date is confirmed, and hotel booking is open.

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

Members were thanked for their participation and time to attend this virtual meeting.