

Great Lakes Great Region.

The Council of Great Lakes Industries is a partner organization of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Sediment Management Work Group.

newsletter



Council of
Great Lakes Industries
Spring 2004

MISSION

To promote the economic growth and vitality of the region in harmony with its human and natural resources (sustainable development).

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

There is a lot going on in our region — and even more is being talked about.

Developments in two important basin-wide activities discussed elsewhere in this newsletter include increased funding of the Great Lakes Legacy Act - at something close to its intended level - and impressive progress on meeting the challenge goals of the Great Lakes BiNational Toxics Strategy in the quest for "virtually eliminating" persistent toxics that bio-accumulate. Developments in these two important basin-wide activities are discussed elsewhere in this newsletter.

Still in the talking stage is potential major U.S. Federal funding (S1398 and HR2720 for \$6B and \$4B) for "Great Lakes Restoration", whatever that turns out to mean. And, the Canadian Federal government is similarly exploring reauthorization of the Great Lakes Program. Also being discussed is a review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to explore the possibility/desirability of making significant revisions to this Agreement.

CGLI would like to see these basin-wide conversations focus on the future of the region, not just remediating problems from the past. CGLI envisions an economically vital region that is in harmony with its human and natural resources or the

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Feature Article

Great Lakes Region Needs Vision for the Future

The Great Lakes Region has many policy-making advantages including the cooperation of two Federal governments on environmental and many other issues; voluntary multi-stakeholder programs like the BiNational Toxics Strategy; engaged community activists and a strong industrial base. Currently the region is the focus of Federal government funding discussions on both sides of the border. Legislation has been proposed in both houses of the U.S. Congress to "restore" the Great Lakes by providing significant funding. In Canada, the government is exploring significant financial support for Great Lakes clean-up over the next decade. What the region seems to lack is a common, strong vision for the future.

Many Great Lakes organizations are actively promoting their "restoration" agendas. The Council of Great Lakes Governors has taken an important step of developing a list of priorities for the region. On behalf of the Governors, the Great Lakes Commission has been running a series of State-based workshops throughout the region to identify priorities. However, most of the priorities currently being identified already have programs designed to address them. While a

great deal of current programmatic activity is addressing environmental impacts of past actions, the Region continues to lack a detailed vision for a sustainable future.

Sustainable development, as defined by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, is *forms of progress, which meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs*. There are three pillars of sustainability: economic growth, environmental protection and social equity. A sustainable development plan for the Great Lakes region would look toward the future and ensure that our economic, social and natural resources are managed so they are available for future generations without compromising current needs.

Any single Great Lakes basin stakeholder, including CGLI, cannot alone develop a vision for the sustainable future of the region. However, CGLI is proposing that region stakeholders collectively take the bold step to create this vision. The first steps to creating this vision are reviewing the challenges facing the region.

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Risk Assessment Needed for Issues Facing the Region

Environmental issues in the Great Lakes region often become emotional issues. While emotion can spark interest in an issue and rally support, emotion cannot solve the issues currently facing the region.

In the past, the Region was dealing with larger quantities of chemical releases that made it easier for environmental agencies to declare defined impacts and direct correlation between exposure and effect. The environmental issues facing the region today are different.

Because of the success of clean-up efforts and industry implemented pollution prevention policies, the Region is today evaluating much lower concentrations of a broader range of substances. The impacts of these, if any, are difficult to determine. If there are observed health impacts in the Region, it is difficult to discern environmental factors from other potential causes such as lifestyle and genetic factors. In addition, the risks associated with these must be viewed within a context of all the other risks which human and other ecosystem populations face daily, recognizing that public perception around voluntary and involuntary risks differs greatly.

CGLI believes that the adoption of a risk assessment – risk characterization framework is critical in evaluating data and developing actions on issues facing the region. The definition of such a risk management framework, according to the Canadian Standards Association, is: “the systematic application of management policies, procedures, and practices to the task of analyzing, evaluating, controlling and communicating about risk issues.”

Risk assessment is especially critical as the new but limited funding (such as that provided by the Great Lakes Legacy Act) for pollution prevention and pollution clean-up becomes available. Funds should be used to alleviate the issues producing the most significant risk.

A risk based decision making framework requires stakeholder participation at each stage including development of risk criteria.



GLBTS Looks at Poorly Characterized Sources

The Great Lakes BiNational Toxics Strategy (GLBTS) is a multi-stakeholder collaborative process with specific reduction targets and timetables (challenges) to work towards “virtually eliminating” 12 named substances that have been declared persistent, toxic and bioaccumulative (PBT). The program is voluntary and CGLI has worked extensively with Great Lakes industry to assure that the necessary industries are at the table to report on actions taken to meet the goals.

As significant progress has been made during the past seven years, many of the substance challenges have been met or are close to being met.

The Dioxin Workgroup of the GLBTS has investigated possible sources of dioxins and furans to the environment. In light of the progress made, they have now turned attention to a list of what they term “poorly characterized sources.” Many of these “suspected” sources have been evaluated by national and international pollution prevention programs and found to be minimal or insignificant contributors to environmental PBT loadings.

The Council of Great Lakes Industries is working with GLBTS leadership to confirm the significance of releases from these suspected sources to the Great Lakes environment. CGLI is contacting industries in the U.S. and Canadian Great Lakes Region that the governments have listed as possible sources. These include:

- Asphalt mixing
- Textile and leather dyeing
- Industrial boilers
- Ceramic manufacturing
- Secondary metal smelting
- Foundries

Companies involved in these activities may contact CGLI at 734-663-1944 or contact Dale Phenicie at dkphenicie@mindspring.com.

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Challenges

The Region faces challenges that may be usefully categorized in terms of time: those problems resulting from past behaviors, the present and the future. Some of the legacies from the past include:

- the presence of alien invasive species;
- the existence of Areas of Concern (AOCs);
- urban land use practices that are not sustainable; and
- the lack of understanding of sustainable practice needs.

Our present needs and current actions include:

- Meeting the goals of the Great Lakes BiNational Toxics Strategy
- Preventing additional problems from new alien invasive species
- Growing the economic base of the Region including addressing the declining manufacturing output, declining employment and the actual withdrawal of some industries from the region.
- Providing incentives to those in large industry, smaller businesses and other regional entities such as communities and agriculture using environmental management systems that focus on eco-efficiency (a management concept that links financial and environmental performance to create more value with less impact).
- Providing education and training for a skilled, diverse and adaptable workforce today that can adroitly adjust to future demands including technological advances and sustainable practices.

Some of the Region's future needs requiring action include:

- Addressing aging community infrastructures such as combined sewer overflows and non-point source run-off into Great Lakes waters.
- Fixing transportation infrastructure issues including border crossings, high-speed rail, mass transit and highways
- Investing in energy infrastructure issues
- Systematically addressing land-use issues
- Managing our water resources in ways that enable local leadership (Governors and Premiers) to protect Great Lakes water from bulk diversion while assuring continued access to it without creating economic disadvantages for in-Basin users.
- Ensuring a skilled workforce and an educated and informed public about the nexus between social progress, efficiency, environmental stewardship and economic development
- Identifying and investing in addressing the needs of the large population growth predicted for some parts of the Basin
- Building a coordinated and comprehensive economic development plan for the region.

Stakeholder Involvement

These are major challenges facing the region. Some are being responded to with major, coordinated efforts. Others still need to be addressed. The entire Great Lakes Basin community needs to come together with a common understanding of these challenges and a plan for the future. The leadership and involvement of a number of groups is needed including:

- government entities,
- environmental groups and other non-

- government organizations,
- industry and others in the basin.

Working together

To attain a sustainable Region the following steps forward are needed:

- Governments must work with all stakeholders to address the issues in each of the three sustainable development categories facing our region: ecological balance; economic growth; and social progress.
- The region needs a plan that will analyze where resources of money and effort can be best applied for the most effective sustainable outcome.
- Two operating principles need to be applied in implementing a plan. One principle, already used effectively in the economic aspects of sustainable development, is risk assessment and risk management. Risk management and risk assessment must also be applied to the environmental and social elements of sustainable development policy so that we are working on problems that represent threats that have been objectively determined. The second principle is to establish clear goals, objectives and timetables to address future issues under the plan.

Using a sustainable development framework that supports the economic, environmental and social needs of the Region, government, industry and the many stakeholders of the region can work together to produce a sound vision for the future. The time for this vision is now.

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sustainable development of the region. In the feature articles of this issue of the newsletter CGLI is advocating the development of a multi-stakeholder vision for the future of the Basin, which would incorporate multiple elements, and multiple stakeholders requiring heretofore unheard of levels of leadership and cooperation.

In all the region's policy deliberations we need to better understand and incorporate the concept of risk — how to access, characterize, and manage it. During the 1990's, the U.S. Presidential/Congressional Commission on Risk Assessment and Risk Management provided significant guidance in the use of risk management and risk-based management decisions related to protecting the environment and the health and safety of citizens.

Similar work was going on in Canada at the same time that significantly impacted the work of Health Canada and its Great Lakes Health Effects Program.

Policy leaders need to ensure this evolving understanding of risk governs policy development throughout the region. That's why we've devoted an article in this newsletter to the use of risk management in public policy.

— George H. Kuper



EPA Announces Legacy Act Funding at Detroit Event

The EPA plans to fund the Great Lakes Legacy Act (GLLA) with \$45 million for ongoing Great Lakes sediment cleanup projects in fiscal year 2005, which begins October 1, 2004. This amount is an increase of \$35 million over the current fiscal year but is \$5 million under the \$50 million authorized. The funding announcement brought to Detroit EPA Administrator Mike Leavitt and the Council of Environmental Quality Chairman James Connaughton, who serves as principle environmental policy advisor to President Bush. (The GLLA was passed by Congress in 2002 and is not to be confused with the current discussion of major U.S. federal funding for Great Lakes "restoration".)

CGLI has been engaged with GLLA legislation since its initiation by Congressman Vern Ehlers, and Senators Levin and DeWine. CGLI joined with the National Wildlife Federation and the Sierra

Club to support its passage at hearings in Washington.

"We are pleased to see the government coming closer to full funding for sediment clean-up in the region," said George Kuper, President of CGLI, who attended the funding announcement. Then EPA Region 5 Administrator Tom Skinner, also at the event, said that this was one of a series of funding announcements for programs that demonstrate good planning, include identification of needs, prioritization, defined plans and partnerships. As part of this GLLA funding President Bush is also proposing an additional \$3 million for other Great Lakes restoration measures and an additional \$1 million for alien species research.

Congressman John Dingell, Gary Gulezian of EPA Region 5, Jon Allan of Consumers Energy, David Aspen of GM, and Thomas Breneiser and Neil McKay of Chrysler also attended.



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