GOVERNANCE OF THE GREAT LAKES
Northeast Midwest Institute
Congressional Briefing
March 29, 2019

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The Water Resource
The Water Resource

- One of the largest bodies of surface fresh water in the world
- Formed 10,000 years ago by glaciers
- 94,000 square miles
- Over 10,000 miles of shoreline
- 35 million people
- Third largest economy in the world
Historical Sketch

- Indigenous people all around the lake
- The early explorers came in the 1600’s
- Settlers followed in the 1700’s
- Major Cities founded and grew in the 1800’s
- Industrial revolution and agriculture
- Decline in the 1960’s
- Boom in the water belt
Legal Framework

- Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909
- Great Lakes Fishery Convention of 1955
- Great Lakes Basin Compact 1955/1968
- Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement 1972
- Great Lakes Charter 1985
- Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Agreement and Compact 2008
Domestic Laws

- United States
  - Clean Water Act
  - Clean Air Act
  - Superfund
- Canada
  - Canada Water Act
  - Canadian Environmental Protection Act
Organizational Framework

- International Joint Commission
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission
- Great Lakes Commission
- Conference of Great Lakes Governors and Premiers
- Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
- Non Government Organizations
Government Structures

- United States
  - Environmental Protection Agency
  - Corps of Engineers
  - Fish and Wildlife Service
  - Coast Guard
  - Other agencies
- Eight states
- Tribes
- Local Governments
Government Structures

- **Canada**
  - Environment and Climate Change Canada
  - Natural Resources Canada
  - Fisheries and Oceans Canada
  - Other agencies

- **Provinces**

- **First Nations**

- **Local Governments**

- **Conservation Authorities**
Planning Documents

- United States
  - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Action Plan
  - Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy
  - State Plans – Domestic Action Plans - nutrients

- Canada
  - Canada Ontario Agreement
  - St. Lawrence Plan

- Lakewide Action and Management Plans
- Remedial Action Plans
Observations and Challenges

- How does all of this work? Not as well as it should or needs to.
- Fundamental concerns
  - No one in charge
  - Little accountability
  - No central plan or scorecard
  - Inadequate funding
  - Lack of vision
Key Issues

- Climate change
- Invasive species
- Toxic pollutants
- Nutrients
- Combined sewer overflows
- Loss of coastal wetlands
Conclusion

- Legal foundation critically important
- Key is to use it effectively
- Great potential for the Great Lakes Region
Sources

**Boundary Waters Treaty**
Treaty Text (1909)
http://www.ijc.org/en_/BWT

**III. Great Lakes Compact and Convention of Great Lakes Fisheries**
Great Lakes Compact Council Website:
http://www.glscouncil.org/
Great Lakes Basin Compact (1968) Text:
General Overview of Compact:
Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries:
http://www.glfc.org/pubs/conv.htm

**Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement**
Full text:
http://www.ijc.org/en_/Great_Lakes_Water_Quality
History:
https://www.epa.gov/glwqa/what-glwqa
Illinois Municipal Wastewater Disposal Act:
Canadian Environmental Protection Act:
http://canlii.ca/t/52ws5
Canada Water Act:
http://canlii.ca/t/527q3

**Rights of Indigenous People**
Example of Treaty – 1833 Treaty of Chicago:
http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/vol2/treaties/chi0402.htm
Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission:
http://glifwc.org/

**Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers**
Website of organization:
http://www.cglslgp.org/

**Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Water Resources Management Compact and Agreement**
Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact (2005) Text:
http://www.cglslgp.org/media/1330/great_lakes-st_lawrence_river_basin_water_resources_compact.pdf

**Great Lakes Restoration Initiative**
Organization website:
https://www.gleri.us/
Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) text:
https://www.epw.senate.gov/cercla.pdf
CERCLA information:
https://www.epa.gov/superfund

**Other Treaties and Links**
Clean Air Act text:
https://www.epa.gov/clean-air-act-overview/clean-air-act-text