



## LAKEWIDE MANAGEMENT

### Objective

**To coordinate the binational assessment and management of issues which, due to their nature, are best addressed on a lake-specific basis.**

In this annex of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA), Canada and the United States have reaffirmed and expanded on the previous commitment to develop Lakewide Management Plans for each of the five Great Lakes. The annex streamlines and standardizes the content of these plans.

The annex includes a new commitment to developing, **within three years**, an integrated nearshore framework in the Great Lakes.

The nearshore framework will:

- provide an overall assessment of the state of the nearshore waters;
- identify areas within the nearshore that are, or may become, subject to high levels of environmental stress;
- identify areas within the nearshore that are of high ecological value;
- determine factors and effects that are causing stress or threatening areas of high ecological value;
- establish priorities for nearshore prevention, restoration and protection;
- identify and engage appropriately in developing and implementing restoration, prevention and protection strategies;
- take into account impacts on human health and the environment;
- include nearshore monitoring.

### Why is action on lakewide management important?

One principle of ecosystem management is that different issues are best addressed at different scales. Some issues are most effectively addressed at a local scale, while others are better handled at regional, national or international scales.

Each of the five Great Lakes is a major water body, has unique ecosystem characteristics, and is exposed to different use patterns and combinations of environmental stresses. Because of this, individual Lakewide Management Plans were created.

Lakewide Management Plans are important for engaging governments and the public within a lake basin. Lakewide plans help governments and the public to understand the lake ecosystem, and to work cooperatively to address issues best handled at the lake scale.

### Commitment to key activities within the 2012 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

- Develop an integrated nearshore framework **within three years**;
- Develop and implement lake-specific binational strategies to address substance objectives established pursuant to the GLWQA and any other current and future potential threats to water quality that are judged to be best addressed on a lake-by-lake basis;

*The cumulative impacts of multiple stresses have led to deteriorating nearshore water quality. The International Joint Commission has identified the nearshore as a top priority that requires urgent action.*

*Waterborne pathogens (bacteria and viruses) originate from sewage, municipal stormwater, agricultural waste and wildlife. Impacts include disease (e.g., avian botulism) and beach closures.*

- Establish lake ecosystem objectives as benchmarks for assessing status and trends in water quality and lake ecosystem health;
- Assemble, assess and report on existing scientific information concerning the state of each lake and future potential threats to water quality;
- Identify science priorities for each lake;
- Identify further actions as required to address priority threats to water quality;
- Issue a Lakewide Management Plan for each Great Lake once **every five years**.

### Expected outcomes

- Improved coordination of actions to restore and protect the Great Lakes;
- Improved understanding of the status and trends in water quality and ecosystem health of each of the Great Lakes;
- Development and implementation of strategies to address unique circumstances within each of the Great Lakes, where required;
- Improved nearshore water quality and aquatic ecosystem health.

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