



# The Lake Huron Binational Partnership

The Lake Huron drainage basin plays a unique role in the Great Lakes system, both as the lake in the middle of the Great Lakes and due to its abundance of shoreline habitat. Lake Huron has over 30,000 islands and, as a result, has the longest shoreline of any lake in the world. Its expansive open-lake waters, large watershed area and relatively undisturbed nearshore areas support a high diversity of aquatic and riparian species of importance to the Great Lakes region.



## What Is the Partnership?

In 2002 the federal, state and provincial agencies that manage binational environmental activities under the 1987 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement formally endorsed the formation of a Lake Huron Binational Partnership in order to prioritize and coordinate environmental activities in the Lake Huron basin. This partnership builds upon the efforts begun by the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes in their Lake Huron Initiative.

The Partnership facilitates information sharing and priority setting for binational environmental protection and restoration activities of importance in the Lake Huron basin and also the development of partnerships to undertake efforts that can not be accomplished by individual agencies alone.

One of the purposes of the Partnership is to develop an action-oriented

process for addressing Lake Huron concerns to help identify priority issues and future efforts needed to ensure a healthy Lake Huron watershed. The effort has led to the development of a binational work plan that focuses on longer-term priority setting (over 5 years) and short term project implementation (over the next 2 years).

The Partnership will address priority issues that require binational cooperation in order to resolve them. The priorities will be determined by a Steering Committee of the Partnership, based on their mandates and available resources. In order to streamline activities and minimize costs, the Partnership will work closely with existing programs. One example of this effort is the close tie to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's Lake Huron technical committees, including the development of Environmental Objectives.



## What issues will the Partnership address?

The participants of the Partnership have agreed upon three initial priority issues that will benefit from the binational effort. The issues are: contaminants in fish and wildlife, biodiversity and ecosystem function, and fish and wildlife habitat. However, to say that there are three priority areas fails to highlight the complexity of the issues. Some of the questions that are being addressed include:

- How have contaminants affected fish and wildlife, and are the fish and wildlife healthy and safe to eat?
- How is the lake ecosystem changing and why? What kind of invasive species are present in the lake and how do they affect the ecosystem? What types of fish are found in the lake currently and what is responsible for the changes? How is the food supply for these fish populations changing and what effects will that have?
- How can we protect and restore critical habitat and the plants, fish and wildlife that live there? How does the loss of wetlands affect fish and wildlife populations? How does the alteration of shorelines and development pressure affect the habitat?



Photo: United States Environmental Protection Agency

Photo: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources



Lake Huron is a diverse ecosystem with a variety of habitats for fish and wildlife.  
Above: A Michigan beach. Below: The Canadian Shield at Georgian Bay.

While these questions are being addressed binationally, other issues are looked at domestically. These include progress of restoration of the Areas of Concern, and other local issues such as fouling of beaches by algae and bacteria. The Partnership facilitates the sharing of information between countries on these domestic issues.



## Who are the Partners?

The federal and state/provincial environment agencies and the state/provincial natural resource agencies form the core of the Partnership by providing leadership and coordination. However the Partnership emphasizes the importance of having a flexible membership which is inclusive of other agencies and levels of government, Tribes/First Nations, non-government organizations and public on an issue by issue basis.

The Partnership assists in directing restoration and protection efforts for Lake Huron. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Environment Canada, with the state of Michigan, the province of Ontario and local interests, are combining efforts to address the issues of common concern in Lake Huron.



## Keep Informed!

For further information on the LHBP, check out our Web site at [www.binational.net](http://www.binational.net), or contact:

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## The Lake Huron Drainage Basin and Areas of Concern

