



# St. Clair River Area of Concern Program

## Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, 1978, 2012

The Great Lakes are a unique natural resource containing 20% of the world's fresh surface water and form the international boundary between Canada and the United States. The Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 was enacted to protect water resources, address problems, and enhance water quality of the Great Lakes. The **International Joint Commission (IJC)** was established to implement this treaty. The GLWQA assigns the IJC a role in assessing progress and providing scientific and policy advice to help the U.S. and Canada restore and maintain the integrity of the Great Lakes.

## International Joint Commission

The IJC is an independent, binational organization created by the United States and Canada under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. Under this Treaty, the two countries cooperate to prevent and resolve disputes relating to the use and quality of the many lakes and rivers along their shared border. The responsibilities of the IJC were expanded with the signing of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement in 1978.

Windsor, ON / Ottawa, ON / Washington, D.C.

The IJC consists of 19 boards and workgroups.

## Great Lakes Water Quality Board

- One of the 19 IJC boards
- Consists of 3 U.S. and 3 Canadian commissioners

## Areas of Concern Program for the Great Lakes

In 1987, the IJC identified 43 locations throughout the Great Lakes where action was needed to clean up and control pollution. These locations are known as Areas of Concern. The sites are located:

- 26 in the U.S.
- 17 in Canada
- 5 Binational

## U.S. EPA

The EPA consists of 10 national regions. The Great Lakes Region includes MN, WI, IL, IN, OH, MI and 35 tribes. The Region 5 Office in Chicago administers the AOC Program.

## Michigan Office of the Great Lakes

The Michigan OGL, part of the Department of Natural Resources, works with the Public Advisory Councils of the remaining 12 AOCs and is tasked with coordinating AOC activities in Michigan.

We are in the **St. Clair River Area of Concern**, 1 of 5 Binational AOCs. The St. Clair River is 40 miles long and forms the international border between the U.S. and Canada.

## Public Advisory Councils (PACs)

PAC groups exist across the Great Lakes to oversee each of the Areas of Concern (AOCs). PACs must create and follow the guidelines of their Remedial Action Plans and one of their major roles is to hold the EPA and EGLE agencies accountable. Where an Area of Concern waterway shares a border with Canada the PAC is called a Binational PAC.

## St. Clair River Binational Public Advisory Council

The St. Clair River BPAC was created in 1988 to oversee the St. Clair River Area of Concern and implement its Remedial Action Plan. There are stakeholders representing Agriculture, Business and Industry, Citizens, Community Groups, Labor, Conservation and Environment, Education, Fisheries, Health, Municipal, Native Peoples, Shipping and Recreation. This group meets throughout the year rotating meeting locations between Sarnia and Port Huron.

## Friends of the St. Clair River, Canada

Our Canadian counterpart serves the same non-profit role on the Canadian side of the river.

## Friends of the St. Clair River

Due to the river's international nature, nonprofits were needed on both sides of the river. Therefore, Friends was incorporated as a 501c3 in 2007 and is based in Port Huron, MI serving the Blue Water Area. The organization consists of a Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers.



Friends of the St. Clair River