

7.0 Lake Huron Initiative - Next Steps

Creating and maintaining a collaborative bi-national Lake Huron ecosystem management process is important to the long-term management of the Lake Huron Basin. The Lake Huron Initiative is a process designed to fulfill the collaborative management needs for the basin by providing a mechanism for increased communication and cooperation. In addition, the Initiative will utilize linkages to other natural resource management activities, such as the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Also, the Initiative will address impairments found in open waters of the lake and nearshore areas, by supporting without duplicating the efforts of localized remedial action plans. The following outlines the proposed roles and responsibilities of the Initiative effort.

Steering Committee - The Lake Huron Steering Committee was first convened on June 24, 1999 to guide the overall development and implementation of the Lake Huron Initiative process. The members are representatives from federal, state and local agencies. Current membership includes U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-Great Lakes National Program Office, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation and Environment Canada. The Committee directed the Initiative development through approval of documents, specific strategies and work plans and works through their respective agencies.

Issue	Action
Steering Committee	Should consist of senior-level bi-national representatives capable of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and approving recommendations for short-term actions and long-term objectives • Approve time frames for action, as appropriate • Provide necessary resources to implement actions identified • Assign and issue charges to technical committees work groups • Oversee conflict resolution • Review and approve completed documents • Must expand to include greater participation on the part of the Canadian governments; federal, provincial and tribal.

Technical Committees - The technical committees are comprised of representatives of agencies supporting the Lake Huron Initiative activities. Two committees have been established to review critical pollutants and use impairments and habitat and biodiversity issues. The Committees consist of cooperating agencies and other interests. Additional committee may be established as required by the Initiative process.

The Initiative has and should continue to work in conjunction with the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission Lake Huron Technical Committee to identify and implement necessary actions for fisheries issues. This type of relationship should be developed with other existing interest groups to ensure no duplication of effort and to assure input for experts in the field of concern. The Initiative can play an important role in assisting the Lake Huron Technical Committee in the development of environmental objectives for Lake Huron.

Issue	Action
Technical Committees	Should consist of bi-national representatives capable of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying recommendations for short-term actions and long-term objectives • Developing recommended time frames for actions, as appropriate, • Develop completed documents • Participation should include interest groups including federal, provincial, state and tribal agencies

Public Involvement and Education - To date, the public has had limited involvement in the Lake Huron Initiative. The Michigan Office of the Great Lake has held conferences and workshops open to the public. The Lake Huron Initiative Steering Committee worked with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission Lake Huron Technical Committee in

developing and holding a joint seminar on the State of Lake Huron in 2001. A follow up workshop was held in January 2002. Future public involvement will depend on the commitment of the state, provincial federal and tribal agencies toward the Lake Huron Initiative. The basic public participation recommendation is that the Steering Committee consider development of a public participation strategy for Lake Huron, consistent with the level of future efforts toward development of a continuing planning and implementation process for Lake Huron. Potential future efforts may include:

- Continue to use the State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference as an opportunity to bring the public together to discuss Lake Huron and receive input into Lake Huron issues.
- Consider development of a Lake Huron Network, an informal effort of providing information on a regular basis, and
- Public meetings, including efforts to meet in many different areas of the Lake Huron Basin.

The public involvement program for the Initiative should aim to fully support efforts to create and strengthen partnerships with citizens and organizations taking restoration and protection actions in the Lake Huron Basin. Historically, the public involvement process has included the following elements:

- holding an open conference,
- conducting workshops,
- improving connections with the Remedial Action Plans,
- maintaining a mailing connection to keep people informed and solicit interest in the Initiative,
- collecting information and conducting evaluations, and
- developing information and education materials.

Another important function of the Lake Huron Initiative is to provide information regarding Lake Huron. The Lake Huron Initiative web site provides summaries of meeting and provides sources of information regarding Lake Huron and specific activities within the watershed. The Lake Huron Initiative web site can be accessed at www.deq.state.mi.us/lhi . This web site is updated regularly by the Michigan Office of the Great Lakes. Any information that would be appropriate for inclusion in the web site should be sent to bredinj@state.mi.us.

Future efforts to provide increased public involvement should be as follows:

Issue	Action
Public Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use the State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference as an opportunity to bring the public together to discuss Lake Huron and receive input into Lake Huron issues. • Build partnerships across various programs to preserve and protect Lake Huron. • Provide opportunities for bi-national discussions between representatives from partnerships and other stakeholders on key issues or other major decisions. • Include participation on the part of United States and Canadian interest groups • Continue the development of the Lake Huron Initiative web site. • Support development, fund raising and construction of the planned Great Lakes Visitor and Education Center in Bridgeport, Michigan by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.