



GREAT LAKES REGIONAL COLLABORATION STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

I. INTRODUCTION

The *Framework for the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration*, adopted at the Conveners' Meeting in Chicago, Illinois on December 3rd, 2004, set forth the overall governing principles for operation of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC). Among its key provisions was a charge to the GLRC to produce a comprehensive strategy for the restoration and protection of the Great Lakes.

Following one year of intensive effort by 1,500 governmental and non-governmental participants representing a broad spectrum of Great Lakes stakeholders, the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes* was released by the GLRC at Summit II on December 12th, 2005 in Chicago, Illinois.

The December 3rd, 2004 *Framework for the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration* includes the following general provisions regarding the Strategy and its implementation:

Practical Goals of the GLRC

“The GLRC is a means by which ideas are communicated, decisions are made and a strategy is written. The GLRC will focus its energy on three important goals. First, it will develop a Great Lakes Restoration and Protection Strategy (Strategy) to inform future implementation of programs and funding throughout the region. This Strategy will build upon the extensive collaborative efforts already in place and will include specific action plans based on the recommendations provided by the Issue Area Strategy Teams (Strategy Teams; see Section IV. C.). Second, the GLRC will serve as a forum for addressing near-term regional issues that relate to Great Lakes ecosystem protection and restoration. Third, the GLRC will create an oversight forum to coordinate and enhance implementation of the Strategy.” (page 2)

Coalition and Implementation Phase

“It is the vision of the GLRC Members that once the Strategy is adopted at Summit II, the Members will undertake an effort to build broad support for implementing the actions and policies identified in the Strategy.

The GLRC Members also support the development of a process to ensure ongoing coordination of the Members' activities regarding the Great Lakes ecosystem. However, the GLRC Members themselves will determine whether its continued

existence will be valuable in advancing the goals of Great Lakes ecosystem protection and restoration.” (page 12)

The *Framework for the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration* provides broad latitude in both the structure and process for implementation. This *GLRC Strategy Implementation Framework* provides further specificity on how the GLRC will fulfill these general requirements but it does not alter the *Framework for the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration*, whose provisions remain fully in effect.

II. PURPOSE

When the *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes* (Strategy) was released on December 12th, 2005, the members of the Collaboration signed a resolution that read, in part:

[W]e recognize that the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Protect and Restore the Great Lakes, which represents the work of many governments, organizations and individuals with expertise in Great Lakes issues, will guide future efforts to protect and restore the Great Lakes.

This *Strategy Implementation Framework* describes how the GLRC will be organized to ensure that this shared commitment is met in an ongoing manner.

III. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS

Continuity of the structure used to develop the Strategy will provide for the smoothest transition to implementation since nothing new needs to be created and the ongoing working relationships can continue. Thus, the current Executive Committee structure and decision-making process will remain in place and an appropriate administrative structure will be created to support implementation of the Strategy, to ensure coordination, and to facilitate action.

A. Executive Committee

1. Membership

The Executive Committee of the GLRC will continue to be organized with the following persons representing the various parties:

- Federal – Chair, Great Lakes Interagency Task Force
- State – Chair, Council of Great Lakes Governors
- Local – Designated Mayor, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
- Tribal – The Tribal Spokesperson will vary based on meeting location and topic of discussion. To ensure continuity, the Tribes will utilize the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s American Indian Environmental Office as the central point

of coordination and information sharing. In addition, Tribes will be responsible for continuity in participation on the Executive Committee.

- Congressional – The Congressional Delegation will provide one permanent spokesperson from the Great Lakes Congressional Task Force and any additional representatives as the Congressional Delegation sees fit. The Congressional Delegation will be responsible for ensuring continuity of participation on the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee members will designate representatives to work on a Subcommittee to provide staff support and assistance in carrying out the ongoing responsibilities of the GLRC.

2. Responsibilities

The Executive Committee of the GLRC is responsible for carrying out the following activities:

- Direct ongoing activities of the GLRC; e.g. preside at major meetings, sign key documents, etc.,
- Develop and implement mechanisms to promote accountability,
- Identify and resolve major implementation issues,
- Facilitate coordination of Great Lakes restoration and protection activities among GLRC participants,
- Communicate with stakeholders and provide for ongoing public participation, and
- Rotate responsibility for convening, facilitating and summarizing GLRC meetings.

3. Ongoing Public Participation

Open and transparent proceedings are essential to the long-term successful implementation of the GLRC Strategy. The Executive Committee will develop a public participation plan to establish opportunities for public input at the appropriate stages of implementation so that the GLRC can have the full benefit of the ideas and expertise of the Great Lakes community.

4. Roles of the Issue Area Strategy Teams

Eight Issue Area Strategy Teams provided outstanding service to the GLRC in developing the recommendations included in the GLRC Strategy. The quality of work clearly reflects the participants' expertise and commitment to protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. The Executive Committee will seek the assistance of the Strategy Teams as necessary as actions are taken to implement the Strategy.

5. Reporting

Successful implementation of the GLRC Strategy will require sound management. A key element of that sound management is a system for tracking actions and progress on a regular basis. At the same time, the Executive Committee is sensitive to the need to keep the administrative burden of tracking and reporting to a minimum in order to maximize the resources devoted to implementation.

The Executive Committee will establish an appropriate system to identify:

- The actions that need to be tracked,
- Who will be responsible for the tracking,
- When and how often the tracking will take place, and
- How the tracking results will be reported.

This tracking will cover both the implementation actions being taken and the indicators of ecosystem improvement that will be monitored.

As a means of communicating with the full GLRC and the broader public, there will be an Annual Meeting where the status of implementing the GLRC Strategy will be presented. This Annual Meeting will be scheduled for a time appropriate to budget cycles and other key activities related to implementation.

6. New Issues

The Great Lakes ecosystem is dynamic, and new issues will arise in the future that will need to be addressed. As such issues are raised, the Executive Committee will review them and determine what type of action might be most appropriate.

Addendum to the Strategy Implementation Framework

This Strategy Implementation Framework is intended only to facilitate the processes and relationships contemplated in the Executive Order 13340, the original Framework Agreement, and the Strategy developed pursuant thereto. It is not intended to, and does not, create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any Collaboration member or another person against any of the other Collaboration members, their governments, offices, or organizations, or any other person.

In addition, nothing in this Strategy Implementation Framework affects the authority or obligations of the Great Lakes Collaboration members or their governments, offices, or organizations, or any bi-national agreement with Canada.

Participation in this Strategy Implementation Framework is voluntary and subject to funding availability and applicable legal requirements of the respective jurisdictions, governments, offices, and organizations of those who so choose. Financial transactions necessary to carry out specific projects under the Strategy Implementation Framework will be in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures, and will be subject to separate agreements.