

Program

Celebrate Our Great Lakes

Great Lakes Public Forum 2016



OCTOBER 4-6, 2016 - ALLSTREAM CENTRE - TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

THE GREAT LAKES PUBLIC FORUM

Every three years, the Great Lakes Public Forum brings together leaders from Canada and the United States to discuss topics important to the restoration and protection of Great Lakes water quality and ecosystem health. The event is an opportunity for you to share your ideas and vision for the future of this important and unique region. Two days will be devoted to:

- The latest assessment of the state of Great Lakes water quality and ecosystem health;
- Actions being taken to restore and protect the Great Lakes and meet the commitments of the Canada-United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement; and
- Current and future priorities for science and action.

A SPECIAL DAY DEVOTED TO A CELEBRATION OF THE GREAT LAKES

The Great Lakes are singularly magnificent and vital to our future. This day offers a chance to look above and beyond the challenges and actions that are the focus of the first two days. It's an opportunity to recharge our connection and attachment to the Great Lakes, and to reimagine what the Lakes can mean for generations to come.

This special day will invite a sharing of perspectives on what the Great Lakes mean to people prominent in diverse fields—from sport through to the arts and architecture—in a panel conversation hosted by broadcaster Valerie Pringle. It will spotlight leading and inspiring actions around the Lakes, and applaud many more. It will generate ideas for engaging and empowering people throughout the basin in celebrating and championing the Great Lakes. The day will be capped with the announcement of an exciting new initiative for elevating the Great Lakes in the hearts and minds of people everywhere.





YOUR HOSTS

The Great Lakes Public Forum is a joint conference of the Canadian and United States federal governments, hosted by Environment and Climate Change Canada and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, with a special evening session put on by the International Joint Commission.

ABOUT THE GREAT LAKES

The Great Lakes, Superior, Huron, Michigan, Erie and Ontario and the connecting rivers, the St. Marys, St. Clair including Lake St. Clair, Detroit, Niagara and the St. Lawrence, are among the largest fresh water ecosystems on earth. They contain one fifth of available surface freshwater on the planet. They are important environmentally, and to the economy, health and culture of the 40 million Canadians and Americans who live within the Great Lakes drainage basin.

ABOUT THE CANADA-U.S. GREAT LAKES WATER QUALITY AGREEMENT

In 2012, the Governments of Canada and the United States renewed and revised the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, the mechanism which has guided binational cooperation to restore and protect Great Lakes water quality and ecosystem health for over four decades.

In renewing the Agreement, governments committed to holding a Great Lakes Public Forum every three years to publicly review the state of the Great Lakes, report progress on implementation of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and discuss priorities for science and action.

JOIN LEADING GREAT LAKES AND WATER EXPERTS AND MANY OTHERS INVOLVED IN PROTECTING AND RESTORING THE GREAT LAKES

The 2016 Great Lakes Public Forum will feature presentations by Canadian and American water experts responsible for leading efforts to restore and protect Great Lakes water quality and ecosystem health.

Participants include representatives of Canadian and United States Federal, State and Provincial Government Agencies, Tribal Governments, First Nations, Métis, Municipal Governments, watershed management agencies, other local public agencies, and the public.

Topics of discussion will include the State of the Great Lakes, Indigenous perspectives, the cleanup of Great Lakes Areas of Concern, the implementation of Lakewide Management Plans, the identification of and actions to address Chemicals of Mutual Concern, the growing problem of nutrient loading and toxic and nuisance algae, groundwater quality, the protection of habitat and species, climate change impacts, aquatic invasive species, discharge from vessels, and science.





THE FOLLOWING SPEAKERS WILL SHARE THEIR PERSPECTIVES

Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada

Bruce Heyman, United States Ambassador to Canada

Glen Murray, Ontario Minister of Environment and Climate Change

John Tory, Mayor of Toronto

France Picotte, Chair, Métis Nation of Ontario

Neil Patterson Jr., Director, Tuscarora Environment Program

Mark Fisher, Chief Executive Officer, Council of the Great Lakes Region

Valerie Pringle, Co-Chair, Trans Canada Trail Foundation

Mark Mattson, Founder and President, Lake Ontario Waterkeeper

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4 - MORNING

8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Registration

8:45 a.m. – 9:05 a.m.

Opening:

First Nation Welcome

Opening Remarks

Michael Goffin, Regional Director General Ontario Region, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Cameron Davis, Senior Advisor to the Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency

9:05 a.m. – 9:10 a.m.

Welcome: John Tory, Mayor of Toronto

9:10 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Keynote Address: Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

9:30 a.m. – 10:40 a.m.

How are the Great Lakes Doing?

The Great Lakes are a vast shared resource and are fundamental to the well-being of over 40 million Canadians and Americans who live along their shores. Despite their immense size, the Great Lakes are highly sensitive to stresses including the impacts of climate change, invasive species and toxic contaminants. So how are the Great Lakes doing? This session will report on the state of the Great Lakes using nine science-based ecosystem indicators.

Session leaders: Nancy Stadler-Salt, Great Lakes Program Coordinator, Great Lakes Issue Management and Reporting Section, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Jacqueline Adams, Environmental Scientist, United States Environmental Protection Agency

10:40 a.m. – 10:55 a.m.

Networking Break & Exhibits

10:55 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Restoring Great Lakes Areas of Concern

Pursuant to the 1987 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, 43 environmentally degraded sites within the Great Lakes were designated as “Areas of Concern” by Canada and United States. This session will describe the considerable progress being made and priorities for restoring degraded conditions in Areas of Concern.

Session leaders: Jon Gee, Manager, Great Lakes Areas of Concern, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Wendy Carney, Deputy Director, Great Lakes National Program Office, United States Environmental Protection Agency

11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Question & Answer

Moderator: TBD

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4 - AFTERNOON

1:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Great Lakes Celebration

Speaker: TBD

1:30 p.m. – 2:05 p.m.

Reducing Risks from Harmful Chemicals

The Great Lakes basin is the industrial heartland of Canada and the United States. This fact, combined with long-range atmospheric transport and deposition of contaminants from outside the basin, make chemical pollution a longstanding problem. Chemicals in the Great Lakes environment can harm aquatic ecosystems, biodiversity and human health. This session will focus on past successes in addressing chemicals, Canadian and United States chemicals management programs, and recent experience in identifying and addressing chemicals of mutual concern under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Session leaders: TBD, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Margaret Guerriero, Director, Land and Chemical Division, United States Environmental Protection Agency

2:05 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.

Understanding Groundwater Impacts to Great Lakes Water Quality and Ecosystem Health

Understanding the influence groundwater has on the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Great Lakes is important for their long-term protection. Clean groundwater can enhance surface water quality, while contaminated groundwater can act as a long-term source of pollutants. This session will focus on the findings of the first binational report on groundwater science relevant to Great Lakes water quality, including issues such as groundwater-surface water interaction; contaminants and nutrients in groundwater; the role of groundwater in aquatic habitats; and, urban development and climate change impacts on groundwater.

Session leaders: Dale Van Stempvoort, Section Head, Groundwater, Environment and Climate Change Canada and TBD.

2:35 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.

Networking Break & Exhibits

2:50 p.m. – 3:25 p.m.

Taking Action on a Lakewide Scale

The Great Lakes are comprised of 5 of the 20 largest lakes on Earth. Given their size and complexity, it is important to assess the status of each individual lake, and to address those environmental stressors that are best tackled on a lakewide scale. This session will focus on the identification of science priorities for each lake; an integrated framework to assess the cumulative impact of stressors on the health of nearshore waters in the Great Lakes; and, the recently finalized blueprint for action on Lake Superior.

Session leaders: John Marsden, Manager, Great Lakes Issue Management and Reporting Section, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Christopher Korleski, Director, Great Lakes National Program Office, United States Environmental Protection Agency

3:25 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Question & Answer

Moderator: TBD

4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Networking Break & Exhibits

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Breakout Sessions: Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Erie, Lake Ontario

The Great Lakes are complex and, although they are all connected, each lake is unique. Building on the information presented in the Taking Action on a Lakewide Scale plenary, five concurrent lake sessions will be held to provide a closer look at the state of each lake, identify the stressors and threats to each ecosystem, and discuss the priorities for science and action. These interactive sessions are an opportunity for Forum participants to provide their thoughts on threats, priorities and the actions being taken to address challenges, as well as sharing what they value most about “their” lake.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5 – MORNING

8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Registration

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Opening:

Michael Goffin, Regional Director General Ontario Region, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Cameron Davis, Senior Advisor to the Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency

9:00 a.m. – 9:40 a.m.

Tackling Algal Blooms in the Great Lakes

Excess phosphorus loadings in some areas of the Great Lakes contribute to harmful and nuisance algae blooms that threaten drinking water quality and human health, degrade fish and wildlife habitats and populations, adversely impact economic activities, and drive beach closures. This problem is most acutely felt in Lake Erie, where, in August 2014, algae toxins caused the shutdown of drinking water treatment plants serving Toledo, Ohio and Pelee Island, Ontario, affecting 500,000 people. This session will focus on the newly established binational phosphorus reduction targets for Lake Erie, as well as the action plans that are being developed domestically to meet them.

Session leaders: Susan Humphrey, Associate Regional Director General, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Tinka Hyde, Division Director, Region 5 Water Division, United States Environmental Protection Agency

9:40 a.m. – 9:55 a.m.

Great Lakes Celebration

Speaker: Mark Mattson, Founder and President, Lake Ontario Waterkeeper

9:55 a.m. – 10:05 a.m.

Networking Break & Exhibits

10:05 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.

U.S. Tribal Government Representative Address: Neil Patterson Jr., Director, Tuscarora Environment Program

10:20 a.m. – 10:55 a.m.

Protecting and Restoring Native Species and their Habitats

The diverse and often unique landscapes in the Great Lakes region are home to expansive habitats and numerous native species, including several globally rare species. This session will focus on the actions being taken by Canada and the United States to protect native species and restore degraded habitats, recover populations of species at risk, and work towards the goal of a net habitat gain in the Great Lakes basin.

Session leaders: Susan Humphrey, Associate Regional Director General, Environment and Climate Change Canada and TBD, United States Fish and Wildlife Service

10:55 a.m. – 11:45 p.m.

Question & Answer

Moderator: TBD

11:45 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Lunch

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5 – AFTERNOON

12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Great Lakes Celebration

Speaker: Mark Fisher, Chief Executive Officer, Council of the Great Lakes Region

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Understanding the Impacts of Climate Change on the Great Lakes

Understanding how climate change will affect ecological processes is essential to protecting Great Lakes water quality and ecosystem health. Impacts such as warming temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, decreased ice coverage, and alterations to water levels are being observed across the basin, in some cases exacerbating existing ecological stressors. This session will share findings from the first State of Climate Change Impacts Report for the Great lakes basin, as well as information on efforts to better understand and predict the impacts of climate change.

Session leaders: Tricia Mitchell, A/Manager, Regional Analysis and Relations, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Doug Kluck, Director, Central Region Climate Service National Climatic Data Centre, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

1:30 p.m. – 1:55 p.m.

Addressing the Threat of Aquatic Invasive Species to the Great Lakes

By competing with native species and altering the way nutrients and chemical contaminants move within the ecosystem, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) can affect the integrity of the food web, productivity of the lakes and Great Lakes water quality. Efforts to control AIS are costly, and they are nearly impossible to eradicate once established. Potential new invaders, such as Asian Carp, could prove devastating to the Great Lakes ecosystem. So what action is being taken to prevent future invasions and manage AIS that have taken hold? This session will focus on efforts to minimize the risk of AIS to the Great Lakes, including the establishment of an early detection and rapid response initiative.

Session leaders: Gavin Christie, Division Manager, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Todd Turner, Assistant Regional Director, Aquatic Resources Program, Region 3, US Fish and Wildlife Service

1:55 p.m. – 2:25 p.m.

Preventing and Reducing Threats from Vessel Discharges to the Great Lakes

The Great Lakes are part of a binational trade route that supports tens of thousands of jobs on both sides of the border and serves as a critical transportation corridor for commodities such as iron ore, coal, minerals and grain. This session will focus on Canada's and United States' continued efforts, through both domestic regulatory regimes and international conventions, to prevent and reduce threats to the Great Lakes from potentially harmful vessel discharges such as oil and other hazardous substances, garbage, wastewater and sewage, biofouling, antifouling systems, and ballast water.

Session leaders: Chris Wiley, Manager, Technical Services, Marine Safety, Transport Canada and Lorne Thomas, Chief, External Affairs Division, United States Coast Guard, Ninth District

2:25 p.m. – 2:40 p.m.

Networking Break & Exhibits

2:40 p.m. – 2:55 p.m.

Métis Nation of Ontario Address: France Picotte, Chair, Métis Nation of Ontario

2:55 p.m. – 3:25 p.m.

The Importance of Science to the Protection of the Great Lakes

A strong foundation of water quality and ecosystem science underpins binational cooperation to restore and protect the Great lakes, guiding priority setting, problem identification and action. This session will address current approaches to the coordination of Great Lakes science.

Session leaders: Ram Yerubandi, Research Manager, Watershed Hydrology and Ecology Research Division, Water Science and Technology, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Todd Nettesheim, Environmental Engineer, United States Environmental Protection Agency

3:25 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Question & Answer

Moderator: TBD

4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Closing

Speaker: TBD

4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Public input to the International Joint Commission

This session provides an opportunity for Forum participants to provide their comments to the International Joint Commission, on the Progress Report of the Parties and the governments' actions to meet the objectives of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6 - MORNING

8:30 a.m. – 8:40 a.m.

Opening Remarks

Michael Goffin, Regional Director General Ontario Region, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Cameron Davis, Senior Advisor to the Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency

8:40 a.m. – 9:20 a.m.

Welcome:

Catherine McKenna, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada
Glen Murray, Ontario Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Bruce Heyman, United States Ambassador to Canada
Cameron Davis, Senior Advisor to the Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency

9:20 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Celebrating the Great Lakes – Sharing Perspectives

This session will provide an opportunity to explore multiple perspectives on why the Great Lakes matter to our culture, environment and economy. Noted Canadian broadcaster Valerie Pringle will host a discussion among a panel of exciting guests and forum participants on what the Great Lakes mean to them.

10:45 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Networking Break & Exhibits

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Celebrating Success

Thousands of dedicated people, institutions and organizations are striving to achieve amazing things in the Great Lakes. This session will recognize Great Lakes champions, and showcase particularly inspiring examples of citizen engagement that are contributing to the restoration, conservation and protection of the Great Lakes.

12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Lunch

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Student Summit

Approximately one hundred grades 11-12 Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) student delegates, from across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin, will be pitching innovative solutions to Great Lakes decision-makers on how to tackle issues facing the Great Lakes. Decision-makers will be invited to listen and share feedback. Prior to their arrival, students have investigated upstream/downstream issues in their home communities using the SHSM problem-solving model of Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship to explore, test and develop possible solutions for challenges currently facing the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6 - AFTERNOON

1:15 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

Ideas to Networks to Action

This session will engage participants in developing additional possibilities for celebrating, protecting and promoting the Great Lakes. How can engagement in existing efforts be broadened and strengthened? What innovations and new ideas might there be? How can connections among groups and individuals be strengthened and sustained? Participants will be invited to consider and offer ideas on these and other questions in breakout sessions.

Session leaders: Doug Wright and Karen Kun, Executive Director and Co-Founder, Waterlution

2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Networking Break & Exhibits

3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Inspired by Greatness

Participants will be invited to present the ideas generated in the previous session.

An exciting new Initiative will be launched to make celebration of the Great Lakes ongoing. With a focus on arts and culture, it will offer a banner for promoting and amplifying Great Lakes actions and successes of all kinds.

Session leaders: Doug Wright and Karen Kun, Executive Director and Co-Founder, Waterlution

4:15 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Closing

Michael Goffin, Regional Director General Ontario Region, Environment and Climate Change Canada and Cameron Davis, Senior Advisor to the Administrator, United States Environmental Protection Agency



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