

THE GREAT LAKES PROJECT

Late Summer 2008 Interim Report: Progress Since the June Mackinac Island Meeting

Since the June Mackinac Island meeting, a number of significant and exciting developments have begun to take shape for the Great Lakes Project. This interim report is intended to highlight activities across the Basin in the wake of the unprecedented meeting of over 200 senior leaders of The Nature Conservancy on the island, in which they signed on to a pledge of action, collaboration and support to advance the goals of the Great Lakes Project. The Great Lakes have been identified as a global priority in The Nature Conservancy's Campaign for a Sustainable Planet, a campaign designed to help advance the 2015 goal, embody our commitment to help make the Great Lakes Basin among the best managed ecosystems in the world, and generate internal and external collaboration to leverage conservation across the Great Lakes Basin.

A complete source of information about the Great Lakes Project is available at nature.org/mackinac. Everyone is encouraged to review the materials about the Project.

Leadership and Governance

The Great Lakes Board has actively been establishing and identifying the staff who will serve on the four teams reporting to the board: Conservation, Policy, Philanthropy, and Finance. Staff members from every state program have been identified and have agreed to serve on these teams, including colleagues from Nature Conservancy of Canada. Appendix A includes a listing of the Great Lakes Board members and the supporting teams to the Board. Highlights of work underway for each of the teams includes:

- **Conservation:** The conservation team is meeting in July to begin setting campaign priorities for full span of the campaign and \$200 million goal; develop project charters and develop recommendations for the first \$2 million in investment in teams addressing basin-wide strategies; and scoping FY10 budgeting and goals.
- **Policy:** The policy team is holding monthly calls, and already had a briefing in July on the Great Lakes Compact strategy for passage by Congress, now that all eight states have adopted the Compact. Calls are already scheduled with the Worldwide Office Director of U.S. Government Relations to seek assistance and coordination in this effort.
- **Philanthropy:** The philanthropy team also has held monthly calls, and will be developing recommendations for the establishment of a Great Lakes matching fund, and a draft marketing plan for the Great Lakes Project, for the Great Lakes Board to review in September.

- **Finance:** The finance managers of the state programs are coordinating to establish video-conferencing links across the Basin to facilitate greater connectivity for coordination, and reduction of travel and time costs in carrying the Great Lakes Project forward.

The Great Lakes Board will hold its next meeting in September followed by a longer 2-day meeting in December.

Progress in Great Lakes Project Implementation

The Great Lakes Project will require \$200 million in private resources and has established a \$1 billion goal for public resources. The Great Lakes Directors developed objectives, goals, strategies and plans for the Great Lakes Project—these were included in the materials presented at the June Mackinac Island meeting. Known internally to staff as the “OGSP” (Objectives, Goals, Strategies and Plans) this tool (see Appendix B) serves as a guide for the implementation of the Project over the next 10 years. Significant steps have been taken in the implementation of the objectives, goals, strategies, and plans outlined in this tool. While the OGSP includes important new strategies and projects for our Great Lakes work, in many aspects it reflects an opportunity to better align and integrate existing TNC capacity by taking advantage of our network of state and project staff and expertise. There are several steps underway to take advantage of this strength. Highlights include:

- **Lake Basin teams** are being established for each of the five Great Lakes. These teams are being modeled after the exciting Lake Ontario Conservation Area Plan (C.A.P.) which considered, for the first time, the entire lake ecosystem (open water, food webs, rivers/streams, watershed drainages and site-based conservation areas). These teams will help us integrate our work on a watershed basis, at an ecologically appropriate scale and unify our actions in a shared, coordinated fashion. The teams will undertake conservation planning, and help inform and influence our fundraising, policy strategies, partnerships and acquisition actions. The Conservation Team will charter the Lake Basin Teams by the end of summer. Lake Huron is off to a fast start, after a grant was approved in July by U.S. EPA, with Nature Conservancy of Canada matching it with public funds, for a total of \$200,000 to support the Lake Huron planning process.
- **Multi-disciplinary teams** are being chartered and established for multiple Basin-wide strategies and stresses. The *Migratory Bird Stopover Project* and *Aquatic Invasive Species Project* teams are up and running already, with staff involvement across the Basin. Extraordinary advancement in launching these teams was a \$2 million challenge grant made in late June, largely in response to the success of the Mackinac Island meeting, providing seed money to scope and establish teams focusing on needed partnerships and joint initiatives in research, science, and pilot projects for Working Lands (agriculture, forestry, energy, and the built environment); Mitigating Stresses (invasives and climate change); and Finance and Incentives. The Conservation Team is developing recommendations for how the first installment of the challenge gift, \$500,000, should be invested.
- **Northwestern Lake Superior Coast Project:** In a traditional but very exciting project, we are working with The Nature Conservancy of Canada on a significant acquisition on the Northwest Lake Superior Coast. This project, an acquisition targeting nearly 20,000 acres of coastal/island habitat spanning nearly 50 miles of Lake Superior coast near Thunder Bay, Ontario, lies in the midst of the newly establish Lake Superior Coastal Reserve, the world’s largest freshwater coastal reserve. Prior to the meeting on Mackinac Island, we secured

options for the property and are now conducting due diligence and reviewing appraisals. Since meeting on Mackinac, we secured our first \$1 million challenge grant commitment to the project!

- **Alignment of fundraising and goals:** As the Great Lakes Project develops we are continually refining our fund raising targets to align with (and be driven by) our evolving conservation projects. To that end, the chairs of the Conservation and Philanthropy teams will work with their teams and conservation and philanthropy staff across the basin to further refine Phase I and develop Phase II of the Great Lakes Project. We have targeted a December 2008 timeline to present a \$200 million goal and priorities to the Great Lakes Board State Directors for review.

In addition to these highlights of progress since the Mackinac meeting, it is important to note that an enormous amount of ongoing work is underway within each state, furthering our conservation goals and impact on the Great Lakes. As the Lake Basin teams develop and further integration of our work is achieved, it will become easier to reflect this ongoing work, and create the tools for reporting and tracking our progress across the Great Lakes work in its entirety. In addition, the Great Lakes Board believes that the teams described above are key in the next steps of trustee involvement, and the Board will be bringing forward recommendations for trustee and partner involvement with the teams described above at the Great Lakes convening at ConEx in Vancouver in October.

What You Can Do, and Next Steps

The most important action you can take is to visit the Great Lakes Project website (nature.org/mackinac) and review the following documents:

1. An Overview of the Great Lakes Project (and OGSP)
2. Great Lakes Board Charter Roles and Responsibilities
3. A Pledge of Collaboration, Action and Support

Reviewing the papers drafted for the Great Lakes Project meeting on Mackinac Island this past June will provide additional information about some of the specific projects already underway.

As a next step, trustees, state directors, and senior staff of TNC's Great Lakes states made a commitment to convene again in Vancouver in October 2008 at the ConEx meeting. This follow-up meeting is scheduled for the evening of October 14, 2008, including dinner and discussions, at which time a progress report will be shared and discussed on the Great Lakes Project. Any advance reading materials will be prepared and made available at the website prior to the Vancouver meeting.



APPENDIX A: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Great Lakes

Helen Taylor, MI, **Chair**
Peggy Ladner, MN
Mary Jean Huston, WI
Leslee Spraggins, IL
Mary McConnell, IN
Josh Knights, OH
Bill Kunze, PA
Jim Howe, NY
John Anderson, MI (Chicago office)
Dennis McGrath, Conservation Team Chair
Don Zeilstra, Philanthropy Team Chair
Rhonda Vassar, Finance Team Chair
Donna Stewart, NCC
Michael Bradstreet, NCC
Rob McKim, CUSR
John Cook, EUSR

Great Lakes Conservation Team

Dennis McGrath, MI, **Chair**
John Andersen, MI (Chicago office)
Richard Bowman, MI
William L. (Lindsay) Chadderton, MI (Chicago office)
Larry Clemens, IN
Patrick Doran, MI
David Klein, NY
James Duncan, Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC)
Marleen Kromer, OH
Rebecca Smith, WI
Doug P. Thompson, MN
Scott Thompson, WI

Great Lakes Philanthropy and Marketing Team

Donald Zeilstra, MI, **Chair**
Karen Benningfield, OH
Martha Bolyard, IN
Joe Bull, WO
Michael Burke, WO
Bridget Edmonds, WO
Rebecca Girvin-Argon, IL
Jane Howard, MN

Dana Kleniewski, NCC
Lizabeth MacDonald, Marketing Resource Center (MRC)
Teresa Midthun, WI
Lucy Miller, OH
Benjamin Perry, PA
Kathleen Rogers, NY
Betsy Smith, IN

Great Lakes Policy Team

Rich Bowman, MI, **Chair**
Gabe Horner, MN
Todd Holschbach, WI
Casey Eggleston, WI
Claudia Emken, IL
Susan Donovan, IL
Lynn Dennis, IN
Angela Hughes, IN
Denise King, OH
Steve Caminati, OH
Ron Ramsey, PA
David Higby, NY
Jessica Ottney, NY

In addition, John Anderson, Rachel Taylor, Lindsey Chadderton and Lauren Riga participate on a regular basis.

Great Lakes Finance Team

Rhonda Vassar, MI, **Chair**
Nancy Amo, NY
Kathleen (Kelly) McFeeley, WI
Diane Miller, WI
Louise Morgan, MN
Josh Parrish, PA
Nancy Petchenik, IL
Debbie Schultz, IN
Mark Schmaltz, OH
Peggy Shannon, MI (Chicago Office)

APPENDIX B: THE GREAT LAKES OGSP



Great Lakes Project 3 yr. and 10 yr. Plan

FY2008-2018

TNC's Mission: Preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.
Ten Year Goal: By 2015, in partnership with others, work to ensure effective conservation of places that represent at least 10% of every major habitat type on Earth.

10-year Project Objective
 To ensure the Great Lakes ecosystem is among the best managed ecosystems in the world.

FY08-10 Project Objective:
 Establish a "One Conservancy" 8-state 2-country integrated conservation operation that meets the goals below.

GOALS: FY08 FY09 FY10

•Network of protected areas:
 Acres 30k 70k 200k
 •Priority Watershed and Coastal Reach CAPs:

2 4 4

•Invest in AIS, Climate Change and Large Lake Basin Science & Planning:

250k 500k 1M

GOALS for FY-08-FY18:

- Net gain of 1 million acres in effectively protected areas, working lands, and improved ecosystem conditions.
- Advance protection of 20 priority watersheds across the basin.
- Maintain the health and function of 15 coastal reaches across the basin.
- Recover coastal and open water food webs and habitats.
- Support protection of priority large lake ecosystems of the world

FY08-18 STRATEGIES:

- 1. Conservation: 3 strategies**
 - a. **Achieving tangible results at scale:**
 - Create network of protected areas in forest/prairie/coastline/inland waters
 - Priority working lands in agriculture, forestry, fisheries and urban areas.
 - Achieve natural flow/hydrologic function/health in 20 priority watersheds.
 - Expand conservation impact: to open water systems through protection of the coastal reach benthic and pelagic zones.
 - b. **Leveraging our impact** by establishing strategic partnerships and influencing public policy.
- 2. Building strong science-based knowledge and public awareness.**
- 2. Relationships:**
 - a. Build "One Conservancy" operational approach and strengthen TNC's partnership with Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC).
 - b. Move intergovernmental treaties, agreements/agencies to true ecosystem-management approach, cooperation among large lake basins (GL Water Quality Agreement, Great Lakes Compact, AIS, climate change, fire).
- 3. Finance.**
 - a. Raise \$200 Million in private \$.
 - b. Develop basin-wide capital investment strategy to leverage \$1 B public.
 - c. Establish Great Lakes Challenge Fund.
- 4. People**
 - a. Advance the role & activities of the GL Board of State Directors to play a more strategic leadership & collaborative role in achieving GL conservation.
 - b. Facilitate more collaboration among chapter staff and partners around GL priorities across the basin, sharing of talent and expertise
 - c. Invest in building leadership and mgmt. skills, enhancing the quality of the workplace experience, efficiency & results, and create a dynamic values-driven culture where people are encouraged to develop transformational strategies.
- 5. Learning and Knowledge.**
 - a. Develop a broad-based conservation research agenda in partnership with top scientists and academic institutions.
 - Establish demon. projects to facilitate learning/ leverage success & knowledge through systematic replication in new priority areas.
 - b. Understand/respond to impacts of climate change & aquatic invasive species.
 - c. Create new tools and pilot projects for freshwater mgmt. solutions (e.g., assessing water withdrawal impacts).
 - d. Develop ecosystem services model for GL.
 - e. Establish a learning network of conservation practitioners addressing the large lake basins.
 - f. Build a widespread, informed community-based action plan.
 - g. Develop a Great Lakes "scorecard" to monitor and track progress.
 - h. Realize global impact by transferring resources and learning from large lake basin management to priority large lake systems of the world.

FY08-10 PLANS:

- 1a. Lake basin plan charters complete for large lake basins; Conservation Action Plan (CAP) complete for Ontario.
 - 1a. Map protected areas and working land priorities across region.
 - 1a. Priority watersheds and coastal reaches identified; CAPs completed.
 - 1a. Basin-wide 10-yr. goal/priorities OGSPs.
 - 1a. CAPs completed for half of the vision priorities.
 - 1b. See #2 a and b: - integrated approach, NCC collaboration, develop policy agenda.
 - 1c. See #5 below for science, knowledge, etc.

- 2a. Integrate Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) priorities - begin with Northwest Lake Superior Coast project.
 - 2b. Develop regional policy agenda.

- 3a. Raise first \$30M.
 - 3a. Create GL marketing plan.
 - 3b. Develop regional Government Relations plan for leveraging public \$.
 - 3b. Coastal Heritage Act plan / Pass bonds in Minnesota, Michigan, scope others.
 - 3c. Identify/solicit principal gift requests \$50M for challenge fund.

- 4a, 4c. Work with HR/MRC/WO Conservation Strategies/Conservation Leverage Teams to develop a plan.

- 5a. Develop regional science agenda.
 - 5b. Frame and secure funding for GL climate change research.
 - 5c. Frame and secure \$ for coastal research.
 - 5b. Develop regional Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) research agenda.
 - 5.e. & h. Launch learning network among GL and country programs for lake basin work.