



Institute for Environmental Studies

Institut pour l'Etude de l'Environnement

December 8, 1993

Sarah Miller
Canadian Environmental Law Association
517 College St. #401
Toronto, ONT M6G 4A2

DEC 13 1993

Dear Ms. Miller:

I am writing to invite you to participate in an upcoming workshop on developing *An Ecosystem Charter for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin*. The workshop will be held from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Monday, December 20 at the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, 207 Queen's Quay, in Toronto. The event is sponsored by the Great Lakes Commission, which is coordinating charter development by public, private and citizen organizations in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin. Paul Muldoon and John Jackson are assisting with the workshop and will be present.

The workshop has been organized to provide you and several other representatives of leading Canadian and binational organizations with an opportunity to present views on draft elements of the charter and to explore opportunities for your direct participation in its overall development. As a representative of the Canadian Environmental Law Association your thoughts and suggestions about the draft framework and the development of a working Ecosystem Charter are valued.

Enclosed is a public review packet for the charter, which contains draft charter elements, a project overview, a set of review questions and a list of charter drafting and advisory committee members. A workshop agenda is also enclosed, along with a list of invitees.

Some money for travel assistance is available. If you require assistance to attend the workshop, please contact Victoria Pebbles at the Great Lakes Commission (313-665-9135). I hope you are able to attend this workshop. Only with your involvement can we ensure that the charter is truly reflective of community held principles in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin.

Please contact Victoria Pebbles at the Great Lakes Commission (ph: 313-665-9135 or fax: 313-665-4370) as soon as possible to confirm your attendance.

Sincerely,

Henry Regier
Professor

WORKSHOP

AN ECOSYSTEM CHARTER FOR THE GREAT LAKES - ST. LAWRENCE BASIN

December 20, 1993

Waterfront Generation Trust
207 Queen's Quay, West, 5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario (416) 314-9471

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 10:00 a.m. | Welcome, Introductions and Workshop Objectives |
| 10:15 | Project Overview: Origin, Objectives and Use of the Charter |
| 10:30 | Review of Draft Charter Elements |
| 11:00 | Break |
| 11:15 | Open Dialogue on Draft Elements <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Comments• Specific Comments on Draft Elements<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Vision Statement-Categories-Principles-Addendum-Other |
| 1:00 p.m. | Break |
| 1:05 | Open Dialogue (continued) |
| 1:45 | Project Timeline and Future Opportunities for Participation in Charter Development and Endorsement |
| 2:00 | Adjourn |

Note: A working lunch will be served.

Invitees List
Ecosystem Charter Workshop
Toronto, Ontario
December 20, 1993

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Terry Yonker
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November 8, 1993

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NATHANIEL E. ROBINSON
Wisconsin Dept. of
Administration
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Friend of the Great Lakes:

An exciting new initiative is underway in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin and I welcome your participation and leadership as it moves forward.

The initiative involves developing an "Ecosystem Charter for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin." The charter is a statement of principles, findings, and commitments that the entire Great Lakes-St. Lawrence community -- government, citizen groups and industry alike -- can embrace and work toward. The charter will define goals for ecosystem management and tie a common thread through the many policies, programs, agreements and institutional mandates that collectively shape current ecosystem management efforts in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin. When completed, along with an action agenda, it can serve as a Basin-wide work plan, a vehicle for coordination, and an advocacy tool to promote the informed use, management and protection of this great resource.

The charter process is being coordinated by the Great Lakes Commission with Joyce Foundation support, but the intent is to produce a charter that is "owned" by the entire community of Great Lakes-St. Lawrence interests who subscribe to its principles. Drafting and advisory committees have been established with broad Basin-wide representation, and have begun to develop the framework and basic elements of the charter. However, the support and involvement of the entire Great Lakes-St. Lawrence community is needed to ensure that the charter is truly reflective of community held principles and commitment. In brief, we need your advice!

We invite you to review and comment on the enclosed material, which includes:

- A draft preamble, vision statement and set of principles;
- An addendum which presents, for illustrative purposes, a more detailed discussion of two principles.

Please let us know your thoughts on this material. Are there principles that should be added, deleted or otherwise revised? Does the vision statement reflect your views or those of the organization you represent? Does the statement of findings and commitments presented in the addendum provide a good model for use with all the principles? Your perspective is valued.

We have enclosed, for background purposes, a project overview and a list of drafting and advisory committee members. Also enclosed is a questionnaire that can be used to guide your response.

Established in 1955 by inter-state compact "to promote the orderly, integrated and comprehensive development, use and conservation of the water resources of the Great Lakes Basin."

November 8, 1993

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The Drafting Committee welcomes all comments received through January 31, 1994. Comments will also be generated through various public information/involvement events planned in the coming months. An initial complete draft of the charter will be prepared on the basis of comments received and another review period will be scheduled. Agencies, organizations and individuals will subsequently be invited to endorse the Ecosystem Charter, contribute to an associated action agenda to implement it, and be a partner in its ongoing review and refinement.

On behalf of the Drafting Committee, thank you for supporting this initiative in its early stages. Please let us know if we can assist you in your review efforts, and in securing the best possible input from the entire community of Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin interests. I can be contacted at 313-665-9135.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Donahue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael J. Donahue, Ph.D.
Executive Director

MJD/rjs

AN ECOSYSTEM CHARTER FOR THE GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE BASIN

QUESTIONNAIRE

Note: The Charter's Drafting Committee needs your help as it begins its task. Please review the enclosed set of proposed charter principles, along with the addendum, which includes examples of how each principle might be described in detail.

A few questions to guide your review are presented below. We invite you to communicate your comments in writing or by telephone (see phone number and address below.) Sending us a marked-up copy of the draft material is one option.

Thanks for your cooperation! We look forward to hearing from you on or before January 31, 1994.

1. Does the preamble adequately describe the goal and use of the Charter? Revise as needed.
2. Does the vision statement reflect your own view of what the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin should be? Revise as needed.
3. Do you agree with the principles as stated? Identify those that should be deleted or revised. Please add new ones, as appropriate.
4. Is the format presented in the addendum (i.e., principles, findings, commitments) a good model for use with all the principles? If not, suggest alternatives.
5. Beyond the public comment period, are there specific events/activities that should be organized to secure broad input into the charter drafting process?
6. Are you willing to work with the Drafting Committee on an ongoing basis, and help secure your agency/organization's endorsement and use of the final document?
7. Please present any other comments, questions or suggestions you might have on any aspect of the project.

Thank you for your contributions! Please provide your response by phone, fax or regular mail to:

Ecosystem Charter Drafting Committee
c/o Great Lakes Commission
The Argus II Building
400 Fourth St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103-4816
Phone: 313-665-9135
Fax: 313-665-4370

Inquiries can be directed to either Michael J. Donahue, Executive Director, or Victoria Pebbles, Program Specialist.

*Draft Elements of an
Ecosystem Charter
for the
Great Lakes-St. Lawrence
Basin*

October 21, 1993

*Presented by:
Ecosystem Charter Drafting and Advisory Committee Members*

With Support Provided by the Joyce Foundation

Draft Elements of An Ecosystem Charter for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin

PREAMBLE

The impetus for this charter is a long-standing heritage of binational cooperation to ensure the informed use, management and protection of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Ecosystem. This charter builds on landmark agreements like the U.S.-Canada International Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, which established procedures for avoiding or otherwise addressing transboundary environmental problems, and the 1978 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which commits the two countries to restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the waters of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem. Through these and many other initiatives, Great Lakes leadership has pioneered the ecosystem approach to resource and environmental management and protection. The Ecosystem Charter, as a statement of shared principles and commitments for an array of stakeholders, represents an important step forward in this approach. "Ecosystem" as referenced within is defined as "the interacting components of air, land, water, and living organisms, including humans."

This charter sets forth a series of principles to guide future actions to enhance and sustain the environmental health and economic viability of the world's greatest freshwater system. In so doing, it can serve as a model in North America, and globally.

A broad cross-section of interests and entities contributed to the development of the charter. Its language speaks broadly to public agencies, private sector interests, citizen organizations, and all individuals with a role in, and responsibility for, the future of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Ecosystem.

It is a model framework for use by all stakeholders in guiding the design and implementation strategies connected with the principles set forth herein.

Presented within is a vision statement followed by a series of commonly held principles in the categories of rights and responsibilities; ecological integrity and diversity; sustainable communities; institutional relations; and public information, education and participation. Associated with each principle are statements of findings and commitments that facilitate the practical application of those principles.

Any agency, organization, or individual that subscribes to the principles presented within is invited to be a signatory to the charter. Signatories agree to use the charter as guidance in the development of their work plans and priorities, as a means to enhance communication and cooperation with other stakeholders, and as a benchmark for assessing progress toward a shared vision for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Ecosystem.

A VISION FOR THE GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE BASIN ECOSYSTEM

OUR VISION IS A GREAT LAKES BASIN ECOSYSTEM....

Where all people consider, conduct, and respect themselves as part of our ecosystem;

In which humans and other inhabitants can breathe air, drink water, and eat foods untainted by human activity from any part of the Basin;

That exists as an evolving natural and cultural system which demonstrates integrity—the ability to self-organize and adapt to diverse changes;

That includes the natural integrity of pristine areas as well as the cultural integrity of properly stewarded landscapes in developed areas;

That manifests itself in a rich mosaic of waters and lands, of wilderness and cultured places, and of different peoples who govern themselves in various ways;

That nurtures an abundance and diversity of native species in their natural communities and habitats;

That supports and sustains well planned, visually pleasing, and biologically sound human activity conducted in an environmentally sustainable manner that meets the responsible needs of this generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs;

That sustains all people and their communities and economic activities in socially equitable and just ways;

That is held in trust in which people act as stewards committed to protecting and preserving both natural and desirable cultural components benefitting this and future generations;

In which citizens, governments, businesses, industries, and organizations accept the responsibilities and challenges to transform our consumer society to a sustainable society; and

In which a shared governance process, among diverse and respected traditions, provides an accessible and equitable context for responsible action and effective accountability among persons, peoples, and institutional entities.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Principle I

All people of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem have the fundamental and unequivocal right to live in a healthy ecosystem which supports their health and well-being.

Principle II

As inhabitants of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem, we have a responsibility to educate and inform our children and ourselves in order to encourage behavior that supports and sustains a healthy Basin Ecosystem.

Principle III

We acknowledge the rights of people to use natural resources for human economic activity and enjoyment within the limits imposed by maintaining the integrity and health of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY AND DIVERSITY

Principle IV

The restoration and maintenance of the integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem shall be accomplished by respecting, restoring, and protecting ecological resources and by maintaining a balance of diverse plant and animal populations within the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

Principle V

An ecosystem approach to protecting, restoring, and sustaining ecological processes and resources of the Basin Ecosystem shall be adopted, predicated on the understanding that human activities, natural resources, and ecological processes are parts of a unified whole and completely interdependent.

Principle VI

Contamination of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem shall cease, to the maximum extent practicable, by eliminating or reducing the discharge of conventional pollutants, prohibiting the discharge of toxic substances in toxic amounts, and virtually eliminating the discharge of all persistent toxic substances into the water, air, and soil of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

Principle VII

The natural fluctuations of the levels and flows of the Great Lakes and their tributaries shall be respected and accommodated to protect existing and future beneficial uses while ensuring the fundamental character and integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

Principle VIII

The Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem shall support self-sustaining communities of renewable resources that provide an optimum contribution of harvestable resources, recreational opportunities, and associated benefits to meet societal needs for a healthy ecosystem, wholesome food, raw materials, recreation, and economic livelihood.

Principle IX

The Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem shall support biological diversity so that viable populations of indigenous species may flourish in natural habitats and communities as well as in specially protected sites in the Basin.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Principle X

Signatories shall recognize the interdependency between the health and integrity of the ecosystem and the economic well-being of human communities, and shall take the necessary measures to assure that protecting ecosystem integrity is an integral part of economic activity within the Basin.

Principle XI

Full cost accounting and pricing mechanisms to determine the prices of goods and services, based on direct production costs and costs of environmental management associated with the production and use of these goods and services, shall be developed and encouraged.

Principle XII

Industry in the Great Lakes Basin is a key partner in protecting the integrity of the ecosystem and shall support and maintain high environmental, conservation, and safety standards and principles.

Principle XIII

Public agencies, private enterprises, and individual citizens shall recognize energy conservation as a priority necessary for the economic and ecological well-being of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

INSTITUTIONAL RELATIONS

Principle XIV

Government entities, including First Nations and Native American authorities, Federal, State, Provincial, and local governments, shall cooperate to apply the principles of this charter to ensure that the protection of the integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem supersedes the narrower perceived interests of single jurisdictions.

Principle XV

The Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem shall be understood and respected as an integrated holistic ecosystem, whereby management of the ecosystem emphasizes partnerships between and among government entities, including First Nations and Native American authorities, the private sector, and all U.S. and Canadian citizens whose environmental health, economic well-being, or quality of life are directly affected by activities in the ecosystem.

PUBLIC INFORMATION, EDUCATION, AND PARTICIPATION

Principle XVI

Timely, accurate, and accessible information shall be provided to the public regarding all planned activities likely to significantly affect the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

Principle XVII

Stewardship of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem shall be fostered by educational efforts to promote greater understanding of the ecosystem, the problems facing it, and policies and programs designed to improve and protect it.

Principle XVIII

Meaningful public participation shall be ensured by providing community access to and empowerment in decisionmaking processes for the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

Principle XIX

An aggressive, coordinated research agenda shall be developed and pursued to improve the scientific, social, economic, and philosophical understanding of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem, and assist in the fulfillment of the principles of this charter.

ADDENDUM

Note: The proposed format for the Ecosystem Charter includes a statement of finding and a series of commitments for each principle. For illustrative purposes, the Drafting Committee has developed the following two draft principles in this format. Comments on and suggested improvements to this format are welcome. As you review the draft principles for the Ecosystem Charter, you are encouraged to develop findings and commitments for each of them.

Principle IV

The restoration and maintenance of the integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem shall be accomplished by respecting, restoring, and protecting ecological resources and by maintaining a balance of diverse plant and animal populations within the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

Findings:

Binational and national commitments have been made to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem. Restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity will improve the integrity of the overall ecosystem and will ultimately help support and protect the health of the ecosystem's inhabitants, including humans. The goal of ecosystem integrity for the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem, however, remains distant. As such, the health and well-being of the ecosystem's inhabitants continue to be at risk. We can achieve ecosystem integrity in which human health and well-being are fully realized if we act wisely, swiftly, and decisively. By protecting and restoring ecological resources, and by ensuring ecological diversity and balance within the ecosystem, the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem may be restored and maintained.

To fulfill this principle, signatories commit to the following:

- Adopting a definition for "ecosystem integrity" that represents the most robust thinking of the ecological sciences, and that may be used consistently among the numerous agencies, organizations, and other interests throughout the Basin to facilitate progress toward achieving ecosystem integrity
- Providing strong governmental, business, and industrial support for: 1) timely and effective adoption and implementation of Lakewide Management Plans; and 2) timely and effective implementation of Remedial Action Plans for the Basin's 43 Areas of Concern
- Implementing existing programs and, where appropriate, developing new ones to restore, protect, and preserve ecological resources and diversity within the Basin Ecosystem
- Increasing the binational effort to monitor wildlife populations in the Basin, both to preserve and restore these populations and to better understand environmental threats to human health
- Developing, adopting, and promoting strategies to integrate and extend efforts to protect areas of natural beauty, wildlife habitat, or ecological significance, especially wetland areas

Principle XIV

Government entities, including First Nations and Native American authorities, federal, state, provincial, and local governments, shall cooperate to apply the principles of this charter to ensure that the protection of the integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem supersedes the narrower perceived interests of single jurisdictions

Findings:

Institutional arrangements in the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem frequently provide innovative institutional approaches to solve complex ecological problems, but they can also be rigid, fragmented, and even contradictory. The institutions created to develop and implement policies to restore and protect the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem often create barriers to those efforts. It is the special responsibility of Canada, the U.S., First Nations, and Native American authorities to make certain that entities under their respective

authorities act cooperatively to protect the integrity of the ecosystem over the perceived interests of single jurisdictions. The most effective means of overcoming institutional barriers and ensuring the integrity of the ecosystem is through cooperative, coordinated, and collaborative policies and programs agreed upon and implemented by the U.S., Canada, First Nations and Native American authorities, and other jurisdictions in the Basin. The International Joint Commission, a unique binational institution, has clearly demonstrated the value and benefits of this kind of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration over its 80 year history.

To fulfill this principle, signatories commit to the following:

- Developing common objectives for Great Lakes institutions consistent with the highest standards to protect and achieve the sustainable health and integrity of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem and developing appropriate organizational strategies to meet those objectives
- Seeking consensus among affected jurisdictions and other interested parties upon the development and/or consideration of any proposal with ecosystem-wide implications
- Ceasing all activities which breach binational or regional laws, obligations, or agreements regarding the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem
- Continuing the practice and tradition of binational dispute management and resolution in the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem

ECOSYSTEM CHARTER DRAFTING COMMITTEE

As of August 15, the following agencies/organizations have confirmed their participation on the Ecosystem Charter Drafting Committee. Additional agencies/organizations may be added in the future.

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**Chippewa/Ottawa Treaty Fishery
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ECOSYSTEM CHARTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As of August 15, the following individuals have confirmed their participation on the Ecosystem Charter Advisory Committee. Additional individuals may be added to the committee in the future.

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ECOSYSTEM CHARTER PROJECT- AN OVERVIEW

The Great Lakes Commission is undertaking, in cooperation with the community of Great Lakes public agencies and non-governmental organizations, the development, adoption and Basin-wide implementation of a binational Ecosystem Charter for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin. A statement of goals, objectives, principles, and action items, the Ecosystem Charter will present - simply and explicitly - a shared vision of the Great Lakes and a blueprint to achieve it. The Joyce Foundation is funding this two-year project.

First introduced via the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement of 1978, the term "ecosystem management" is now common parlance within the Great Lakes scientific and policy communities. At the conceptual level, ecosystem management has been embraced by the array of public sector, non-governmental and citizen based institutions in the Basin, and has provided the framework for many Great-Lakes related policies, programs, and agreements. The problem, however, is the absence of a single, clearly articulated statement - or charter - that explicitly defines goals for ecosystem management in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin and ties a common thread through the many policies, programs, agreements, and institutional mandates that embrace the ecosystem management concept. This problem has been documented in many areas of Great Lakes protection, demonstrating the need for a common, operational definition of "ecosystem management" and a vehicle to promote its application. Until such a charter is developed for this purpose and adopted by the community of Great Lakes agencies and organizations, the collective Great Lakes management effort will be compromised.

A six-step methodology is underway to meet the objectives of the project, which has the potential to be a landmark achievement in the continuing evolution of the collective Great Lakes management effort. These steps include: 1) coalition building to ensure broad participation in Charter drafting and implementation; 2) policy research to identify prospective Charter elements; 3) a drafting initiative to prepare the Charter itself; 4) a policy summit for Charter refinement; 5) a Charter presentation and endorsement event to publicize and promote the initiative; and 6) an implementation strategy to ensure that Charter principles are broadly applied and the action agenda is vigorously pursued.

Two committees have been established to guide the development of the project. The Ecosystem Charter Drafting Committee is a representative group of regional governmental agencies, citizen organizations, and business interests. Committee members are responsible for not only coordinating development of the Charter, but for publicizing it and securing endorsements from the agency/organization they represent. The Ecosystem Charter Advisory Committee, comprised largely of noted academics from universities, is responsible for assisting with development of the Charter and offering insights and advice to the project staff and Drafting Committee. Committee efforts will be augmented by public outreach efforts during all stages of the project.

The Charter document will consist of a vision statement and a series of principles organized by category. Each principle will be accompanied by a statement of finding; a series of commitments that signatories agree to; and an action agenda outlining specific actions that will be undertaken by each signatory in support of the principle. All public and non-governmental agencies and organizations that develop or otherwise influence Great Lakes policy will have an opportunity to both contribute to the development of, and sign the Ecosystem Charter.

The project will formally conclude in the fall of 1994 after the Ecosystem Charter has been broadly endorsed. Implementation and update of the Charter and the associated action agenda will continue into the future.

For more information about the Ecosystem Charter project, please contact Mike Donahue or Victoria Pebbles at the Great Lakes Commission (313) 665-9135.
