

INTERNATIONAL UPPER GREAT LAKES STUDY BOARD

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE RECREATIONAL BOATING AND TOURISM TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP

GENERAL GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

The Technical Working Groups (TWGs) are formed by the Board in consultation with the IJC. The TWGs are organized under specific tasks which fulfill the mandate of the IJC to undertake the studies required to provide the Commission with the information it needs to evaluate options for regulating levels and flows in the Upper Great Lakes system in order to benefit affected interests and the system as a whole in a manner that conforms to the requirements of the Treaty, and the Board shall be guided by this mandate in pursuing its studies. These studies include:

1. Examining physical processes and possible ongoing Lake Huron outflow and St. Clair River changes and their impacts on levels of Lake Michigan and Huron. Additionally, depending on the nature and extent of these changes and impacts, recommending and evaluating potential remedial options;
2. Reviewing the operation of structures controlling Lake Superior outflow in relation to impacts of such operations on water levels and flows, and consequently affected interests;
3. Assessing whether changes to the Order or regulation plan are warranted to meet contemporary and emerging needs, interests and preferences for managing the system in a sustainable manner; and
4. Evaluating any options identified to improve the operating rules and criteria governing the system.

Specific Tasks Teams (TTs) are the Lake Huron Outflow/ St. Clair River Task Team and Lake Superior Regulation Task Team (See attached “IUGLS Organization – Task Team Framework”). The following TWGs are established under the two Task Teams to provide the expert and technical support to deliver the Study:

I. Lake Huron Outflow/ St. Clair River Task Team:

1. Data Verification, Reconciliation, Collection and Monitoring;
2. Hydraulic Modeling; and
3. Sediment Studies.

II. Lake Superior Regulation Task Team:

1. Municipal, Domestic and Industrial Water Uses;
2. Commercial Navigation;
3. Eco-System;
4. Coastal Zone;
5. Hydropower; and
6. Recreational Boating and Tourism

III. Other TWGs which serve one or both TTs:

1. Basin Hydrology: to address net basin supply (NBS), net total supplies (NTS) and climate change issues for both Task Teams;
2. Plan Evaluation: directly linked to the Lake Superior Regulation Task Team, but could peripherally be connected to the Lake Huron Outflow/ St. Clair River Conveyance Task Team;
3. Mitigation Issues: directly linked to the Lake Huron Outflow/ St. Clair River Task Team, but could peripherally be connected to the Lake Superior Regulation Task Team.

The individuals appointed to the TWGs provide the Study Team and the International Joint Commission their expertise and support in their personal and professional capacity and not as representatives of their agencies or employers. The Board provides guidance to the TWGs directly and through the Study Co-Managers. Each TWG should, whenever possible, be composed of equal numbers of members from the U.S. and Canada, and there shall in all cases be at least one member from each country. Each TWG will have two co-Leads, one from each country. All reports of TWGs shall include any dissenting or different views within the group.

Study Board and PIAG members will be apprised of the activities of the TWG by the Task Team Co-Chairs and specifically by TWG co-Leads for those in which they have an expertise in the subject being evaluated by that TWG.

TWG members are committed to work with their specific group as a team in advising on the issues and delivering the work with which the group is tasked.

The co-Leads of each TWG, working in close liaison with the Study Managers and the TWG members are expected to provide leadership and guidance in planning and delivering the work of their TWG as defined by the Study Board Work Plan. The co-Leads will organize meetings and

conference calls; draft work plans; draft terms of reference and provide cost estimates for required work; identify suppliers and sources; draft documentation for contracts; prepare written reports on completed work; and coordinate with other TWGs.

The co-Leads are responsible for ensuring that all deliverables are provided on time and within the approved budget. Meta-data will be required for all deliverables and activities will not be considered complete until this obligation is fulfilled with funding retained accordingly. (As a rule of thumb, twenty percent [20%] of funding will be retained until meta-data is provided).

Each TWG is expected to confirm its annual Work Plans and deliverables with the Board and Study Managers. Funding for the activities of each TWG, in accordance with its approved Work Plan, will be provided by the appropriate section of the Commission, in accordance with applicable government procedures and requirements.

Work that may be undertaken by other government agencies will be on the basis of well-identified products and deliverables, with timelines and itemized costs associated with the tasks. Such work may be according to a formal agreement, contract or memorandum of understanding as the case may justify. Such agreements will be concluded by the appropriate section of the Commission, in accordance with applicable government procedures and requirements.

Each TWG will submit a semi-annual activity report listing activities completed and products created during the reporting period in time to provide input to the Board's semi-annual Progress Report. The TWG will also submit a semi-annual report on expected deliverables that will be generated during the next period.

Each TWG should also keep abreast of the activities of the Board, TTs and other TWGs to ensure consistency in Board general procedures and guidelines, and to ensure best integration of the results of these groups towards the ultimate objectives of the Board and IJC.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION AND TASKS

Recreational boating and tourism are important economic industries in the Great Lakes states and in Ontario. The Great Lakes Commission estimates that there are over a million recreational boats registered in U.S. counties that border the Great Lakes and nearly 800,000 in Ontario that are used on the Great Lakes (GLC, 2000). The recreational boating industry is greatly affected by water levels. Low water may adversely affect recreational boating in several ways. Direct effects include damages to boats, docks, and seawalls, and reduced accessibility as water levels drop.

Accessibility is particularly a problem to properties that have water-only access, such as on eastern and northern Georgian Bay. Damage to boats may occur when boats run aground or hit submerged objects. Docks and seawalls exposed to air as water levels drop may start to decay, leading to accelerated deterioration and failure. High water levels can cause problems, preventing passage under bridges and flooding of docks.

Indirect effects of low water on recreational boating include the loss of boat use and the resulting reduction in related spending. Marinas, boat launches, and related boater support services suffer when boating days are reduced either due to low or high water. Costs for dredging increase during low water periods as many marinas are forced to dredge to stay in business. Facilities often have to be renovated or upgraded. Boat sales also suffer during periods of low water, as the perception of low water affects overall user interest in the industry. Outdoor recreation and water-related tourism is likewise greatly affected by variations in water levels. Extreme high and low water levels can reduce business at marinas, waterfront restaurants, and other commercial establishments and increase costs of doing business. Beaches are a very popular tourist destination in the Great Lakes, and the vacation dollars they bring to the local economies are significant. The commercial and sport fishing industry is also a growing economic force. When extreme high or low water levels occur, tourism in the coastal communities throughout the upper Great Lakes suffers.

In order to assess the effects of alternative regulation plans on recreational boating and tourism in the upper Great Lakes, a detailed description of current recreational boating use and tourism would be developed. The study approach may entail the use of site visits, mail and phone surveys, focus groups, interviews, and mapping to collect and analyze data. A crucial element of any survey task is to develop and test the surveys that would be given to the recreational boaters, marinas, dealerships, charter fishing boats and other related tourism sectors. The end result would include information about how Great Lakes water levels affect the tourism and recreation economic sectors and how the Lake Superior regulation plan can be modified to help the recreation and tourism industry on the upper Great Lakes.

The study will assess the current state of recreational boating and tourism on the upper Great Lakes and then project potential impacts due to alternative operating plans and climate conditions. Once an assessment of the recreational boating on the lakes is complete, the results of the survey can be used to develop a relationship between water levels and boater days. The economic information collected through the surveys would also be used to develop an average cost expended per day. Using these relationships, the relative impacts of alternative regulation scenarios on recreational boating can be evaluated.

Many areas in the upper Great Lakes are prime fishing locations. Extreme high and low water levels impact the quality and availability of fishing resources, including such issues as the ability to launch boats as well as to wade in the rivers, lakes and rapids areas. Impacts on tourism would also be addressed in this study. Impacts would be limited to those directly related to fluctuating water levels, such as effects on waterfront commercial districts that are inaccessible during high water levels. Conversely, effects could also include impacts on businesses in small waterfront communities during low water periods that make their marinas inaccessible or reduce the attractiveness of waterfront facilities, such as beaches, for visitors and customers. Sport and commercial fishing will also be addressed.

The Recreational Boating and Tourism TWG should address the issues of climate change/variability and how these resources may need to adapt in the future to respond to more extreme conditions than have been experienced in the past.

Tasks would include, but are not limited to the following:

- Refine study method in consultation with U.S. and Canadian agency representatives, industry organizations, First Nations/Native Americans tribal leaders.
- Analyze tourism, boating, and commercial fishing businesses and the relationship of their infrastructure to water levels on Lakes Superior, Huron, Michigan, St. Clair, and Erie.
- Integrate all data to report on the size and economic importance of coastal tourism, commercial and charter fishing, and recreational boating and the relationship of these resources to water level fluctuations.
- Conduct mail and telephone surveys of marinas, charter boats, boat dealers, boat repair and reconditioning facilities, boaters, and Great Lakes-dependent tourism businesses in Ontario and the states bordering the upper Great Lakes. Representative samples of registered boat owners would be developed to ensure the survey sample represents all sizes and types of boats and marinas.
- Integrate economic analysis on industries and Great Lakes economy to estimate the economic impacts of fluctuating water levels on recreational boating and tourism industry.
- Assess relative impacts of alternative regulation plans and make recommendations for any improvements to regulation plans specifically for the recreational boating and tourism industry.