

**JSOST Great Lakes Public Briefing
Shedd Aquarium, Chicago, IL
Sept. 15, 2006**

Comment-I was a participant in the Denver workshop. The Great Lakes Commission will work with the Great Lakes governor's council to pull together comments on the draft document.

-The draft document has good references and good packaging, with a good focus on the Great Lakes. However, there needs to be additional emphasis on the unique nature of the Great Lakes in the document.

-One of the most obvious areas is contaminant transport mechanisms in the near-shore affecting drinking water supplies, particularly given the number of people that collect their drinking water from the near-shore.

-Another area is with invasive species. Additional work needs to be done with ballast water.

-We also need more funding in the areas of paleogeology. The Great Lakes is a young system. We have evidence that the area is undergoing isostatic rebound, which, combined with anthropogenic changes, is affecting waterways.

-Under the topic of maritime transport, we need more hydrodynamic information on our rivers and inland seas.

-We are slowly recognizing the importance of global contaminant cycling and associated atmospheric deposition. Pollutants generated external to the basin and to the continent are affecting the area.

-The Great Lakes could be used as model to examine terrestrial interactions. As a restricted system, we can better understand input and develop models for terrestrial interactions.

-For IT, the plan calls for data acquisition and use but has little emphasis on data compatibility and access.

-We have had 10-11 years of developing indicators for ecosystem health, but it's very hard to find the money to implement them.

Question-What's the update cycle of the plan? How long is it good for? When will we have a chance to revisit it? How will it influence the '08 budget?

Response-When commenting on the plan, it's great to have good, specific recommendations like these.

-The implementation strategy will include a timeframe for updating the plan. Given that the agencies need to renew their plans every three years and the administration changes every four years, the plan will likely have a 3-5 year update.

-Every year, there will be guidance on the near-term priorities. For example, OSTP issues a guidance memo to the agencies yearly.

-With regards to the '08 budget, given that the document is scheduled to be released at the end of the year, this will really be a '09 initiative. However, agencies will be thinking of the near-term priorities for '08.

-The initial feedback from OMB indicates that they're happy with the level of granularity of the near-term priorities and the partnership potential.

-How do we engage with outside planning efforts? Examples of areas of interaction with outside planning may be through regional efforts or governors' councils.

Comment-The document is broad and touches on a lot of issues. Not sure how the issues will relate to Great Lakes issues. Through one of the executive orders, we have a strategy for protecting the Great Lakes. Will that be incorporated?

Response-Regional efforts are critical to the success of the priorities plan. SIMOR is engaged and participates in interactions with the JSOST. Through interactions with SIMOR, there is a hand-off to managers. For example, with the Gulf Coast Alliance, SIMOR has a small group working with the Gulf Coast governors. This effort pulls together scientists and managers for dialogue.

-We would welcome suggestions for how to best promote the dialogue, such as events planning.

Question-Will the implementation strategy have a public comment period?

Response-The IS is being generated over the next couple of months and won't have a public comment period due to its federal focus and time limitations.

Comment-The devil is in the details. The Great Lakes regional collaboration is still internalized to the federal agency discourse. Need to keep the pressure on.

Comment (written comments from Shedd-attached)

Comment-On the topic of underwater technology, a few organizations call the tune for the production of research tools. For example, Woods Hole asks industry for something.

-We would like to see improvements in the tools for researchers-this is what industry can bring to the table.

-Each region could have its own wish list of tools. This could include improvements to existing tools or modifications to make them more efficient, less expensive.

-Would like to hear from researchers as a group as opposed to here and there about their needs.

Response-The IS could include a mechanism for setting up a dialogue like that.

-We've been relying on IOOS development documents, but even those don't emphasize new development.

-Getting back to the question on IT access-It's very important to get the data out and in a usable manner. We need to look at interoperability and metadata.

Question-As a representative of Sea Grant, the Sea Grant motto is research, outreach and education. We're trying to include Great Lakes education into standards. Are you working with the Department of Education?

Response-The ocean research community sees education as needing to be integrated with research. In the initial planning materials for the priorities document, education was discussed prominently. We then encountered resistance to having education featured in an ocean research priorities document. The workshop and feedback convinced OSTP that education needed to be in the document. OMB is still on the fence, because the Department of Education is not part of the group developing the document.

-The JSOST and SIMOR have a joint ocean education subcommittee.

-We have some constraints on what we can put in the plan, but not on what we can do as a committee.

Question-Will the public comments from the briefings be available on the web?

Response-Has not yet been discussed, but will be.

Shedd Aquarium comments

Melanie Napoleon, Great Lakes Conservation Initiative Manager

Hello, my name is Melanie Napoleon and I manage Shedd Aquarium's Great Lakes Conservation Initiative. As manager of this Initiative, I thank you for including the Great Lakes as a critical part of the aquatic ecosystems that we Americans depend on.

As you certainly know, the Great Lakes contain 20% of the world's fresh water, supplying more than 42 million people with drinking water everyday. Fifty million tons of cargo are transported through the GLs annually, recreational boaters spend more than \$2 billion annually, and GL anglers and hunters spend more than \$6.5 billion annually. We in the Great Lakes region enjoy the beaches and other recreation, and use the water everyday; the Great Lakes affect our weather, define our region and our quality of life. So its inclusion in this document is important and appreciated by all of us.

I thank you for recognizing the importance of education and public involvement in awareness of ocean and Great Lakes issues. Having your hearing here at Shedd Aquarium also nods to the importance of ocean literacy and the critical role the public has in the supporting research and its applications to keep our waters healthy. Sustainable and effective management of the oceans, Great Lakes and their resources is critical to our future.

I appreciate your acknowledgement of the need for basic research and your recognition of discovery, understanding and application as necessary components of ocean science research. I appreciate your acknowledgement that these resources are finite and vulnerable to overuse.

However, I have some thoughts and suggestions for your consideration, which will help strengthen this document:

Human impact on the oceans and Great Lakes is just as important as the impact the oceans and GLs have on us humans. Anthropogenic effects on oceans often impact human health and utilization of these resources. Ocean-borne threats to human health may originate from human-borne threats to the oceans and Great Lakes, such as atmospheric mercury transport and deposition and sewage overflows.

We must understand effects of human alterations and implement remediation efforts prior to the occurrence of marine hazards. For example, the restoration and/or preservation of coastal wetlands in Louisiana prior to the arrival of Hurricane Katrina could have prevented at least some of the harmful effects we experienced last year.

I suggest that development and improvement of marine operations include technologies for prevention of new invasive species via ballast water, such as sterilization and other means; as well as minimizing water diversions that can affect water levels in harbors and diminish our water supply, something of particular importance to the Great Lakes region.

We here at Shedd know the importance of the connection people have to animals, and how this connects them to the living world. It helps to increase ocean literacy and inspire them to make a difference. Therefore an acknowledgement of the importance of the oceans and Great Lakes, their wildlife, habitats and ecosystems as having their own intrinsic value, should be included in this document and as part of basic research.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, I appreciate the inclusion of the Great Lakes in your definition of “oceans,” and encourage you to make that clear in the Executive Summary, as you have in the main body of the document.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak and provide suggestions. I look forward to the implementation strategy that addresses these research priorities, and how we at Shedd Aquarium can assist.