

FWS/AF

**James D. Watkins
Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)
Chairman
U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy
1120 20th Street North West
Washington, D.C. 20036**

Dear Admiral Watkins:

The attached is in response to the follow up questions you posed in your letter of October 16, 2002, regarding my testimony at the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (Commission) at the Great Lakes Regional Meeting, September 24-25, 2002 in Chicago, Illinois. I appreciated the opportunity to address the Commission on the Natural Resources Panel relative to this matter of great importance to the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Following is the response to your questions. If you should require any additional information relative to this question or if you have other questions on my testimony I would be pleased to address your concerns. If you would like to speak to me directly I can be reached at (612) 713-5301. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the Commission and we look forward to the Commission's report .

Sincerely,

**/s/ William F. Hartwig
Regional Director**

**Approved to Send E:Mail William F. Hartwig
Date: Nov. 12, 2002**

**Great Lakes Regional Meeting
Chicago, Illinois
September 24-25, 2002**

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

Natural Resources Panel

Mr. William F. Hartwig

How can we strengthen collaboration between diverse Federal restoration programs with a variety of local constituent interests, and encourage them to work effectively with local partners to set and meet regional priorities for restoration of natural resources? What process is being used to coordinate habitat restoration activities in the Great Lakes?

Answer:

Restoration programs can only succeed if local constituent interests are addressed. The Chicago Wilderness project exemplifies a successful approach at working effectively with local partners to meet regional priorities for restoration of natural resources. Key resource issues affecting the Chicago Wilderness include exotic species invasions, lack of fire in prairie habitats, increasing habitat fragmentation and habitat loss due to increasing development encroaching on natural areas. Executives of 30 local, state and Federal agencies and organizations met in September 1994. An executive committee was elected and five working teams were created each with a focus such as land management, science, policy/strategy, education/outreach, and marketing. The project tapped the enthusiasm of over 5,000 volunteers previously established by The Nature Conservancy. Success of the project hinges on involvement of many committed people and an understanding and appreciation by all involved of the critical need for natural areas in and urban and suburban environment.

Expansion of this example to a basin-wide approach will only be successful if we adhere to the adage – think globally but act locally. Effective use of Federal interagency coordination at the Great Lakes Basin level must build upon the already established

Midwest Natural Resources Group. This partnership of 14 Federal agencies is working together to bring focus and excellence to Federal activities in support of the health, vitality and sustainability of natural resources and the environment. This body is strengthening collaboration among Federal restoration programs and is providing a linkage to local projects which include Federal partners. A logical next step is to include Great Lakes states and provinces, local government representatives, Tribes, non-governmental organizations, and international commissions such as the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Great Lakes Commission and the International Joint Commission in a truly collaborative effort to form an umbrella body to develop and implement a comprehensive plan modeled after the Everglades Ecosystem Restoration Initiative to begin coordinated efforts to restore the health of watersheds throughout the Great Lakes Basin.