

# Lake Ontario Needs Your Help!



No matter how much we learn about Lake Ontario's ecosystem, nor how well government agencies collaborate on resource management and environmental quality improvements, nor how much money is spent to restore or protect the lake's natural resources, Lake Ontario cannot survive as we know it unless society cares for the its health.

For this reason, one of the three fundamental goals of the Lake Ontario Lakewide Management Plan is:

*We, as a society, shall recognize our capacity to cause great changes in the ecosystem and we shall conduct our activities with responsible stewardship for the Lake Ontario basin.*

To achieve this goal, our activities and decisions affecting Lake Ontario must embrace an environmental ethic and a commitment to responsible, sustainable stewardship by current and future generations. This ethic and commitment for stewardship starts with each of us and grows to include all the members of our family, community, watershed, state or province, and government bodies.

A major role of the LaMP is to help define a lake-wide vision and to promote the growth of stewardship activities, consistent with the vision, across the entire basin. This is accomplished by:

- coordinating government programs and policies to clean up the environment and conserve the lake's natural resources,

- providing factual public information regarding the current state of the lake and those factors or challenges that pose future threats, and
- supporting opportunities for local activities and educational programs that stimulate an understanding and appreciation for the lake's valuable resources and uses, such as the LaMP stewardship poster available at [www.on.ec.gc.ca/pollution/fpd/fsheets/intro-e.html](http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/pollution/fpd/fsheets/intro-e.html).

The good news is that there are an ever-growing number of successful stewardship activities and responsible public organizations in the Lake Ontario basin that are working tirelessly to help achieve the LaMP's goal. In fact, the LaMP member agencies are compiling a comprehensive list of such organizations and activities to share and help promote lessons learned. We want to hear of your activities and organization. Please drop us an email (see pg. 8) with a brief description.

Meanwhile, there is always more you can do. For instance, continue learning all you can about the lake's ecosystem and how our activities affect it; create posters for display at museums, botanical gardens, marinas and other places in your community; and help get the word out that Lake Ontario is important to you!

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## Conserving Lake Ontario Shoreline Bald Eagle Habitat

Bald eagles are back!

There are currently several successful inland bald eagle nesting territories, and in 2000 the first shoreline nest was established. The continued restoration of shoreline nesting territories would be an important sign of ecosystem recovery, helping the LaMP to meet its ecosystem objective for perpetuation of a healthy, diverse, and self-sustaining wildlife community that uses the lake habitat and/or food.

In the long term, the recovery of Lake Ontario bald eagles will depend on the availability of nesting, foraging, and overwintering habitat needed to support their expanding populations.

The Lake Ontario LaMP requested the US-Canada St. Lawrence River Bald Eagle Working Group (SLBEWG), a group of US and Canadian bald eagle experts, to develop a habitat conservation strategy that would (1) identify valuable shoreline bald eagle habitat, and (2) develop improved bald eagle restoration goals and objectives. The SLBEWG effort



Photo credit: Pete Nye, NYSDEC

focused on the eastern Lake Ontario basin and the Upper St. Lawrence River, where the highest quality habitat and the greatest amount of bald eagle activity are currently found. The Upper St. Lawrence River is an important overwintering area for bald eagles and will likely be a source of new nesting pairs that will move into the Lake Ontario basin.

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## Conserving Lake Ontario Shoreline Bald Eagle Habitat

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Bald eagle research has determined that bald eagle nesting and foraging sites need (1) more than 260 contiguous hectares (642 acres) of forest; (2) sites more than 1.5 km (0.9 miles) from wetlands, rivers, or lakes; and (3) sites close to wetlands, lakes, or rivers of greater than 30 hectares (74 acres). A geographic information system (GIS) habitat computer model was used to identify where these 3 habitat types occur together. As a result, 40 shoreline sites (19 US and 21 Canadian) with a high potential to support bald eagle nesting and foraging were identified. These sites will be field-checked beginning in 2006 to confirm the model's results. Working with local conservation groups and individuals, habitat conservation strategies will be considered for those sites that are confirmed to have suitable nesting and foraging habitat.

The SLBEWG developed the following initial bald eagle population and habitat conservation goals to be used in measuring progress in restoring for the combined Lake Ontario-Upper St. Lawrence River ecosystem:

- fledge 1 or more eaglets per year from 80 percent of bald eagle nesting pairs,
- establish at least 10 shoreline nesting territories by 2016, and
- protect at least 5 Canadian and 5 US priority sites totaling more than 5000 hectares (12,355 acres) by 2016.

Continued implementation of bald eagle monitoring and public awareness programs, combined with effective local habitat conservation efforts, will ensure the success of US-Canadian bald eagle restoration efforts.



*Photo credit: Pete Nye, NYSDEC*

## Help Bald Eagles Return to Lake Ontario's Shore

Bald eagles are very sensitive to human disturbance particularly during the critical April to June nesting period. Sightings of these magnificent birds with their 6 to 7 foot (1.8 to 2.1 metre) wing span and brilliant white heads are likely to become increasingly more common along Lake Ontario's shoreline. Whether or not bald eagles establish shoreline nesting territories can depend on how humans interact with them.

### Respect Eagle Privacy

- Don't directly approach nesting or roosting eagles in your boat or vehicle.
- Keep quiet; don't try to make the eagle fly.
- Use binoculars rather than trying to get close for a better view.

### Report Sightings

Not all eagle sightings need to be reported but certain observations are helpful to wildlife experts in managing and protecting eagles. Call one of the numbers listed in the box below if you see the following:

- adult eagles between April 15 and June 15. This could lead to the discovery of new nesting pairs,
- four or more eagles in one location, especially after 3:00 p.m. (this could reveal a significant winter roost site), and
- eagles with colored wing tags or leg bands.

### Support Eagle Conservation

- Become an active participant in local planning and development.
- Support organizations that work towards eagle and all wildlife conservation.
- Owners of quality eagle habitat can consider permanently protecting lands through conservation easements.

## Sound the Alarm!

If you see someone harassing or injuring an eagle, spot destruction of eagle habitat, or find an injured or dead eagle, report it at once to:

- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources  
(800) 667-1970
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
(518) 402-8859

## Understanding Changes in the Lower Aquatic Food Web

The success of US and Canadian efforts to achieve the LaMP's ecosystem objective for maintaining recreational fisheries, restoring self-sustaining populations of native species and maintaining populations of fish eating birds and wildlife depends to a large extent on the ability of the lower food web to support these organisms.

Lake Ontario's lower aquatic food web has been severely disrupted since the arrival of zebra mussels and other invasive aquatic species in the early 1990s. The Lakewide Management Plan and the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's Lake Ontario Committee collaborated to develop the Lake Ontario Lower Aquatic Food Web Assessment (LOLA) project in 2003 to address the serious questions that existed regarding the status of the lower food web.

The project involved partners from 7 government agencies and 6 universities and colleges and coordinated lakewide sampling activities carried out on 3 monitoring vessels. The goals of the project were to (1) assess the status of the lower aquatic food web, and (2) develop recommendations for a long-term binational approach to monitor the status.

Water quality and biological samples were collected across the lake during the spring and summer of 2003. After collection, a considerable amount of time and effort was needed to analyze the samples and interpret the resulting data. A comparison of current conditions to pre-1990 conditions shows that Lake Ontario's ability to support fish populations has been significantly reduced.

The LOLA findings were presented and discussed at a binational workshop attended by LaMP representatives, government agencies and academics held at Cornell University November 16-17, 2005. The final report includes recommendations developed at this workshop for promoting a long-term binational cooperative approach to monitoring the Lake Ontario lower aquatic food web. The International Joint Commission's Council of Great Lakes Research Managers is sponsoring a fall 2006 LaMP workshop to help begin the planning needed to implement some of these recommendations as part of the Lake Ontario 2008 Intensive Monitoring Year. The complete report is available online at [www.epa.gov/glnp/lakeont/lola/lola2006.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/glnp/lakeont/lola/lola2006.pdf).

- **Understanding Changes in the Lower Aquatic Food Web**
- **Binational Lake Ontario Biodiversity Conservation Strategy**
- **2007: A Time for Celebration!**

## Binational Lake Ontario Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

To help guide its actions in conserving and restoring the biological diversity of Lake Ontario, the LaMP has enlisted the support and expertise of two well-respected non-governmental organizations, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Nature Conservancy Canada (NCC), to develop a binational habitat strategy for the LaMP.

The strategy will consider habitat found in the open waters of Lake Ontario, as well as coastal wetlands and inland areas. The project uses a habitat evaluation method known as Conservation Action Planning (CAP) to identify key species, communities, and ecological units. This process will rely heavily on input provided by US and Canadian biologists and ecologists.

It is impractical to consider all species and communities within the Lake Ontario basin as part of a habitat strategy. Therefore the first step in the CAP process is to select a limited number of specific organisms and/or physical habitats, referred to in this approach as targets, that represent biodiversity at all spatial scales and levels of organization throughout the ecosystem. This was the focus of a June 2006 expert workshop, the first of 4, held in Kingston, Ontario. Targets can be natural communities, species, or ecological systems. The findings of this workshop are now being analyzed. The next 3 workshops will identify threats to targets, develop conservation strategies, and develop necessary monitoring plans. The strategy will build on and incorporate existing US and Canadian government fish, wildlife, and habitat conservation strategies, goals, and objectives, whenever possible. The final strategy will be another important

tool to help prioritize and guide binational approaches to habitat conservation. It aims to support the LaMP's ecosystem objective for promoting sufficient quality and quantity of habitat to support the health, productivity and distribution of plants and animals in and adjacent to Lake Ontario.

Local governments, non-governmental organizations and private citizens can play an important role in the successful implementation of selected habitat conservation strategies. Contact us (see pg. 8) if you or your organization would like to know more about this developing project.

### 2007: A Time for Celebration!

In 2007, the Lake Ontario LaMP will join with the Niagara River Toxics Management Plan (NRTMP) in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Niagara River Declaration of Intent. The Declaration of Intent was the instrument responsible for the creation of the NRTMP and the Lake Ontario Toxics Management Plan (LOTMP), which was the foundation for the LaMP.

A celebration/public meeting will be held in Niagara Falls, New York. If you would like to receive more information about the meeting and are not on our mailing list, please contact one of the names on the back of this newsletter.

## Source Reduction Activities in Ontario

### • Source Reduction Activities in Ontario

Canadian PCB trackdown efforts are working! As a result of intensive sampling and analysis done in 3 major Lake Ontario tributaries, Environment Canada and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (OMOE) have identified several sources and potential sources of ongoing contamination, and are working with their partners to control pollution. Here are some examples:

**Twelve Mile Creek** - Twelve Mile Creek, located at the southwest end of Lake Ontario, has a relatively small watershed. More than 95 percent of the water within the creek is diverted from Lake Erie through the Welland Canal. Trackdown work in this watershed started in 2000 and has been successful in identifying a number of sources of PCBs as well as a source of endosulfan, an insecticide used to control various fruit and vegetable pests.

The OMOE engaged the City of St. Catharines to investigate whether a closed landfill is leaking PCBs. The City is now conducting further work to define areas within the landfill that may be contributing PCBs to the creek.

The OMOE has also ordered a Thorold company to investigate sources of PCBs that were traced back to the property it owns. The company is currently preparing a voluntary clean-up plan to address the PCB contamination.

Further work in Richardson Creek, a tributary to Twelve Mile Creek, to track down sources of endosulfan will be focusing on smaller tributaries within this sub-basin.

**Etobicoke Creek** - Etobicoke Creek is an urban stream located in the western section of the city of Toronto, draining land from Brampton to the north and Mississauga to the west (approx. 211 km<sup>2</sup> or 81.5 sq. mi.). The trackdown work within this watershed started in 2001. As a result of this work, a number of branches to the creek have been ruled out as sources of PCBs.

In 2005, two areas were the focus of further investigative work: a large storm sewer system and a tributary draining an industrial area. Current results suggest that the large storm sewer does not appear to be a significant source of PCB contamination. Samples taken from the small tributary adjacent to the industrial area suggest a local source of contamination from discarded materials within the banks adjacent to the drain and potential ongoing contamination from another storm sewer. This contamination is detected in sediment and may be biologically available. Results from water samples taken in 2005 will help determine whether the contamination can be attributed to historical bank sources or to ongoing storm sewer inputs.

**Cataraqui River** - The Cataraqui River (Kingston Inner Harbour) located in eastern Lake Ontario, is an area that was heavily industrialized. There is also a closed (1972) landfill on the west bank of the inner harbour.

Initial trackdown work started in 2001 and led to more detailed environmental investigations. The work identified an area of PCB-contaminated sediment that was an active source of PCBs to the water. To address the problem, a number of groups and agencies contributed funding and expertise to remove, store and ultimately dispose of the identified contaminated sediments. In 2004-2005, the Emma Martin Park Sediment Remediation Project removed 500 m<sup>3</sup> (654 cu. yd.) (dry weight) of PCB-contaminated sediment from the Kingston Inner Harbour. Project partners included Environment Canada, Transport Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Kingston Rowing Club, the City of Kingston, and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment.

No other active sources of PCBs have been identified in this area and the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Environment Canada are planning to return to the area in the fall of 2006 to determine whether sediment remediation efforts have been successful.

The PCB trackdown project, initiated in 2000, is one part of Canada's commitment to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement principle of virtual elimination of persistent toxic substances. The 3 tributaries in the trackdown project were selected because they showed high levels of PCBs. Sampling included sediment, water, and biota. PCBs were chosen as the focus of this project since these contaminants are responsible for many fish consumption advisories.

Future activities in Twelve Mile Creek and Etobicoke Creek will focus on narrowing down sources of PCBs and other persistent bioaccumulative compounds. Within the Cataraqui River, monitoring will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of dredging to remove the sediment PCB source to the river and at reducing PCB loadings to eastern Lake Ontario.



## Source Reduction Activities in New York

NYSDEC and United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) conduct a wide variety of environmental investigations across the Lake Ontario basin, tracking down potential sources and evaluating critical pollutant concentrations in water, sediment, fish, and biological samples. Much of this sampling has been guided by reviews of existing information and recommendations provided by core environmental program monitoring and other special purpose monitoring activities. Highlights of investigation results and critical pollutant control actions completed or underway in New York's Lake Ontario watersheds include the following:

**Eighteenmile Creek** - Twelve miles (19 km) upstream from where the designated Area of Concern enters Lake Ontario, contaminated sediments are located near the city of Lockport downtown area, in the Barge Canal, and



its tributaries. These sediments have moved downstream and are trapped behind the Newfane and Burt dams. Despite source removal work by USEPA at the Williams Street Island (Flintkote Site), residual PCBs persist in the creek bed sediments. The Lockport wastewater treatment facilities have been upgraded with Environmental Bond Act and Great Lakes Protection Funds to address the sewage collection system, combined overflows, and related stormwater. The Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District, which began management and coordination of Remedial Action Plan (RAP) activities in 2005, is coordinating the data synthesis, trackdown, and remedial measures in the AOC and watershed.

**Genesee River** - The Genesee River watershed extends into Pennsylvania about 160 miles (257 km) to the south of Lake Ontario and includes 52 tributaries and 6 lakes. The lower 6 miles (10 km) of the river and mouth area are identified as the Rochester Embayment Area of Concern.

Contaminant source reduction work has been performed in the Monroe County's Sewer Collection System. Updated wastewater treatment permits now include pretreatment and pollution minimization requirements, to enhance discharged water quality. One section in the western metropolitan area of Rochester was identified as having wastewaters high in PCB concentrations. Follow-up action for the Delphi automobile parts manufacturing facility was identified and groundwater remediation was implemented, resulting in treated wastewater free of PCBs being discharged to the local sewer system. In addition, the Monroe County Department of Health has implemented several pollution prevention projects to address mercury discharges from hospital and dental clinic wastewaters, a common source of low levels of mercury reaching the environment. A guidance manual was developed and voluntary actions have resulted in mercury phaseout, collection, and prevention efforts at many dental and hospital facilities. The bay and ponds along this nearshore area present a challenge for shoreline nuisance management conditions due to nutrients and other invasive species.

**Black River** - The Black River and smaller tributaries to the northeastern Lake Ontario shoreline drain about 2,500 square miles (4,023 km<sup>2</sup>) in north-central New York State. This area includes portions of the western Adirondack Mountains, the Tug Hill Plateau, and lowlands along the Lake Ontario shore. Land use is diverse but not intense, making this area among the most naturally pristine and wild regions of the state. The eastern portion of the basin features densely forested woodland of the western Adirondack Mountains. The primary land uses in this sparsely populated region are silviculture and tourism/recreation. At Carthage and Watertown, an inventory and assessment of local waterbodies was completed in 2005. The New York State Priority Waterbody Strategy will be updated based on this recent inventory and assessment to guide the future implementation of watershed and non-point source abatement activities. New York state and local authorities continue to evaluate the potential for remediation of a minor PCB sediment source below the village of Carthage and in other isolated areas of the Black River. In addition, the combination of closing local paper manufacturing facilities as well as upgrades at the Carthage/West Carthage Municipal Sewage Treatment Plant have resulted in significant improvements in the quality of discharge water to the Black River.

### • Source Reduction Activities in New York

## Restoration of Native Fish Species

- Restoration of Native Fish Species
- Sources and Loading of Critical Pollutants

The Lake Ontario LaMP and its partners are actively involved in the restoration of several native fish species. At this time there are projects occurring at Mud Creek, NY, for walleye, Genesee River, NY, for lake sturgeon, in several tributaries around the lake for Atlantic salmon, and offshore for lake trout. This year NYSDEC is leading the development of a new lake trout management plan as the previous plan predates zebra and quagga mussels and goby colonization of Lake Ontario.

Our most recent initiative is very exciting as it is focused on restoring deep-water ciscoes to Lake Ontario and is being championed by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission as well as the LaMP member agencies. It is hoped that re-establishing these deep-water prey fish will restore some of the ecosystem conditions required for lake trout and other predators to thrive. Currently, most salmon and trout feed on alewife and smelt. Bringing back native prey fishes will provide a better quality food item for the top predators! More information will come in the next update.



*Baby cisco (species unknown). Credit: Northern Appalachian Research Laboratory, USGS 2006.*

## Sources and Loading of Critical Pollutants

The virtual elimination of critical pollutants to protect human health and Lake Ontario's natural resources is a major LaMP goal and ecosystem objective. Critical pollutants are bioaccumulative and persistent toxic substances that are known or suspected to be responsible for lakewide impairments of beneficial uses. These substances include PCBs, DDT and its metabolites, mirex, dioxins/furans, mercury, and dieldrin. The LaMP 2002 Biennial Report indicated, based on the very limited loadings data available, that one of the most significant sources of critical pollutants to Lake Ontario comes from outside the Lake Ontario basin, specifically the Niagara River Basin and Lake Erie. The 2006 Report, although still based on very limited data, suggests that while the upstream Great Lakes system is still a significant source, atmospheric deposition (the delivery of pollutants from the atmosphere to water), may be an equally significant transboundary source. While the LaMP parties continue to address in-basin sources through identifying source reduction, regulatory actions, and voluntary efforts to reduce inputs of critical pollutants, the LaMP is also working with the Niagara River Toxics Management Plan and Lake Erie LaMP to achieve further reduction of critical pollutants from these upstream sources.

### Agricultural Pesticide Clean Sweep: Ontario Update

Ontario farmers in the Lake Ontario basin safely disposed of more than 19,000 kg (about 42,000 lbs) of de-registered, outdated, or unwanted agricultural and commercial pesticides in 2005 thanks to the Ontario Waste Agricultural Pesticide Collection Program. From November 22 to 23, 2005, farmers brought pesticides to collection sites at Wellandport, Picton and Bethany,

with 10 other sites providing service to farmers across the province. The pesticides were sorted, recorded, and packaged before being transported to an approved facility for safe disposal.

About 240 kg (525 lbs) of DDT, 2.5 kg (5.5 lbs) dieldrin and its precursor aldrin, and 15 kg (33 lbs) of mercury-containing pesticides were collected in the Lake Ontario basin. Over 1800 kg (4000 lbs) of other old, unidentifiable pesticides were also brought to collection sites by concerned farmers.

The program was funded by CropLife Canada, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Environment Canada, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Agricultural Adaptation Council's CanAdvance Program. The program was also supported by AGCare, the Ontario Agri Business Association and its network of participating agricultural dealers, and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.



*A Clean Sweep event. Photo credit: Environment Canada.*

## Oswego River Area of Concern

### *First United States delisting takes Oswego River AOC off action list*

On June 19, 2006, the Oswego River, New York AOC became the first Area of Concern to be delisted from among the 26 wholly US and 5 binational AOCs identified in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (there are also 10 wholly Canadian AOCs). As a result of much hard work and cooperation, the lower Oswego River and Harbor are once again the crown jewel of the City of Oswego! Through coordinated efforts, the City of Oswego has revitalized the downtown area, the Port Authority has made many improvements, boating and fishing interests have grown, and water access and water quality have improved tremendously.

For the Oswego RAP, impairments involving fish consumption, fish habitat and populations, and eutrophication and algae were identified. Through public participation, investigative studies, and expert involvement, and assessment efforts, the indicators and beneficial uses for the Oswego AOC addressed pollution reduction activities to reduce point and non-point water discharges; watershed best management practices; and local agency river corridor enhancement activities. Consistent with US Policy Committee Delisting Principles, the larger Lake Ontario LaMP responds to fish consumption advisories; the required re-licensing of the power dams responds to fish habitat and population recovery; and eutrophication, algae, and weed characteristics have improved to the point where they are not impaired and will be managed as nuisance conditions where they occur in isolated areas. Watershed restoration and protection activities, as well as Lake Ontario initiatives, all contribute to the desired results.

There is a true success story behind the preparation of the Stage 3 document and delisting of the Oswego River Area of Concern. By representing stakeholder interests, the RAP Remedial Advisory Committee (RAC) has determined, influenced, and observed the implementation of many supportive activities in the Oswego watershed and accomplished the community's recognition of the importance of this area as a natural resource and thereby encouraging others to act responsibly to restore and to protect the environment and the beneficial uses of the waters. In

addition to the implementation of remedial activities, accomplishments for the AOC include the undertaking of a number of investigative studies and report review activities by the RAP; the power dam license provisions, which fully respond to the needs identified in the Fisheries Enhancement Plan for the Oswego River, significant waterfront revitalization by the City of Oswego, and the benefit of local area funded environmental enhancement projects. Recreational interests have also been protected and improved by the responsible agencies oversight.

The RAC effectively applied a wide variety of strategies (called an ecosystem approach) to address the problems. As a result, the status of each of the Use Impairment Indicators was resolved and an understanding was achieved that a significant impairment and/or threat to the AOC environment does not exist. The conclusion is that the lower Oswego River and harbor area no longer warrant the AOC designation.

NYSDEC, USEPA, and other agencies will continue to use the existing suite of environmental laws and regulatory oversight to implement, monitor, and enforce programs that protect the environment in and around the area. The presence of local environmental groups, concerned citizens, and the agencies' purview provide a vigilance that assures beneficial uses will remain intact and that the riverine system will not revert to an impaired status.



*Oswego River AOC Delisting Celebration July 25, 2006. Photo Credit: USEPA*

### • Oswego River Area of Concern

## Next Steps

The LaMP parties will continue their cooperative efforts towards the restoration and protection of Lake Ontario and its ecosystem. The updated LaMP workplan outlines details of activities by the LaMP parties for the next 5 years. Some of the activities include the following:

- contaminant trackdown efforts in the United States and Canada will continue so that contaminant sources can be identified and addressed,
- coordination of binational monitoring efforts, particularly those related to the LaMP's ecosystem indicators, will continue to be a special area of emphasis. Planning is underway for a cooperative monitoring effort focusing on Lake Ontario in the year 2008,
- the monitoring of sediment cores will continue with the data analysis and will include new emerging chemicals. Major US tributaries to the lake will be monitored twice yearly and protocols will be developed for measuring PBDEs in water,
- further assessment of the biological aspects of the lake is planned, including the possible development of new biological indicators to establish well-defined endpoints for the LaMP's restoration efforts, and
- the LaMP will begin the coordination and research necessary for the development of new indicators such as those for coastal wetlands.

The Lake Ontario LaMP has aggressively pursued binational cooperative projects and information sharing in recent years. A coordinated effort has begun to enhance habitat management. This will result in a binational data base and strategy for conservation. The work will draw information from the Canadian habitat assessment, New York State's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, the US Lake Ontario Coastal Initiative, and other relevant habitat work. We also plan to continue and expand our collaborative efforts in the areas of bald eagle conservation and restoration.

The LaMP is following the possible change in water level control by the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Water

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## Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence Water Level Study

The final report of the International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study Board was released on May 31, 2006. The Study Board reviewed the regulation of water levels and flows in the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River system, taking into account the impact of regulation on affected interests, including the environment.

The International Joint Commission is considering the options presented in the Study Board report as potential replacements for the current regulation plan, Plan 1958-D, and will also consider revising its Orders of Approval for regulation of Lake Ontario outflows. After making a preliminary decision on changes to the current regulation plan and Orders of Approval, the Commission will be holding public hearings. The times and locations will be announced. For more information, visit the Commission's website at [www.ijc.org](http://www.ijc.org).

Control Board and the adaptive management actions that will be needed to monitor and mitigate any potential adverse impacts to the ecosystem.

The ecosystem is constantly evolving, and as new information becomes available the LaMP will continue to re-evaluate the lake's beneficial use impairments to update their status.

Ongoing and planned activities with the public include opportunities to meet with existing groups, forming partnerships locally and providing information when requested and regularly through the LaMP website and mailings. Stewardship of the lake will be emphasized at future partnership meetings and member agency programs. We will continue to focus on developing linkages with other Great Lakes strategies that have common goals and objectives as we move forward in restoring and protecting Lake Ontario resources.

## For More Information

Please visit our Web site at [www.binational.net](http://www.binational.net) or contact:

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