

CHAPTER 13 LAMP NEXT STEPS

13.1 Summary

The LaMP parties will continue their cooperative efforts towards the restoration and protection of Lake Ontario and its ecosystem. The LaMP workplan outlines details of activities by the LaMP parties for the next 5 years. In the upcoming years, special attention will be concentrated on the following activities:

- Coordinating binational monitoring efforts and programs to better assess the health of Lake Ontario and its ecosystem.
- Reducing critical pollutant loadings to the Lake.
- Reporting on the status of the LaMP's ecosystem indicators, and adopting new indicators.
- Assessing the current status of the lower food web and the fisheries.
- Re-evaluating the status of the Lake's beneficial use impairments, as needed.
- Developing a binational habitat conservation strategy and actions.
- Conducting public outreach and promoting LaMP partnerships and stewardship of the Lake and its watershed.

The updated workplan and relevant documents can be viewed on the website at www.binational.net.

13.2 Next Steps

The parties of the LaMP will continue efforts to restore and protect Lake Ontario and its biological resources. The LaMP workplan directs and determines progress towards achieving this goal. An updated LaMP workplan became effective in January 2007 and is based on a 5-year schedule. Some of the activities that the LaMP is pursuing are described below.

Contaminant trackdown efforts in the US 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, has proven to be valuable for the LaMP, and will continue to be a special area of emphasis for future years. Planning is underway to continue the data analysis from the major binational monitoring efforts, to disseminate this information and evaluate the management implications and follow-up that will evolve from these efforts. A focused effort is the 2008 Lake Ontario Binational Monitoring planned for the lake.

Further assessment of the Lake is planned including the possible development of new indicators, e.g. habitat including physical integrity, coastal wetlands; stewardship and sediment.

The Lake Ontario LaMP has leaped ahead in binational cooperative projects and sharing in recent years. We plan to continue and expand our collaborative efforts in the areas of bald eagle conservation and restoration and monitoring sediment contaminants.

A binational effort is underway to enhance habitat management. This will result in a binational data base and strategy and actions for conservation. The coordinated work will draw information from the Canadian habitat assessment, New York State's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, and other relevant habitat documents.

The LaMP is interacting with the International Joint Committee on its study of a possible change in water level control by the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Water Control Board, and the adaptive management actions that will be needed to monitor and mitigate any potential adverse impacts.

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

The LaMP will continue to be vigilant on issues such as: the protection and restoration of native species (i.e., Lake trout, American eel); the prevention of introduction of new non-native species; the continuing colonization of the lake by non-native species such as zebra/quagga mussels, fishhook/spiny waterfleas, and round gobies; the effects of rapid urbanization of the western end of Lake Ontario; emerging chemicals of concern such as PBDEs and flame retardants; fish and wildlife diseases; harmful algal blooms and climate change.

Providing the public with a sound understanding of the complex problems facing the Lake is the first step in gaining public support and participation in achieving the LaMP's goals. Ongoing and planned activities include opportunities to meet with existing groups, forming partnerships locally to assist in LaMP projects 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 inform the public through reporting and public meetings, and will participate in other meetings such as SOLEC and the International Joint Commission (IJC) biennial sessions.

Outreach materials that are developed for the public by either U.S. or Canadian agencies will be used in the Lake Ontario basin on both sides of the border whenever possible, to increase awareness of the pollution prevention opportunities in the ecosystem that we have in common.

We are looking forward to this next phase of progress for Lake Ontario and its ecosystem. The updated workplan and relevant documents can be found on the web at www.binational.net, and in Chapter 12 of this document.

13.3 Research and Monitoring Needs

The Lake Ontario Lower Food Web Assessment project was the start of binational cooperative projects to assess the status of the changing lower food web. A major binational cooperative monitoring effort is planned for Lake Ontario in 2008.

The presence of new emerging chemicals in fish and the sediment has begun. A binational sediment core sampling project took core samples in the lake which are being analyzed. The extent of emerging chemicals in the samples will provide direction for future management actions.

13.4 Recommendations

The further reduction of critical pollutants is of primary importance to the LaMP. We recommend that federal, state, local governments, and partner agencies and organizations be encouraged to participate in developing and funding future actions of either a voluntary or a regulatory nature, to track down sources and reduce pollutants.

The binational biodiversity conservation strategy effort is identifying major threats and geographic areas to be protected, and strategies will be identified for future actions. Once the strategy is finalized, we recommend that targeted restoration or protection projects be selected, as well as the process of establishing funding, resources and partners to carry out these projects.

Finally, the synergy that develops from linkages with other Great Lakes strategies that have common goals and objectives, such as pollutant reduction and habitat conservation, should be encouraged.

13.5 References

Lake Ontario 5-Year Workplan, Lake Ontario LaMP Status Report 2008, Chapter 12