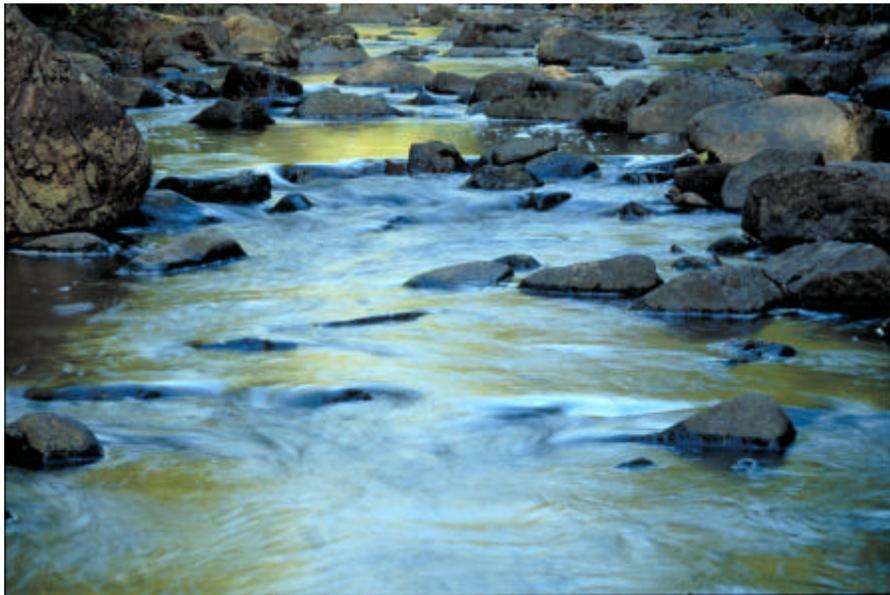


Chapter 2

Public Outreach and Education

This document replaces LaMP 2000 Chapter 2.



Lake Superior's North Shore, Minnesota
Photograph by Dave Hansen, Minnesota Extension Service

Lake Superior Lakewide Management Plan
2004

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Chapter 2

Public Outreach and Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lake Superior Binational Program has a long history of public involvement in the development of the Lake Superior Lakewide Management Plan (LaMP). In particular, the Lake Superior Binational Forum, the primary public group associated with the agencies responsible for carrying out the zero discharge demonstration project, has been key to establishing an effective multi-sector stakeholder process. The Forum has held many workshops over the years for the purpose of acquiring necessary background information to help develop recommendations and proposals for reducing the Lake Superior nine critical pollutants. The Forum has also published many documents on key issues relating to the LaMP.

In addition, a separate Communications/Public Involvement Committee, comprised of staff from government agencies and their partners, was formed to help expand the network of stakeholders and outreach activities. This Committee has produced documents for the purpose of informing the public about all aspects of the LaMP and the Binational Program.

2.0 ABOUT THIS CHAPTER

All the partners involved in the Lake Superior LaMP (i.e., states, provinces and federal agencies, the Tribes/First Nations, industry, the public and others) have long been committed to an open, fair and significant public involvement process. One of the main goals of the Lake Superior Binational Program is, in fact, to promote meaningful public participation and education so as to ensure that the needs and concerns of the diverse population in the Lake Superior basin are met. This section of the LaMP will briefly describe the efforts that have been made to date on public outreach and involvement.

2.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A major tenet of ecosystem management is the necessity of continuous involvement of the public that is inclusive and respectful of all viewpoints and stakeholders. Public input and support help ensure that the actions recommended in the LaMP are carried out, leading the way to restoring and protecting the Lake ecosystem. The key to public support and the program's success is effective communication between the government agencies and the diverse population of the Lake Superior basin.

LaMP 2004 is presented as a working document, based on existing information. It was the goal of the Binational Executive Committee to provide a *current* foundation for discussion of Lake Superior efforts, not necessarily a *complete one*. The LaMP will be modified based on new findings and public input. To that end, public input received on

LaMP 2000 has been addressed in LaMP 2004 (e.g. chapter 9 sustainability). This is a necessary step if we are to institute adaptive management on an ecosystem scale.

2.2 PUBLIC OUTREACH/EDUCATION EFFORTS TO DATE

When the Lake Superior Binational Program first began, public involvement activities were carried out primarily by the Binational Forum (see section below). As the Program matured, it became apparent that the government agencies and their partners needed their own separate public outreach mechanism. A separate group, therefore, was formed entitled the Communications/Public Involvement Committee. Over the years, the two groups have worked together, complementing each other's efforts to involve the Lake Superior population.

2.2.1 Lake Superior Binational Forum

Since 1991, the Lake Superior Binational Forum has served as the principal public body providing input to the governments responsible for carrying out the Binational Program. In 1990, the IJC recommended that Lake Superior be a demonstration area where no point source discharge of any persistent toxic substance would be permitted. The purpose of the Forum is to further consultation and participation among government, industry and environmental stakeholders on the restoration and protection of Lake Superior. The Forum is composed of Canadian and American stakeholders representing environmental, Tribal/First Nation, industrial, business, health and academic interests.

The Forum has held various technical workshops since 1991 for the purpose of acquiring necessary background information to help develop proposals for phase-out schedules and reduction recommendations. These recommendations on the nine critical pollutants, for example, may be found in the Stage 2 Lakewide Management Plan. These workshops have been held on mercury, sustainability indicators, PCBs and pesticides, to name a few. A more complete list and description of recent Forum activities may be found in Addendum 2-A.

In addition to sponsoring workshops, the Lake Superior Forum has published a number of reports and documents, ranging from assessing public attitudes toward pollution prevention, to providing feedback and comment on Lake Superior ecosystem objectives and principles.

The Forum has focused on a series of projects that are conducted jointly with the Superior Workgroup. These have included a newspaper insert, the Community Awareness Review and Development (CARD) project, stewardship and awards programs, and workshops on mercury and household garbage burning. Forum activities are reviewed annually during the preparation of the yearly workplan.

2.2.2 Activities of the Communications/Public Involvement Committee

The Communications/Public Involvement Committee of the Work Group is led by staff from Environment Canada and U.S. EPA. The committee implements provisions of a strategy reflecting the Lake Superior Binational Program's long-term commitment to communications, public involvement, outreach, and education.

The Binational Program has produced various documents and brochures for the purpose of informing and educating the public. These documents include a general informational brochure on the Binational Program, as well as a brief introduction of each committee on the Lake Superior Workgroup. Each individual committee has also produced fact sheets that outline the goals and objective of the committee, with past and anticipated activities.

In the fall of 2001, the agencies released another brochure, commemorating the tenth anniversary of the Binational Program. This brochure addressed the accomplishments achieved over the ten year period and addressed the challenges that remain.

The Binational Program has developed a traveling display as a means of outreach and education to the general public. This display has been, and will continue to be, used as a means to publicize Lake Superior and the Binational Program at public meetings, seminars and conferences. The display includes a large photographic display of the lake, with space for fact sheets, brochures, and other documents. The display booth is staffed by members of the Binational Program. In addition, a table-top display developed by University of Wisconsin - Extension is in use around the basin.

The Committee has been revising the main Lake Superior Binational Program web sites (www.epa.gov/glnpo/lakesuperior/ and www.on.ec.gc.ca/water/greatlakes/lakes/superior/intro-e.html) which consist of a home page and supporting pages. This complements the Forum website which can be found at www.superiorforum.info/sitemap.html. In the future, it is anticipated that the main program website will be moved to a joint Canada-U.S. site (www.binational.net) which is a site devoted to binational programs jointly lead by Environment Canada and U.S. EPA.

The Communications/ Public Involvement Committee is also participating in joint outreach and education projects with the Forum such as a newspaper insert and a Lake Superior Awards program (see Addendum 2-A).

A mailing list has been compiled to keep the public informed of new developments in the Lake Superior basin and to provide them with the opportunity to comment. The mailing list includes both U.S. and Canadian government agencies; tribal organizations and First Nations; environmental groups and other public groups.

Assembling material to inform the public on progress toward restoring and protecting Lake Superior is another role the committee fulfills. In that function, the committee is working on success stories for distribution in various newsletters. The Binational Program works in partnership with other organizations toward a common goal of a

healthy and safe Lake Superior. A number of examples of outreach activities associated with chemical issues can be found in the LaMP 2004 chapter 4 progress report under Appendix C.

As this Lakewide Management Plan Report 2004 is not intended to be extensively circulated to the public, the agencies plan to produce a separate document to inform the public on Binational Program activities.

2.3 CONCLUSION

The partners involved in the Lake Superior Binational Program have many ongoing outreach, education and communication activities. The partners believe that these will meet the objectives of informing and educating the public about the program, involving the public in the decision making process and educating and motivating stakeholders into action. These agencies are mindful that involvement by people representing a wide range of interests is essential to the success of the Lake Superior Binational Program. Public input and support will help ensure that actions recommended in the program are carried out, leading the way to restoring and protecting Lake Superior.

ADDENDUM 2-A

LAKE SUPERIOR FORUM WORKSHOPS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Forum Accomplishments 2002 and 2003

- Conducted a one-day workshop in September 2003 called “Living on the Edge: Protecting and Restoring Lake Superior’s Rivers and Shorelines” that addressed the impacts of human activities on the land and water of riparian areas. About 100 people from Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ontario attended the workshop, held at the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa reservation in Odanah, Wisconsin. The event was part of a three-day Water and Land Symposium organized by four regional and state partners.
- Conducted a one-day workshop in June 2003, in conjunction with the Work Group, on “Mercury in Our Lives: A Workshop on Mercury Reduction for the Lake Superior Community.” The goal of the workshop was to raise public awareness about mercury’s effects on human health and the environment. About 65 people attended the workshop held in Thunder Bay, Ontario.
- Provided mini-grants to four community groups for projects and programs to restore or protect natural resources in the basin. These projects included: installing native plants as garden landscaping for the Marquette, Michigan public library; paying for travel expenses for five high school student presentations that were delivered at the sixth biennial Lake Superior Youth Symposium in Ashland, Wisconsin; training volunteer citizens through the Bad River Watershed Association to conduct water quality monitoring activities; and constructing a Forum website.
- Scheduled a Lake Superior Binational Program display at community events around the basin to educate residents about the zero discharge program and the LaMP.
- Organized elected officials in two states, four cities, and one tribe to sign a proclamation declaring the third Sunday in July 2003 as Lake Superior Day. The goal of this day is to celebrate the importance, beauty, and uniqueness of the lake. The following governments signed proclamations that acknowledged a dedication to protecting the lake: the states of Michigan and Wisconsin; the cities of Superior, Duluth, Bayfield, Ashland; and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa tribal government.
- Collaborated with EcoSuperior and the Work Group in Thunder Bay in April 2002, to hold a workshop, “Burning Household Garbage: Impacts and Alternatives,” about the dangers of using burn barrels as a method of disposing of household garbage. The workshop targeted a diverse group of participants and

asked for feedback on the extent of burning, the challenges of introducing behavior changes, waste reduction alternatives, and regulations and enforcement.

- In 2003, the Forum initiated two joint projects with the Superior Work Group: 1) a basin-wide Environmental Stewardship Award Program and 2) a newspaper insert.
- The Forum continues to provide input and analysis to governments about LaMP implementation. In addition to holding workshops and public input sessions, the Forum has also written numerous letters to various government representatives about different environmental issues having the potential to negatively impact the Lake Superior ecosystem. Some of these issues include: trap rock mining in Michipicoten Harbour in Wawa, Synfuel Technologies' proposed power plant on the Mission River in Thunder Bay, trading of emission credits among power plants in Wisconsin, and an all weather road proposed for Black Bay Peninsula. The Forum has recommended that the Binational Executive Committee take more of an advocacy role in mercury reduction targets for Lake Superior.
- The Forum has also requested that the Work Group address water diversions, exports, flows and levels in the 2004 LaMP with recommendations for preventing/reducing such threats.