

The Québec Metropolitan Community and its President Régis Labeaume, Mayor of Québec City, hosted the 9th Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative Annual Meeting and Conference on June 26-28, 2012. *Advancing Waterwise Cities* was the theme of the successful event held in scenic and historic Old Québec, offering spectacular views of the nearby St. Lawrence River.



Mayor Régis Labeaume, President of the Québec Metropolitan Community (center), with Mayor Brian McMullan, of St. Catharines, Ontario, 2011-2012 Chair of the Cities Initiative (left) and David A. Ullrich, Executive Director of the Cities Initiative, at a press event at City Hall, Québec City.
Photo Credit : Robert Greffard, CMQ.

Mayor Brian McMullan, the 2011-2012 Chair of the Cities Initiative, presented awards to six member communities for their outstanding work in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River over the past year. The City of Gary, Indiana, received the Wege Small Cities Sustainability Award for its GrowNWI program. The Cities of Duluth, Minnesota and Thunder Bay, Ontario, were recognized for their leadership in water pollution prevention and Lambton County, Ontario, was recognized for its progress in water pollution prevention, with Green CiTTS awards. Two member communities received Water Conservation Framework awards. The City of Windsor, Ontario, was recognized for its progress in water conservation, and the City of Thunder Bay, Ontario for its innovation in water conservation.

At the meeting, nine resolutions were passed, on topics ranging from aquatic invasive species to shale gas exploration, sediment management and sustainable municipal water management. Mayor McMullan thanked the members for their involvement in the organization during his chairmanship before handing the position

to Mayor Tom Barrett of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mayor Régis Labeaume became Vice-Chair of the organization along with Mayor Keith Hobbs, of Thunder Bay, Ontario, as Secretary/Treasurer.



Mayor Tom Barrett, of Milwaukee, WI, 2012-2013 Chair of the Cities Initiative, discussing a resolution at the 2012 Annual General Meeting.
Photo Credit : Chantal Gagnon, CMQ.

Mayor Labeaume welcomed municipal leaders, government and policy officials and other concerned stakeholders to Québec City. He introduced the dynamic speaker, Canadian astronaut and Québec Scientific Delegate Ms. Julie Payette. She shared her unique view of the relationship between water and cities from her experience in space and stressed the importance of caring for our shared waters with spectacular photos of many cities in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin taken from space.



Ms. Julie Payette during her keynote address at the 2012 Annual General Meeting.
Photo Credit : Chantal Gagnon, CMQ.

The first panel of the Conference, moderated by Mayor Labeaume, *Shoreline Communities and the Marine Industry: Challenges and Opportunities*, showed how cities and their ports and marinas can grow together. David Bolduc, Executive Director of Green Marine, discussed the growth of marine industry involvement in environmental issues. Nicole Trépanier, President of the St. Lawrence Economic Development Council, discussed the challenges facing the marine industry, from recreational uses to cruise ships and marine shipping. Finally, Mario Girard, CEO of the Québec Port Authority, talked about the importance of the relationship between a port and its host city and how public information has helped change opinions about the port.

Mayors and other conference attendees took the opportunity to directly connect with each other on issues important to their community in the *Mayors Exchange*. The topics of *Rural Issues and Erosion*, *Climate Change Adaptation*, *Invasive and Endangered Species* and *Land Use Planning and Shoreline Protection* sparked interesting discussions and debates and allowed all attendees to go back to their communities with fresh ideas and an expanded network of experts.

The highly informative day was capped by a gala dinner at Baie de Beauport, a public, newly restored beach and multi-purpose facility along the St. Lawrence. U.S Ambassador to Canada David Jacobson's keynote address discussed the strength of the binational relationship created by the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River and the importance of the newest version of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.



Commissioner Dereth Glance of the International Joint Commission during her keynote address at the 2012 Annual General Meeting.
Photo Credit : Robert Greffard, CMQ.

To kick off the second day of the Conference, Commissioner Dereth Glance put into perspective the current work of the International Joint Commission by discussing the origins of the organization and its priorities for the next few years. Robin Hamlyn, a 13 year old student from Kingston, Ontario, urged the mayors to push for more action in water protection.

Our first panel of the morning, *Changes in the Nearshore: Ideas for your Community*, featured Mayor Randy Hope, of Chatham-Kent, Ontario as moderator. Charles Larochelle, Deputy Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks of Québec and Philippe Morel, Regional Director of Environment Canada, presented the highlights of the St. Lawrence Action Plan 2011-2026. Dr. Don Scavia of the University of Michigan discussed sediment flow to the Great Lakes and the reasons of the new wave of algal blooms in the nearshore of Lake Erie. Conference attendees also saw the results from student intern work through the NASA-DEVELOP program on algal blooms in the Great Lakes.



Mayor Randy Hope, of Chatham-Kent, ON, moderated the panel *Changes in the Nearshore: Ideas for your Community*.
Photo Credit : Robert Greffard, CMQ.

Mayor McMullan moderated the last panel on *Sustainable Municipal Water Management*. Mayor Barrett described some of Milwaukee's efforts and talked about the publication of ***Sustainable Municipal Water Management: Measuring Progress and Reporting Publicly***, a Cities Initiative Green CiTTS (Cities Transforming Towards Sustainability) program report presenting a public reporting framework and milestones for cities to achieve in their quest for sustainable water management. Peter Vanrolleghem presented the water management audits offered by the

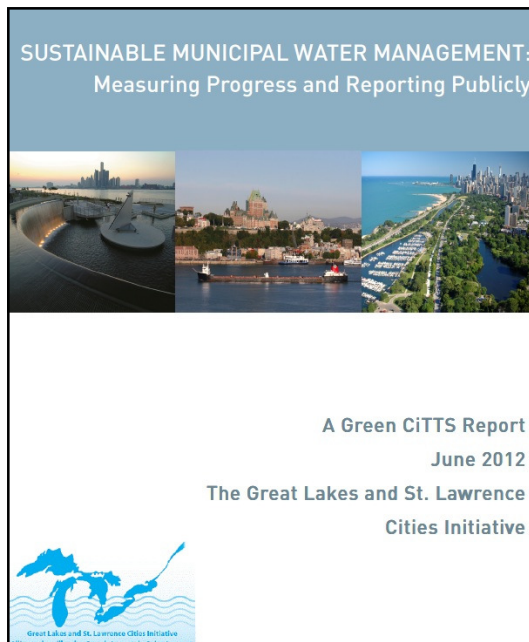
International Institute for Municipal Aquaresponsibility. Jean-Francois Barsoum, from IBM, talked about monitoring technologies and stressed the importance of modeling as part of comprehensive municipal water management.



Mayor Tom Barrett (left), of Milwaukee, WI, speaks at the Sustainable Municipal Water Management panel.

Photo Credit : Robert Greffard, CMQ

At the mid-day press conference, Cities Initiative mayors made public their **Declaration on Water Sustainability** as an effort towards the protection of water resources. As part of the Green CiTTS program, the report titled **Sustainable Municipal Water Management: Measuring Progress and Reporting Publicly** was officially launched, offering municipalities tools to measure their performance in sustainable water management and report publicly about their efforts. The report is available at: <http://www.glslcities.org/initiatives/greencities/smwmm.cfm>.



Laurent Lessard, Minister of Municipal Affairs of Québec, delivered a keynote address over lunch. He discussed the role of municipalities in water management and congratulated attendees for their willingness to share best practices towards the greater good of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. Mayor Labeaume closed the Conference by stressing the need for action and the prime position of municipal administrations in water management. Representatives from Marquette, Michigan showcased a video inspiring attendees to come and visit this wonderful lakeside town of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan for the 2013 Annual Meeting and Conference on June 19-21, 2013.



Laurent Lessard, Minister of Municipal Affairs of Québec, during his keynote address at the 2012 Annual General Meeting.

Photo Credit : Robert Greffard, CMQ.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative would like to thank the Metropolitan Community of Québec, the City of Québec, Mayor Régis Labeaume and his staff for their wonderful efforts to make this a memorable and productive annual meeting and conference. Special thanks also go to our generous partners who made this event possible and so successful. We look forward to seeing you in Marquette, Michigan, on June 19-21, 2013. For more information about the Conference, visit: <http://www.glslcities.org/annual-meetings/2012.cfm>.