



MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

Launch of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Collaborative Strategy

The Great Lakes St. Lawrence Collaborative is an independent, stakeholder-driven process to propose new and innovative ways to tackle some of the most challenging and imminent threats to Great Lakes and St. Lawrence communities. The resulting Great Lakes Collaborative Strategy will focus on four critical challenges:

- 1) **Climate Change:** is causing severe flooding, extreme heat, and extended drought, posing an extreme threat to the waters of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence and the communities in the Basin.
- 2) **Toxics and other Harmful Pollutants:** from fire retardants to plastics to salt, inland waters that are a source of drinking water to millions of Canadians, are accumulating toxics and other harmful pollutants
- 3) **Nutrients:** phosphorus loadings, primarily from agricultural and municipal sources, are feeding harmful algae blooms in Lake Erie and other areas of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence basin that present a serious threat to public health, drinking water, fishing and swimming.
- 4) **Beaches and Bacteriological Contamination:** , beach closures caused by stormwater runoff, sewage overflows, leaking septic tanks or animal waste during prime tourism season pose a public health risk and impact tourism-dependent local economies.

Expert Panel*

The Collaborative Strategy will be led by a 12-member Expert Panel co chaired by two eminent environmental experts, former Ontario Environmental Commissioner, **Gord Miller** and former Québec Sustainability Commissioner **Jean Cinq-Mars**. The co-chairs are joined by the following indigenous representatives, environmentalists, municipal leaders, academics, and business leaders, including:

Anishinabek Nation Regional Deputy Grand Council Chief Edward Wawia

St. Catharines (ON) Mayor Walter Sendzik

Denis Lapointe, former mayor of Salaberry-de-Valleyfield

Theresa McClenaghan, Executive Director of the Canadian Environmental Law Association

Denise Cloutier, Executive Director, C.I.EAU.

Karen Clarke-Whistler, Former Chief Environment Officer, TD Bank Group

Hélène Lauzon, president Conseil Patronal de l'environnement du Québec

Professor Bob Slater, University of Carleton

Adriane Plourde, Director, l'Institut des sciences de la mer de Rimouski

* Bios and photos available at <https://westbrookpa.com/glsllcollab/>



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Seeking New and Innovative Solutions

The Collaborative will bring new thinking to complex challenges facing water resources in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence region and beyond. These solutions may range from innovative financing mechanisms like green bonds, pollution trading and local revolving investment funds, to new applications of clean technologies to remove diffuse sources of pollutants, to the use of smart technology to remotely detect and alert authorities about deteriorating water quality, to engaging citizens to make changes to their daily habits that impact water resource on which we all depend.

Bringing Diverse Expertise together to find solutions

The Expert Panel will be supported by stakeholders representing a cross section of interests from diverse sectors, including agriculture, finance, climate change, clean tech, environment, industry, indigenous, public health, and local government representatives. Organised into four issue tables, these stakeholders will formulate recommendations for the Expert Panel's consideration.

The four issue tables will be chaired by:

Climate Change: Ewa Jackson, deputy director of ICLEI Canada; and Al Douglas, Director, Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Resources (OCCIAR)

Beaches: Collingwood Mayor Sandra Cooper; and Bernard Mayer, Haliburton Kawarthas Pine Ridge Public Health Department

Toxics: Helen Doyle, chair of the OPHA Environment Committee. Representative from Ontario Environment Industry Association (ONEIA) to be confirmed.

Nutrients: Gayle Wood, former CAO of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority; and Dale Cowan, AGRIS and Wanstead Farmers Cooperatives

18-month process

The Collaborative will follow an 18-month process beginning in October 2018, proceeding in two overlapping phases. The first phase, from October 2018–June 2019 will focus on recommendations to improve protection of the Great Lakes. The second phase, beginning in April 2019 through to December 2019, will focus on making recommendations to improve protection of the St. Lawrence River. Two summits, in Toronto (Spring 2019) and in Quebec City (Fall 2019), will bring broader stakeholders together to provide input.

Collaborative Partners

The need for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Collaborative Strategy was championed by five organisations committed to strengthening protection of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin: the [Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative](#), the [Great Lakes Fishery Commission](#), the [Council of the Great Lakes Region](#), [Freshwater Future Canada](#), and [Stratégies Saint Laurent](#). These organisations now form the Collaborative Steering Committee, responsible for the administration of the process.