

## Indicators and Information Strategy Team

This paper presents an overview of the approach being used by the Indicators and Information (I&I) Strategy Team to develop its portion of the Great Lakes Restoration and Protection Strategy.

**Objective:** The I&I Strategy Team will produce a report that provides information on current programs for observing, monitoring, evaluating and modeling environmental information across the region and will identify critical future needs including development of decision support tools. This report is intended to explicitly address the Governors' priority to standardize and enhance the methods by which information is collected, recorded and shared within the region.

**Scope:** The I&I Strategy Team is composed of over 140 interested participants representing all major stakeholders across the region.

The I&I Team has divided its task into the following three steps:

- Description of existing programs and activities to collect observations, operate monitoring networks, define indicators, model complex physical and ecological systems and assess progress to consensus goals;
- Evaluate options for addressing identified needs for observing, monitoring, modeling and indicator systems, and;
- Recommend actions to implement desired indicator and information system improvements.

**Process:** Five workgroups have been assigned to perform these tasks according to the following technological categories:

- **Indicators:** Members will interact with other strategy teams to develop a methodology for identifying and applying a suite of indicators that will help gauge progress in meeting goals of the restoration strategy.
- **Data and Information Management:** Members will develop and recommend a methodology for acquiring and maintaining relevant data and information, with an emphasis on standardization and ensuring broad availability.
- **Research and Monitoring:** Members will identify research and monitoring needs to support strategy implementation, and recommend research priorities and monitoring systems toward that end.
- **Decision Support:** Members will identify and recommend observing systems and associated decision support tools that can link research and monitoring outcomes with policy and management decisions.
- **Communications:** Members will develop and recommend a methodology by which scientific and technical data can be effectively presented to non-technical decision makers and stakeholders, as well as the general public.

**Interaction with Other Teams:** Since all of these workgroups are addressing issues that are cross-cutting and overlap with work being conducted by the other strategy teams, the I&I Strategy Team will assign one team member to act as a liaison with each strategy team. Liaison responsibilities are to be focused on insuring that the results of the I&I Strategy Team's work is consistent and integrated with the final Great Lakes Restoration and Protection Strategy document.