

Sustainable Development Strategy Team

This paper presents an overview of the approach being used by the Sustainable Development (SD) Strategy Team to develop its portion of the Great Lakes Restoration and Protection Strategy and issues identified by the SD Team for consideration by other Teams and the Executive Committee.

Objective: This Team will produce a report that provides information related to current and future human activities in the Great Lakes Basin with recommended actions to promote sustainable use practices that protect environmental resources that may enhance the recreational and commercial value of the Great Lakes.

Scope: The SD Team has divided its task into the following three steps:

- Description of existing human activities and infrastructure related to a particular category of natural resource use with an evaluation of factors potentially affecting future uses, as well as any projected trends;
- Evaluation of the options for sustainable use practices with consideration of their societal, economic and environmental impacts, and;
- Recommendations for actions to promote selected sustainable use practices, including description of their costs and impacts and responsibilities

Process: Workgroups have been assigned to perform these tasks aligned with the following categories of human uses of natural resources:

- Land use and development;
- Agriculture and forestry¹;
- Industrial activity;
- Transportation;
- Water infrastructure, and;
- Recreation, tourism and fishery

Interaction with Other Teams: The issue of sustainable development is cross-cutting and overlaps with every other priority issue to some extent. In order to facilitate integration of priority issues, this Team will provide information to all other Teams on the first task from each workgroup (descriptions of existing uses and trend analysis) at the end of February so that it may be used in their evaluations. ¹This Team wishes to work in partnership with the Nonpoint Source Team to evaluate agriculture and forestry use, trends and sustainable practices.

Other Issues: The expedited schedule set for the development of the Great Lakes Restoration and Protection Strategy is a significant handicap to the SD Team for several reasons: there is no pre-existing regional strategy or plan that provides a headstart in directing our effort; the cross-cutting nature of the SD issue requires additional time to resolve potential conflicts with other issues, and; SD is more future oriented than other “restoration issues” and requires a broader base of basin participants. There is a concern that the quality of report developed in this expedited timeframe will not be sufficient to present justifiable recommendations and facilitate meaningful review comments. In addition, the current schedule would not allow adequate time for integration of the eight Team reports in an open process. With this in mind, recommend the Executive Committee consider allowing a minimum of one additional month for delivery of the draft strategy.