

## Chapter 2:

# A Vision for St. Clair River Lake St. Clair

### Key Topics:

- 1) Our collective vision
- 2) Principles to guide our efforts
- 3) Goals and objectives

This chapter defines the vision, principles, goals, and objectives of the St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair Comprehensive Management Plan. This material was developed in cooperation with the Project Management Team and the Management Plan Advisory Committee. They were afforded broader public review at the June 2003 U.S. EPA Lake St. Clair conference. They provide a foundation and a series of benchmarks upon which to both guide implementation of the management and evaluate its success. Appendix A of the management plan contains a matrix that illustrates the linkages between the management plan goals, objectives, and recommendations.

## Our Collective Vision

What do you imagine the Lake St. Clair watershed to be like in five years? Ten years? One hundred years? A vision invites us to imagine our most desirable future state and to work together to make that vision a reality. Based on comments from interested stakeholders and project partners, the following vision statement was developed to describe the ideal state for the Lake St. Clair watershed:

*We envision a healthy Lake St. Clair watershed in which governments, associations, businesses, educational institutions, and individuals work together to protect, restore, and maintain the health of the watershed for current and future generations.*

## Principles to Guide Our Efforts

The following principles provide guidance for our efforts – both individual and collective - to protect and restore the Lake St. Clair watershed.

### ***Individual Rights and Responsibilities***

Access to clean water, air, and land is a fundamental right of all individuals. This right involves a shared responsibility for the informed use, management, conservation, and protection of these natural resources.

### ***Government Rights and Responsibilities***

Government authorities have an obligation to protect, restore, and maintain resources that are held in public trust and to support implementation of relevant federal, state, provincial and local laws and programs consistent with their mandates.

### ***Environmental Quality***

A healthy Lake St. Clair watershed requires protecting, restoring, and maintaining the natural resources of the watershed through improved management, monitoring, and research.

St. Clair River and Lake St. Clair Comprehensive Management Plan, June 2004  
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### ***Economic Prosperity***

A healthy Lake St. Clair watershed requires an appropriate balance between ecosystem protection and economic development.

### ***Partnership Approach***

A healthy Lake St. Clair watershed requires cooperative management among governments, associations, businesses, educational institutions, and individuals in the watershed.

### ***Ecosystem Approach***

A healthy Lake St. Clair watershed requires an ecosystem approach that considers Lake St. Clair and its entire drainage basin as a holistically interconnected system. Each component of the system, including humans, affects other parts of the system.

### ***Sustainable Communities***

Sustainable communities meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## **Goals and Objectives**

This plan identifies specific goals and objectives to protect and restore the Lake St. Clair watershed. These goals and objectives are binational and lakewide. The goals are broad and identify discrete areas for action to achieve our vision for the lake. The objectives are interim steps to achieve the goals. The management plan's recommendations are specific actions necessary to achieve the goals and objectives, and are included in the subsequent topical chapters. These recommendations pertain only to the U.S. portion of the Lake St. Clair watershed; Canadian recommendations will be developed separately by the Canadian agencies. These recommendations represent current priorities and problem perception. They are not exhaustive. As collaboration in the watershed proceeds, and more is understood about the watershed processes and functions, recommendations will be eliminated, changed or new ones identified as necessary to meet management goals.

Recognizing that a separate suite of goals and objectives has been developed for the St. Clair River via the binational St. Clair River Remedial Action Plan, the goals and objectives below are intended solely for Lake St. Clair. However, they are envisioned to be consistent with, and complementary of, those in place for the St. Clair River.

### ***Environmental Health of the Watershed***

**Goal: Pollution does not threaten public health and the health of the watershed.**

Objective: Meet water quality standards.

Objective: Identify, quantify and control pollutant discharges from point and nonpoint sources.

Objective: Identify and eliminate chemicals of concern with specific emphasis on mercury and PCBs.

Objective: Support the development and implementation of pollution prevention strategies.

Objective: Monitor, identify, and eliminate spills.

Objective: Provide adequate monitoring to assess individual areas and trends.

### ***Habitat and Biodiversity***

**Goal: All biological communities and habitats are healthy, diverse, and self-sustaining.**

Objective: Meet all existing water quality standards and ensure that there are no negative impacts on the health of aquatic populations due to water quality impairments.

Objective: Protect, restore, and maintain natural communities and habitats within the watershed necessary to support fish and wildlife populations.

Objective: Protect, restore, and maintain threatened and endangered species and communities within the watershed.

Objective: Identify, prioritize, and remediate contaminated sediment sites that impair the biological communities.

Objective: Prevent, control and manage invasive species.

### ***Human Health***

**Goal: Water is safe for drinking.**

Objective: Meet all existing drinking water criteria, as specified in federal, state and provincial law.

Objective: Control sources of pathogens and contaminants in order to ensure water is safe for drinking.

Objective: Ensure adequate monitoring of source water used for drinking water supplies.

**Goal: Water is safe for swimming.**

Objective: Ensure that all water bodies in the watershed meet water quality standards for total body contact, where ecologically feasible.

Objective: Control sources of pathogens to eliminate the need for beach closures.

Objective: Provide adequate beach monitoring to assure rapid detection of elevated pathogen levels and timely reporting to public.

**Goal: Fish and wildlife are safe to consume.**

Objective: Remediate sources of contaminants that cause fish and wildlife consumption advisories.

Objective: Ensure that consumption guidelines for fish and wildlife are well publicized and comprehensible.

### ***Land Use***

**Goal: Land use activities are sustainable and support a healthy watershed.**

Objective: Promote sustainable land use activity.

Objective: Identify and monitor impacts from land use, and develop mitigation strategies to help minimize and avoid these impacts.

### ***Fisheries, Recreational Boating and Commercial Navigation***

**Goal: Recreation and economic activities impacting the lake are sustainable and support a healthy watershed.**

Objective: Initiate and support initiatives that promote sustainable recreation and economic activity.

Objective: Identify and monitor impacts from recreation and economic activities that impact the lake and develop mitigation strategies to minimize these impacts.

Objective: Enhance existing public access sites to the lake and develop and maintain new sites.

Objective: Ensure effective ballast water management practices to minimize introductions of exotic species.

### ***Monitoring***

**Goal: Data and information are available to ensure informed management decisions.**

Objective: Establish, maintain and fund a long-term monitoring program that establishes baseline conditions, identifies a complete set of indicators, and utilizes indicators to assess environmental trends, detect responses to management actions, and identify management priorities.

Objective: Disseminate monitoring information to the public, local authorities, and other interested parties in a timely manner.

### ***Achieving Our Vision***

**Goal: All entities responsible for natural resources and environmental protection within the watershed are working together in a collaborative manner to protect and enhance the watershed.**

**Goal: The public is informed about environmental issues and engaged in activities to restore and protect the lake.**

Objective: Increase awareness among the public, local governments, and other stakeholders regarding adverse impacts to Lake St. Clair, actions needed to address those impacts, and progress made toward achieving management plan goals and objectives.

Objective: Encourage and maintain a high level of public participation in, and commitment to, actions needed to achieve and maintain management plan goals and objectives.

Objective: Implement educational programs to foster appreciation of Lake St. Clair and its resources and to develop a stewardship ethic for the lake and its watershed.