

KEEPING OUR GREAT LAKES GREAT

Remedial Action Plans for Areas of Concern: **24 Years On**

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Water Guardians Network Workshop
Toronto
20 August 2009

Three items I do not want to miss

- GLWQA, RAPs, AOCs, IJC, PACs, BPACs: alphabet pasta & jargon, lotsa **cheerleading**, some soup?
- **Smart & accountable** are the key words
- **Smart** – scientific uncertainty, lack of follow through
- **Accountable** --- Strong regulatory standards coupled with local control [cf. IJC, COA + collaboration with local stakeholders and First Nations]
- More involvement of more ENGOs especially in **local** RAPs [signatories and a group modelled on Waterguardians Network]

OVERVIEW

- Brief personal note
- Brief overview of RAPS
- Appreciation & critique in the context of the review and revision of the GLWQA
- A plea for more ENGO participation in local RAPS

Historic Milestones

- 1794-5 Jay's Treaty--Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation
- 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty – cholera – fantastic progress
- 1972 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement --- phosphorus nutrient issue --- fantastic progress
- 1978 revision --- persistent toxic substances – some progress
- 1987 Protocol & annexes -- RAPS
- 2009 Canada and USA Committed to Amend Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement -- opportunity for ENGOs

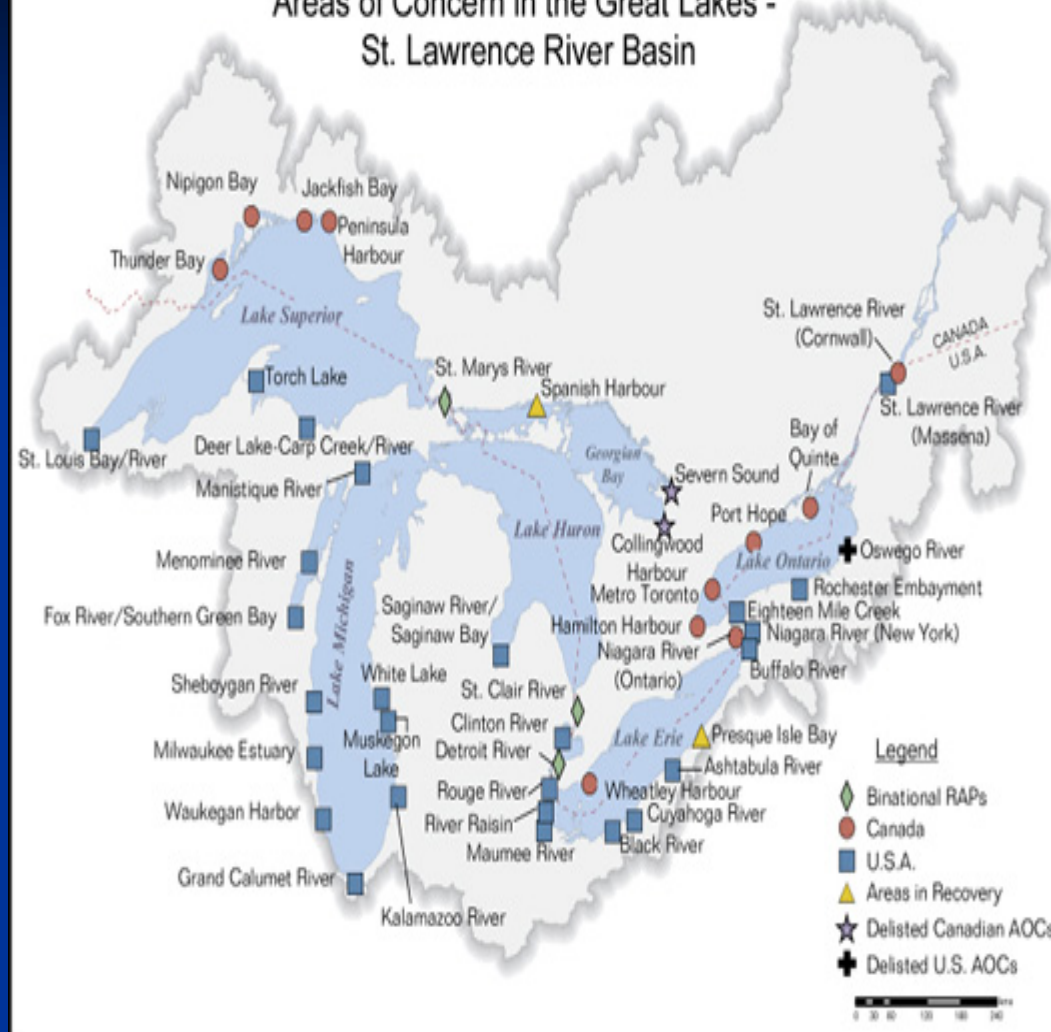
RAPs in brief

- RAP programme established in 1987 under Annex 2 of the revised GLWQA
- Commitment to ecosystem approach in Annex 2 [land]
- 42 + 1 added later
- 10 in Canada, 26 in US and 5 binational
- 3 delisted: Collingwood Harbour and Severn Sound in Ontario & Oswego Bay in New York State

RAPs -- beneficial uses of the aquatic ecosystem are impaired because of environmental degradation

- 14 impaired uses
- Restrictions on drinking water (taste & odour)
- Loss of fish & wildlife habitat [T]
- Beach closures [T]
- Restrictions on fish & wildlife consumption [T]
- Toronto has 8, maybe 11 impaired uses

Areas of Concern in the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Basin



■ Areas of Concern

- Thunder Bay,
- Nipigon Bay
- Jackfish Bay
- Peninsula Harbour
- St. Marys River
- St. Clair River
- Detroit River
- Wheatley Harbour
- Niagara River X
- Hamilton Harbour X
- Toronto and Region X
- Port Hope X
- Bay of Quinte X
- St. Lawrence River X

■ Area in Recovery

- Spanish Harbour

■ Delisted Areas of Concern

- Collingwood Harbour
- Severn Sound

The Toronto and Region Area of Concern (AOC) extends from the Rouge River in the east to the Etobicoke Creek in the west and includes six watersheds: Etobicoke Creek, Mimico Creek, Humber River, Don River, Highland Creek and Rouge River. More than three million people live in the 2000 square kilometer area.

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/raps>

Some progress – a lot more is needed

- RAPs have significantly contributed to the improvement of the Great Lakes and particularly the AOCs and public involvement (PACs and OPAC) has played a leading role in the successes of the RAP process.
- RAPs need more attention from both governments and ENGOs because the more costly and more difficult remedial actions have lagged. ENGOs should play a leading role in mustering public involvement and assessing progress.

Public and ENGOs have significantly contributed to the literature about RAPs

- JGLR collection of critiques on 10th anniversary of RAPs launch
- Strategies for Restoring Our Waters (1993)
- Clean Water, Clear Choices (1994)
- Great Lakes Hotspots: Ontario Citizens Speak Out (2006) (John Jackson for OPAC)

Summary of RAP **Progress**

- Habitat rehabilitation -- very good progress – visible, comparatively low cost and less complex
- Industrial point sources – substantial
- STPs -- upgraded from primary to secondary. Less progress on CSOs
- Contaminated sediments – significant progress
- Non-point sources pollution – widespread efforts and success

Impediments to success

- Lack of federal and provincial sustained commitment and leadership, especially funding [balanced budgets resulted in cuts for RAPs which have not been restored]
- Scientific and technical complexity – lack of agreement on solutions
- High cost (1-3 billions for STP and combined sewers in Toronto)
- Who should pay? (Hamilton vs Toronto)
- Lack of regular and meaningful reporting on RAPs (cf. IJC)
- Lack of legislated obligation for RAP programmes
- Lack of clarity around delisting process
- Imperative to involve First Nations

Crucial changes in process

- Lack of **accountability** – role of IJC has been helpful but also a problem – dependent on the 2 federal governments for budget
- No legislative clout specific to RAPs
- Poor **collaboration** with local stakeholders -- poor reporting, no budget and no meetings with OPAC and/or local PACs
- For example, most recent progress report on the Toronto RAP followed a long hiatus – it is 2 years late, no communication with PAC or opportunity to comment, short notice
- ?First Nations?

Plea to ENGOs

- Imperative for ENGOs to join hands for long haul (Water Guardians Network is an excellent prototype)
- Focus especially on COA
- Learn from US experience
- Strengthen OPAC
- Enhance visibility for both local and Province-wide issues relevant to the RAP process
- Build on local support among public and politicians
- Increase the number of funded projects, campaigners and researchers devoted primarily to RAPs

Thank you

?questions? and !comments! welcome



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