

GREAT LAKES LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

MISSION

The mission of the Great Lakes Law Enforcement Committee (LAW) is to protect, enhance and promote the safe and wise use of the natural resources in the Great Lakes for present and future generations and in doing so, the LAW shall:

Promote the concept that the Great Lakes fisheries resource is a shared, renewable resource whose protection and enhancement requires close cooperation among all jurisdictions charged with the responsibility of resource protection.

Promote recognition and acceptance that law enforcement is an integral part of effective Great Lakes fisheries management.

Promote cooperation among all Great Lakes law enforcement jurisdictions by:

1. Identifying and promoting Great Lakes law enforcement priorities and tactics;
2. Sharing of law enforcement information;
3. Supporting investigations that span jurisdictional lines and the Memorandums of Understanding on Regional Cooperative Enforcement Operations (MOU);
4. Supporting development and dissemination of information about emerging enforcement technologies and techniques; and
5. Developing and recommending consistent objectives for policies and regulations, and commensurate penalties, among jurisdictions.

Provide regular updates to the Council of Lake Committees as appropriate.

Ensure law enforcement information is made available for incorporation into policies that affect fisheries management decision-making.

Participate in the management of fisheries resources and fish habitat by preventing exploitation by unlawful means, over-harvest, introduction of aquatic invasive species, and habitat destruction.

GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF CONCERN

For deliberations of this committee, the area of concern is the illegal take, possession, transportation, sale and release of aquatic resources and the conservation and protection of fisheries habitat from “Lake Ontario (including the St. Lawrence River for Lake Ontario to the 45th parallel of latitude), Lake Erie, Lake Huron (including Lake St. Clair), Lake Michigan, Lake Superior and their connecting waters.” It also includes the tributaries of each of the above waters to the extent necessary to ensure effective enforcement in the Great Lakes basin. Due to threats to the Great Lakes and Great Lakes fisheries stocks that occur outside of the listed boundary area, discussions of this committee may, at times, include enforcement activity within the territorial and jurisdictional boundaries of the respective signatory parties to *A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries* (Plan), especially when considering aquatic invasive species and organisms in trade.

COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

Provide a forum for the exchange of information among law enforcement agencies within the Great Lakes basin. Provide a conduit for the transfer of information between fisheries managers and law enforcement to promote the development of enforceable regulations. Guide and direct any subcommittees appointed by the LAW. Work with lake committees to determine the appropriate role of law enforcement to support fisheries management and fisheries habitat objectives. Identify and evaluate issues associated with compliance to fishery regulations in the Great Lakes Basin and to support agencies in their resolution to deter illegal activities. Draft recommendations for consideration by the Council of Lake Committees on the cooperative procedures and the practical fishery management policies required to reduce and prevent illegal commercialization in the Great Lakes Basin. Advise the Council of Lake Committees on all matters pertaining to effective law enforcement in the Great Lakes Basin.

MEETING SCHEDULE

The committee shall meet twice per year sufficiently in advance of the Council of Lake Committees meeting to allow the preparation of material, reports, and recommendations for its review and action. The Chair, to deal with special business items, may convene special meetings.

MEMBERSHIP

Each Plan agency shall appoint one law enforcement member to the committee. Members are responsible for effectively representing their respective agency by providing information and guidance on committee discussions and recommendations. Each agency may designate alternates who can serve in the absence of regular members. Agencies are encouraged to bring ~~guests~~ additional enforcement staff or other agency personnel to LAW meetings. A non-Plan agency with law enforcement authority in the Great Lakes Basin may serve as a member of the LAW as approved by the committee and appoint a member to the committee.

OFFICERS

Chair: The Chair shall be a member of a Plan agency and serve a 2-year term. The outgoing Chair shall be responsible for presenting the committee's update to the Council of Lake Committees.

Vice-Chair: The Vice-Chair shall be a member of a Plan agency and serve a concurrent 2-year term, but may not be from the same country as the Chair. The Vice-Chair shall be responsible for assisting the Chair with presenting the committee's report at the Council's annual meeting. The Vice-Chair will become the Chair upon the completion of the Chair's term.

Past Chair(s): Past Chairs may serve up to a 2-year term, and be reappointed by the Committee for additional terms. They are responsible for continuity as appropriate, historical perspectives and contributing to ongoing and future initiatives.

LAW Leadership Team: The LAW Leadership Team shall consist of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Past Chairs, and any other committee member deemed pertinent by the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Past Chairs to carry out duties of the LAW Leadership Team. The LAW Leadership Team shall be responsible for conducting executive level business for the committee, planning and organizing committee meetings, drafting recommendations and documents, and representing the committee with other committees, organizations, and agencies.

SUB-COMMITTEES

Sub-committees may be established by the LAW Leadership Team to work on specific projects.

ADVISORS

Advisors may be appointed to work closely with the membership on the committee for indefinite terms, as required to enhance the progress of committee work.

DECISIONS

Decisions of the LAW shall be based on consensus of appointed members or designated alternates who are present at the meetings. Any recommendations or decisions that are produced by the LAW shall note agencies that were not present or chose to abstain. The concerns of all members shall be described in the committee's report to the Council of Lake Committees.

REPORTING

Detailed reports of the LAW meetings will be furnished by the Chair to all committee members, including member agencies not present at the meeting. Summary reports and committee recommendations for Council of Lake Committees approval will be presented during the Council's annual meeting.

ROLE OF THE GLFC SECRETARIAT

The Secretariat of the Commission (Secretariat) will be the liaison between LAW and the Commission. Specifically, the Law Enforcement Specialist from the Secretariat will assist LAW in developing and distributing agendas and minutes for each meeting, preparing briefing materials, reports, letters, and other communications, and making meeting arrangements. In fulfilling its role, the Secretariat will apply diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competency standards of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (<https://www.glfrc.org/deic-statement.php>).

Approved by the CLC: October 23, 2024