

Charge Question 6

How, if at all, should scientific indicators developed by the International Joint Commission or other official processes be considered for use refining Measures of Progress or other aspects of the GLRI Action Plan?

Scientific indicators should play a significant role in measuring progress and communicating results of GLRI investments in the future. The SOLEC process has been very effective for years in identifying many indicators on the Great Lakes, and has more recently grouped and reduced the numbers of indicators to a more manageable level. Starting in early 2012, the International Joint Commission formed a Workgroup to further refine the list to come up with a group of indicators with broad support as the few that tell us the most. That workgroup, and the broader process, included many representatives from government, non-government, and academic communities. Both the Science Advisory Board and the Water Quality Board were heavily involved. A workshop that included over 50 Great Lakes experts from a variety of disciplines met over a three day period in September 2012 to develop the list. Extensive work has been done since then and a summary report was delivered to the IJC in April and the full technical report will be delivered by the end of July. This work still needs final review and approval by the two Federal governments, but that should not be too far away.

It is exceedingly important for the Great Lakes community to develop a common currency of progress and success on the Great Lakes. It will help significantly in evaluating our programs, making adjustments to increase their effectiveness, and communicating with the broader public and opinion leaders about the health of the Great Lakes. We strongly recommend the Interagency Task Force adopt these indicators to the extent possible for measuring the success of the GLRI investments. A copy of the summary report on indicators is attached.