



Great Lakes Fishery Commission & Indigenous Communities

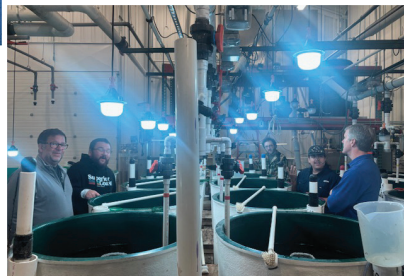


Cover artwork by Jess Pauze, Garden River First Nation

The purpose of this fact sheet is to share information about the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission) with regard to our efforts, including but not limited to relationship and trust building, partnerships, and education and outreach occurring with and in Indigenous communities across the basin.



Marc Gaden, Andrew Muir, and Janessa Esquivle on the ferry heading to Walpole Island First Nation for a community and relational visit with local community members, staff, and Council members in April of 2025



Alex Duncan, Andrew Muir, Josh Egan, Bo Bunnell receiving a tour at the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB) hatchery in August of 2025

Relationship and Trust Building

Commission staff recognize the importance of building trust and developing a better understanding of shared visions, goals, and objectives with Indigenous communities across the basin to ensure the health and sustainability of Great Lakes fisheries and communities. Respect, reciprocity, relationality, and responsibility help guide the Commission's perspective toward building relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities. Above all, we operate by consensus. Commission staff have engaged in training and are actively developing experience in cultural sensitivity, Indigenous language, Indigenous data governance and sovereignty, and are committed to learning how to better support and work with Indigenous peoples and communities. Commission staff are committed to applying lessons from history to inform and improve relationship and trust-building approaches with Indigenous communities.

Education and Outreach with Indigenous Communities

Commission staff have participated in education and outreach activities with Indigenous communities. Staff can bring sea lamprey educational outreach materials and live sea lamprey to community gatherings and share general sea lamprey educational outreach materials directly with interested communities. Commission staff have attended public Tribal and First Nation powwows and other cultural gatherings regularly (by invitation). Staff can also share information about the Commission funding programs, *A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries* (Joint Strategic Plan), and relevant fisheries meetings hosted by the Commission that are open to the public.



Christina Contreras Stone and Andrew Muir performing outreach at the Gun Lake Nmé Celebration on September 3, 2025



Commission staff, Inaaknigewin Initiative Leadership & Chippewa of the Thames First Nation Lands Guardian Program leadership visit



Commission Science Directorate Staff, River Institute Staff doing a tour at the Native North American Travelling College in January of 2026

Partnerships with Indigenous Communities

The Commission's fishery management staff have formally engaged with some United States Tribal governments and organizations (e.g., Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority, 1854 Treaty Authority, Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa) as it facilitates the Joint Strategic Plan and its associated fishery management committees. The Commission-supported the Joint Strategic Plan, bringing fishery decision makers together as equals. Sea lamprey control staff work with several Tribes and First Nations on various agreements and projects pertaining to sea lamprey control. The science team has many well-established and emerging relationships with Indigenous communities and researchers across the basin, including some formal research partnership agreements and contracts with Indigenous partners. Communications staff support the fishery management, sea lamprey control, and science directorates through the development of outreach materials and attendance at various events to share information with Indigenous communities about the Commission's programs.



Have Feedback for Us?

Share your thoughts by scanning the QR code and filling out our survey.

Funding Opportunities and Community Support

The Commission supports three unique funding opportunities through fishery research, sea lamprey research, and science transfer programs. The Commission provides funding to the Indigenous Great Lakes Network Initiative (IGLN) and Inaaknigewin: Giigoonyag, Nibi ge Aki Initiative (Anishinaabe Law: Fish, Water and Land Initiative), which both have a focus on facilitating knowledge sharing and learning with Indigenous Peoples and organizations. The Commission has also sponsored community events (e.g., gatherings) and provided materials (e.g., lamprey models) so that communities can undertake their own outreach and education programs.



Learn more at indigenousgreatlakesnetwork.org

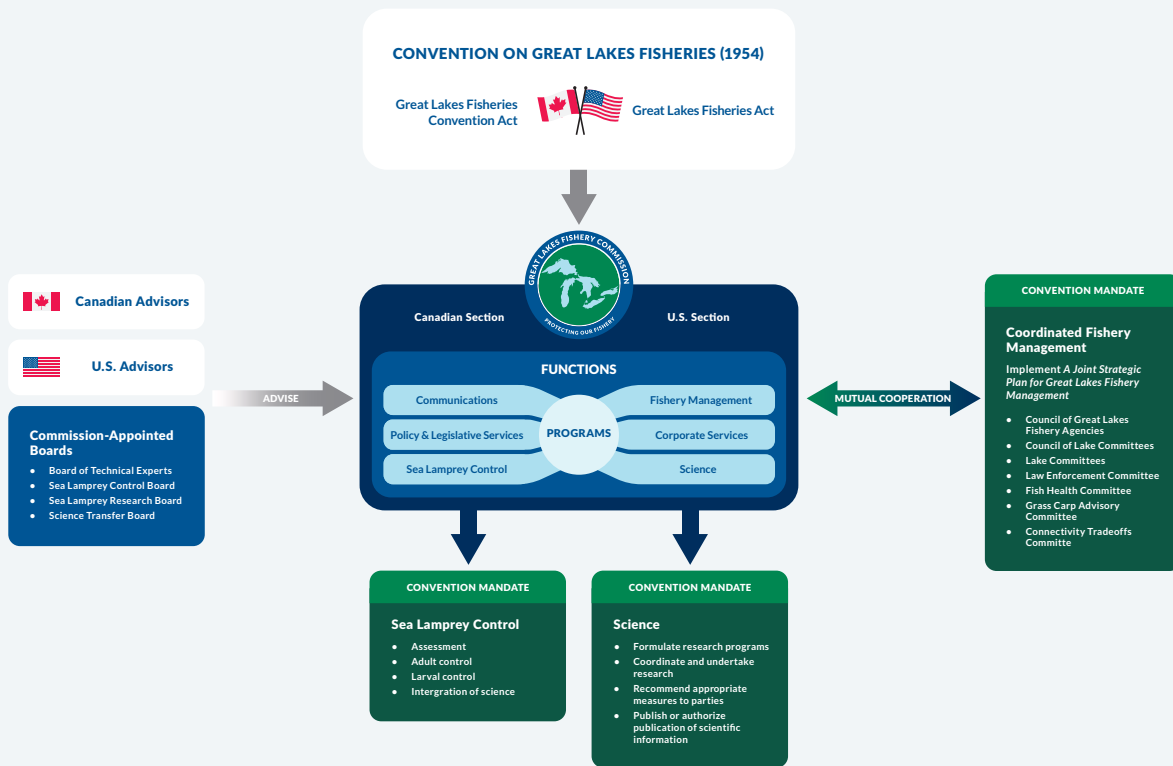


Top and bottom: Saugeen Ojibway Nation and Commission staff participate in a retreat. Right: Walpole Island First Nation walk with partners (photo : Jade Prange)



Commission Overview

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission was established in 1955 by the Canadian/U.S. Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. Its primary roles include coordinating fisheries research, controlling predatory, non-native sea lampreys, and facilitating cooperative fishery management through *A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries* (Joint Strategic Plan).



Opportunities to Learn More

Within the scope of its mandates, Commission staff spend time coordinating and bringing researchers, community members, stewards, decision makers, and others together to discuss Great Lakes issues.

If you would like to learn more about the opportunity to collaborate, learn more from one another, or about any of the Commission's funding and educational outreach opportunities, please contact Jill Wingfield, Communications Director, at info@glfc.org

