



**Committee of Advisors
to the
Great Lakes Fishery Commission**



**Resolution #1: Resolution in Support of USGS Great Lakes Science Center:
Fisheries Assessment**

Whereas the USGS Great Lakes Science Center supplies essential fishery assessment data to Great Lakes fishery management agencies through its acoustic surveys, annual trawl surveys of prey populations and annual surveys of lake trout populations;

Whereas information on forage fish populations is essential for implementing fisheries management plans;

Whereas the federal fisheries research capabilities, including the large vessel program, on the Great Lakes was moved from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, an agency with a long history of fisheries mandates on the Great Lakes, to the U.S. Geological Survey, an agency with no prior or existing fisheries mandate or responsibility on the Great Lakes, and

Whereas the Great Lakes Science Center is at present the only agency with the capability and mandate to conduct these surveys;

Whereas annual assessments have always been at the core of the Great Lakes Science Center's mission;

Whereas the needs for fishery research in the Great Lakes by the state, tribal, and fishing public have consistently been unfulfilled since the federal research program was moved to the U.S. Geological Survey, and

Whereas recent personnel changes, shortages of staff, and budgetary shortfalls now preclude the center from conducting much of its core mission and the overall capability of the federal Great Lakes fisheries research program and its fiscal and staff resources continues to deteriorate,

Whereas the Committee of Advisors is alarmed by the prospect of losing the valuable assessment capability to the detriment of management of the Great Lakes fishery resources;

Whereas a multi-agency review of the Great Lakes Science Center recommended forage base assessment be continued for the foreseeable future;

Therefore be it resolved that the Committee of Advisors urge the USGS Great Lakes Science

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Center to fully fund and staff its vessel assessment program in order to fulfill its obligation to Great Lakes management agencies and the stakeholders in the U.S. and Canada

Be it further resolved that the Great Lakes Commissioners carefully consider these issues and add its voice to those concerned with the loss of these programs.

Be it further resolved: The Great Lakes Fishery Commission should clearly articulate the requirements of the Great Lakes Science Center's large vessel research program to the Secretary of the Interior, focusing especially on the unique capabilities of these vessels and their role in the multi-agency partnerships in the management of Great Lakes fisheries.

Be it further be it resolved: In addition to articulating requirements, the Commission should challenge the Secretary of the Department of Interior to take immediate actions necessary to ensure long term funding, staffing and equipping of the large vessel program.

And finally be it resolved; The Commission should ask the Secretary to seriously consider recombining the federal Great Lakes fishery research capability at the Great Lakes Science Center with the fisheries management assistance programs of the Fish and Wildlife Service's, however, any transfer of the large vessel program or the Science Center must include full staffing, support facilities and funding.

Passed, June 4, 2002

Resolution 02-01

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