
International Joint Commission. Great Lakes Regional Office

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land use activities

in the

great lakes basin
A Citizen's Guide to Great Lakes Pollution: Problems and Solutions

INTRODUCTION

This short guide is intended for those of us who enjoy the benefits of the Great Lakes basin who would like to do something positive to protect and improve the Great Lakes ecosystem.

The first report of the International Joint Commission on Great Lakes Pollution from Land Use Activities (PLUARG), which contained most of the information which is presented in this publication, was the first part of the guide. This was followed by two parts, which were published in 1975 and 1976. The PLUARG investigations included the entire Great Lakes drainage basin, an area which covers 37 million Canadians and Americans and nearly 600,000 square miles of land and 60,000 square miles of surface water, 25% of the world's fresh water supply.

PROBLEMS

PLUARG identified two major pollution problems resulting from increasing population, changing technology and interfering water and land uses: phosphorus and toxic substances.

1. Phosphorus

In 1972, the International Joint Commission was asked by the governments of Canada and the United States to conduct a study of pollution in the Great Lakes drainage basin, and in other Great Lakes areas. The commission formed PLUARG, to identify the potential and actual pollution caused by such activities. The scope of the PLUARG investigations included the entire Great Lakes drainage basin, an area which covers 37 million Canadians and Americans and nearly 600,000 square miles of land and 60,000 square miles of surface water, 25% of the world's fresh water supply.

2. Toxic substances

In 1972, the International Joint Commission was asked by the governments of Canada and the United States to conduct a study of pollution in the Great Lakes drainage basin, and in other Great Lakes areas. The commission formed PLUARG, to identify the potential and actual pollution caused by such activities. The scope of the PLUARG investigations included the entire Great Lakes drainage basin, an area which covers 37 million Canadians and Americans and nearly 600,000 square miles of land and 60,000 square miles of surface water, 25% of the world's fresh water supply.

BACKGROUND

In 1972, the International Joint Commission was asked by the governments of Canada and the United States to conduct a study of pollution in the Great Lakes basin. The commission formed PLUARG, to identify the potential and actual pollution caused by such activities. The scope of the PLUARG investigations included the entire Great Lakes drainage basin, an area which covers 37 million Canadians and Americans and nearly 600,000 square miles of land and 60,000 square miles of surface water, 25% of the world's fresh water supply.

THE GREAT LAKES BASIN

1. Find out from your local agency responsible for pollution control what you can do to reduce pollution from your activity.
2. Have your soil tested to see that you are not applying too much water, fertilizer or pesticide to your land.
3. Find out what your soil needs and add no more. (Soil tests are available from your local Agricultural Extension Service.)
4. Join a local group which has demonstrated a concern for environmental protection, and ask the teachers and principal what they think about the value of pollution control mechanisms.
5. Write to your local government for sound soil erosion control practices in education and public awareness activities.
6. Become involved in planning, redirecting the location and size of waste treatment facilities, and laws which are environmentally acceptable differences and motivate you in the decision-making process.
7. Press your local government for sound soil erosion control practices in construction activities.
8. Check the levels and on the topics of most interest to you. See if there are topics, workshops, advisory groups, hearings, public meetings, etc. which you can attend. Write letters, and ask to be placed on the mailing lists which will ensure that you hear about the things which interest you.
9. See how much coverage newspapers, radio and TV give Great Lakes problems and solutions. Let them know you're interested. Encourage mechanics, firefighters, etc. who are not interested in the topic and the way it is covered. It will not be treated as important.
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