A PROMISING FRAMEWORK TO FOSTER GLOBAL COLLABORATION

Lake committees & advisory groups in the Laurentian and African Great Lakes

by Zeph Migeni and Evans Lomodei

THE GLOBAL SIGNIFICANCE of large lakes—with their extensive biodiversity and huge provisioning ability for goods and services—calls for transboundary and transjurisdictional collaborations, partnerships, and extension in both research and education. Two pre-pandemic conferences demonstrated this thirst for such collaboration: the African Great Lakes (AGL) conference in Entebbe, Uganda (2017) and the 60th annual conference of the International Association for Great Lakes Research in Detroit, Michigan, USA (2017). At both events, a diverse group of attendees came together to explore the enormous benefits of shared and varied ideologies and resources across continents. Organizers argued that resource paucity within one lake system or region may inhibit efforts to address larger-scale challenges on freshwater fisheries, thus calling for collective transboundary collaboration to enhance the maximum beneficial use of scarce resources across regions for management and conservation of the world's large lakes.



Lake Turkana Advisory Group experts and advisors on a recent research visit. Photo by James Last.

The importance of collaboration within the African Great Lakes has been demonstrated in the Lake Victoria basin through the coordinating effort of the Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization between Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Similarly, the successful coordinating and facilitative efforts of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the International Joint Commission, and others in the Laurentian Great Lakes emphasize the need for large lakes collaboration. Therefore, the huge potential that can be harnessed through a joint African and Laurentian Great Lakes collaboration is highly desired. Each region has a similar framework to facilitate collaboration: advisory groups in Africa and lake committees in North America. The AGL's advisory groups are facilitated by the African Center for Aquatic Research and Education. The organization provides lake-specific freshwater experts drawn from academia, research, and policy-making governmental and nongovernmental institutions to offer advice and conduct research for the management and conservation of the African Great Lakes. Similarly, the lake committees of the Laurentian Great Lakes are lake specific and tasked with similar roles as stated by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. The envisaged collaboration between these two groups can enhance the interchange of ideas and resources, which will in turn contribute to and ensure sustainable management and conservation of both the African and Laurentian Great Lakes. This transboundary collaboration can benefit further from the involvement of other independent organizations playing a role in educating and sharing science about the Great Lakes.

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	Laurentian Great Lakes Lake Committees	African Great Lakes Advisory Groups
Formed	1965	2019
Purpose	To promote information sharing; became "action arms" of Joint Strategic Plan for Great Lakes Fishery Management in 1981	Primarily to promote information sharing
Composition	Senior officials from state, provincial, and U.S tribal fishery management agencies advised by at least one field-level technical committee	Members (experts in countries riparian to the lake in question) and advisors (invited large lake or freshwater experts)
Activities	Coordinate fishery management across basin through development of shared fish community objectives, establishment of appropriate stocking and harvest levels, identification of law enforcement priorities, and formulation of management plans	Currently producing a series of state-of-the-lake papers to be published in special section of the *Journal of Great Lakes Research*
Reporting	State-of-the-lake report every five years to summarize trends	Bimonthly advisory group reports
Management Actions	Mutually agreed-upon management actions implemented by individual agencies	Management actions currently out of scope
Meetings	Formal meetings 3 times/year, informal meetings throughout year	Annually in person, monthly virtually
	Source: *Great Lakes Fishery Commission*	***Source:*** *African Center for Aquatic Research and Education*