



Citizens Organizing Statewide: The Michigan Statewide Public Advisory Council

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MICHIGAN AREAS OF CONCERN



Torch Lake

**Deer
Lake**

St. Marys River

**Menominee
River**

**Manistique
River**

**Saginaw
River/Bay**

White Lake

Muskegon Lake

**St. Clair
River**

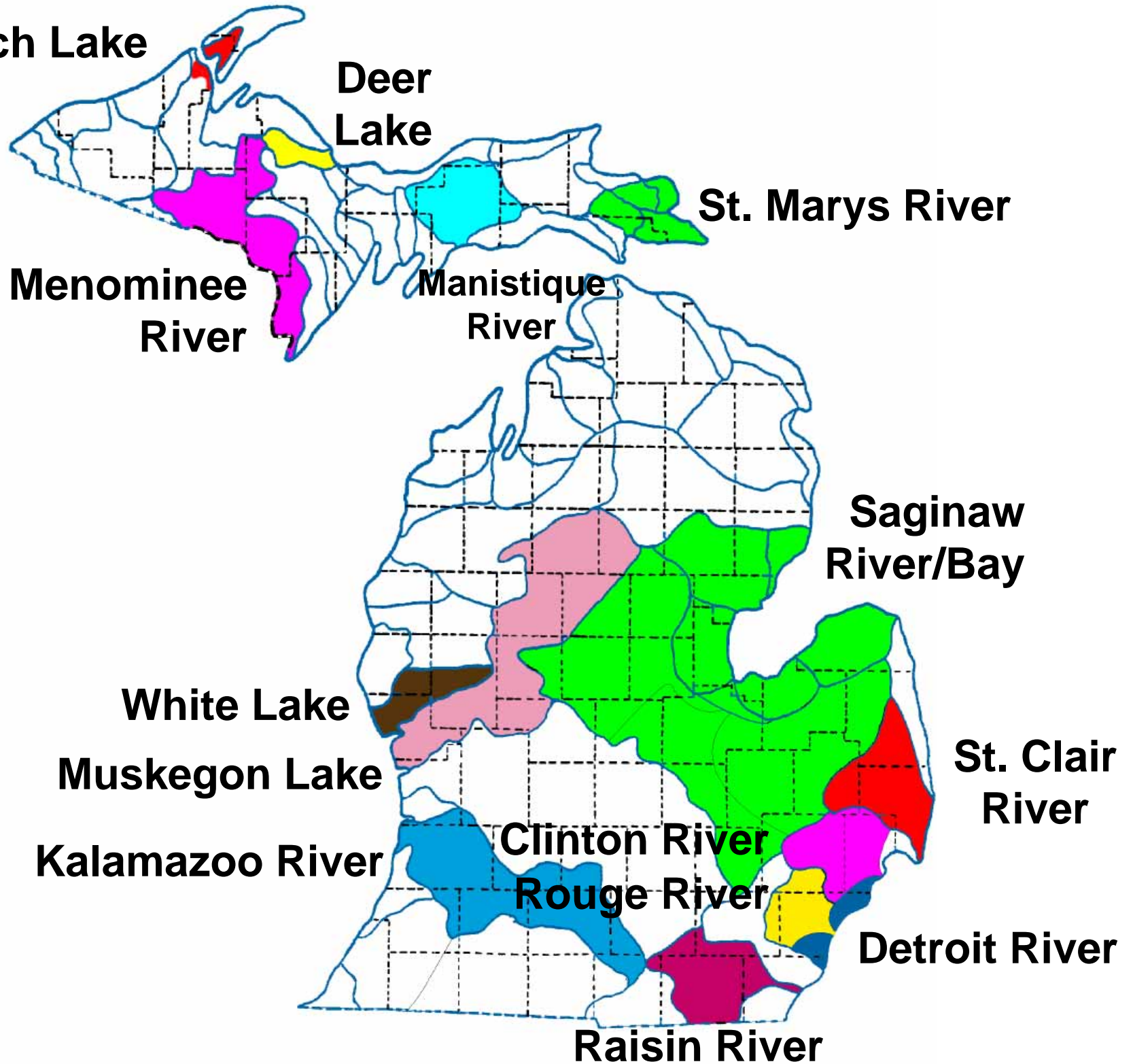
Kalamazoo River

Clinton River

Rouge River

Detroit River

Raisin River



Some History

- **SPAC formed in 1991; outgrowth of first AOC citizens conference**
- **Initial support from SEMCOG; GLC took over in 1994**
- **MDEQ split off from MDNR in 1995**
- **Long-Term Strategic Plan developed in 1996**
- **SPAC chairs include Tim Lozen, Nancy Douglas, Greg Mund and Kathy Evans**

Some History

(continued)

- **Initially SPAC met four times/year in Lansing with annual statewide citizens conference**
- **Late '90s SPAC shifts to three meetings/year with issue-specific workshops in AOCs**
- **Legislative briefings/office visits started in 1998**
- **2004 SPAC begins focus on statewide delisting guidance**
- **2005 new RAP staff hired**
- **2006 statewide delisting guidance completed, SPAC shifts to implementation and development of F&W targets**

SPAC Long-Term Strategic Plan

(April 1996)

Mission:

The Statewide Public Advisory Council, comprised of citizens representing each of Michigan's fourteen Areas of Concern (AOC) identified in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, advances AOC clean-up efforts by generating broad-based support for Remedial Action Plan development and implementation by forming partnerships with and advising governments at the state, federal, and local levels on the AOC Program; informing and educating citizens on pollution problems and opportunities; and supporting and advancing efforts in individual AOCs.

Goal: RAP Process

- Enhance opportunities for public input to the AOC program
- Develop and maintain linkages with MDEQ and other stakeholders
- Network with similar groups and organizations in other states and provinces to exchange information

Goal: RAP Funding

- **Communicate funding needs**
- **Obtain legislative support for the AOC Program**
- **Network with similar groups in Michigan and other states and provinces**
- **Seek long-term funding for the AOC Program from diverse funding sources**

Goal: Public Involvement

- **Provide information and opportunities for citizen involvement**
- **Work with the media to promote the AOC Program**
- **Implement public awareness activities targeted at various audiences**

SPAC Activities

- **Business meetings**
- **Training workshops**
- **Legislative briefings**
- **RAP Summits**
- **Newsletter**
- **Information exchange (mich-rap, AOC updates, funding opportunities, etc.)**
- **Grant administration**
- **Advocacy**

SPAC Workshops

- “RAP Summits”
- Grant forums
- Land use planning
- Addressing public health concerns
- Building local partnerships
- Local leadership in addressing contaminated sediments
- Communication and outreach
- Assessment, monitoring and remediation for BUIs
- Advocacy training
- Legislative briefings
- Developing restoration targets for the AOCs

SPAC Accomplishments

- **Training and information exchange**
- **PAC support grants**
- **Input and guidance to agencies (e.g., delisting guidance)**
- **Advocacy**
 - State – increased legislative awareness, helped secure new RAP staff
 - Federal – Legacy Act, increased RAP support
- **Program profile – “Keeping the lights on”**
- **Solidarity – an AOC community**

SPAC Challenges

- Differing issues, capabilities and interests among the PACs
- Consistent information exchange
- Multiple priorities vs. focused effort
- Relationships with government agencies
- Consistent participation from SPAC members
- Local capacity
- General enthusiasm

Key Future SPAC Activities

- Support implementation of delisting targets
- Oversee/assist with BUI & AOC delisting (demonstrate and celebrate progress)
- Support implementation of F&W restoration plans
- Sustain advocacy activities
- Build capacity and partnerships (esp. for F&W restoration)
- Strengthen membership, momentum and L-T sustainability (both SPAC and local PACs)
- Help PACs with transition to “life after delisting”

Some Final Thoughts

- **States are critical – they make the RAPs happen**
- **Public involvement is important – both to support current efforts and to sustain stewardship after delisting**
- **Delisting targets are vital yardsticks – make them realistic and use them to guide RAP implementation and progress reporting**
- **Legacy Act has been pivotal – showcase cleanups and focus on ways to generate nonfederal match**
- **Maintain “pipeline” of projects – begin with planning and work through design to implementation; continuous process**

Some Final Thoughts

continued

- **Advocacy is key – RAPs have a powerful but under-utilized voice as advocates (“one for all – all for one!”)**
- **Generate annual priorities list – states, in collaboration with local RAP groups, should communicate RAP priorities to Congress**
- **Show successes – this will attract more funding and more partners**
- **Stay focused – RAPs are not the answer to every environmental problem**
- **Accept delisting and move on – RAPs shouldn’t be forever**