Committee of Advisors
to the
Great Lakes Fishery Commission

Resolution #2: St. Marys River

Whereas sea lampreys, which entered the Great Lakes system via shipping canals, are arguably the most destructive of the over 140 exotic species that have entered the Great Lakes system; and

Whereas lampreys were largely responsible for the collapse of the Great Lakes fisheries, driving lake trout, ciscoes, and whitefish to near extinction; and

Whereas the United States and Canada, operating through the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, pursuant to the Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries, implement a sea lamprey control program that has reduced sea lampreys by 90% in most areas of the Great Lakes; and

Whereas sea lamprey control is the backbone for the achievement of fish community objectives, for stocking programs, for recreational and commercial fishing, for ecological balance, and for fish community restoration and management; and

Whereas sea lamprey control has been largely responsible for natural lake trout reproduction in large areas of Lake Superior to the level where stocking is no longer necessary; and

Whereas more than five million people fish the Great Lakes recreationally, and whereas the Great Lakes fishery provides up to 75,000 jobs and up to $4 billion in economic return the Great Lakes region annually; and

Whereas the St. Marys River is the only major area in the Great Lakes where lampreys are not under control, producing more lampreys than all of the other Great Lakes combined; and

Whereas sea lampreys from the St. Marys River migrate into Lakes Huron and Michigan, causing wounding rates near those experienced before the advent of sea lamprey control; and

Whereas fish community objectives are not being met in Lake Huron and northern lake Michigan because of the St. Marys River sea lamprey problem, and whereas some stocking in those lakes have been put on hold pending St. Marys River sea lamprey control; and

Whereas conventional sea lamprey treatment of the St. Marys River has been impossible because of costs and because of the river's tremendous size and flow volume; and

Whereas the Great Lakes Fishery Commission has developed a cost-effective mechanism to reduce sea lampreys in the St. Marys River by 85% by applying a combination of trapping, the Sterile-Male-Release technique, and the Granular Bayer lampricide; and

Whereas flat funding for the sea lamprey control program threatens to stall the implementation of the St. Marys River control program and threatens advances made in other areas of the Great Lakes if program dollars are redirected to the St. Marys River;

Resolve: The U.S. Committee of Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission

Supports the immediate implementation of a St. Marys River control program so that fish community objectives in Lake Huron and Lake Michigan can be achieved;

Commends the Great Lakes Fishery Commission for relying on alternative control techniques to carry out a major portion of the proposed St. Marys River control program;

Calls upon the governments of the United States and Canada to appropriate additional funds necessary so that control in the St. Marys River will not be achieved at the expense of control in other areas of the Great Lakes.

Submitted by Charles Pistis

Seconded by Ed Makauskas

Passed