



2019-2020 ANNUAL REPORT



GREAT LAKES
ISLANDS ALLIANCE

www.glialliance.org



The year 2020 will forever be remembered as the year of COVID-19. Despite being relatively small and isolated, the Great Lakes island communities were not immune to the reach of the virus. Every islander and island organization was affected on personal or professional level. Despite the numerous challenges and unrelenting uncertainty, our GLIA island communities continued to be resilient, creative, and giving. They found solace in having one another to share ideas and experiences. More than ever, this year helped demonstrate the value of connection for these island communities.



ABOUT GLIA

The Great Lakes Islands Alliance (GLIA) is a new voluntary, collaborative network that brings together island leaders, residents, and advocates from across the region.

The mission of GLIA is to encourage relationship building, foster information exchange, and leverage resources to address shared challenges and embrace opportunities to benefit islands.

This report highlights the major activities and accomplishments occurring in the time period between the 2019 Great Lakes Island Summit and year end of 2020. The items are organized under each of the four Goals identified in the Charter of the Great Lakes Islands Alliance.

To learn more about GLIA, visit www.glialliance.org



2019 Great Lakes Islands Alliance group photo.

2019-2020 MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GOAL 1: Connect remote, distant communities

- Strengthened our network by adding **new members**, including islanders from Sugar Island, Michigan, the 15th island community in the bi-national GLIA network.
- Facilitated dozens of **teleconferences**, averaging two per month, with the full GLIA membership and GLIA Steering Committee.
- Supported the **3rd annual Great Lakes Islands Summit**, held over four days in October 2019 on Mackinac Island. The final registration included 126 individuals from Ohio, Ontario, Maine, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Sessions and field trips focused on a variety of topics, including tourism, housing, infrastructure, environmental protection, schools, and more.



- The **4th annual Summit** was planned for fall 2020 on the Lake Erie islands. Due to the unexpected arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, GLIA made the difficult decision to postpone the event until fall 2021.
- Great Lakes islanders were welcomed to several meetings of the 15-island Maine Islands Coalition (MIC) throughout summer 2020. In October, we had the first-ever, **inter-regional island meeting** between GLIA and MIC. The focus was sharing island community responses to the coronavirus.
- Members attended the **Virtual Island Summit**, an entirely-online global event in September 2020. GLIA heard other sub-national island communities, as well as sovereign island states/nations, describe innovative solutions related to sustainable development, clean energy, information management, and more.



GOAL 2: Facilitate information access and sharing, particularly through tools that offer best practices and solutions to island challenges.

- Great Lakes islanders **regularly updated each other on the Covid-19 conditions** on their island. They shared examples of impacted services, postponed events, and virus-related messaging. A common discussion item involved the influx of visitors and new property buyers seeking the perceived safety of a remote island and new and its implications on the island community.
- The Great Lakes faced record high water levels in 2020. Islanders **sought solutions** to coastal erosion and impacts to properties and infrastructure, including ferries.
- GLIA continued our close organizational **relationship with the Island Institute**, our valued advisors on islands-related approaches and programming.

GOAL 3: Advance opportunities for multi-island collaboration, where appropriate.

- GLIA made significant strides in its continued evolution via a generous grant from the **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation**. Under the watchful hand of **The Stewardship Network (TSN)**, the network is taking an integrated, strategic approach to develop its policy and communications direction and consider alternative organizational models to ensure long-term stability and impact. GLIA and partners are poised to start implementing the recommendations in 2021.
- GLIA **worked with multiple mainland entities**, including universities and government organizations, to collaboratively pursue additional resources to support GLIA's goals.



GOAL 4: Amplify island voices to mainland audiences

- Released a **new GLIA website**.
- **Engaged the federal, state, and provincial governments**, plus the **International Joint Commission, Great Lakes Commission**, and other regional organizations, on various matters related to islands.
- **Provided presentations** at conferences and events.

Great Lakes Islands Alliance (GLIA) members come from these year-round island communities. There are several additional communities in the Great Lakes and all are welcome to join.

Learn more about GLIA at www.glialliance.org

2019-2020 GLIA MEMBER ISLANDS

Lake Erie

Kelleys Island, *Ohio, USA*
Middle Bass Island, *Ohio, USA*
Pelee Island, *Ontario, Canada*
South Bass Island (Put-In-Bay), *Ohio, USA*

Lake Michigan

Beaver Island, *Michigan, USA*
Washington Island, *Wisconsin, USA*

Lake St. Clair

Harsens Island, *Michigan, USA*

Lake Huron

Bois Blanc Island, *Michigan, USA*
Drummond Island, *Michigan, USA*
Les Cheneaux Islands, *Michigan, USA*
Mackinac Island, *Michigan, USA*
Manitoulin Island, *Ontario, Canada*
Neebish Island, *Michigan, USA*
Sugar Island, *Michigan, USA*

Lake Superior

Madeline Island, *Wisconsin, USA*

2019-2020 Partner Organizations



2019-2020 Steering Committee (Back-up)

Kristy Beyer (vacant) - Chair, Drummond Island, MI
Bob Anderson (Angel Welke), Beaver Island, MI
Michael Gora (Peter Huston) - Middle Bass Island, OH
Jordan Killam (vacant) - Kelleys Island, OH
Joe Shorthouse (Keith Flaherty) Manitoulin Island, Ontario

Support Staff/Advisors/Partners

Matt Preisser, MI Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
Kate Tagai, Island Institute
Lisa Brush and Rachel Muelle, The Stewardship Network

For more information about GLIA, including contact information, please visit:
www.glialliance.org