



2021

ANNUAL REPORT



GREAT LAKES
ISLANDS ALLIANCE

www.glialliance.org

After the broad societal devastation caused by COVID-19 in 2020, the year 2021 began with the arrival of new vaccines and incredible enthusiasm and hope for returning to “normal.” In reality, it was a roller coaster year. By summer, many of our island communities were reporting record visitation levels, though mostly domestic travel due to the continued border limitations between the US and Canada and other nations. By fall, the arrival of the Delta variant – and later, Omicron – continued to burden our health providers and cloud the long-term outlook. We made the difficult decision of postponing our major event, the annual Great Lakes Islands Summit, for a second straight year.

Despite these circumstances, our “network of islands” has proven strong and resilient, thanks to the amazing commitment, creativity, and diversity of our islander members. At its core, GLIA remains an important forum for islanders to reach one another to share ideas, ask questions, and ponder the “next big thing.” The network continues to grow operationally and has initiated formal project relationships with new partners. GLIA has also provided a shoulder in times of need, such as when tragedy hits one of our islands.

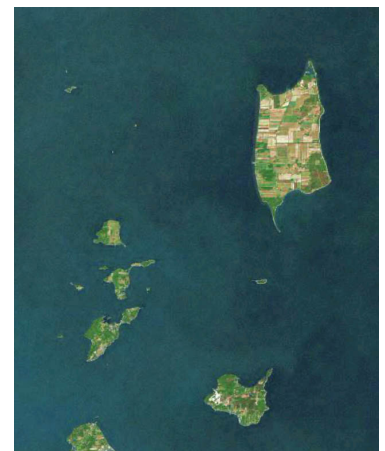
GLIA continues to make steady progress towards its mission and goals. Below is a snapshot of our major accomplishments in 2021.



A multi-lingual sign in English and Ojibwe on Madeline Island, WI

Goal 1: Connect Distant Communities

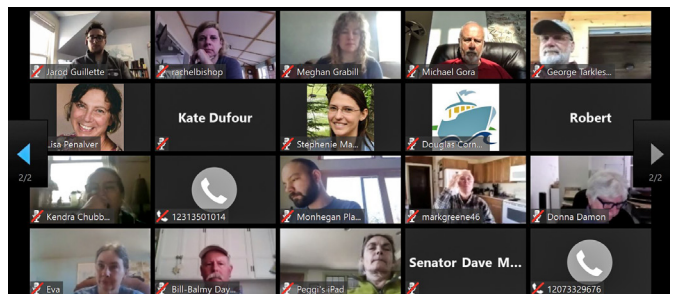
- GLIA hosted **monthly zoom meetings** (open to any islander) to share news between islands, seek advice on tough topics, and conduct GLIA business. The GLIA Steering Committee also met monthly to provide leadership and direction.
- We welcomed **new members** from existing islands plus several additional Canadian islands: St. Joseph Island, located in the St. Marys River, and the Frontenac Islands (Wolfe, Howe and Simcoe Islands) near the outlet of Lake Ontario. GLIA can now boast members from all five Great Lakes!
- Despite significant planning and effort, our marquee event of the year, the annual **Great Lakes Islands Summit**, once again fell victim to the global pandemic. We are optimistic about returning to the Lake Erie islands in fall 2022.



The Lake Erie Islands - South Bass Island is the site of our 2022 Summit

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

- Our long-distance relationship with our sister network, the **Maine Islands Coalition**, continued to flourish on zoom. In 2021, we heard Maine experiences related to the covid-19 vaccine rollout, American Recovery Act funds, climate planning, broadband, succession planning, and housing.
- GLIA earned a seat on the global stage by connecting with several international island organizations and networks, such as the Institute of Island Studies at University of Prince Edward Island, the Climate Strong Islands Network, and Island Innovation.
- GLIA and the Island Institute collaborated on a new Great Lakes entry to the Institute’s Solutions Library focusing on managing a private island transportation service.
- Our collaboration with The Stewardship Network provided access to a number of established, community-based networks around the U.S.
- We started planning a new GLIA webinar series to be rolled out in 2022.



Maine Islands Coalition Zoom Meeting

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

- A second generous grant from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation supported the hiring of GLIA's **first paid employee**. Peter Huston, from South Bass Island, Ohio, became the GLIA Project Manager in July and immediately set forth to meet with members and advance a number of GLIA's communications and planning priorities.
- A team of graduate students at the University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability selected GLIA as a client for a new, 14-month **master's project** that will start in early 2022. The students will help GLIA build its network structure/processes and develop a data/metrics program to better understand conditions and trends on island communities.
- GLIA launched a new **Fundraising Subcommittee** to coordinate strategic efforts with donors and other funders. In late 2021, we initiated our first end-of-year fundraising campaign, called the "5 Reasons to Donate to GLIA."
- After a one-year hiatus, the third annual **Great Lakes Islands High School Basketball Tournament (GLIBB)** resumed in December 2021. The Put-in-Bay Panthers welcomed the Beaver Island Islanders for a little inter-island camaraderie with a touch of rivalry! Teams from Mackinac and Washington Islands were late scratches due to COVID-19 protocols.



Peter Huston
GLIA Project Manager



The Put-in-Bay Panthers and Beaver Island Islanders at Put-in-Bay in December, 2021

Goal 4: Amplify island voices to mainland audiences.

- GLIA continued to grow our **online presence** via a Facebook page, a Facebook group and additional enhancements to our website.
- As part of GLIA's strategic efforts to become an important contributor to regional discussions, we met with leaders from several prominent organizations. GLIA formally joined the **Healing Our Waters - Great Lakes Coalition** as they share many of our environmental goals.
- GLIA partners and members attended other **meetings and workshops** to elevate the needs of islands. This included regional discussions around broadband, ferry operations, and Great Lakes coastal management.



Mnidoon Mnising (Manitoulin Island), served by this ferry, is a gateway into the very heart of Canada. Pristine wilderness stretches across the island while a spirit of camaraderie is shared by First Nations peoples, non-native residents and visitors alike.



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

Learn more about GLIA at www.glialliance.org

2021 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 Ontario

- Howe Island, *Ontario, Canada*
- Simcoe Island, *Ontario, Canada*
- Wolfe Island, *Ontario, Canada*

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*
- St. Joseph Island, *Ontario, Canada*
- Sugar Island, *Michigan, USA*

Lake Superior

- Madeline Island, *Wisconsin, USA*

Lake St. Clair

- Harsens Island, *Michigan, USA*

2021 Partner Organizations



2021 Steering Committee (Back-up)

- Michael Gora (*vacant*) - Chair, *Middle Bass Island, OH*
- Bob Anderson (*Angel Welke*) - *Beaver Island, MI*
- Ned Hancock (*vacant*) - *Madeline Island, WI*
- Jordan Killam (*vacant*) - *Kelleys Island, OH*
- Joe Shorthouse (*Keith Flaherty*) - *Manitoulin Island, ON*

Support Staff/Advisors/Partners

- Peter Huston, GLIA Project Manager
- Matt Preisser, MI Dept. of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy
- Kate Tagai, Island Institute
- Lisa Brush, The Stewardship Network

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