



**For Immediate Release
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GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION HONORS ROBERT ADAIR FOR APPLYING A HOLISTIC UNDERSTANDING OF FISHERIES MANAGEMENT TO THE SEA LAMPREY CONTROL PROGRAM

OTTAWA, ONTARIO—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission presented Mr. Robert Adair with the 2016 Vernon C. Applegate Award for Outstanding Contributions to Sea Lamprey Control. The award, which the Commission bestows annually, recognized Mr. Adair for outstanding dedication and leadership to the Sea Lamprey Control Program, for which he served as program leader from 2007 to early 2016.

Sea lamprey, a destructive Great Lakes invader, must be controlled to protect the \$7 billion fishery. The award presented is named after the father of sea lamprey control, Dr. Vernon Applegate, who was perhaps best known for demanding excellence in science. Commissioner Tom Melius, the Midwest Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, presented Mr. Adair with the Applegate Award at the Commission's 61st annual meeting in Ottawa, Ontario.

“In the spirit of Vern Applegate, Mr. Adair relied on science to deliver the most effective sea lamprey control possible,” said Commissioner Melius. “Populations of sea lampreys have been knocked down to thirty-year lows in Lake Huron and twenty-year lows in Lake Michigan. Populations are below target levels in Lake Ontario and continue to follow a steady five-year decline in lakes Superior and Erie. We have a \$7 billion fishery in the Great Lakes region thanks in large part to sea lamprey control and the dedication of professionals like Mr. Adair.”

Melius continued: “During his tenure, Mr. Adair worked tirelessly to advance the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's vision of ecologically, economically, and socially acceptable sea lamprey suppression. His exemplary dedication to sea lamprey control is best displayed by his steadfast perseverance and unwavering commitment to deliver a field program that was based on sound science. He helped the Commission achieve the intended outcome of sea lamprey suppression. He is a forward thinker, critical analyzer, and strategic visionary.”

Melius continued: “Tough challenges and difficult choices never deterred Mr. Adair. He understood where change would be beneficial and pursued those changes no matter how politically or logistically complicated the pursuit may have been. Mr. Adair was willing to trek forward for the greater good he knew his team could all achieve together. Once decisions were made, he took the collective message to the nearly 100 employees he led, listened to feedback, and developed comprehensive plans that set the needed direction.”

Melius continued: “Mr. Adair also helped lay solid groundwork in the sea lamprey barrier, aquatic habitat connectivity, and selective fish passage arenas. He involved partners from federal, state, provincial, and tribal agencies and set the stage for effective collaboration. He persevered through difficult administrative

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processes to ensure seamless delivery of the U.S. program. He ensured the critical components were never compromised despite sequestration, government shutdowns, and hiring restrictions.”

Melius concluded: “Last year, Mr. Adair retired from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Not only did he leave a lasting legacy of leadership for the Sea Lamprey Control Program, but he also left big shoes to fill. He taught so many during his tenure – from interns in the field to senior managers in Washington DC. “We are indebted to him for his guidance.”

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is an international organization established by the United States and Canada through the 1954 Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. The commission has the responsibility to support fisheries research, control the invasive sea lamprey in the Great Lakes, and facilitate implementation of A Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Great Lakes Fisheries, a provincial, state, and tribal fisheries management agreement.



Great Lakes Fishery Commission Commissioner Tom Melius (left) presents Robert Adair with the 2016 Vernon C. Applegate Award Jack Christie/Ken H. Loftus Award for Outstanding Contributions to Sea Lamprey Control. The award was presented to Mr. Adair on June 9, 2016, during the Great Lakes Fishery Commission’s annual meeting, held in Ottawa, Ontario. Photo: T. Lawrence, GLFC.

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