



**Committee of Advisors  
to the  
Great Lakes Fishery Commission**



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**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE GREAT LAKES MASS MARKING INITIATIVE**

**WHEREAS**, fish stocking in the Great Lakes basin is essential to species restoration, sportfishing, and ecosystem health;

**WHEREAS**, state, federal, tribal, and provincial agencies stock a variety of trout and salmon in the Great Lakes basin;

**WHEREAS**, unless a hatchery fish is marked, there is no sure way to tell the difference between a natural fish and a hatchery-reared fish;

**WHEREAS**, because of the labor-intensive nature of marking fish manually, not all trout and salmon produced in a hatchery can be marked;

**WHEREAS**, the lack of marks on all stocked trout and salmon inhibits the ability of the fishery managers to understand basic facts about the fishery, including the ratio of natural to stocked fish in the Great Lakes basin, an understanding of the effectiveness of stocking programs, stocking to match the available prey base, the ability to identify strains or hatcheries that contribute to most fisheries and recovery efforts, and the ability to measure progress toward rehabilitation of native species. Moreover, tax dollars for fishery management would not be used most efficiently;

**WHEREAS**, technology known as the AutoFish system exists to automatically clip the adipose fin and insert a coded-wire tag into every fish produced in a hatchery, and such technology has been used with great success in the Pacific Northwest for more than a decade to aid in the recovery of that region's salmon fisheries;

**WHEREAS**, the Council of Lake Committees, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have developed the Great Lakes Mass Marking Initiative to plan for the marking of all trout and salmon stocked into the Great Lakes, to acquire the equipment necessary to mark and tag all fish stocked, and to share the equipment among all jurisdictions;

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has established the Great Lakes Fish Tag and Recovery Laboratory, has successfully tagged all lake trout and Chinook salmon stocked into U.S. waters of lakes Michigan and Huron since 2011, and implemented tag recovery efforts since 2010 using funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative; and

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**WHEREAS**, acquiring the base funding to sustain the Great Lakes Mass Marking Initiative has been a challenge, with funds coming from a variety of sources including directly from Congress, from the Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act, and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. Funding, however, has not been sufficient to date to implement a complete Great Lakes tagging operation as requested by the Council of Lake Committees for the Great Lakes.

**BE IT RESOLVED**, The U.S. and Canadian Advisors to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission strongly support the Great Lakes Mass Marking Initiative.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Advisors ask the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to include adequate funds in the federal budget to implement a complete Great lakes basin tagging program, including operations, equipment purchases, and required hatchery upgrades.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Advisors ask the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to continue to include funds from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to implement a complete Great Lakes tagging operation.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, Advisors ask the U.S. Congress to support the Great Lakes Mass Marking Initiative, to urge the service to include the initiative in the federal budget, and to fund mass marking through federal appropriations.

Passed unanimously  
May 29, 2013

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