

## OUR STORY

The future of the Great Lakes region hinges on effectively leveraging and sustaining our primary asset – the world’s largest freshwater system. Hundreds of different entities – across eight states and two provinces – currently invest billions of dollars in restoring and maintaining the Great Lakes, but there hasn’t been a way to measure the effectiveness of these efforts to protect ecosystems, safeguard human health and bolster the economy.

In 2013, the Great Lakes governors and the premier of Ontario called for a smarter and more comprehensive approach to monitoring our Great Lakes water resources. Their resolution led to the creation of Blue Accounting, a new initiative and online platform that provides cutting-edge information services about the Great Lakes. This issue-based, goal-driven initiative will help our leaders manage the world's largest freshwater ecosystem in a more collaborative, effective, and holistic manner.

Blue Accounting measures progress on issues related to nine desired [environmental](#), [economic](#), and [social](#) outcomes for the Great Lakes region.

- ▶ Economic and Sustainable Human Use Outcomes
- ▶ Social Outcomes
- ▶ Environmental Outcomes

These outcomes were developed as part of the initial Great Lakes Blue Accounting report, produced by a [workgroup of regional stakeholders](#) representing governments from Canada and the United States (from federal to local scales), three binational lakes commissions, food industries, power and shipping industries, and experts in hydrology, water quality, water accounting, local storytelling, and binational governance. Based on a combination of existing regional visioning documents and the output of that workgroup, these nine outcomes represent a Great Lakes region where ecosystems, economies, and social values work in harmony to thrive.

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

- " Given the hundreds of millions of dollars being spent to protect the largest freshwater system on Earth, nothing could be more critical or more

transformational than establishing a system that will enable us to know whether our investments are effective in assuring the long-term economic and ecological health of the Great Lakes.

Rick Snyder, Governor, State of Michigan



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" Blue Accounting is one of the most important initiatives I have seen in over 40 years of my work to protect and restore the health of the Great Lakes. I spent many of those years working with others to measure the health of the Great Lakes and the effectiveness of programs to protect them. Not enough thought was given to who needed that information, how it should be delivered to them, or what other information might they need to make more informed decisions. Blue Accounting helps answer these questions hand in hand with the decision makers so that better information is available to decide on the best projects and programs to protect and restore the Great Lakes.

David Ullrich, Advisor and former President and Chief Executive Officer, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

WHAT WE DO

Blue Accounting provides decision-makers with a big picture view of complex issues and relevant information so they can set priorities and allocate resources most efficiently.

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## HOW WE DO IT

Through collaboration, Blue Accounting helps the Great lakes community set shared goals, track progress and measure whether we are achieving our goals by transforming existing data into useful information.

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