



# Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Study Étude des Grands lacs et de la Voie maritime du Saint-Laurent

## NEWSLETTER

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Transport Canada / Transports Canada



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



U.S. Department of Transportation



The St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation



The St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation



Environment Canada / Environnement Canada



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



## The Homestretch: The Challenge of Consolidation

by Janin Huard, Transport Canada

Much has been accomplished since our last newsletter released at the end of 2005. The three technical study teams – engineering, economics, and environment – are now nearing the homestretch towards fulfilling the mandate and objectives of the GLSLS Study, supporting at the same time the study consolidation and report production process, which is already underway.

The two roundtable information sessions that were held in Quebec City (Quebec, Canada) and Cleveland (Ohio, United States) in September 2005, where a status update was provided for each of the teams, allowed the stakeholders and interested parties to be reassured with regards to study's mandate and scope. It would appear that the misconception that the study was looking at expanding the St. Lawrence Seaway and river channel has been put to rest, to the great relief of the management team, whose efforts could return to the primary objectives of the study instead of increased communication and justification actions.

The Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Seaway network is an essential component of North American transportation infrastructure. It is imperative, in light of the aging infrastructure and associated cost to the public, to plan its operations, maintenance, and repairs for the future. The GLSLS Study is therefore effectively assessing the operational maintenance and long-term investment needs of the network in order to ensure its security, efficiency, reliability, and sustainability.



Although the false perceptions have been dispelled, there are still diverging interests and opinions regarding the needs and issues related to the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence River, and the Seaway system. This is why the GLSLS Study, with its specific mandate, budget, and limited timeframe, will not necessarily meet everyone's expectations.

What is clear is that the GLSLS Study will give us sufficient information on the facts, issues, and technical, economic, and environmental repercussions of the future needs of the GLSLS system. However, various interested parties would also like the study to make recommendations on various subjects and issues that it will not be able to deal with in-depth, but would certainly merit a more exhaustive review, especially regarding economic, social, and environmental issues. Fortunately, there are a number of other studies and research projects already underway that cover a wide range of key issues, including aquatic invasive species and water levels. The results and recommendations of the GLSLS Study will enable the various organizations involved to prepare their own action plans, if necessary, based on their respective mandates and priorities.



## Contact Information

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### Steering Committee

- Transport Canada
- U.S. Department of Transportation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corp.
- The Saint Lawrence Seaway Management Corp.
- Environment Canada
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

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Get more information about the  
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[www.glsls-study.com](http://www.glsls-study.com)

### A full agenda

But before we can talk about results and recommendations, the three GLSLS Study teams have a lot of work to do. The agenda is still very full. Here is an overview:

#### *Technical Team (engineering)*

In short, this team is responsible for determining the general condition of the existing infrastructure; creating an analytical technical reliability model of the major infrastructure components; estimating future operating and maintenance costs based on the condition and reliability of the infrastructure; and assessing various maintenance and restoration scenarios.

The majority of the work related to these objectives is complete or in the final stages of completion. Before they can provide the study's Management Team with the conclusions of their work, some key research elements need to be confirmed, specifically:

- Risk and sensitivity results associated with mechanical stress;
- Results of the risk analysis of certain projects and specific infrastructure elements (St. Lambert and Soo locks, Welland Canal, international bridge, etc.); and
- Results of the fatigue analysis of certain metal structures.

When these results are analyzed and compiled, they will be sent to the Economics Team and integrated into the data for prospective cost-benefit models.

#### *Economics Team*

This team is responsible for reviewing and categorizing information and historical and projected data on traffic, fleets, markets, industries, and freight costs; predicting long-term traffic for current, additional, and potential new cargo; assessing factors that are likely to affect the future capacity of the fleet that is serving the system; and assessing the socio-economic impact and costs of various maintenance and restoration scenarios, if applicable.

The work is progressing well. Several projects have been completed, including: an overview of economic developments in the GLSLS system with an emphasis on aspects of commercial navigation; a profile of the system's ports, traffic, trade, major shippers, etc.; a cost analysis of the marine movements of 857 commodities; an exhaustive database of the cargo and vessels travelling through the GLSLS, etc. However, one important project has not yet been finalized: the economic models for projecting system traffic and vessel costs (which require the Technical Team's results).

As the study teams' work is interrelated, the Economics Team's data and results will be used by the Environment Team to complete their assessment.





### **Environment Team**

The Environment Team has been working on compiling the necessary information to characterize environmental conditions of key resources potentially affected by navigation-related activities on the System; reviewing and assessing (qualitatively) the environmental impact of maintenance and rehabilitation scenarios on the existing infrastructure; and identifying and defining an appropriate methodology for assessing the environmental impacts of future navigation-related activities on the system.

The team's experts have nearly completed all their research and assessment work. However, a few steps remain:

- Validating certain elements of the GLSLS terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems;
- Integrating certain essential data from the Economics Delivery Team into the environmental impact scenarios;
- Articulating the environmental stresses on the GLSLS based on historical evidence, trends and future traffic projections;
- Evaluating the contribution from navigation to these stresses and projecting the environmental state for the next 50 years;
- Finalizing the Environment Team Appendix (report) in support of the final GLSLS Study Report.

The Appendix will take into account the impact that commercial navigation has had on the environment. It will consider expected future trends in navigation and the anticipated future environmental changes to the system. The Appendix will also detail both existing and proposed management actions to minimize the environmental impact. Gaps in the information will be identified and management options will be presented and evaluated against environmental stresses and valued ecosystem components.

### **Consolidation: A Major Challenge**

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As the various teams are wrapping up their work, an independent consulting firm is already at work collecting various sources of information (historical information, reports, databases, economic models, etc.) and drafting a consolidated report that will not only outline the work completed, but will also be relevant, useful, and understandable; in short, a report that "tells the story" effectively both for the experts involved and for the general public: a major challenge!

The challenge also lies in the highly specialized nature of the work in the various respective fields. The final report will have to synthesize analyses and results and make them accessible to the general public without losing the value or significance of their content. Furthermore, the balanced approach of the GLSLS Study will have to be maintained and reflected in the consolidated report. In fact, the consolidation and report production process is three fold:

1. *Assimilation*

This first step involves gathering and organizing all the information and the different study products (files, reports, models, etc.), read and review them, and pull out the "story lines". All team experts are called for their insight views to clarify their mandate and work.

2. *Consolidation*

Afterwards, the consolidation begins in compiling and writing key sections of the report. An annotated outline will derive from this and, after an approval from the Management Team, the "story" will take place following the findings and the conclusions of the several works and reports undertaken under each study team.

3. *Report Production*

Finally, the actual report will be organized and written, including state of the art design and graphic elements.

The expectations are high and the deadline for the final report is fast approaching. All the teams are mobilizing to meet the planned deadline. The final GLSLS Study Report for public release is expected in spring 2007.

