

in 1994 as St. Lawrence Vision 2000 and renewed again in 1998 for five years. In 1989, the federal government initiated a five-year Great Lakes Action Plan to fulfill Canada's commitments under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Phase II of the program followed in 1994, called the Great Lakes 2000 Program, and has recently been renewed. Ontario, the only province that borders on four of the five Great Lakes, is a full participant in the program. The St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes action plans were the first "large action plans" designed to clean up, restore, and protect ecosystems.

Building on experience from these initiatives and the public concerns expressed in consultations, in 1991 the federal government targeted the Fraser Basin in British Columbia and the coastal zone of the four Atlantic provinces for remedial and curative action. That same year, the Northern River Basins Study was launched by the governments of Canada, Alberta, and the Northwest Territories to gather comprehensive information on the cumulative impact of development on the Peace, Athabasca, and Slave Rivers. In 1998, the Northern Rivers Ecosystem Initiative was established to follow up on the study findings. This five-year initiative will bring together various levels of government, Aboriginal organizations, industry, and environmental groups.

In 1998, the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative was launched, another example of collaboration between Canada and the United States. Attention is focused on the entire Georgia Basin–Puget Sound ecosystem in recognition of the past and projected population growth pressures in this area and the need for coordinated management of the attendant human effects on the environment.

The Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) was designed to demonstrate the effectiveness of a novel approach to solving environmental problems where affected communities take management responsibilities for generating solutions. Initiating and championing community-driven approaches are part of the Atlantic culture. By 1995, 13 ACAP communities had each developed a comprehensive environmental management plan and delivered it to their respective communities and partners. Sable Island became the 14th site in 1999. Currently, ACAP is striving to build broader coalitions at larger ecosystem scales, such as the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Bay of Fundy, the Gulf of Maine, and Labrador. As a result of this program, communities are making informed decisions about local issues through teamwork, consensus building, and collaborative problem solving. Thousands of Atlantic Canadians, from youth to the elderly, participate in the program annually. Approximately 1000 action projects have been undertaken following community-identified solutions that are socially acceptable, economically feasible, and environmentally sound.

Remedial Action Plans

Public consultation and involvement have been critical to the delivery of programs and activities arising from the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Citizen participation is key in the development of Remedial Action Plans for 43 designated Areas of Concern around the Great Lakes. Relevant interests or stakeholders are brought together to achieve consensus on issues and remedial actions in long-standing problem locations where the agreement's objectives are not being met. Upon learning the extent of the problems, stakeholders often become leading proponents of community action. Collingwood Harbour on Georgian Bay is no longer an Area of Concern because of successful remedial actions.