

Three Tributaries and Another Lake

Canadian and American scientists are making a multimillion-dollar study of the St. Clair, St. Marys and Detroit rivers and of Lake St. Clair. It is the most extensive such study in history.

It began in 1984 and will include 150 separate surveys of the effects of toxic chemicals on ducks, fish and clams. It is sponsored jointly by the federal governments, and the governments of Ontario, Michigan and Detroit.



International Joint Commission

A victim of toxic pollution, this baby gull was born with a crossed beak.

Some Solutions Are Difficult

The Niagara River flows from Lake Erie into Lake Ontario. The famous falls are more or less midway. The river is a major source of drinking water for both Canadians and Americans.

The shores are heavily industrialized, particularly on the American side, and more than 3,000 pounds of toxic chemicals enter the river each day from industries, municipalities and leaking hazardous waste dump sites, such as the notorious Love Canal.

Last year officials from the two federal governments and New York and Ontario agreed on a 10-year program to cut the amount of chemicals in half by 1997. The program will complement work already underway through the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to restore water quality of the river.



THE GREAT DIVERSION

In 1965 the U.S. Congress approved the diversion of the waters of the Missouri River, which flows south, into the Hudson Bay drainage basin, whose waters flow north.

A reservoir, Lake Audubon, would be created to irrigate 250,000 acres of farmland and provide water for 14 communities.

The lake waters would flow through the McClusky Canal, across the continental divide, into the Lonetree Reservoir and then into the Souris, Red and James rivers and the Devil's Lake basin.

Construction began in 1968.

The province of Manitoba and the Canadian government soon realized that

the inflow could introduce trash fish and fish parasites and diseases into the Souris, Assiniboine and Red rivers and Lakes Manitoba and Winnipeg, a group containing Manitoba's most heavily fished sports waterway, huge commercial fisheries and an abundance of northern pike, walleye and sauger.

Some trash fish have high rates of reproduction and would probably overwhelm species already in the Hudson Bay basin.

Canada asked for a moratorium on construction and discussions began.

The IJC concluded in 1975 that the project would cause serious harm, and in 1984 the U.S. Congress put the construction money in escrow and appointed a commission to suggest alternative construction plans.

A compromise in 1985 produced a new design which will supply drinking water to 130 municipalities, instead of the original 14, and irrigate 130,940 acres.

The end of the process seems to be approaching, though environmentalists and the governments of Canada and Manitoba are concerned that under the plan undesirable fish may still be introduced into Canadian waters.

THE UPBEAT SIDE

Not all environmental agreements evolve through controversy. Some, such as the two that follow, are bred in harmony.

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