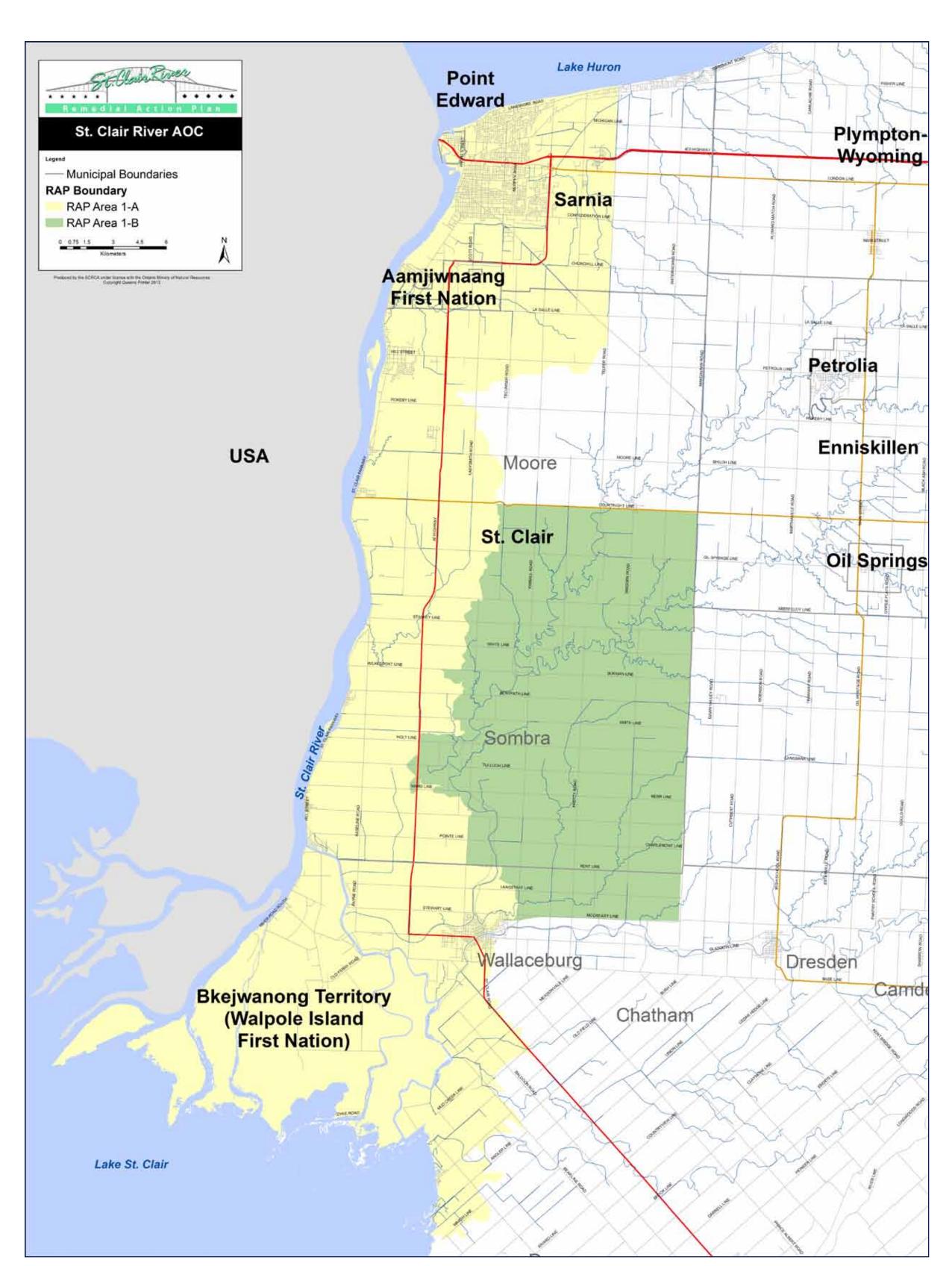
The St. Clair River



In 1987, the International Joint Commission (IJC) identified 43 locations in the Great Lakes that failed to meet the water quality objectives of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. These Areas of Concern (AOCs) all showed impairment of one or more of 14 beneficial water uses (BUIs) identified by the IJC. The St. Clair River was identified as one of these AOCs due to contaminated sediments, pollutants from municipal and industrial discharges, urban and rural runoff and combined sewer overflows (CSOs).



Location and boundaries of the St. Clair River Area of Concern.









Taking Action:

Working together, Canadian and U.S. government agencies announced a Remedial Action Plan (RAP) to address pollution concerns in the river. The following year, the St. Clair River Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) was created to work with and advise the agencies during development and implementation of the RAP. The BPAC consists of Ontario and Michigan citizens that represent federal, provincial and state governments, First Nations, Non-governmental organizations and the public living on both sides of the river.









Accomplishments:

Through natural recovery processes and human cleanup efforts, environmental conditions in the St. Clair River have improved so that there are now:

- No additional costs to agriculture or industry to treat water taken directly from the St. Clair River
- No fish and wildlife flavour issues
- Less frequent CSOs and spill events
- Increased land cover consisting of wetlands, tall grass prairie, Carolinian forest and riparian buffers.

Future Endeavours:

With this progress, the future of the St. Clair River is promising. In 2013, a work plan was published that outlined all remaining actions required to clean up the St. Clair River. Efforts continue to focus on:



- Protecting, restoring and rehabilitating fish and wildlife habitat
- Restoring all ecological issues through on-going control of pollution sources
- Addressing all listed BUIs and identifying opportunities for continued improvement.

BPAC will continue to involve communities and citizens so that all individuals who work, live and recreate in the St. Clair River AOC understand their role and responsibility for a healthy, beautiful and bountiful river system.

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