

**Summary Report:
International Joint
Commission's
Public Engagement
Events
June – September 2019**

**Volume I:
Summary of
Responses to All
Event Surveys**

Prepared by:
Dr. Carolyn Johns & Andre Setoodeh
Ryerson University

November 25, 2019

Table of Contents

1.0 Executive Summary	2
2.0 Background	3
3.0 Methodology.....	5
4.0 Demographic Profile of Participants at Public Engagement Events	6
5.0 General Engagement Findings	8
5.1 Engagement and Awareness Prior to Event	8
5.2 Awareness of Great Lakes Programs, Agreements and Governance	8
5.3 Engagement During the Event	10
5.4 Engagement Expectations Post-Event.....	13
6.0 Findings from Open-ended Engagement Questions	14
6.1 How did you become aware of this event?	14
6.2 Are you Regularly Engaged? If so, How?	15
6.3 Preferred Way of Engaging in Great Lakes Issues/Actions	15
6.4 How Could Engagement in Great Lakes Issues and Priorities be Improved?	16
7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations	18

1.0 Executive Summary

This report summarizes findings from surveys completed by attendees at seven public engagement events organized by the International Joint Commission (IJC) between June and September 2019 in communities across the basin. A total of 371 or 35% of public meeting participants completed surveys out of a total of 1,066 attending the June-September 2019 public engagement events. When combined with other sessions held in these communities with various experts, groups, Indigenous peoples and stakeholders, a total of 1,312 participants attended GLWQA consultation sessions in these communities.

Some highlights from those who completed surveys include:

- i. The location of events allowed for attendance by members of the public from Canada (35%) and the United States (64%), representative overall of the Canadian/US population in the Great Lakes basin; three attendees who completed surveys reported being from Indigenous communities (this does not include Indigenous peoples who were in attendance and who did not complete surveys; and Indigenous peoples who attended the separate listening sessions as surveys were not distributed at those sessions)
- ii. respondents indicated they were attending as representatives of their communities (31%); nongovernment organizations/NGOs (30%); and the general public (27%); several respondents to this question indicating they attended as representatives in more than one category
- iii. attendees were generally older, with 56% being 55 and older; 68% being over 45; 17% between 18-24 and only 3 attendees being 18 or under; youth were not well represented in survey results (with the exception of the event in Ashland, Wisconsin)
- iv. there was a good balance of women (50%) and men (45%) in attendance
- v. the self-identified race/ethnicity of the majority was White/Caucasian (56%) with 29% not responding to this question, and a very low response indicating representation of other groups
- vi. many identified in their comments various publics who were not represented including people of colour, Indigenous people, industry, agriculture and youth
- vii. attendees have some knowledge and awareness of Great Lakes issues, particularly in their communities (85%), about the GLWQA (66%), the IJC (59%), and 50% indicating some general awareness of responsibilities of the Parties
- viii. most reported it was 'extremely' or 'very' easy to attend events (84%), the speakers/facilitators (73%) very engaging, and the program content (56%) engaging
- ix. 78% indicated their participation in the event made them feel more engaged and wanting to contribute to actions on Great Lakes issues
- x. attendees were split on whether their participation in the event changed their views; and opinions were mixed about expectations for follow up after the event, with many expressing that they didn't know what to expect related to follow up after the event
- xi. the open-ended questions indicate that most became aware of the event through email and notifications through their organizational affiliations; the vast majority are regularly engaged and prefer engagement at the community level; and attendees had numerous suggestions and recommendations related to improving public engagement in Great Lakes issues and priorities (as detailed in Sections 6 and 7 of this report).

2.0 Background

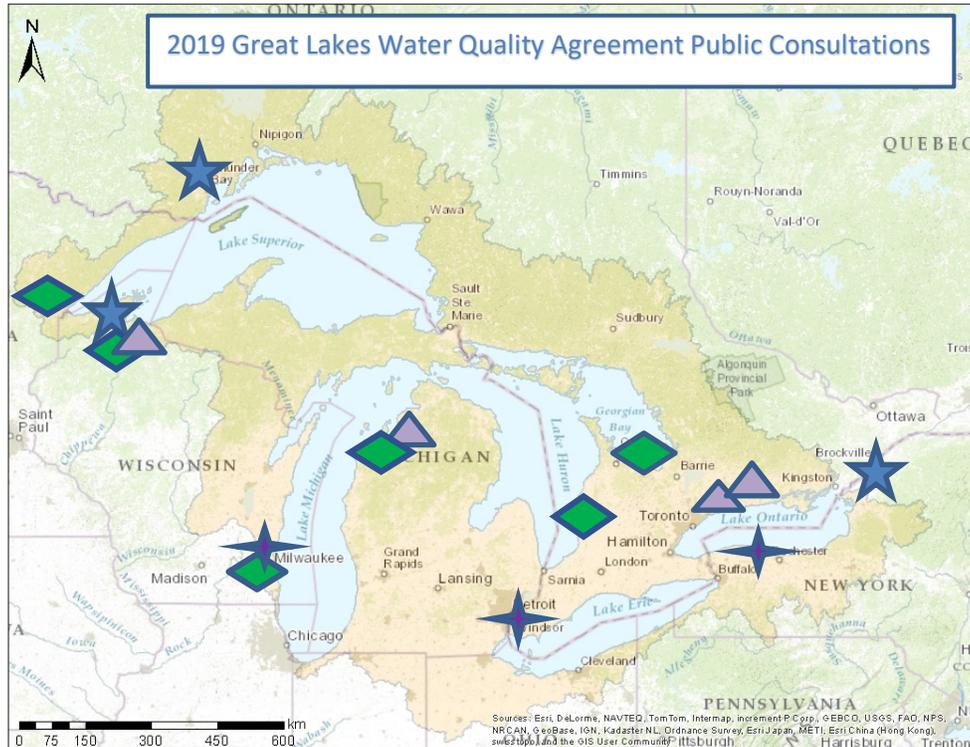
The IJC has a long-standing role in public engagement related to the Great Lakes. The Boundary Waters Treaty (1909) contained wording related to engagement of witnesses and experts, but also a commitment that “all parties interested therein shall be given convenient opportunity to be heard” (Article XII). For decades, the IJC has involved the public by appointing stakeholder representatives to its boards and advisory groups. The IJC sponsors conferences, meetings and round table discussions in which members of the public and representatives of community groups and other organizations can take part. The public is also invited to share perspectives on general and specific matters under consideration at public meetings and information sessions, formal public hearings, webinars, and in response to information posted on the IJC’s website.

Under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA), the IJC is mandated hold public meetings and engage the public to receive input on Great Lakes issues and priorities; the triennial Progress Report of the Parties (PROP); and related to its own Triennial Assessment of Progress (TAP) Report. In October 2018, the IJC Commissioners approved a five-pronged approach to obtain public input on the Progress Report of the Parties (PROP), the health of the Great Lakes, and key issues the IJC should consider as priorities over the next three to six years.

To obtain input from the general public, the IJC organized public meetings in six locations (see map on next page) beginning with two IJC organized session at the Great Lakes Public Forum in Milwaukee in June 2019. The locations for public engagement events were selected based on community support; involvement of key local organizations and local governments, and support provided by members of the IJC’s Great Lakes advisory boards in communities or who teach at colleges and universities in these communities. Materials on the PROP were provided beforehand to meeting registrants, as well as at the meetings, to encourage input on the PROP report itself as well as GLWQA progress overall. The program and format of each meeting was designed in partnership with local groups and contacts to suit the local community’s interests.

Dynamic, participatory programs were developed at three universities: Northland College through the Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation, Ashland, WI; Lakehead University and Confederation College in Thunder Bay, ON; and Clarkson University in Potsdam, NY with participation from St. Lawrence College in Cornwall, ON and students from 14 other colleges and universities in the Great Lakes region, thanks to funding from the Great Lakes Research Consortium.

In addition to these community events, and to obtain input from Indigenous peoples and communities, IJC staff also organized listening sessions with US tribes and First Nations in specific communities. Again, these were organized with support and guidance from Indigenous representatives on the IJC’s Great Lakes advisory boards. Some were organized in conjunction with the public events and Indigenous organizations and peoples actively participated in planning and holding the day-long information sessions, roundtables and evening public meetings, such as the event at Northland College in Ashland, WI. The summaries and input from these listening sessions is summarized in a separate report.



Great Lakes Consultations Timeline and Key

June: Meetings with Great Lakes Advocacy, Policy and Scientific Community

- June 12: International Association of Great Lakes Research IJC Town Hall Sessions, Brockport, New York (conference is June 10-14) 
- June 19: Roundtable with Great Lakes organization leaders and others attending the Great Lakes Public Forum, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

June - October: Evening Public Meetings

- June 18: Milwaukee, WI
- July 24: Traverse City, MI (plus afternoon roundtable and tour with local leaders in regional watershed management) 
- August 6: Collingwood, ON
- August 7: Goderich, ON (plus afternoon roundtable and tour with local leaders in regional watershed management)
- September 24: Duluth, MN
- September 25: Ashland, WI (plus day-long meetings and roundtables with representatives of local government, tribal, academic and watershed management organizations)

August - October: Listening sessions with Indigenous Peoples

- July 25: Petoskey, MI
- September 25: Ashland, WI 

September - October: Afternoon symposia/roundtables/roleplaying exercises at universities

- September 23: Lakehead University and Confederation College, Thunder Bay, ON
- September 25: Northland College (Burke Center for Freshwater Innovation)
- October 9: Clarkson University in Potsdam, NY with participation from St. Lawrence College, Cornwall, ON 

3.0 Methodology

The methodology for this report was developed as part of a larger, multi-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) grant led by Drs. Carolyn Johns and Debora VanNijnatten that focuses on Great Lakes water governance. Phase I applied the OECDs Water Governance Indicators to the Great Lakes region by Dr. Johns and the Rio Grande/Bravo by Dr. VanNijnatten that includes engagement indicators. Phase 2 focuses on stakeholder and public engagement as a critical component of effective water governance. Collaboration on this phase of the SSHRC project with the IJC started with a Ryerson student internship at the IJC in Ottawa from May-August 2018, focused on public opinion survey/polls and previous public meetings conducted by the IJC.

Under the Research Ethics Protocol for this project, Phase 2 of the SSHRC project focuses on developing and applying engagement indicators at various scales in the Great Lakes region (and Rio Grande/Bravo region by Dr. VanNijnatten). Dr. Johns shared draft engagement indicators with IJC staff in February 2019. Based on feedback from IJC staff it was determined that the engagement indicators were broadly applicable at various scales but that event-level engagement surveys could be a valuable source of data collected from those attending public engagement events being planned by the IJC.

Over the next few months, Dr. Johns worked with staff at the IJC to develop and finalize a short two-page instrument with 21 questions focused on collecting data related to public engagement. The instrument is in Appendix 1 at the end of this report. In addition to 16 questions with close-ended response categories, 12 of those questions provided space for respondents to provide additional comments. The survey also included 4 open-ended questions, and 5 socio-demographic questions.

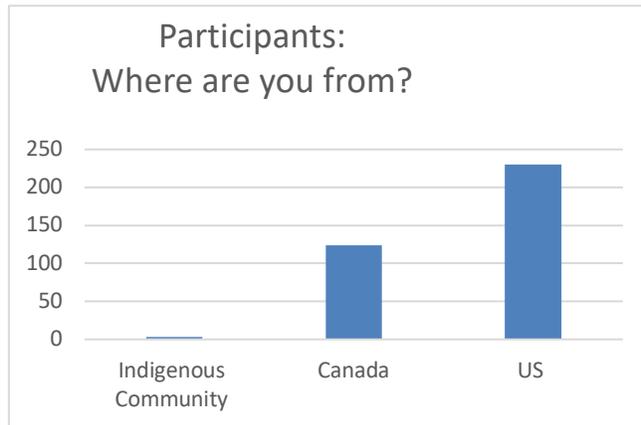
The survey was distributed to all participants attending IJC organized public events, starting with the two public sessions at the Great Lakes Public Forum in June 2019. Attendees who completed the survey were given a map of the Great Lakes, courtesy of The Erb Family Foundation. A total of 371 of public participants completed surveys for a response rate of 35%.

Event	Date	Number in Attendance	Surveys Completed
GLPF Evening Session	June 18, 2019	143	55
GLPF Afternoon session	June 19, 2019	116	33
Traverse City,	July 24, 2019	302	73
Collingwood, ON	August 6, 2019	91	34
Goderich, ON	August 7, 2019	122	56
Duluth, MN	September 24, 2019	89	38
Ashland	September 25, 2019	203	82
Total		1066	371

This report includes findings across all seven public engagement events. The detailed findings from each event are included in **Volume II of this report: Detailed Summaries of Public Engagement Surveys by Event**. Most of the surveys were completed in full. The response to the socio-demographic questions at the end of the survey was very high, indicating that those who completed the survey worked through the questions until the end of the survey. This is a positive finding related to the methodological strategy of using a one-page, double-sided survey instrument that was easy to complete. Where numbers do not add to 371, there were questions with no response, or multiple responses to response categories.

4.0 Demographic Profile of Participants at Public Engagement Events

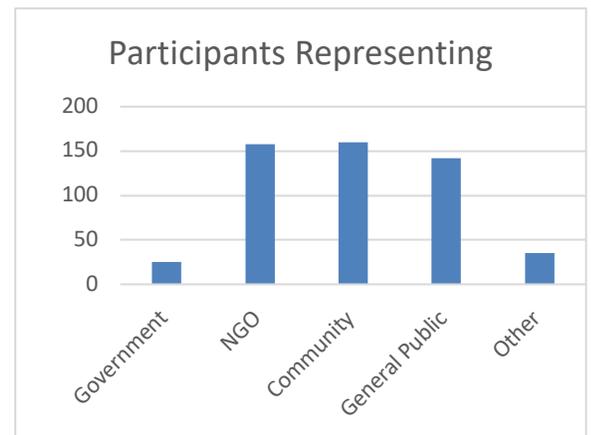
A series of demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey. Response rates were generally high for these questions, but totals do not sum to the total number of surveys as some participants chose not to respond to the demographic questions and others chose to respond to some but not all of the demographic questions.



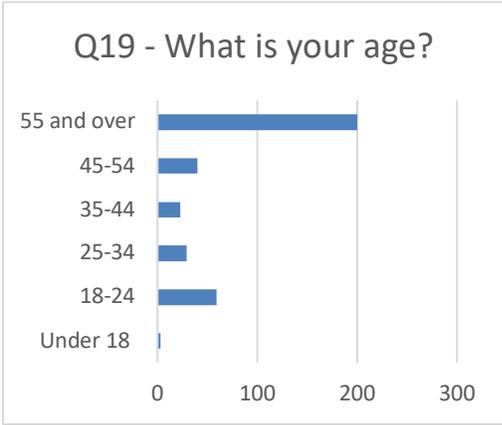
Overall, it is clear that the strategy of holding public engagement events in Canada and the US yielded 124 participants from Canada; 230 from the United States, and 3 from Indigenous communities who completed surveys. It should be noted that the IJC held specific forums for scientists and experts in some of the communities and separate listening sessions with Indigenous peoples in Petoskey, MI and Cornwall, ON. Surveys were not given to participants at these sessions.

Those who attended the public engagement sessions were asked if they were attending as members of the general public, or as representatives or affiliates with any particular communities, organizations or sectors.

The public engagement events were attended by a mix of people from nongovernmental organizations, the community and the general public. This question generated multiple responses with respondents indicating they represented more than one of the response categories. The response categories were not mutually exclusive, and from the multiple responses received there is an indication that the response categories could have been more precise. While the 'member of government

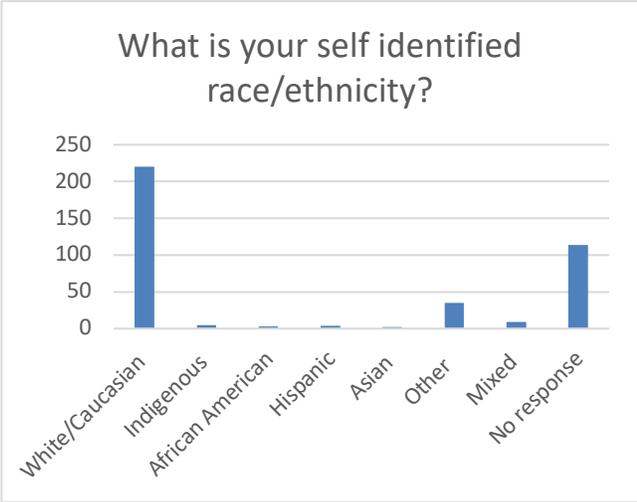
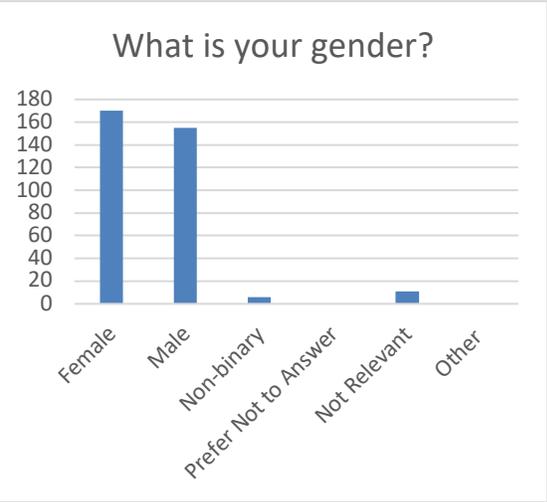


category' was clear, it would have been more precise to have the categories labelled 'member of NGO not community-based', 'member of community *organization*' and 'member of general public' as it difficult to differentiate between responses in these categories. Nonetheless, when combined the vast majority of attendees reported being members of their community or members of the general public, which was the target for these events. This was the case across all of the events except the afternoon session at the Great Lakes Public Forum where a slightly higher percent of participants (23%) reported they attended as a representative of government. Some respondents did indicate in the 'other' category they were attending due to their affiliation with community colleges or universities.



In terms of age, the vast majority of attendees who completed surveys were 55+, with 200 (54%) declaring they were in this category; 92 between 25-54; 59 indicating they were in the 18-24 category and only 3 respondents indicating they were under 18. This demographic finding was commented on in the qualitative findings in Section 5.3 below.

It should also be noted that 47 of attendees at the Ashland event were age 24 and under, while only 2-4 were in this age category at other events, and 0 of the attendees who completed this survey at the Collingwood event reported by 24 or under.



The participants who completed surveys were almost equally distributed with 170 female and 155 males completing the survey. Some 220 indicated their race/ethnicity as White/Caucasian; 5 Indigenous; and much lower numbers for those representing other races, ethnicities and people of colour. It should also be noted that this demographic question yielded the high number of non-responses. A total of 114 individuals who completed this survey chose not to respond to this question.

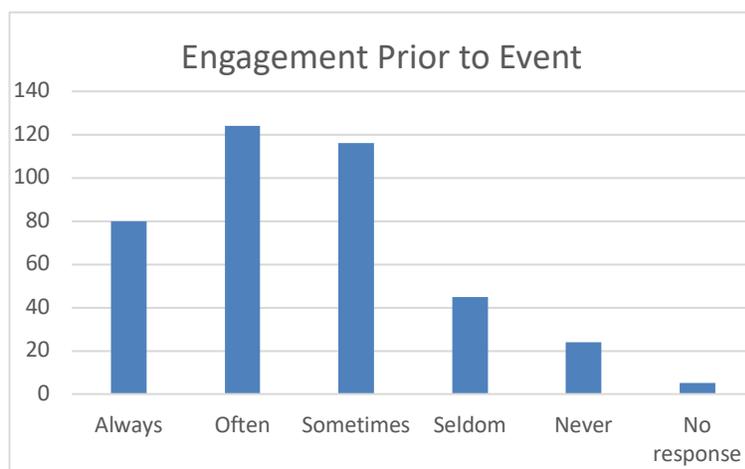
Overall, the demographic findings indicate a homogenous group of individuals attended the public engagement events.

5.0 General Engagement Findings

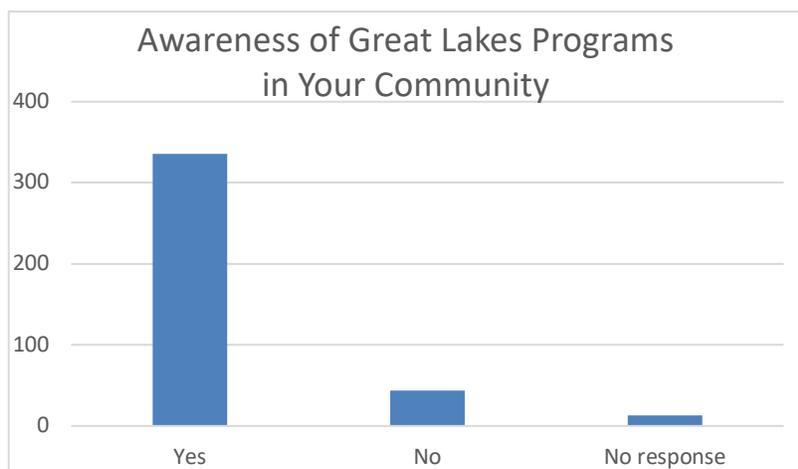
The first section of the survey instrument contained 5 questions asking attendees about their general engagement and knowledge prior to the attending the event. The first question used a 5 point Likert scale asking respondents to indicate to what degree they were engaged in Great Lakes issues/activities prior to the event always, often, sometimes, seldom, or never. The remaining 4 questions in this section asked about awareness with 'Yes'/'No' response categories and space for respondents to provide brief comments related to each question.

5.1 Engagement and Awareness Prior to Event

Some 20% of attendees indicated 'always'; 31% reported 'often' and 29% 'sometimes' as the degree to which they were engaged in Great Lakes issues/activities prior to the event. The vast majority reported being engaged prior to the event. A much smaller number indicated 'seldom' and 'never' being engaged prior to the event. This clearly indicates that the events were attracting individuals who are already engaged in Great Lakes issues and activities - 'the engaged public'. This is also reflected in responses to the other questions in this section of the survey.



5.2 Awareness of Great Lakes Programs, Agreements and Governance

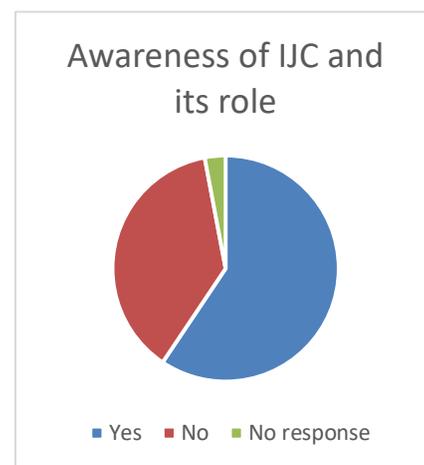
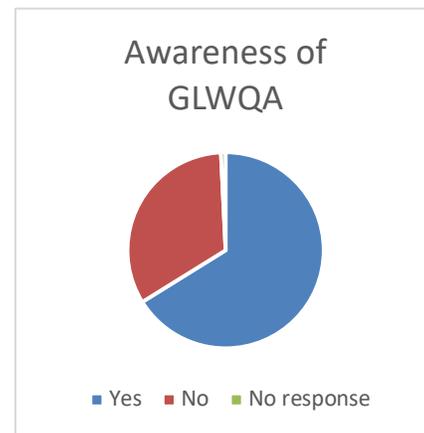
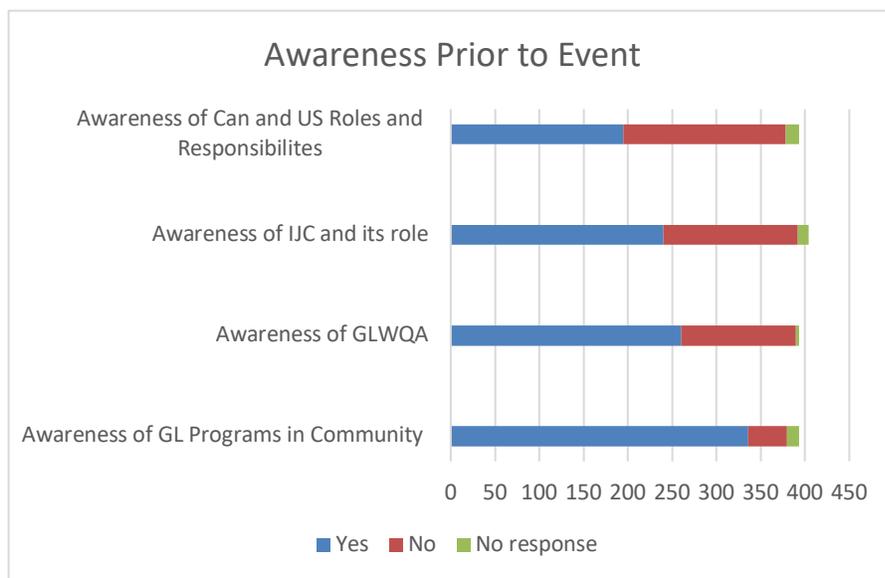


In addition to reporting engagement, participants reported very high levels of awareness of Great Lakes programs in their communities with 336 participants, some 85% indicating they were aware of programs focusing on Great Lakes issues in their community prior to attending the event.

Additional comments related to this question indicated that participants who attended the

Great Lakes afternoon and evening session were very aware of programs and community efforts related to the Great Lakes. Comments from those attending the Ashland event indicated their awareness was connected to the work of the Burke Center. Participants from Collingwood, Duluth, and Goderich had more mixed levels of awareness of Great Lakes programs in their communities with several noting "somewhat" or "some general knowledge" in their comments. Comments from Traverse City indicated there were some individuals who were new to the community and just starting to learn about Great Lakes issues and efforts in their community.

There were also a significant number who were aware of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (260 or 66%), although 33% of those in attendance indicated no awareness of the GLWQA. Some 59% indicated awareness of the International Joint Commission and its role in Great Lakes water governance, 38% were not aware. Awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the Canada and US signatories to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement was split with 50% indicating 'Yes' and 47% indicating 'No'.



Qualitative comments related to the GLWQA indicated that participants had some general knowledge of the GLWQA with comments like “some”, “vaguely”, “not in detail”. In Traverse City there were comments that more information on GLWQA would have been valuable before and during the event, “it would have been helpful to have an overview” and “still don’t know because Commissioners haven’t said anything”.

Similar comments were noted about the IJC: “not deeply knowledgeable”, “not specifically”, “a bit through the media”, “vaguely aware of it”, “heard of it”, “not very aware of its role but know it exists”, “not crystal clear on the breadth of scope and work of IJC”. A respondent from Goderich noted “it would have been beneficial to outline the IJC’s role a bit more clearly”.

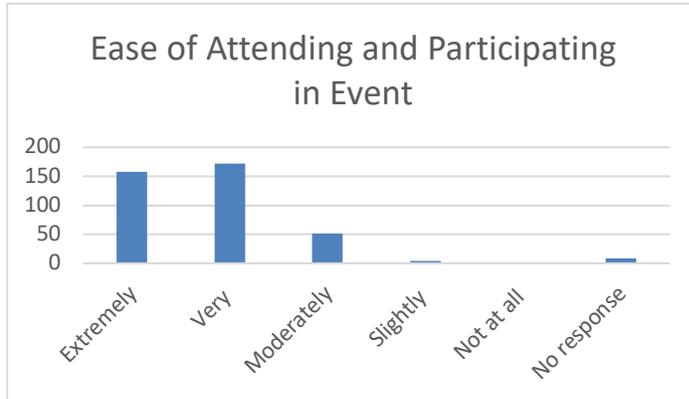
Comment received about their awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the Canadian and US government signatories to the GLWQA included: “somewhat”, “not really”, “no, still unclear”, “very vague idea but virtually nothing”, “not in any specific way”, “certainly not in detail”, “superficial awareness”, and “they need to execute the agreement”.

The comments related to awareness of the GLWQA, IJC and Canadian and US government roles related to the Great Lakes were consistent across all 7 public engagement events, with slightly fewer comments at the Great Lakes Public Forum sessions. An analysis of the responses for those under 24 years of age 52% were not aware of the GLWQA before the event; 60% were not aware of the IJC; and 73% were not aware of the role of the Parties as signatories to the GLWQA. It is important to note that 76% of respondents in this age category attended the event in Ashland, WI.

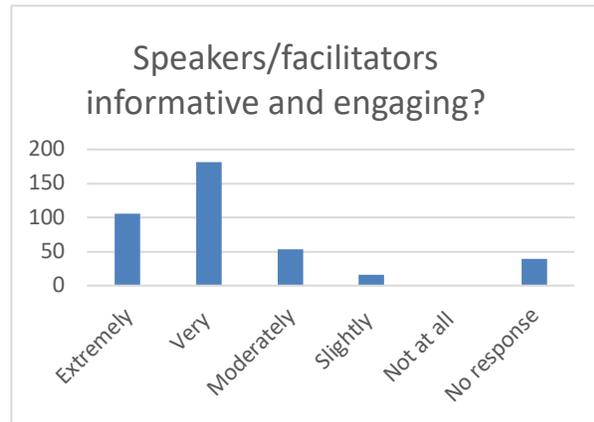
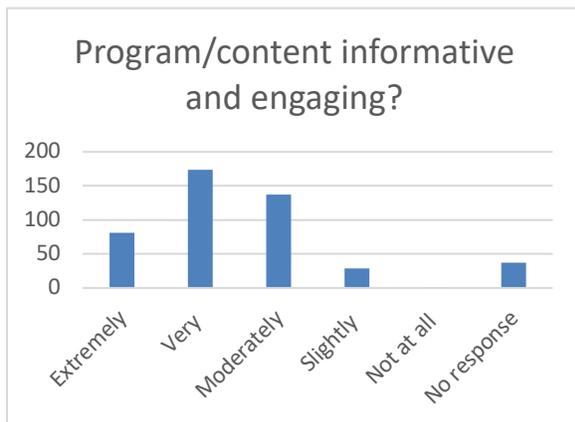
5.3 Engagement During the Event

Participants reported that it was very easy for them to attend and participate in the event. There were some comments in the open-ended section related to this question that locations were an

issue, particularly related to downtown Milwaukee location of the Great Lakes Public Forum. This question also does not reflect those segments of the public who were not in attendance and may have found it difficult to attend.

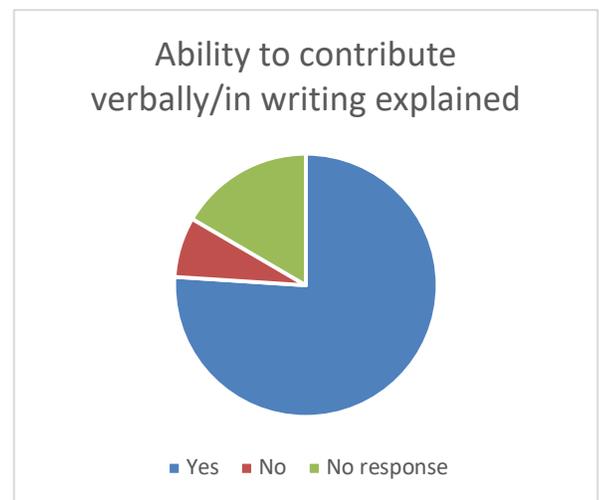


Participants were very positive about the event format, program, and content. The vast majority found the program content and speakers informative and engaging.



Comments received in response to the question about participation during the event were mixed. The vast majority of participants felt they were provided with information on how to contribute verbally and in writing during the sessions.

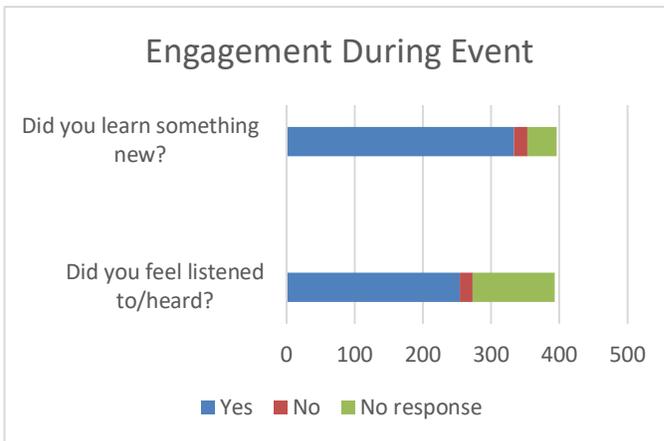
At the Great Lakes Public Forum (GLPF) sessions, comments indicated participants were not sure how to share comments and questions in writing. Another commented at the GLPF that they “would have liked an opportunity to write in a live question”, A few commented that they wished the afternoon roundtable was the focus/over two days, rather than reporting on progress. Similar comments from a participant in Traverse City: “I didn’t come here to hear my community report the same messages over and over again”. At other events, positive comments were noted about round tables and group sessions at tables.



A respondent from Ashland indicated they were “not told about comment cards” and a similar comment was noted by a participant in Traverse City who noted “did not find special cards”.

One participant felt the “letters was way too long”, while others commented very positively about the “love letters to the lakes”. In Goderich a participant suggested that “it would have been easier if I had prior notice of the questions that were going to be discussed”. Overall, several participants across all events commented that they preferred to listen rather than speak.

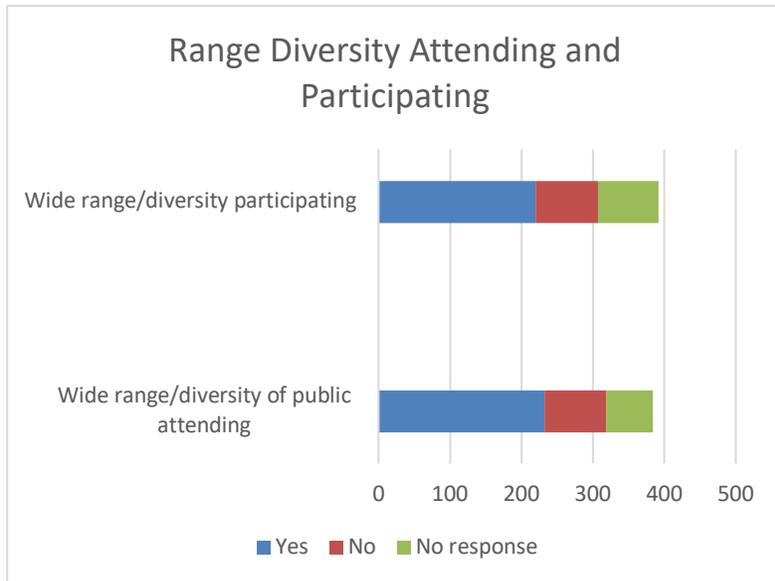
Some 65% expressed they felt they were listened to and heard. However, it is important to note that a significant number (120 participants) did not answer the question indicating if they felt listened to or heard. Many of the comments in the open-ended questions indicated this is because they didn’t make verbal comments, pose questions, or participate orally. Many indicated they chose to just listen.



Some noted in comments section that they felt it was challenging to feel listened to given the number of participants engaged. However, others noted the fact that there were many people asking questions and making statements was a positive aspect of the event. Some commented they would have liked more time for comments. A few commented that “it seemed the commissioners were engaged and attentively listening” and “I feel the commissioners made sure to make people feel like they were heard”.

However, others noted they “don’t think much will happen from comments”; “not sure the IJC has a role to listen when there are only comments back to governments” and another expressed the “time for talking is up – time for actions now”.

The vast majority of attendees across all events indicated they learned something new (84%). Comments provided indicated participants learned something new about a range of issues, about the GLWQA, about actions, about the commissioners and the IJC: “who the commissioners are and what they do”; “what the IJC does and doesn’t do”, “passion of people”, and “people really care about the Great Lakes, the IJC, and education”.



Although the majority of respondents reported that in their opinion a wide range and diversity of residents, community leaders and others attended and participated in the events, there were a significant number who expressed that there was not a wide range and diverse set of attendees and participants. There were also a significant number of non-responses to these two questions. This was also reflected in the comments provided in the space adjacent to these questions and the open-ended questions section of the survey.

The comment sections for these two questions received the most written comments and elaborations and a significant number of comments were received across all seven events. Volume II details all the comments received by event. This report summarizes the comments received across all events related to range and diversity of people attending and participating.

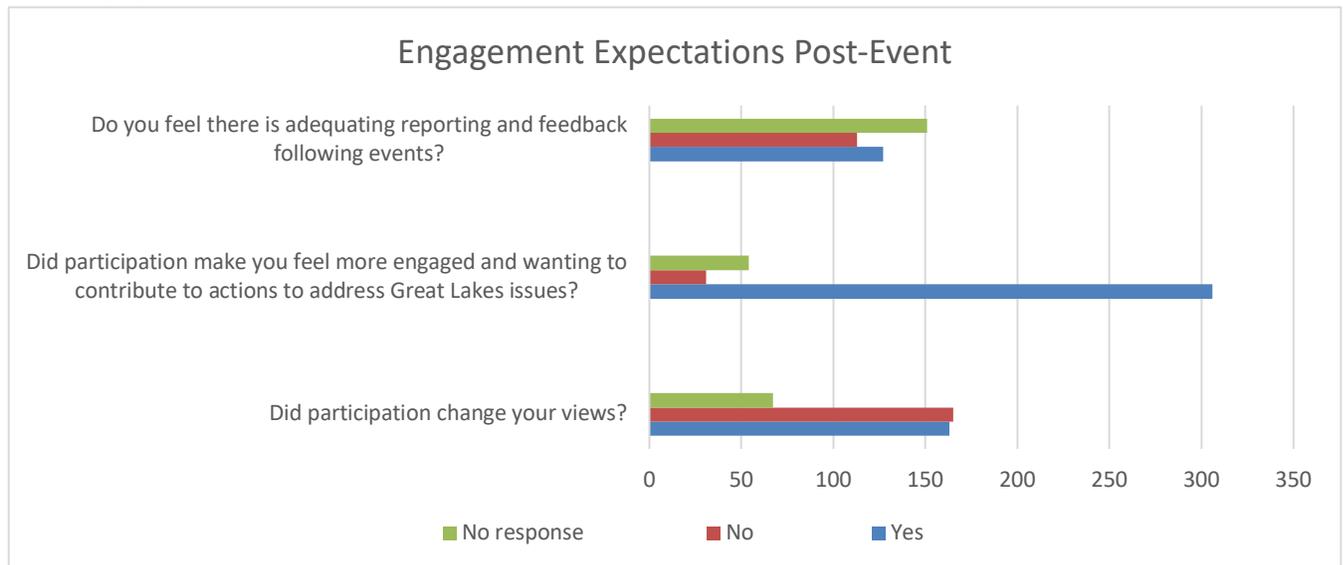
There were many comments about lack of diversity such as “people of colour not represented”, “need outreach to diverse peoples”, “few minority members”, “could have had more racial diversity”, “diversity of ethnic groups lacking”, “primarily white”, “predominantly white”, “audience was 90% white”, “pretty much all middle-class white people in the room”, “few from marginalized communities”. These comments about lack of racial and ethnic diversity were consistent across all seven events. There were numerous comments along these lines from participants who attended the GLPF sessions and fewer comments about racial and ethnic diversity in Collingwood, Goderich, Ashland and Traverse City. A few commented that there is a “need to engage Indigenous populations” (Collingwood) and “need more First Nations representation” (Goderich). A few others commented that “need to more accessible to disenfranchised”, “not many people with limited mobility”, “pretty good but more communities, rural, LGBTQ”.

The second most common set of responses related to who attended and participated in events related to youth and young people. This was not a focus of comments from GLPF (which focused more on race, ethnicity and age) and Ashland (which had representation of students and youth) but engagement of youth was noted in all other events. “Mostly older demographic”, “need to engage youth”, “no people younger than 30”, “more youth”, “need to draw in more young citizens”, “missing youth” and “need more young people”. This seemed to be a particular comment received from several of the Traverse City respondents.

In addition to these comments there were a few who noted that business and agriculture were absent. Comments such as “seemed business was missing”, “no industry”, “would have liked to see more industry and politicians from all levels”, “politicians nearly absent”, “disappointed more agricultural community members weren’t present”, “farm and agriculture representation could have been better”.

Others noted at the GLPF that “attendees from general public appear to be only a small percentage” and “wish more local residents attended”, “need to engage more non-experts, general public audience”. Several commented that “converted are present”, “mostly those already engaged”, “people who already know something are here”, “was the typical activist/scientific community”, “mostly already people who are engaged”.

5.4 Engagement Expectations Post-Event



The last segment of questions asked participants whether their participation in the event changed their views about anything discussed. Responses to this question were mixed with almost an equal number indicating ‘Yes’ (163) and ‘No’ (165). A significant number (51) did not respond to this question. Comments related to this question indicate that many felt their participation “reinforced” “strengthened” or “solidified” their views. Some expressed that they “felt more optimistic”, “learn what is being done”, “feel more united with others”, and “now I am extra fueled, I’ve got to do my part”. While others expressed that attending “strengthened their worries and concerns”, “made me more scared and angrier” and “determined” several wrote comments like: “much more needs to be done”, “so much more needs to be done”, and “we need to do more to protect the Lakes”. There were numerous participants across all the events who commented that their views were changed positively about the IJC. Only one person at the Traverse City express negative comments in response to this question noting “the IJC have nothing to say, why are you paid, what do you actually do. Get on your feet and get 3 important agenda items to solve”.

There was overwhelming agreement – some 306 participants or 78% – who indicated the event made them feel more engaged and wanting to contribute more to actions to address Great Lakes issues. Many noted in comments that they were already engaged, involved and active. Some noted “it made me want the IJC to engage the public and various groups more”; “I have a base to find out more and get involved”, “because IJC doesn’t seem to care much, we need to be the change”, “volunteer opportunities need to be advertised”, “individuals can make an impact”.

Finally, the question about whether there is adequate follow-up and reporting generating a split in responses, with the majority (151) not responding to this question; 127 indicating there was

adequate follow up and reporting and the other 113 indicating there is not. The comments indicate there were a significant number of “don’t know”, “not sure”, “unsure” and “?” responses. The second most common response was “we will see”, “remains to be seen”, “time will tell” and “hope so”. Some commented that they felt there would not be much follow up with comments like: “probably not” and “more would be better”. Some noted that it was not clear at event what was the follow up and plan for ongoing engagement, noting “is there any”, “not clear”, “when is the next follow up”, unsure what the follow up is/will be”. There was clearly uncertainty in response to this question. This is clearly reflected in the distribution of responses, the high number of non-responses, and the numerous written comments related to this question.

6.0 Findings from Open-ended Engagement Questions

In addition to the questions with response categories and boxes for additional comments and elaboration, 4 open-ended questions were asked.

This section of the report presents findings from the aggregation, coding and analysis of qualitative responses to these 4 questions. This section also presents any interesting findings, patterns and variations evident across the various public events. Volume II highlights that each public engagement event had some unique elements and partnerships that had implications in terms of the qualitative comments on the survey.

The findings are presented here related to the specific questions

6.1 How did you become aware of this event?

There were numerous written responses to this question. Coding across the events indicates responses cluster in the same categories which are ranked here based on frequency:

1. Email notification/flyer
 - a. From IJC
 - b. Through local organization
2. Through my organization/affiliation with organization or group
3. Notification/invitation from colleague
4. Social media (Facebook and Twitter)
5. Traditional news outlets – newspaper, radio, television
6. Poster/flyer
7. Professor/Speaker
8. Friend/family member

The most common way people became aware of the event was through email notification. Three people noted they found out about the event using Google Alerts. The social media mentioned was Facebook and Twitter. No other social media platforms were mentioned. This may align with the demographic findings above.

Traverse City the call for “love letters” to the Great Lakes was mentioned by several participants as the impetus for their engagement.

6.2 Are you Regularly Engaged? If so, How?

As noted in other sections above, the vast majority of those attending the public events indicate they regularly engage with Great Lakes issues through their work or volunteering in local community organizations and efforts. Across all events, the comments indicated the vast majority of attendees were regularly engaged. These rates were particularly high for those respondents who attended the Great Lakes Public Forum public engagement sessions. In Ashland, WI, a significant number of students indicated they were engaged because of the event and this event also had the highest number of respondents who commented that they were new to the area and Great Lakes issues. In Goderich and Traverse City there seemed to be more participants who were engaging for the first time, or not regularly engaged. In Traverse City there seemed to be more specific issue engagement (Line 5), more diversity of perspectives in the comments and a large number of comments related to activism.

Overall, the events attracted members of the public and representatives of community organizations who were regularly engaged. The comments indicate that many were engaged based on environmental concerns and issues. Comments also indicate that many members attending events have been involved in various ways for some time, for some decades.

6.3 Preferred Way of Engaging in Great Lakes Issues/Actions

Many of the comments from attendees indicate they were regularly engaged in community efforts, actions and activism. Participants indicated they are involved in multiple ways. This question generated a long list of comments indicating participants are engaged in the following ways (in order of most frequently noted):

- Community projects
- Events/conferences/workshops
- Volunteering
- Email/online/reading/conversations
- Committees
- Education and awareness efforts
- Daily practice/interaction with the lakes
- Political action

The preferred way of engaging seemed to be in the form of activism and investments of time. Some expressed that they preferred to be involved in local action and efforts, rather than political action as “politicians don’t listen”. However, a small number of respondents did indicate they preferred to be engaged through political action and interaction with elected officials.

6.4 How Could Engagement in Great Lakes Issues and Priorities be Improved?

In response to this open-ended question, the seven public engagement events generate 11 single-spaced pages of written comments. This section summarizes the most common suggestions but also highlights some unique suggestions.

1. Engage more with local communities

This category of responses included the most comments across all the events. Comments such as “more engagement and communication at the grass roots/local level”; “more with local communities by partnering with community groups and organizations”; connect with grassroots people”; “get out and face the community”; “more engagement focused on each lake”; “community focus on green infrastructure projects”; “work with local/states and provinces to update civic codes to harvest and use grey water”; “funding for infrastructure projects that engage communities and schools, especially green infrastructure so it becomes normalized”.

2. More frequent and ongoing engagement

Several expressed in written comments that they felt more frequent and ongoing engagement was important. Comments such as: “continue local visits”; “keep doing this conference, educating on issues”; “continue to host comment sessions and public outreach”; and “more than once every 3 years”.

Some participants commend on the need for longer term engagement, ongoing tracking: and an engagement shift: “need a reporting flow chart with timelines, something graphical and visual, where does information and recommendations flow”; “need to change opinions of water as source of economy and focus on the importance as a source for life”.

3. Broaden and diversify engagement

There were many comments about broadening public engagement. Several commented about: “bringing in knowledge and opinions beyond old-boy participants and scientists”; “bring in more, ‘less-informed’ community members”; “reach out to the unconverted”; “use incentives, sponsors, prizes from local industries”; “visit and hold meetings with communities of colour”; “more inclusion of First Nations and Tribes”; “more discussions about intersectionality and access to the table”; “more diversity from government leadership positions” and “more push to get things done”.

Some commented on the need for more political engagement: “have federal, provincial, municipal leaders and politicians attend”, “greater involvement of political leaders”, “more political involvement”, “better communications and more access to government”; “lobbying of Canadian government”; “more action by governments”; more listening by leaders and politicians”.

Several commented about the need to engage other less-engaged publics: “more local groups working with companies”; “more meetings with users of the Great Lakes, boat landings, marinas, lake-walks, beaches, etc.”; “more connection with homeowners, farmers”; “engage agricultural stakeholders”; “residents and businesses need to be informed about harmful/helpful practices”; “more focus on landscape scale”; “stewardship education and outreach directed to people who can make a difference (septic owners, industry, agriculture etc.)”. There were numerous comments on the need to focus on engagement of youth.

4. Focus on Youth engagement

The survey findings clearly indicate that engagement of those 18-24 was very low, particularly if the large contingent of youth at the Ashland, WI event are removed. The attendance and participation of those 18 and under was almost non-existent. This observation was reflected in numerous comments received in writing across all seven events about engagement of youth and the next generation.

Comments such as: there needs to be “mandatory teaching in schools”; “emphasis on Great Lakes in classrooms”; “make curricula”; “learning starting young, more collaborations with K-12 schools and college/university students”; and “education by reaching teachers”. The Ashland event indicates that events organized with post-secondary institutions as partners may be effective at reaching 18-24 year-old attendees and the next generation of Great Lakes practitioners. However, many expressed that the IJC could focus more on youth engagement.

There were some who expressed ideas on how the IJC could better engage youth: “making spaces for young people, they have voices and power”; “set up a student run IJC in every State”; “young people might not read the paper so how can they know”; “increase IJC social media presence to target younger audiences”.

It is clear from responses to the first question in the open-ended questions that most received information on the events through email and their organizational affiliation. Youth use email much less than the demographic attending the events. The social media platforms mentioned were Facebook and Twitter. None of the respondents indicate they heard about the events through other social media channels that youth may be using such as Instagram and SnapChat. There were however, some specific comments about using traditional media and social media more effectively.

5. More Use of Traditional Media and Social Media

Several attendees across all events offered comments on how the traditional media and social media could be used to improvement engagement on Great Lakes issues and priorities. Suggestions included: “more regular media coverage”; “tell success stories more widely”; “flash facts everywhere – beaches, fountains, everywhere that has to do with water”; and “educational insert into every water bill to every home”.

Other respondents recommended “short video series for social media about various topics – how does your behavior relate to the lakes, how do green roofs help...” that can be shared easily”, “produce and share short videos on ways average people can do no harm to our H2O”.; and “use surveying and tools to find out how residents value the Great Lakes using social media”. Some had specific suggestions related to future IJC public engagement events: “raise the profile of the IJC”; “more regular updates”; “more online press releases”; “media blitz on issues”; “more live web-feeds of meetings”; “more use of social media”.

7.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This report highlights some very positive aspects of the IJC's efforts related to public engagement. A total of 1066 people attended seven public engagement events hosted by the IJC between June and September 2019. Some 35% of these people were willing to share their backgrounds, thoughts, perspectives, opinions and comments by completing this short survey.

The findings across all seven events presented in this report, and the detailed findings from each event in **Volume II: IJC Public Engagement Event Summaries** reveal some very important empirical quantitative and qualitative data and findings. The surveys clearly indicate that public events attract a homogeneous segment of the public in Canada and the US that are already generally engaged in Great Lakes issues, particularly in their communities. In the scholarship on public engagement, the participants would be considered the 'engaged public'. The findings also reveal that the public attending these meetings comes to the meetings with some general awareness of Great Lakes issues in their communities, the IJC, the GLWQA and about half have some awareness that the Parties as signatories to the GLWQA have some level of responsibility in the Great Lakes. They however seem to be less clear on the specific roles and responsibilities of the IJC and Parties.

The findings from this report indicate that the socio-demographic profile of those attending IJC public engagement events are very homogenous. Although there was a good balance in terms of gender, participants were generally older and self-identified as White/Caucasian. Both the quantitative socio-demographic data and the comments indicate various publics in the Great Lakes region are not represented at these public meetings including: Indigenous peoples, people of colour, industry, agriculture and youth. These are important findings that could underpin future public engagement strategies and many attendees offered specific comments on how the lack of diversity or strategic engagement could be improved.

In terms of the format of the event, most reported that it was easy to attend, recognizing that this survey clearly does not capture those who did not find it easy to attend. Participants found the speakers and facilitators extremely or very engaging, and the program content very or moderately engaging. The vast majority expressed that they learned something new and their participation made them feel more engaged and wanting to become more engaged and contribution to actions related to the Great Lakes. This is an important finding that could be leveraged related to mobilizing these engaged publics following events. This is particularly important as respondents clearly indicated they didn't know what to expect following the event.

The findings from this report indicate there are a few important recommendations that the IJC may wish to consider as it moves forward with its public engagement strategy, and future public engagement events. that can be used by the IJC and others to further analyze public engagement, strengthen positive aspects, identify gaps, and inform future strategies.

The significant number of 1066 attending these seven public events held across the region indicate that partnerships with local community organizations is a good way to communicate and engage local community members and citizens. This was also confirmed in the survey as the vast majority of the respondents indicated they heard about the event through email and other communications from the partner organizations or other community organizations.

The open-ended comments provide some very important insights, suggestions and recommendations for future public engagement efforts by the IJC. As outlined in Section 6 above, there was consensus from participants across all events that the IJC could improve its engagement by focusing on 5 engagement priorities:

- 1) More engagement with local communities
- 2) More frequent and ongoing engagement
- 3) Broaden and diversify engagement
- 4) Focus on youth engagement
- 5) More use of traditional media and social media

Participants provided some very specific comments related to these engagement priorities, including some creative ways to advance these recommendations as independent strategies or as strategies across these five main categories of engagement. For example, there were many positive comments about the 'love letters to the Great Lakes' used as part of the Traverse City event. There was clearly a consensus that the IJC should prioritize a particular focus on youth. This is reinforced by the data indicating that the vast majority of attendees at public events are 55 and older.

Overall, the findings from the surveys completed by participants in IJC organized public events indicates there are important findings and recommendations that the IJC may wish to consider as it moves forward with its public engagement strategy, and future public engagement events.

It should be noted that this report presents findings from just one of several other engagement activities and initiatives that are part of the IJC's broader public engagement efforts including the IJC's:

- Great Lakes Biennial Public Opinion Poll
- Triennial Great Lakes Public Forum
- Listening Sessions with Indigenous peoples and communities
- the 2019 'Step In and Speak Out' online Survey
- open comment forums through the IJCs website
- regular and issue specific public engagement opportunities

Combined, the IJC has collected a significant body of knowledge from various publics in the Great Lakes region and about its engagement efforts and practices. This body of knowledge includes important information for practitioners who are working on public engagement at a variety of scales in the region. For example, these findings could be shared with the Parties, Annex Leads, engagement committees and others working on public engagement in the Great Lakes.

This report also highlights the value of research partnerships and engaging knowledge from other sources that are relevant to the IJC's public engagement efforts. As Phase 2 of our SSHRC project focuses on public engagement, we have generated two other reports on public engagement in the Great Lakes region; are conducting a review of relevant scholarly literature on public engagement to bring theory and practice together related to best practices and enhancing engagement; are developing and applying engagement indicators to a broad range of stakeholders and less-engaged 'publics' in 2020; and are training the next generation of practitioners to work on these important topics. We hope this research report is a valuable contribution and presents findings that are valuable for the IJC and other readers.