The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement: Successes and Shortcomings

Theme: Leadership, Economics and Policy

Team: Yellowjackets

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In efforts of restoration and preservation of the Great Lakes, 20% of the Earth's surface freshwater, Canada and America formed the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) in 1972, prompting powerful legislation, like the Clean Water Act. Despite many progressive actions to maintain the lakes, specific resolutions were not as effective due to government administration and economic constraints. This project will investigate the successes and failures of the GLWQA, analyzing the legislature economically and politically. To conduct our research, we will interview water quality administrations, councils, and policymakers on a local, state, and federal level, including our cities' water administrations, our Michigan's Department of the Environment, and federal EPA offices. Our questions will be geared toward understanding how the GLWQA has changed over time, how it affects the interviewee, and the challenges the interviewee faces when working under the GLWQA. In addition to the interviews, we plan to research the history of the GLWQA. Using the information we gain from interviews and our background research, we hope to propose new resolutions to the current problems under the GLWQA and present them to federal representatives. The project will also increase dialogue between officials in policymaking and the officials following the policies.