

DRAFT Jan 4, 2023

GBA 2023 – 2025 Strategic Plan

Georgian Bay Association

The Georgian Bay Association was established in 1916 as an advocacy leader and umbrella organization for its member associations to champion the interests of their 3,000 plus paying families on the eastern and northern coasts of Georgian Bay (“the Bay”) and be their prominent, responsible, and credible voice at the federal, provincial, municipal, and Indigenous government levels on issues that include: coastal, environmental and water protection; boating, safety & emergencies; aquaculture; fisheries; lands and forests; species at risk; indigenous relations; and other important Bay related matters.

Our Vision

The preservation and protection of the Bay and it’s natural environment, ecosystems, and species to sustain this world-renowned biosphere and archipelago for future generations.

Our Mission

GBA's mission is to engage with all levels of government and like-minded organizations through education and advocacy to achieve our Vision.

Values/Core Principles

GBA is an organization that:

- ❖ Is responsive to the needs, views, and opinions, of our members, partners, and other stakeholders
- ❖ Establishes and continually seeks to enhance trust, transparency, and mutual respect amongst all organizations, communities, and individuals we work with
- ❖ Engages collaboratively and ethically with our many partners and all levels of government
- ❖ Promotes openness, integrity, diversity, and dignity amongst our board of directors, member associations, stakeholders, and employees

Priority Action

COASTAL PROTECTION

Focus: Promote the protection of the Bay's unique land and waterscapes, environment, and ecosystems in the face of increasing development pressures

Advocacy

- ❖ Safeguard the existing strong planning and sustainable development standards and principles and promote more consistent protections and higher standards going forward
- ❖ Monitor and respond to key issues such as threatening developments, floating cottages and provincial policies on development
- ❖ Launch a Coastal Protection Fund to protect the Bay's natural landscapes and coastal environment
- ❖ Support related coastal protection initiatives

Information/Education/Services

- ❖ Communicate with, and provide educational materials to, municipalities, GBA member associations & GBA members on coastal protection projects and issues, including the benefits of strong planning standards and environmental stewardship
- ❖ Collaborate and develop an ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders on these issues

WATER

Focus: Advocate directly to governments at all levels and other NGOs, to voice the interests of GBA members on water levels and water quality issues

Advocacy

Water Quality

- ❖ Provide input on the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement in collaboration with partners, and directly to government agencies, to address: chemicals of mutual concern (pollution, mercury contamination in fish); nutrient loading (sewage overflows, agriculture and aquaculture); Lakewide Management Plan for Lake Huron; vessel discharges (quagga mussels) and aquatic invasive species (asian carp); habitat and species (species-at-risk); groundwater; climate change impacts; and science (research needed)
- ❖ Continue to push for better black/grey water controls and regulatory changes to support improvements to septic system options and municipal septic inspections
- ❖ Improved regulation/reduction of plastics pollution vectors such as dock foam and clothes washing machines (filters)

Water Levels

- ❖ Continue to persuade governments to find solutions to extreme water levels, rather than only focus on adaptation
- ❖ Continue to push for more transparency in making key information public to better inform municipalities, shoreline businesses and GBA members on how to prepare for increased water levels variability

Information/Education/Services

Water Quality

- ❖ Promote septic system management/education/inspections
- ❖ Educate members about the dangers of pollution, mercury contamination in fish, sewage overflows, agricultural run-off and aquaculture nutrient loading

Water Levels

- ❖ Educate our members, municipalities and local business on climate change and the expected impacts of extreme high/low water levels and increasing winds, waves & wakes and help them develop mitigation techniques, such as protecting their shorelines through natural vs. “hardening” measures
- ❖ Promote the need for careful planning - adopting long term strategies - avoiding short term solutions

BOATING, SAFETY & EMERGENCIES

Focus: Promote safe boating, better boater education, water and waterway safety, and a quieter more enjoyable cottage experience

Advocacy

- ❖ Push for reductions in boat speeds, wake, traffic, and noise

Information/Education/Services

- ❖ Continue to educate members on:
 - proper nautical rules and cold water awareness
 - reducing marine fatalities
 - fire safety and emergency responses

AQUACULTURE

Focus: Advocate for sustainable aquaculture production in Ontario

Advocacy

- ❖ Continue to provide evidence to the federal and provincial governments that open net cage fish farms (aquaculture) cause environmental harm
- ❖ Push to transition these aquaculture operations to either enclosed systems or land-based systems
- ❖ Request research on the various negative environmental impacts from aquaculture operations
- ❖ Negotiate for improved government regulation and oversight

Information/Education/Services

- ❖ Inform members on the potential and actual environmental impacts of aquaculture
- ❖ Communicate details of GBA aquaculture advocacy

COMMUNICATIONS - MEMBERSHIP

Focus: Effectively communicate with members, governments, and stakeholders to keep them informed, inspired, and engaged with important matters on the Bay

Advocacy

- ❖ Support membership in GBA associations and develop communication tools that support our committees’ public facing mandates, through surveys such as the economic impact analysis

Information/Education/Services

- ❖ Develop educational tools/platforms that support each of our committees’ key communication objectives to engage and educate our members/government decision makers/key stakeholders
- ❖ Continue to provide information on climate change impacts, increasing development pressures, and other major threats to the Bay.

WETLANDS – FISHERIES – LANDS & FORESTS

Advocacy

- ❖ Continue to monitor and submit comments on government legislation, such as the Species-At-Risk Act, Environmental Protection Act, Fisheries Act, fisheries regulations, and provincial legislation that impacts wetlands and other habitat
- ❖ Continue to push for improved controls over invasive species, such as phragmites, grass carp and quagga mussels

Information/Education/Services

- ❖ Educate members on the importance of protecting wetlands & sensitive fish habitat, and phragmites control and removal
- ❖ Continue to participate actively in projects such as the ECCC Great Lakes coastal wetlands resiliency study and Georgian Bay Biosphere's Fisheries Stewardship Framework
- ❖ Keep members updated on forest health (forest pests), invasive species, and species-at-risk
- ❖ Report regularly on changes to fishing regulations/advisories, the state of state of local fisheries industries, and stocking programs
- ❖ Continue to communicate regularly and work together with a range of government agencies and NGOs to keep members informed

INDIGENOUS RELATIONSHIPS – GUARDIANS OF THE BAY

Information/Education/Services

- ❖ Exploring how to integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) into GBA activities
- ❖ Ongoing education on Ethical Space and Two-Eyed Seeing and reporting on the progress of the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership Report
- ❖ Continue to develop and communicate the need for everyone to protect and preserve the Bay in every action they take for future generations

GOVERNANCE

- ❖ Bring governance procedures up-to-date and ONCA compliant
- ❖ Ongoing education for directors as required

Leverage Strategic Alliances

- ❖ Continue to develop relationships with key external partners to expand our advocacy reach
- ❖ Leverage their subject matter expertise to expand GBA's knowledge base so that we can reach, educate and influence our members on what the key macro issues are and what the necessary actions are to reach our objectives.
- ❖ Continue to complement the work of the three other Georgian Bay focused organizations, collectively, the GB4. Listed below are the focus and objectives of each of the four organizations:
 - **Georgian Bay Association** (GBA) is a 100+ year old umbrella advocacy group that focuses on the environmental protection of Georgian Bay for 17 paying member associations and their 3,000 members on the east & north shores of Georgian Bay.
 - **Georgian Bay Forever** (GBF) is a science and education charity focused on water issues in the whole of Georgian Bay.
 - **Georgian Bay Land Trust** (GBLT) is a charitable land trust that stewards land on the east coast of Georgian Bay & the North Channel, forever.
 - **Georgian Bay Biosphere** (GBB) is a charity that promotes the aims of the UNESCO biosphere on the east coast of Georgian Bay to actively nurture the balance between human activity and the ecosystem