

US/CANADA ROUND TABLE
Washington, D.C., January 27, 1995

(speaking
copy)

(Notes for a presentation by J. Blair Seaborn)

Priorities for US/Canada Cooperation in Great Lakes Pollution Prevention

Given the short time available, I shall limit myself to making a few observations, putting a few questions, and providing a few possible answers as an aid to focusing discussion this morning.

1. When we speak of environmental problems of the Great Lakes, what are we really talking about?

Scientists have for years recognized that you can't look intelligently at the quality of Great Lakes water other than as part of the whole Great Lakes ecosystem - nor indeed, because of the importance of air-borne pollution, other than as part of an even wider North American ecosystem. The public, as they have become increasingly knowledgeable about environmental questions, also recognize that the Great Lakes Basin has to be looked at as an entity. And governments (federal, state and provincial) in their most recent get-together last year at the State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC) appear to be moving towards the position that the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement should be transformed into a Great Lakes Basin ecosystem agreement. That is good.

2. How important is the Great Lakes Basin, or ecosystem, to us in Canada and you in the USA, and to the relations between us, taken in the context of the many challenges which both countries face today?