

# VISIONING LAKE ONTARIO'S FUTURE

How do the people who work, live and play along Lake Ontario see the future of this great resource? Can American and Canadian anglers, government agencies, charterboat captains, planners, aquaculturists, environmental groups and researchers come together to discuss how they'd like to see the future of Lake Ontario?

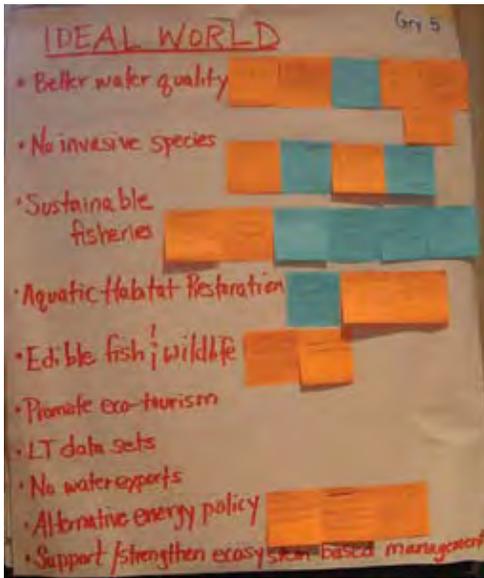


Photo by Barbara A. Branca

To open up such a discussion, the binational Lake Ontario team of the Great Lakes Regional Research Information Network (GLRRIN), led by NYSG's **Dale Baker** and **Dave MacNeill**, held two separate conferences at opposite ends of Lake Ontario. Facilitated by **Dr. Bruce Lauber** of Cornell University's Human Dimensions Research Unit, these two Lake Ontario "Search Conferences" were held this spring in Grand Island, NY and Gananoque, Ontario.

After an overview of Lake Ontario presented by NYSG fisheries specialist and conference co-coordinator MacNeill, facilitator Lauber led each group of approximately 40 participants into a

"shared history" discussion of Lake Ontario. Participants wrote on a wall-sized timeline to show decade by decade the natural and socioeconomic history of Lake Ontario. They were aided by conference planning team members **Tim Johnson**, **Gary Sprules**, **Tom Brown** and **Jim Johnson**.

By alternating small and large work groups, each consisting of a balance of stakeholders, participants listed a shared vision of the "ideal future" and then the "likely future" of Lake Ontario (see photo left). They had an opportunity to identify information needs that would be of practical value to Lake Ontario stakeholders. Each group reported its findings and all participants had an opportunity to indicate which information needs had priority for planning future research, extension and outreach projects.

Lists of prioritized needs as well as pre- and post-workshop evaluations will be synthesized into a report by the team in the coming weeks which will be made available on the GLRRIN web site.

— **Barbara A. Branca**



... for more on the **Lake Ontario Future Search conferences**, including photos and insights by some of the participants