

INFORMATION RELEASE

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For Islands, By Islands *3rd Annual Great Lakes Islands Summit Hosted on Mackinac Island*

Mackinac Island, MI -There are nearly 30 year-round island communities in the Great Lakes. Though independent by choice, they are facing economic, social, and ecological challenges that require a higher degree of collaboration and cooperation.

On October 20 -23, 2019, over 130 people from 14 Great Lakes islands convened at Mission Point Resort on Mackinac Island, Michigan, for the 3rd Annual Great Lakes Islands Summit. This meeting serves as the annual member meeting for the Great Lakes Islands Alliance (GLIA). The Summit is the only Great Lakes-wide event dedicated to the needs of island communities to foster relationships and share information Great Lakes island living.

“I’m often asked how this organization is benefitting Drummond Island and my answer is simple. ‘Great Lakes islands share many common challenges. As a single island we are easily overlooked when facing challenges, but as a group of islands we are able to leverage our experiences through the GLIA network and have a more amplified voice” said Kristy Beyer, GLIA Steering Committee Member. “I’m proud of the work we are doing and excited about the network we are establishing.”

GLIA voluntary network connecting individual island leaders and developing tools to aid collaboration. This year’s attendance nearly doubled, proving the validity of this bi-national group as an important network with a unique purpose. Thanks to the administrative support of Northland College, the group was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Mott Foundation. With this financial support, GLIA will spend the next 12 months establishing the Great Lakes Islands Alliance as a legal entity, an influential voice for policies to protect the interests of Great Lakes islands and continue to provide a support network for year-round island communities.

Featured speakers at the 2019 Summit included Lisa Powers, chairwoman of the Mackinac Bands of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians; Phil Porter, Director, Mackinac State Historic Parks; Eric Ellis, Project Manager, Great Lakes Commission; Lisa Brush founder and executive director of the award-winning Stewardship Network.

Several informational breakout sessions provided insight on tourism, affordable housing, health care, environmental conservation, schools, faith communities, infrastructure, and more. Guided field trips to the school, library, airport, medical center, fire and police department, solid waste handling facility, water treatment plant, and Fort Mackinac allowed fellow islanders a chance to see how Mackinac Island addresses these essential necessities.

The GLIA members from Mackinac Island took significant responsibility for arranging logistics and designing agenda content for this year's event. Additional assistance and oversight was provided by the GLIA Steering Committee, GLIA staff coordinator Matt Preisser with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, and valued partner organizations of Northland College and the Island Institute.

The event was hosted at the Mission Point Resort, which provided a beautiful setting for the event. Financial support for the 2019 Great Lakes Islands Summit was made possible by the Mackinac Island Community Foundation, Grand Hotel, Island Airways, and the Mackinac Bands of Chippewa and Ottawa Indians.

The 2020 Great Lakes Island Summit will take place at the member islands in Lake Erie. To learn more about GLIA, visit www.greatlakesislandsalliance.org.

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About GLIA

The Great Lakes Islands Alliance (GLIA) is voluntary, collaborative network that brings together island leaders, residents, and advocates from across the Great Lakes region. The mission of GLIA is to encourage relationship building, foster information exchange, and leverage resources to address shared challenges and embrace opportunities to benefit islands within the Great Lakes.