

Ballast Water Working Group Report

In March, the Great Lakes Ballast Water Working Group (BWWG) released its 2012 Summary of Great Lakes Seaway Ballast Water Management report. The mission of the BWWG is to harmonize ballast water management efforts between the U.S. Coast Guard, Transport Canada, the SLSDC, and the Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation.

In 2012, 100 percent of ships bound for the Great Lakes via the St. Lawrence Seaway from outside the Exclusive Economic Zone received a ballast tank exam. A total of 6,974 ballast tanks were assessed during 386 vessel transits. Vessels that did not exchange their ballast water or flush their ballast tanks were required to either retain the ballast water and residuals on board, treat the ballast water in an environmentally sound and approved manner, or return to sea to conduct a ballast water exchange.

In 2012, all 36 vessels that did not exchange ballast water before entering the St. Lawrence Seaway, chose to retain their ballast on board. Each vessel was then checked for compliance when it departed the system.

This is the fourth consecutive year that agencies comprising the BWWG ensured the examination of 100 percent of ballast tanks entering the Great Lakes via the St. Lawrence Seaway.

The BWWG anticipates continued high ship compliance rates for the 2013 navigation season.