



All Too Clear

Rebuilding the Great Lakes

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Inspired Planet
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The Great Lakes contain 20% of the world's freshwater.

Today, the lakes have reached historic levels of clarity as life is literally sucked out of them. The deep waters are becoming a desert.

But the solutions to this problem are surprising, and the opportunities it creates inspiring.

***All Too Clear* is an epic feature-length documentary, that will challenge everything you think you know about the world's largest freshwater ecosystem, and its tremendous potential for the future.**



It's time to muddy the waters

Logline

Life in the deep waters of the Great Lakes of North America has vanished, making them incredibly clear. Is this an insurmountable problem, or an unexpected opportunity to restore the world's biggest freshwater ecosystem?

Synopsis

It's gone largely unnoticed, but over the past 20 years, the deep waters of the Great Lakes - the world's largest freshwater lake system - have completely changed. Our success at controlling nutrients entering the lakes, combined with the proliferation of some 950 trillion invasive mussels, has resulted in cascading consequences on an astounding scale. Lifeforms of all kinds - from the tiniest plankton to the largest fish - have disappeared, turning vast parts of the Great Lakes into a "deep water desert". It's one of the biggest changes to impact the earth's freshwaters in 10,000 years, and the consequences for nature and people are dire.

But this loss of life has had an extraordinary side effect. It's made the lakes far clearer than they've ever been before, giving us an incredible window into the depths. It's also made the waters more like they were hundreds of years ago, creating a remarkable opportunity for

restoring an amazing deep-water ecosystem that was long thought lost forever.

At this crucial turning point, *All Too Clear* is an epic feature documentary designed to inspire the public will to restore the deep waters of the Great Lakes.

All Too Clear dives into the historically clear waters to reveal an underwater world in a state of unprecedented change, and into the extraordinary lives of fishers whose livelihoods and cherished ways-of-life are vanishing along with the fish. But most of all, *All Too Clear* makes us part of the high stakes mission to breathe life back into the depths.

All Too Clear is a story of unintended consequences, finding the courage to adapt to a changing world, the mind-bending complexity of our planet, and most of all, the incredible underwater worlds we live next to that we are finally beginning to see clearly.



“In recent years, we’ve seen dramatic changes in the ecology of the lake, and the changes continue to occur.”

- Arunas Liskauskas

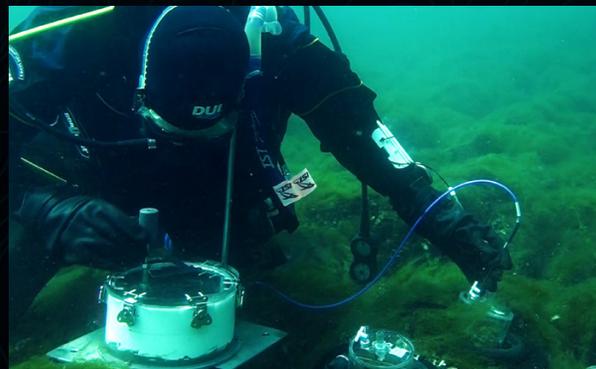
Management Biologist, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry



Goals of *All Too Clear*

- **Bring to life** the historically clear deep water world of the Great Lakes - both thriving and degraded
- **Clearly** show and articulate the problem in an accurate, un-biased way
- **Humanize** the problem through the eyes of fishers impacted by species declines
- **Follow** the dedicated researchers working to find solutions to this problem
- **Imagine** what a restored deep water ecosystem could look like
- **Articulate** the benefits we'll get from a thriving deep water Great Lakes ecosystem
- **Connect** the decline of Great Lakes fish with global freshwater fish declines
- **Greatly increase awareness** of the issue across a broad international audience
- **Provoke** people to think differently about what makes the Great Lakes "healthy" beyond clear waters and clean beaches
- **Prompt** action to restore the deep water Great Lakes ecosystem

***All Too Clear* will be a powerful communications tool for lake managers, scientists and non-profit NGO's to use to generate momentum and funding to restore the deep waters of the Great Lakes**



“Freshwater fish populations globally are down 80% relative to 1970 levels. Being here in Canada, we’re surrounded by fresh water and it’s really easy just to say that’s happening somewhere else. But it’s happening right under our nose.”

- Steven J. Cooke

Canadian Research Professor, Carleton University



Top Aquatic Cast



Lake trout



Ciscoes



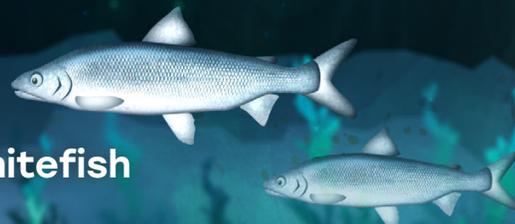
Salmon



Diporeia & mysis – freshwater crustaceans



All your favourite zooplankton



Lake whitefish

Round goby



Cladophera



Quagga & zebra mussels



Filming Targets

Combining clear waters with the expertise of scientists, fishers, and remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) will allow us to bring to life the underwater world of the Great Lakes like it's never been seen before.

- ◇ Our testing has proven the latest ROVs can be used to “swim with the fishes” in a way that divers cannot and produce smooth, high quality video of fish in their native habitat.
- ◇ We will target spawning, feeding and schooling behaviours that have *never been captured on film*.
- ◇ Some fish seem to ignore small ROVs, giving us the opportunity to capture the “personality” of fish acting normally.
- ◇ ROV filming will be supplemented by lab, hatchery and aquarium “sets”, where we'll use the latest macro and “probe” lenses to capture tiny critters like zooplankton, diporeia and larval fishes in exquisite detail.



Macro shots of trout eggs

“When mussels came in about 15 years ago, they started stripping all of the food out of the food web. There are trillions of these things out in Georgian Bay, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron. The offshore zone has been described by scientists as a biological desert.”

- David Sweetnam

Executive Director - Georgian Bay Forever





Who we are

Yvonne Drebert & Zach Melnick

Growing up exploring the shores of the Great Lakes, Producer Yvonne Drebert and Director/Cinematographer Zach Melnick have always been attracted to a good fish story. Over the past two decades, the husband-and-wife team have created more than 50 hours of documentary, seen by millions of viewers around the world. In 2014, the pair embarked on a journey that would become the 17x1 hour documentary series, *Striking Balance*, produced by TVO and the Knowledge Network, which was nominated for the Rob Stewart Award for Best Science or Nature

Documentary Program or Series at the *2021 Canadian Screen Awards*. This 2-season, cross-country adventure explored Canada's UNESCO biosphere regions, looking at how communities are tackling threats to sustainability in these amazing places. *Striking Balance* dove into several fish stories – from Atlantic Salmon in the Bay of Fundy, to the Yellow Perch of Quebec's Lac Saint-Pierre, and the gigantic Lake Trout of Great Bear Lake in the Northwest Territories.

Visual & Artistic Approach

Above the water, *All Too Clear* will celebrate the scale and majesty of the Great Lakes through the best in digital cinema technology. We'll drink in the vast landscapes through drone and motion-stabilized watercraft footage. We'll also experience the lakes' many moods and seasons through motion-timelapses. Long, sweeping shots will be contrasted by fast-paced field work, as we jump right into the middle of the action with researchers and fishers.

The *All Too Clear* underwater universe will provide both a visual and conceptual counterpoint to the scientific work unfolding at the surface. When we plunge below the

waves, we will be transported to an entirely new visual world, where we'll play with colour, pacing, and editing. The depths are by their nature mysterious to terrestrial beings – inviting experimentation. We'll be working with top-quality divers, and the latest in underwater cameras and ROVs to create a robust archive to draw from.

Audio will be another avenue for experimentation. We will build soundscapes using both the real and imagined to create an immersive underwater environment. The deeps, but also the nearshore and surface worlds, will have their own musical themes – completing the visual and auditory universe of *All Too Clear*.

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