

# Great Lakes Maritime Strategy

A Strategic Framework for the  
Coast Guard on the Great Lakes



2011-2016

**The last thing an explorer arrives at is a complete map that will cover the whole ground he has traveled, but for those that follow, his map is the first thing with which they will begin. So it is with strategy...we must get our theory clear before we can venture in search of practical conclusions.**

***Sir Julian Corbett, 1911***  
*British Naval Historian and Strategist*





## Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
GEOSTRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT .....	4
Shared and Interconnected System .....	4
Diverse Geography .....	5
Region of Binational Importance .....	6
Strategic Context .....	7
VISION .....	8
COMMANDER'S INTENT .....	9
People .....	10
Professionalism .....	10
Partnerships .....	10
NINTH DISTRICT MISSION ETHOS .....	11
ACHIEVING OUR VISION .....	12
Excel at mission execution .....	12
Inspire and serve our people .....	13
Enhance binational cooperation and governance .....	14
Optimize force allocation and resources .....	15
Strengthen strategic partnerships .....	16
Share our story .....	17
STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN .....	18
Framework for Action .....	18
Tasks .....	20
Governance and Measures .....	21



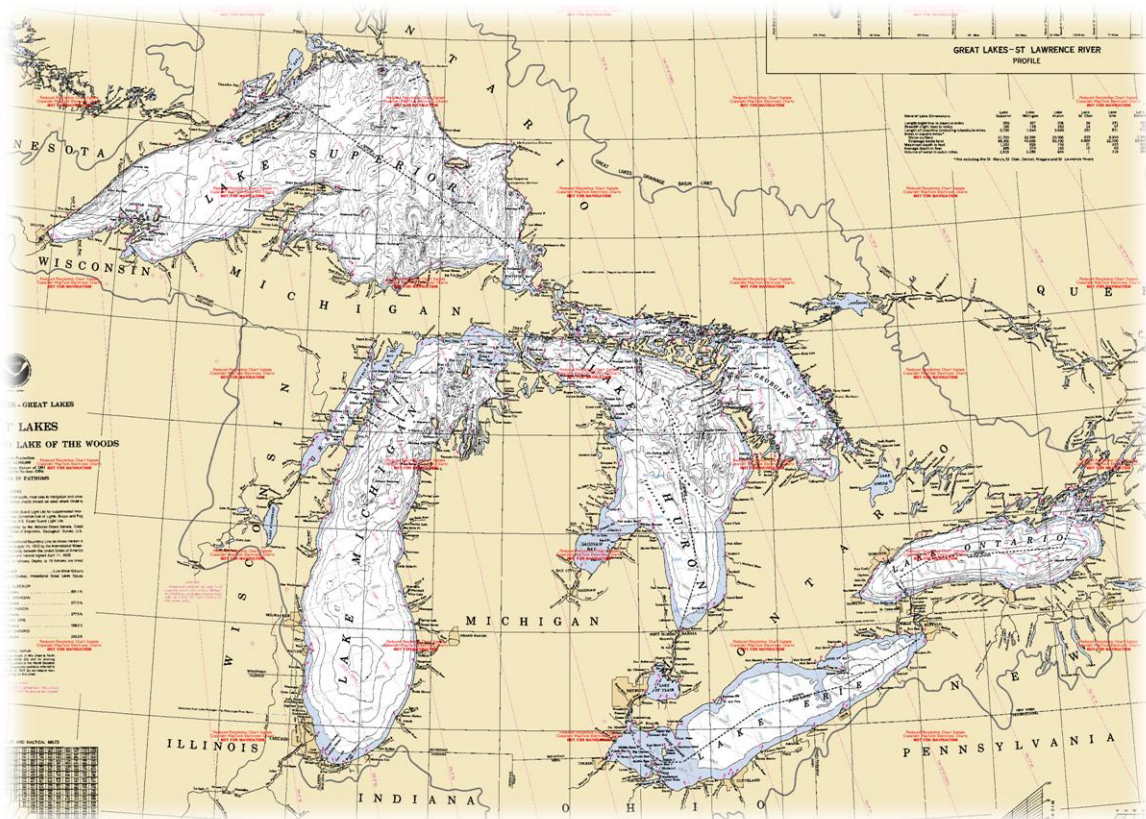


## INTRODUCTION

The Coast Guard's Great Lakes Maritime Strategy frames a five-year vision, the District Commander's intent and guiding principles, mission ethos, and the strategic objectives for the Ninth Coast Guard District. It is a call to action that will guide the years ahead.

The Coast Guard's broad authority combined with multi-mission competencies and capabilities deliver tremendous value to the American public. Given our unique vantage point of the shared system that is the Great Lakes, the time is right for us to lead. We will do so with humility and an unwavering respect for our shipmates, our partners, and the constituencies we serve. The Coast Guard family, constituted by the men and women of our active duty, reserve, civilian, and auxiliary forces, represent some of the finest maritime and military professionals in the world. We bring unique talents to bear in bridging the interagency, joint, and combined operational environments in which we operate.

The Great Lakes are a binational treasure and one that the Ninth Coast Guard District is particularly well suited to serve and safeguard. Achieving the vision and promise set forth herein requires an enduring focus on Mission, People, Canada, Force Allocation, Partnerships, and Sharing our Story.





## GEOSTRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The Great Lakes are a national treasure of the United States and Canada. As the shared internal waters of two sovereign nations, it is one of the most unique bodies of water in the world.

The region is characterized by its fresh water, its diverse communities, its historic marine trade, and its immense recreational boating population. The Great Lakes Basin is governed by two nations, eight states, three provinces, several tribal nations and hundreds of local communities. It is equally represented by historical industrial interests as by growing environmental interests. This national treasure and the system that supports it are unique in their complexity and size.



### Shared and Interconnected System

The U.S.-Canadian maritime border environment is characterized by its shared transportation systems and resulting shared governance. No better example of this reality exists than in the Great Lakes, a contiguous body of water that is a vital artery to the economies of both countries. Encompassing 1,500 miles of the shared border, the entirety of Great Lakes border between ports of entry is equivalent to the southwest border between Brownsville, Texas and San Diego, California. But in the Great Lakes, with the exception of bridges defining specific ports of entry, our shared border with Canada is maritime.

As a continuous, interconnected, and interdependent system shared by both countries, the Great Lakes are also unique for the access it grants to a wide variety of commercial and recreational vessels. Upon entering the Great Lakes, a foreign-flagged commercial vessel may enter U.S. waters as many as 17 times in transiting the system even when not making a U.S. port call. This reality requires a shared governance of the system as a whole. Once a vessel is in the Great Lakes system, it has equal opportunity access to both countries. Similarly, the threat of invasive species and other natural and man-made threats require complementary systems of governance capable of protecting and restoring shared resources.



## Diverse Geography

The Ninth District area of responsibility (AOR) generally encompasses the federal navigable waters of the eight Great Lakes states and connecting waterways, including portions of the St. Lawrence Seaway, boundary waters, finger lakes, Illinois River, Lake Winnebago, New York State Barge Canal and various tributaries. It consists of more than 6,700 miles of U.S. shoreline, the equivalent of a round trip from Miami, Florida to Seattle, Washington. 86 counties line the shores of the Great Lakes. Forty-seven boat stations on five Great Lakes make up 27 percent of the stations in the Coast Guard. The seasonal nature of the AOR, including ice and sometimes harsh winter conditions, poses additional challenges to executing the Coast Guard’s statutory mission mandates.



**Grand Haven, MI**



**St. Lawrence Seaway**

**Seas**

**Rivers**

**Seasonal Changes**

The Great Lakes are bodies of fresh water that are truly “Great.” Thinking of them merely as “lakes” belies their size and complexity as well as the threats and challenges they present to those involved with their protection and security. The citizenry of the region is, for the most part, unaware of the fishermen, sailors, and shippers who still transport a wide variety of goods to and from Great Lakes ports. The recreation and cruising industries are booming, but the maritime professions are hidden. The Great Lakes maritime culture is nearly invisible to the rest of the world as are its individual threats and challenges.



## Region of Binational Importance

The Great Lakes system is North America's industrial heartland. It supports not only a critical economic highway of agriculture, industrial and manufacturing goods but also a multi-billion dollar outdoor recreation and tourism industry. It is a region of binational importance that has been the focus of significant international and domestic attention for more than a century.

While diverse and complex, the maritime communities and stakeholders of the Great Lakes are unified in their view of the lakes as a system, and the criticality of that system to the region's economic and environmental vitality. This reality combined with the attention and sustained effort by a wide range of local and regional stakeholders often sets the national agenda for both Canada and the United States. For example, a series of events in the 1960s – most notably the Cuyahoga River fire in 1969 – focused attention on the need to clean up the Great Lakes and helped lead to the eventual passage of the Clean Water Act in 1972. While the fire lasted only approximately 30 minutes, it prompted lasting improvements to national water quality standards and governance. Similarly, the threat of invasive species to the Great Lakes has driven a number of national and international policy initiatives and raised public awareness on ways and means to prevent the spread of harmful, non-native species across ecosystems.

### Did you know?

- The Great Lakes -- Superior, Michigan, Huron, Erie and Ontario -- and their connecting channels form the largest fresh surface water system on earth.
- Nearly 25 percent of Canadian agricultural production and 7 percent of American farm production are located in the Great Lakes basin.
- More than 30 million people live in the Great Lakes basin - roughly 10 percent of the U.S. population and more than 30 percent of the Canadian population.
- Covering more than 94,000 square miles and draining more than twice as much land, these Freshwater Seas hold an estimated 6 quadrillion gallons of water - 84 percent of North America's surface fresh water and about 21 percent of the world's supply.
- Spread evenly across the contiguous 48 states, the lakes' water would be about 9.5 feet deep.
- From Lake Ontario, the water from the Great Lakes flows through the St. Lawrence River all the way to the Atlantic Ocean, about 1,000 miles away.
- Within the U.S., ten federal agencies administer more than 140 different federal programs helping fund and implement environmental restoration and management activities in the Great Lakes basin.
- Governance of the Great Lakes system is shared between the United States, Canada, eight U.S. states, two Canadian provinces, nearly 40 Tribal nations, more than half a dozen major metropolitan areas, and numerous county and local governments.

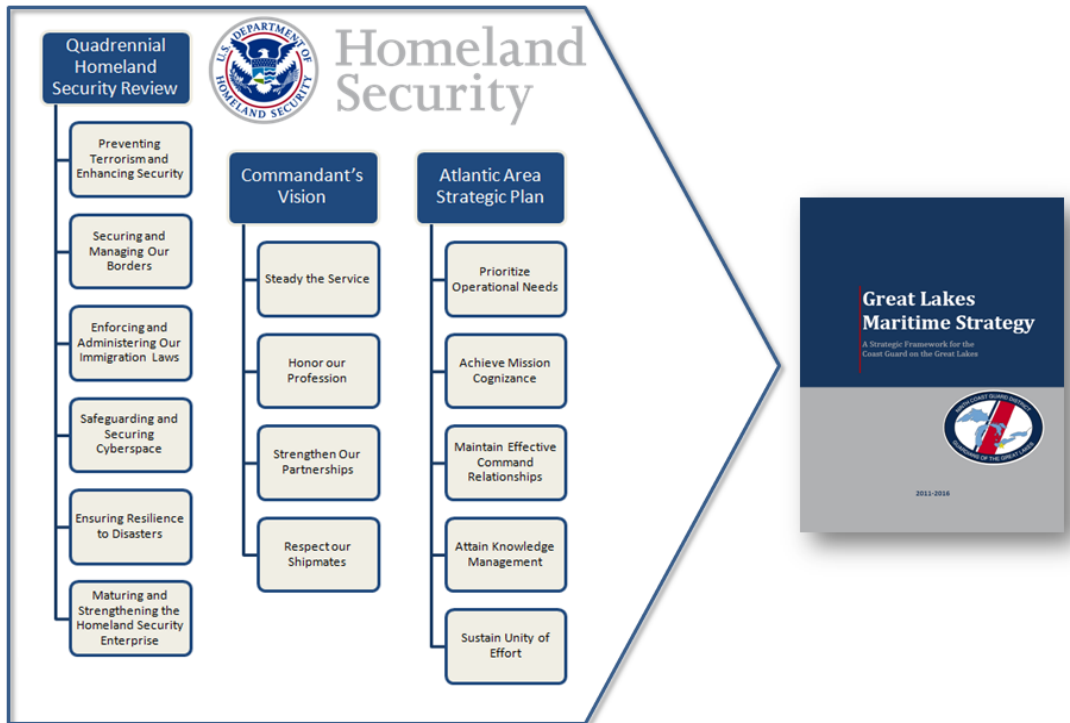


## Strategic Context

The Ninth District arrived at our current arrangement of forces and priorities through a long legacy of mission execution, external influences and changing priorities. That legacy is critical to understand and draw from as we prepare and ready our forces for the future. Additionally, a variety of strategy documents and analyses inform us about what the future might hold. The Quadrennial Homeland Security Review (QHSR) is a cornerstone document to guide our efforts. The Great Lakes region is ideal to pursue the tenets of a homeland security enterprise envisioned by the QHSR. In all, from recent National Ocean Council decisions to ongoing efforts to devise a unified strategy for our shared border with Canada, these national priorities also inform the Ninth District’s future. Similarly, the Coast Guard’s own Project Evergreen takes a long view of 20-25 years to help describe the types of adaptations that will be needed to the form or function of our operational missions and priorities.

Several themes – integrated operations, unity of effort, partnerships, awareness, and many more – echo across a variety of strategic initiatives. And in the Great Lakes, the entirety of our effort must be ‘watermarked’ with Canada. We share the system of the Great Lakes and we must share the solutions through strengthened collaboration.

External events or internal changes may move us back and forth across a spectrum of mission emphasis. But we will seek to steady and align our efforts through the pursuit of a clear vision in the nearer term (five years) that supports Department of Homeland Security and Coast Guard goals and priorities.







## VISION

As we assess the strategic environment and our own history, there are many recurring themes. Search and Rescue has been a stalwart from the days of Light Ships and Lifesaving stations. It has been enabled throughout a long regional history of indispensable Auxiliary volunteers. But we also have a long legacy of marine safety, icebreaking, maritime law enforcement and border security missions. In fact, many pioneering non-compliant vessel use of force tactics were bred on the Great Lakes during prohibition when rum runners took advantage of the Great Lakes geography to move illegal contraband. Further, the presence of the Vintage Vessel Center of Expertise in the Ninth District is a testament to a long history of marine safety experience and expertise.

Looking to the future, the below vision statement is a signpost for the five year horizon. It is compatible with longer views but will remain a center of gravity in the near term around which to rally our efforts. There will be events and external influences that may occasionally cause us to focus on a particular mission area, contingency, or other demand. But when that “tyranny of the present” passes, we will rapidly reset our focus on achieving the below vision.

Leaders serving at every level within the Ninth District shall review our vision regularly to ensure we’re prioritizing our own efforts and those of our subordinates on initiatives in connection with this vision.

### **Ninth Coast Guard District Vision**

We will relentlessly pursue mission excellence through an unwavering commitment to the professionalism of our people.

We will safeguard the Great Lakes system and their maritime communities, advancing national objectives and shaping maritime border policy through a seamless binational enterprise of safety, security and stewardship.

We will promote resiliency, manage risk, and deliver value through superior mission performance and servant leadership.



## COMMANDER'S INTENT

The Commander's Intent outlines the District Commander's expectations for members serving in the Ninth District, collectively the Ninth District family – the dedicated active duty, reserve, civilian and auxiliary personnel that bring life to our mission mandates. It provides guiding principles that will be adhered to in order to meet enduring objectives. Its purpose is to inform all members of the Ninth District of those enduring strategic objectives that we will work toward as well as the guiding personal and leadership principles, direct from the District Commander, which should inform the conduct of daily duties.





## Ninth Coast Guard District Commander's Intent

Our primary purposes are safe and effective mission execution, and taking care of our shipmates and families. Strategically, we are pursuing the following long-term objectives:

- Excel at mission execution;
- Inspire and serve our people;
- Enhance bi-national cooperation and governance;
- Optimize force allocation and resources;
- Strengthen strategic partnerships; and
- Share our story.

We are anchored by our core values of Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty and will accomplish our objectives through three guiding principles: People, Professionalism and Partnerships.

**People.** The priority is taking care of and respecting our shipmates. We must work collaboratively, value diversity and grow as individuals and teams. Our people must be properly trained, healthy and committed to assure their safety and prevent avoidable casualties. We must uphold the highest ideals of public service and create environments where diversity of background and thought are embraced as moral and mission imperatives. We cannot be afraid to challenge the status quo. We are an organization with a bias for action. That bias requires we take care of each other and know when to ask for help. We must trust our chains of command, take care of our families, be prepared for our missions and bring solutions to our challenges.

**Professionalism.** The priority is fielding ready assets, crews and teams to safely meet our mission responsibilities. We are a mission-centric organization. Our greatest value to the public is the ability to respond safely, swiftly, and effectively to maritime calamity, threats to the homeland and environmental disasters. This requires each of us to do our absolute best every day. We must strive to be masters of our respective crafts and exhibit personal and collective professionalism. I cannot provide tactical direction for every operational scenario and recognize we will face limiting factors involving assets, crews, weather and/or other elements. Act independently. Pay attention to detail. Exercise good judgment and on scene initiative. In return, I will always have your back.

**Partnerships.** The priority is full collaboration and communication with Canadian, Federal, state, local, tribal and private sector partners. Truth and transparency breeds trust. It is the foundation of building bridges that improve the reach and efficacy of our operational services. Partnerships can and should be key enablers of mission excellence. Ensure the public understands our commitment to transparency, compassion and mission execution. Engage in important causes and leave our communities better than we found them. Build strong internal partnerships with each other and support elements. We do not have the luxury of inefficiency or waste in any of our mission execution or support processes.

We have the most rewarding professions in the world. To achieve success we must stay motivated to do our best, enjoy our jobs, take care of our shipmates, and leave our units and communities better than we found them.



## NINTH DISTRICT MISSION ETHOS

District Nine personnel have built a legacy of Search and Rescue (SAR) excellence, codified most directly in the SAR ethos that is used to describe and define the character with which we execute SAR missions. While it remains applicable and a key tenet of our SAR doctrine in the Ninth District, achieving our vision requires a mission ethos that translates to all mission areas and instills the same bias for effective action. Below is our Mission Ethos.

### Ninth Coast Guard District Mission Ethos

The Coast Guard's service to the public is a serious responsibility. Personnel at every level must approach their duties with swiftness, vigor, passion and bottom-line accountability to the maritime communities that reside and operate within the inland seas that are the Great Lakes.

We are entrusted with missions and authorities that impact citizens directly and personally, often with life or death consequences. We owe every potential subject and next-of-kin, every member of the maritime community, the Great Lakes region, and indeed nation, our best effort: from communications watch to aircraft, boat and cutter crews, to command center controllers, marine safety inspectors, pollution investigators, command cadre and support personnel -- our actions make the difference. Every Coast Guard family member owns a piece of mission success.

Ninth Coast Guard District personnel should treat every potential victim as one of our own family members and every potential safety and security threat as serious. Let genuine care and compassion for our citizens and shipmates guide us in every aspect of mission execution. Exercise operational curiosity and initiative. If it's happening on the water in the Great Lakes, we should 'own' some part of it within the scope of our authorities. Prepare, prevent, and respond accordingly.

Demanding operating tempo and missions viewed as 'routine' may tempt us to go through the motions or take shortcuts – but that philosophy is unacceptable. A true Coast Guard professional prosecutes every case, every sortie, every boarding, every inspection, and every mission activity with zeal until the subject is located and rescued, threat is fully investigated, compliance is assured, risk is mitigated, or all reasonable doubt is eliminated.

We revere and dedicate ourselves to an unfailing preparedness to prevent and respond. Take good care of our shipmates by continually managing operational risk. And when in doubt: respond earlier rather than later; do more rather than less; search longer rather than shorter.



## ACHIEVING OUR VISION

Achieving our vision demands an enduring strategic commitment to core objectives that enable mission execution, serve our people, and foster partnerships that contribute to national interests. The below strategic objectives are enduring and intended to guide not only our current effort but that of our successors.

- **Excel at mission execution;**
- **Inspire and serve our people;**
- **Enhance bi-national cooperation and governance;**
- **Optimize force allocation and resources;**
- **Strengthen strategic partnerships; and**
- **Share our story.**

It is incumbent on each of us to govern our daily activities and priorities such that together we make tangible and measurable progress toward these objectives, and by extension achieve our vision.

### Excel at mission execution

Our first and primary responsibility is safe and effective mission execution in the maritime domain. We must grow and sustain the best watchstanders, cuttermen, aircrews, boat crews, and marine inspectors in the entire service. The nation expects and the Great Lakes region relies on our ability to accomplish our missions. They are the central purpose for our existence and it is through their execution that we are relevant. This reality demands not just qualification but proficiency. It also demands a continuing focus on knowledge management and data integrity. Attention to detail and shared awareness are critical functions to operational decision superiority. If we're not safely, effectively, and efficiently accomplishing our operational missions, then little else matters.

<b>Operational Lens – Excel at mission execution</b>		
<b>District</b>	<b>Sector/Air Station/Cutter</b>	<b>Unit</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing clear mission guidance and expectations;</li> <li>• Setting reasonable mission and readiness targets along with systems of transparent metrics to foster accountability and positive results.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing masters of operational art, mission cognizance, and execution.</li> <li>• Tactical mission planning in support of CG/D9 mission goals;</li> <li>• Overseeing unit training programs &amp; results to ensure maximum readiness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growing 'masters of our craft' through robust unit training programs &amp; accountability;</li> <li>• Understanding mission guidance &amp; goals and translating those goals to operational results at the water's edge.</li> </ul>



## Inspire and serve our people

Mission execution depends on command and organizational climates that encourage excellence from every member of the Coast Guard family – active, reserve, auxiliary and civilian. We must foster a mutual respect of our shipmates, champion diversity of background and thought, reward innovation and ensure transparent communications. We rely on each other and that reliance demands trust. Trust is not guaranteed or a condition of employment, it is earned. The Ninth District and subordinate command elements will strive to inspire and serve our people, and thereby achieve organizational and individual excellence.

### Operational Lens – *Inspire and serve our people*

District	Sector/Air Station/Cutter	Unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instill a collegial and productive climate;</li><li>• Provide tools and incentives for field commands to use in doing the same.</li><li>• Promote and ensure unity of effort among Active Duty, Reserve, Auxiliary, and Civilian personnel.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure all hands understand their role in operational risk management and oversight;</li><li>• Recognize outstanding achievement and consistently evaluate and improve command climate.</li><li>• Involve and maximize talents &amp; capacity from every part of CG family.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure transparency in expectations and a respect for all;</li><li>• Take care of our shipmates and ensure all know and understand the value they bring, and feel empowered to contribute.</li></ul>



## Enhance binational cooperation and governance

While we have broad organizational authority and substantial capability, we do not control the entirety of the system in which we operate. The Ninth Coast Guard District enjoys a unique view and responsibility within the Great Lakes system that has helped build and sustain a diverse set of relationships, formal and informal, with our Canadian peers. As such, it is incumbent on us to humbly and effectively lead by informing national maritime and border policy with Canada. It is only through combined and interagency effort that daily and contingency mission requirements can be met.



### Operational Lens – Enhance binational cooperation and governance

District	Sector/Air Station/Cutter	Unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead and contribute to binational initiatives with Canada;</li> <li>• Help set the agenda and pursue new authorities, competencies and capabilities that better enable field commands to accomplish cross-border missions.</li> <li>• Seek to host Canadian liaison positions on District staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize partnerships with Canadian peers and Integrated Border Enforcement Teams (IBET);</li> <li>• Nearly everything we do must be ‘watermarked’ with Canada;</li> <li>• Seek opportunities to better integrate operations and harmonize mission goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know and understand current border policies and priorities;</li> <li>• Set the example for maritime professionalism and skill with our Canadian and interagency partners.</li> <li>• Embrace opportunities to train &amp; harmonize operations with Canadian and interagency partners.</li> </ul>



## Optimize force allocation and resources

Resources are scarce and finite and thus we must be diligent in ensuring resources are applied based on data-driven mission requirements and not just historical legacy. We must focus available resources based on analyses of current and projected mission requirements and strive to arrange those resources to the maximum benefit of all missions, the communities we serve, and the strategic objectives outlined herein. Doing



so requires knowledge management to ensure data integrity is interwoven in our support processes and ultimately our results. While we may not always be able to control our ability to relocate resources, we can assure the mission requirements we place at locations are appropriate and sustainable.

### Operational Lens – Optimize force allocation and resources

District	Sector/Air Station/Cutter	Unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure readiness and mission expectations are founded on real, data-driven mission requirements and not just historical or perceived need;</li> <li>• Ensure our system of prevention (inspectors, investigators) and response (aircraft, boats) is appropriately trained, equipped and ready for every mission.</li> <li>• Employ contingency and steady-state operational risk metrics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply risk management principles to prioritize resources to carry out multi-mission operations;</li> <li>• Know and understand mission priorities and target available resources at the highest priorities;</li> <li>• Be proactive in recommending changes in mission requirements to enable progress toward strategic objectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus unit personnel on what’s important – mission execution and training to be ready for it;</li> <li>• Ensure the chain of command knows when mission requirements can’t be met;</li> <li>• Be proactive, lean forward, and anticipate seasonal training and readiness challenges.</li> </ul>





## Strengthen strategic partnerships

We cannot meet every mission priority alone. The public expects and our missions demand that we seek out sustainable partnerships at every level of maritime interest. The complexity and strategic importance of the Great Lakes region has spurred many longstanding regional partnerships that should be leveraged and strengthened to promote harmony among mutually reinforcing goals. We do not seek partnership for its own sake or to do each other's work; we must seek and strengthen strategic partnerships that enable the mission and contribute to our strategic objectives. With more than 40 federally recognized tribal nations in the Great Lakes region, specific effort on tribal partnerships merit increased attention. Similarly, we must ensure our internal partnerships across area of responsibility boundaries and every component of the Ninth District (active duty, reserve, auxiliary, civilian) are vibrant and mutually supportive.

### Operational Lens – Strengthen Strategic Partnerships

District	Sector/Air Station/Cutter	Unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leverage D9's vantage point to a position of humble but effective regional leadership;</li> <li>• Seek to combine joint and interagency capabilities to maximum mission effect.</li> <li>• Ensure seamless mission execution across internal organizational and community boundaries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and know strategic partners and lay groundwork for successors to build on;</li> <li>• Seek sustainable and executable partnerships that accomplish strategic objectives and enable mission execution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek opportunities to partner with those that have common mission goals or like-minded priorities;</li> <li>• Understand their policies and procedures and share our own;</li> <li>• Waiting until the 'heat of battle' to get to know mission partners is much too late.</li> </ul>





## Share our story

The Great Lakes maritime environment is complex and often misunderstood by those outside it, and in some cases even stakeholders within it underestimate the operational complexity and challenges. Few organizations enjoy a broader vantage point of the Great Lakes maritime system than the Ninth Coast Guard District. It’s incumbent on us to proactively share our story, internally and externally. We must orient ourselves to the issues that regional and national leadership care about and ensure they understand the tremendous relevance and value the Coast Guard brings to the effort.

Operational Lens – <i>Share our story</i>		
District	Sector/Air Station/Cutter	Unit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Execute considered and prioritized engagement plans that contribute to strategic objectives;</li> <li>• Understand the Great Lakes environment and constituencies and be proactive in engaging it on mutual goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage early and often with local stakeholders; drive your calendars rather than being driven by them;</li> <li>• Proactively conduct engagement and outreach that assists mission goals and priorities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be proactive citizen-sailors and positive examples for your communities;</li> <li>• We are at all times representing the Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security, and nation.</li> </ul>





## STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Translating the above Commander's Intent and Strategic Objectives into an enduring legacy of action requires detailed and measurable tasks that are accompanied by a sustainable governance plan. Daily mission execution and support demands will always intrude on our ability to act with strategic intent. But we must prioritize achievable and specific tasks that contribute to our strategic objectives and remain the frame of reference to which we consistently return.

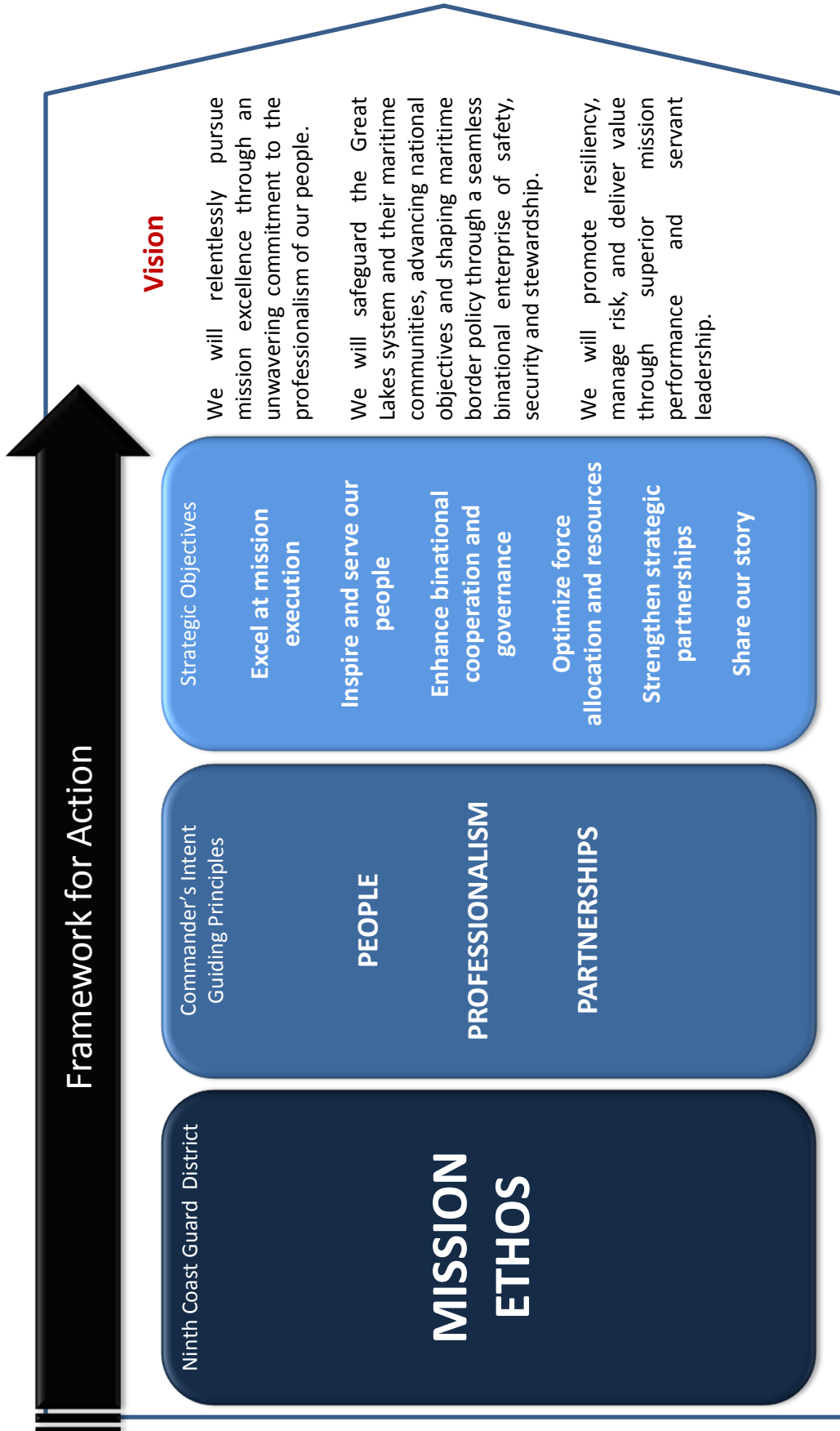
### Framework for Action

Our framework for task development and action will be founded on our mission ethos, guided by the Commander's Intent and guiding principles, organized around specific strategic objectives, and with a constant eye toward the vision we seek to achieve. *Figure 2 displays our framework for action.*





Figure 1 – Ninth District Framework for Action





## Tasks

Specific tasks and initiatives will be developed that contribute to the strategic objectives outlined above. This strategic work list will be a living annex to the Great Lakes Maritime Strategy. For each task, a detailed action and milestone summary will be prepared and maintained by the assigned task owner. As importantly, the tasks and supporting action and milestone summaries will leave a record of progress upon which our successors can build.

Tasks are sorted into one, three, and five year time horizons and further prioritized into two tiers of effort. The tiered priorities generally reflect an assessment of task importance and executability. Tier one tasks are the most important and most executable (e.g., we generally control the ability to complete the task and it's a high priority in support of the designated strategic objective). Tier two tasks may be of lesser importance or may be of equal importance but less feasible due to factors perhaps beyond our control.

Tasks are generally limited to district-wide priorities and initiatives that cross multiple organizational boundaries or disciplines. Sector Commanders and unit commanding officers will develop internal tasks and priorities consistent with the strategic objectives but tailored as appropriate to their local area of responsibility. While not regularly reportable to the Senior Leadership Group (SLG), unit commanders will align their efforts with that of the SLG to develop a cascade of mutually reinforcing priorities that advances this strategy's objectives toward the articulated vision.





## Governance and Measures

Governance is a critical component to achieving our strategic objectives. Our goal is not to create metrics and scorecards for their own sake but to identify and prioritize finite time and resources to ensure we make tangible progress on those “important few”. They are the legacy upon which our successors will build upon and sustain our momentum. Realizing that goal will require sustained commitment and reliable governance of our efforts.

Primary ownership of the strategic framework for action lies with the Ninth District Senior Leadership Group (SLG). The SLG will develop, prioritize, and approve tasks that contribute to the strategic objectives outlined above. Careful scrutiny by the SLG is critical so as not to overwhelm limited time and capacity. Focus must be given to those most important and achievable tasks and initiatives that contribute directly to our objectives and vision.

Strategic Objective Coordination. To coordinate action within each strategic objective, a member of the SLG will be assigned as a strategic objective coordinator for each of the six objectives outlined herein. The primary responsibility of the coordinator is to monitor completion of tasks within each objective area, foster collaboration as appropriate across divisions and units to assist with task completion, and assist in the compilation of required updates and reports to the SLG as a whole.

Task Ownership. Each task will be assigned ownership to a single member of the SLG. If appropriate, task ownership can be assigned below SLG membership but not below the branch chief level of District staff. While many tasks will require contributions across multiple divisions and/or commands, the execution and tracking of milestone accomplishment will reside with this single point of accountability to the maximum extent practical.

Formal SLG Strategic Objective Review. At a minimum, the SLG will meet semi-annually, typically in the Fall and Spring, to formally review and record task accomplishment, validate priorities, and make recommendations to the District Commander and Chief of Staff. Assigned strategic objective coordinators, assisted by the Ninth District quality performance consultants, will be responsible for coordinating and compiling such reviews.

Informal Reviews. Designated strategic objective coordinators will provide informal updates and reviews to the Chief of Staff for each strategic objective area at least once in the months between formal SLG meetings. Informal review schedules will be promulgated by the Chief of Staff and generally follow the sequence outlined in the table below.



Measures. Specific task and objective measures will be defined in action and milestone summaries. The point of accountability will be the task owner directly.

Strategic Objective	Strategic Objective Coordinator	Formal Review	Informal Review
<b>Excel at mission execution</b>	D9(DR)	Fall, Spring SLG	November, June
<b>Inspire and serve our people</b>	D9(DX/DM)	Fall, Spring SLG	November, June
<b>Enhance binational cooperation and governance</b>	D9(DP)	Fall, Spring SLG	January, July
<b>Optimize force allocation and resources</b>	D9 (DX/DM)	Fall, Spring SLG	January, July
<b>Strengthen strategic partnerships</b>	D9 (DR)	Fall, Spring SLG	February, August
<b>Share our story</b>	D9 (DE)	Fall, Spring SLG	February, August





**Commander  
U.S. Coast Guard Ninth District  
1240 East Ninth Street  
Cleveland, OH 44199**

<http://www.d9publicaffairs.com>  
<http://www.youtube.com/USCGD9/>  
[http://www.flickr.com/ninth\\_cg\\_district/](http://www.flickr.com/ninth_cg_district/)  
<http://www.uscgd9.blogspot.com>