



# Lake Michigan Inter-League Organization Newsletter

## PRESIDENTS PRELUDES

Lake Michigan Inter-League Organization was well represented when advocates for the Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act gathered in Washington, D.C. spending two days meeting with Senators and Congressmen in March. Both Co-Presidents, Janet Greenwald (Indiana Delegate) and Suzanne Dixon (Treasurer) spent time visiting with the Illinois, Indiana and Michigan Congressional Delegations. We had an opportunity to meet with League advocates from not only the Lake Michigan states but also Ohio, Pennsylvania, Minnesota and New York. (See Suzanne Dixon's article.)

The National Wildlife Federation has for the last two years paid trip expenses for all the advocates that attended thanks to the Healing Our Waters Coalition. We would like to express our appreciation to Dendra Best, new delegate from Michigan, who has done a fantastic job of getting our Web page up and running. Go to <http://www.lmilo.org/> and check it out. It is also possible to read the Newsletter and get the latest news about problems, programs and legislative efforts to protect our Great Lakes. BRAVO DENDRA!!!! For the first time in several years the Board is fully represented with two delegates from each state. Sharon Carnes from Indiana

and Dendra Best from Michigan are the new members. We're looking forward (excitedly planning) our annual meeting in October at Illinois Beach State Park. (See Marjie Ettlinger's article for details.) Do help us get representation of your League at this informative and stimulating event. Judith Johnston, Jeanette Neagu Co-President  
It is extremely important that Congress pass the Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act. The Act was introduced in the House as H.R. 1350 and in the Senate as S. 791. Unfortunately, several members of Congress that

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### Special points of interest:

- LMILO Power Point Presentation
- Annual Meeting Announced
- New Web Site
- Board Members Contact Information

## LMILO PROGRAM PRESENTATION TOOLS

Another new educational tool is our Power Point Program that Board members can present to your League on "WHAT

*THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CAN DO TO PROTECT THE GREAT LAKES"* It is our goal to have each of our member

Leagues have at least one program in the next twelve months on the Lakes. You can contact Jeanette Neagu 219-879-0431, [jgvneagu@yahoo.com](mailto:jgvneagu@yahoo.com) for more information.

## GREAT LAKE COLLABORATION IMPLEMENTATION ACT Judy Johnston

co-sponsored the legislation in 2006 have yet to sign on this year. Those missing Representatives are: Rep. Bean (D-IL), Rep. Gutierrez (D-IL), Rep. Lipinski (D-IL), Rep. Rush (D-IL), Rep. Rogers (R-MI), Rep. Oberstar (D-MN), Rep. Ramstad (R-MN), Rep. Baldwin (D-WI). Senators that have not co-sponsored S. 791 are Sen. Lugar (R-IN and Sen. Bayh (D-IN), Sen. Durban (D-IL) and Sen. Feingold (D-WI), and Sen. Kohl (D-WI).

If you see your member of Congress on this list, please take the time to ask them to co-sponsor the Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act of 2007 (HR 1350 / S 791). The capitol switchboard, where you can be connected to the office of your member is 1-202-224-3121.



## LMILO ORGANIZATION NAME CHANGE Judy Johnston

The Board voted to change our name to Lake Michigan League of Women Voters. We will be voting on the change at the Annual Meeting. It is extremely important that finally, the Board voted to change our name to Lake Michigan League of Women Voters. our official name have *League of Women Voters*

*ers* contained in the name itself as when we advocate or send press releases no one knows with our current name that we are a League organization. Many thanks to all the Board members who travel so far and are so committed to protecting our magnificent Lake.



## HEAL OUR WATERS COALITION & WASHINGTON D.C. Suzanne Dixon

Lake Michigan Interleague Organization joined over 200 other Great Lake supporters from 90 environmental and conservation organizations, zoos and aquaria and civic organizations to advocate for the restoration of the Great Lakes. This coalition visited 141 congressional members from the eight basin states in Washington, D.C. on March 6 and 7, 2007. We met with and dropped off packets on the Hill to advocate for key Great

Lakes programs and policies, including the Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act, the State Revolving Fund legislation to rehabilitate aging sewage infrastructure, the Asian Carp Barrier Act of 2007 and comprehensive invasive species legislation. We attended a House of Representatives Transportation and Infrastructure Committee hearing on the impact of invasive species on the Great Lakes. The committee room was packed, demonstrating the strength of our coalition and the

urgency.

Members of Lake Michigan Interleague Organization have received message training by the HOW coalition and Biodiversity Project. This training assists us to be community advocates with answers to what we want for the Great Lakes.



# THE HEALTHY LAKES, HEALTHY LIVES MESSAGE Submitted by: Suzanne Dixon

The Great Lakes are essential to the economic and cultural identity of our region. Forty-two million people depend on the Great Lakes for their drinking water. Today, the health of our Lakes is seriously threatened by problems such as untreated sewage and invasive species. The good news is we have manageable solutions to these problems. The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy is a comprehensive plan to modernize sewage treatment, clean-up polluted harbors, -

restore wetlands, and prevent unwanted new species from invading the lakes. Each of these steps is essential if we are to restore the lakes and safeguard our Great Lakes way of life. It is time we use these solutions. Every day we wait, the problems get worse and the solutions get more costly. We must act now to restore the health of the Great Lakes. You can be a part of the solution. Visit [www.healthylakes.org](http://www.healthylakes.org) and urge Congress to enact the Great

Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to protect our drinking water, our economy, our health, our way of life.



## ILLINOIS HOSTS LWVLM ANNUAL MEETING

Friday, Oct. 5th and Saturday, Oct. 6th, 2007

Join us at the Illinois Beach Resort and Conference Center at the Illinois Beach State Park in Zion. The Board meets for a working lunch at noon on Friday. Everyone is welcome. This will be followed by a visit to the North Shore Sanitary District's sludge burner;

the first in this country, and a walk along the Des Plaines River Wetlands Demonstration Project. A member of the team will show us this 550-acre site which had been abandoned farm fields and gravel quarry pits and is now a rehabilitated ecosystem.

After dinner, we will have a fascinating program. After the Saturday morning annual meeting, we'll have a guided walk of the state park. This is the only remaining beach ridge shoreline left in the state.

## INDIANA REPORT Janet Greenwald

### H.R. 573 Provides for National Park Land Acquisition.

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Corrections Act ( H.R.573) was introduced 1/18/07 by Rep Peter Visclosky (IN- 1) and co-sponsored by Rep Joe Donnelly (IN-2)

Title: To amend the Act entitled "An Act to provide for the establishment of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore," to clarify the

authority of the Secretary of the Interior to accept donations of lands that are contiguous to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and for other purposes.

- Permits the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in Indiana, to: (1) accept donations of lands located outside the present boundaries of the Lakeshore if they are either contiguous or sepa-

rated from such lands by only a right-of-way; and (2) make acquisitions to the boundaries of the Lakeshore from units of state or local government by satisfaction of delinquent state or local taxes.

Latest Major Action: 2/7/2007 Referred to House subcommittee. Status: Referred to the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands.

## INDIANA REPORT cont'd Janet Greenwald

### \$13-Million Legacy Act Funding Requested for Grand Cal

Grand Calumet River Area of Concern. Hammond, Indiana: IDEM and the Hammond Sanitary District have applied for \$13-

million of Legacy Act funding. This phase of the Grand Cal RAP will provide for remediation of 120,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment in the west branch of the Grand Calumet River. Projected

starting date is 2008;

To learn more about this topic: [http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/aoc/grandcal.html#RAP\\_Imple](http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/aoc/grandcal.html#RAP_Imple)

## ILLINOIS REPORT Judy Johnson

### DES PLAINES RIVER WETLANDS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

Located on 550 acres in northeastern Illinois, this project is one of the nation's largest, systematic research sites dedicated to demonstrating how wetlands can be restored to solve pressing environmental problems.

In 1985, more than 20 scientists and engineers began to collect baseline information on topography, hydrology, geology, soils, vegetation microorganisms, flora, fauna, prehistoric and current uses.

A research program was then designed to find answers to questions such as: Can water quality be restored by filtering a stream through a single small wetland? What is the appropriate scale? To what extent can flood stages be reduced to prevent downstream damage? What is the most efficient location for flood-water storage in a wetland? How diverse and stable will the created wildlife habitats be? What will rehabilitation cost?

To accomplish its goals, the site was divided into two parts: a passive experimental area devoted to restoring the landscape to emulate pre-colonial settlement conditions and an active experimental area with eight hydraulically-controlled wetlands--both deep marshes and sedge meadows.

To learn the answers to these and other burning questions, mark your calendars for October 5 and 6, when a tour of this extraordinary project will be part of our annual

## GREEN GOVERNMENT ILLINOIS BILL

State Senator Susan Garrett has introduced the Green Governments Illinois Act to encourage all levels of state and local government to make a commitment to adopt green technology through building and conservation measures so that greenhouse gas emissions will be substantially reduced in the state.

Under the leadership of Lt. Governor Pat Quinn, the Green Governments Coordinating Council has already been established and will provide oversight and direction to all participants in the program.

Green Governments Illinois will also provide a resource for governments and schools on cost-sharing of environmental products, sharing of ideas and new markets, and

testing of new programs such as renewable energy and alternative fuel vehicles. All plans, reports, resources, Internet links and guidance materials will be available on the web site: [www.greensolutions.il.gov](http://www.greensolutions.il.gov).

## TREATMENT OF BALLAST WATER Janet Neagu

Lake Michigan Interleague Organization has been very active in supporting legislative efforts to get ballast water treated before it is discharged into the Great Lakes. Michigan has lead the way by passing it's own laws requiring treatment since we do not have Federal Legislation. The Indiana legisla-

ture, at the request of LMILO's Co-President, Jeanette Neagu, passed a resolution requesting the federal government pass ballast water treatment legislation. LMILO signed on to a letter from the National Wildlife Federation requesting Congress pass Legislation requiring treatment of ballast

water. The letter so clearly outlines the problem it is quoted in it's entirety. We all need to work toward the passage of federal legislation.



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### LETTER TO CONGRESS:

Aquatic invasive species are threatening America's waters, wildlife, and economy. As the attached news articles show, the media has recognized the importance of this issue to our country. Environmental groups, scientists, sportsmen, boating equipment manufacturers, state agencies, and the media all agree: Congress must pass comprehensive legislation to fight the Introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species. Our organizations' members and supporters urge you to support a comprehensive bill that will reduce the introduction and spread of aquatic invaders by enacting uniform standards for ballast water discharge; screening aquatic species for invasiveness before import; supporting education and outreach programs to reduce the potential for harmful introductions; creating a "Rapid Response" system for containment, control, and eradication of initial invasions in aquatic systems; and authorizing additional research to ensure that proper methods are developed to prevent, control, and eradicate aquatic invaders. Invasive species are one of the worst threats to native biodiversity, inflicting damage to ecosystems, and they are a great threat to our local economies. They can push native species to extinction, and harm a wide variety of industries, including fisheries and water supplies. Damages from, and control measures for, aquatic invaders cost this country tens of billions of dollars each year."

Lindsay Graham, Wildlife Grants Media Coordinator

S.725 was introduced by Sen. Carl Levine requesting Treatment of ballast water. Please contact your Senator to support this most important legislation.

Jeanette Neagu

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## ILLINOIS REPORT Marilyn Thompson

The Illinois Legislature is coming to the home stretch, but most bills are still pending. The Cool Cities Act for the State of Illinois was passed unanimously out of the Ill. Senate and has been sent to the House, where hopes are high for passage.

Among bills being watched by environmentalists are: Reducing Phosphorus in Dishwasher Detergents, Off-lot Discharge of Private Sewage Disposal Systems, Green Cleaning Schools Act, Mercury-added Product Prohibition, Energy Efficient Furnaces, Fluorescent Light-

ing for Buildings, Pest Control Management, The Global Warming Response Act, and the Ill. Climate Change Act.



## MICHIGAN REPORT Suzanne Dixon and Dendra Best

Michigan has the first and only water ballast permit law, which went into effect January 1, 2007. The law requires all ocean going ships visiting Michigan ports to obtain a state permit by either promising not to discharge ballast water or proving they are equipped to sanitize ballast tanks with one of four state approved technologies. This law is now being challenged by the shipping industry and they have sued the State of Michigan saying it is unconstitutional, places unreasonable burden on interstate commerce and excessive to the benefits gained.

Invasive species cause about \$200 million in ecological and economic losses each year. Andy Buchsbaum, director of the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes office said, "What's wrong with this picture?"

The same shippers that brought us zebra mussels are now suing Michigan to stop us from protecting ourselves from invasive species."

{Also of concern is the probability that the invasive Viral hemorrhagic septicemia, or VHS -- which causes anemia and hemorrhaging in infected fish, which could essentially wipe out native fish stocks in Lake Michigan, was detected earlier this year in fish in an area of northern Lake Huron, about 20 miles from Lake Michigan.

Years ago, phosphorus was banned from laundry detergents. There were few dishwashers, so phosphorus has remained in dishwashing detergent. Too much phosphorus causes nuisance algae blooms, excessive aquatic weed growth, and oxygen reduction which combines to harm fishing, boating, swimming

and other recreational opportunities, not to mention the health of the Great Lakes. Bills have been introduced in the Michigan Senate to reduce the amount of phosphorus in dishwashing detergents. There was no testimony in opposition, so we hope these bills will move soon.

With continued concern over the possible future impact of climate change, projections for significant lowering of lake levels will have a devastating affect on shoreline habitat and fish stocks. (Michigan Environmental Council: <http://www.mecprotects.org/> ) George Kling, a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Michigan, predicts warmer ambient water temperatures will only increase the rate of invasive species infiltration

## NEWLY DESIGNED WEB SITE [www.LMILO.org](http://www.LMILO.org) Dendra Best

If we live in 'the information age' probably no other media has the power to reach across borders, across generations, and empower the grass roots effort than the Internet.

The design of the new LMILO website is a labor of love for me - the love of Lake Michigan. Seeing 'the Big Lake' for the first time made me do what everyone does - taste it for salt water! I've smiled at all the first time visitors I've taken down to the beach in the past 25 years - they all do the same thing.

Over those 25 years I've lived through PCB and PBB, the high and low water marks, brazenly walked above the high water mark to protest the 'taking' of my favorite beach walk, seen beaches closed from fouling by alewives, seen the estuary wetlands where I fell in love turn to grasslands, learned to my cost to forever wear swim shoes in the water now or risk slicing open my toes on zebra mussels, seen purple waves of loostripe and twisted beak cormorants. What is the future, and how do

we make a difference?

When I do presentations to grade schoolers, or adults, I have them close their eyes and visualize looking back on this planet. You can clearly see in your minds eye where the Great Lakes are. And in relation to them, the % of Earth's surface which is covered in salt water. I ask if they can see a 6" water pipe headed in from some outer galaxy, toping up the Earth's fresh water tank? No? All the fresh water there will ever be is

## WEBSITE CONT'D

already here and we can't afford to waste a drop.

That's what I hope the LMILO web site conveys - a sense of urgency, and caring, and the personal nature of the LMILO Mission. We are an organization on a journey, each of us with a personal stake in getting to the safe harbor.

There are so many passionate people deeply involved in this task of taking care of Lake Michigan. The goal of this web site is to grab hold of those just passing through and checking us out - this should be everyone's passion. It's everyone's future at stake.



## WISCONSIN REPORT Art and Marje Palleon

Healthy Lakes, Healthy Lives Seminar was held in Milwaukee and attended by Phil Knier, Art and Marge Palleon. The Great Lakes Restoration Road Show, another name for the presentation, introduced us to various ways to get our message to our target audience. The Healthy Lakes, Healthy Lives campaign depends on making the connection between the condition of the lakes and people's likes. This is a campaign about people, not water. We want water that is drinkable, swimmable and fishable. Website: [www.healthylakes.org](http://www.healthylakes.org)

A coalition of local basin groups, called Lake Michigan Partners, have launched a campaign designed to raise public awareness on the importance of protecting Lake Michigan watersheds. They are planning to install up to 250 signs this spring along popular bodies of water in Eastern Wisconsin. Signs will be placed in a number of Ozau-

kee County sites. Each sign will contain the 1-800 TIP-WDNR hot line number for citizens to report environmental violations. This is funded by Wisconsin Coastal Management Program.

Many newspaper articles have been published about Lake Michigan, most recently the improper sewer connections from Miller Park and other facilities that allowed human fecal bacteria to flow into the Menomonee River and directly into Lake Michigan. The MMSD and the Lake Michigan Water Institute have been investigating the river contamination for past few years and have now discovered some sources. Repairing the source of contamination before the baseball season is top on some people's list. The Kinnickinnic River which also flows directly into Lake Michigan has been sited as the tenth most endangered and contaminated river in the nation. Website: [www.lwvwi.com](http://www.lwvwi.com)

[www.lwvwi.com](http://www.lwvwi.com)

On the State legislative front, The Lake Michigan Compact has not been introduced and is still in committee. But, Representative Molepske has introduced Assembly Bill 86 relating to ballast water management, making an appropriation and providing a penalty. Wisconsin's efforts to combat aquatic invasive species are featured in the current March issue of [U.S. News and World Report](#).

The LWVWI legislative committee signed onto a letter to Mike Johanns, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, asking him to use current rulemaking authorities to reduce the spread of the invasive fish disease Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) by regulating the exchange of ballast water on the Great Lakes. They sent copies of the letter to Senators Feingold and Kohl, WI Senators Rob Cowles and Neal

## WISCONSIN REPORT CONT'D

Kedzie (both sponsoring ballast water bills), Senators Mark Miller, Bob Jauch and Bob Wirch (newly appointed to Senate Environment Committee).

Also the Governors 2007 budget is being presented in March. Below are some highlights that would and could affect Lake Michigan from supporting conservation wardens to approving bonding for removing

sediment from bottoms of rivers with Lake Michigan access. As LMILO representative to LWV-WI, we recommended that LWVWI could support the following:

### 2007 Budget for State Wisconsin Natural Resource-Water Quality

- Support funding for conservation wardens to visit boat landings to conduct public education and enforcement of aquatic invasive regulations.
- Support the increase in the state cost-sharing grants to up to 75% of costs of projects to control aquatic invasive species and will include public or private entity to be eligible for a state grant.
- Support the environmental repair fee on solid and hazardous waste disposed of at a waste disposal facility to \$1.60 per ton. 75 cents per ton would be deposited to the non-point account of the environmental fund.
- Support an increase in the supplement motor vehicle title fee by \$2. This would be deposited to the non-point account of the environmental fund.
- Support increase in general obligation bonding for cost-share grants for rural landowners to install non-point source pollution abatement projects in designated priority watersheds. It also supports short-term non-point source water pollution abatement projects undertaken by local governmental units.
- Support increase in bonding to provide cost-share grants for landowners and provide financial assistance to municipalities and sewage districts for construction of facilities and structures for urban non-point source water pollution abatement and storm water management and the municipal flood control.
- Supports that DNR may make grants from its non-point source water pollution abatement program to local government to be used for cost-share grants to landowners for the implementation of animal water management practice if the DNR has issued a notice of discharge to the landowner.
- Supports \$17 million in bonding to fund a portion of the costs to remove contaminated sediment from Lake Michigan or Lake Superior if federal funds are provided for the project under the Great Lakes Legacy Act.
- Support to create a sum sufficient appropriation from segregated environmental management acct of the environmental fund to pay debt service costs. The fund would be used for cleanup of contaminated sediment in Milwaukee in the Kinnickinnic River and the Milwaukee River in Estabrook Park and would be expected to leverage \$31 million in federal funds from the Great Lakes Legacy Fund.

## Water Resources Agreement ("The Compact") Phil Knier

The compact is at various stages of ratification in the various states. Minnesota has ratified the agreement and "Illinois has passed their legislation. The following is a list-

ing of the status in each of the LMILO states.  
Illinois Senate bill 0050 passed April 25  
Illinois - HB 0375 passed March 29,

SB 0050 passed April 25  
Michigan House bill 4343 introduced  
Michigan - HB 4336, HB 4343, SB 212



Indiana - SB 0022, SB 0515

SB 0515 is destined to wait to die in the Senate Committee on Energy and Environmental Affairs, without a hearing. It is promised legislation will be drafted before the 2008 Session of the General Assembly and the Water Resources Agreement will be introduced in that session.

Wisconsin - no legislative activity

Wisconsin's opposition to the Compact comes from a provision that calls for water in the Great Lakes basin to be held in "public trust" Private property owners own groundwater beneath their land. States might give up their sovereign right to state-owned water by agreeing to be part of a regional water board of eight states. Criteria for water withdrawals should be made by state legislatures and not governors as in the

Compact

Wisconsin is in the process of performing a review, resulting recently in a 12-page document of concerns.

Source

<http://waterwars.wordpress.com>

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