



League of Women Voters® of Illinois

A nonpartisan political organization, dedicated to Making Democracy Work,
through voter education, issue advocacy, and citizen participation.

Join the League of Women Voters in Combatting Nutrient Pollution

“Nutrient pollution is a major threat to water quality. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus carried in runoff from city streets and farm fields or flowing out of wastewater treatment plants can fuel algae blooms that decrease oxygen needed by aquatic plants and animals. Nutrients washed down the Mississippi River have created a ‘dead zone’ in the Gulf of Mexico that stretches for thousands of miles. At home, nutrient pollution can also lower property values, hinder recreation, and degrade drinking water quality.” (From the *EPA Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, 2015*) In August of 2014 more than 400,000 people in Toledo, Ohio, lost their drinking water for several days due to a toxic algal bloom in Lake Erie. Earlier this year, Des Moines, Iowa, filed a federal lawsuit against three counties upstream to stem nitrate pollution in the Raccoon River. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported the “latest, and most likely, longest lasting dead zone in Lake Michigan’s Green Bay this summer.”

The League at all levels (local, state, and regional) works to uphold and promote the LWVUS position that “natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems and that resources should be controlled in order to preserve the physical, chemical, and biological integrity of ecosystems and to protect public health.” In support of that position, the League of Women Voters of Illinois voted at its State Convention in June 2015 to make Illinois’ Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy an action focus for the next two years. At its first annual meeting to be held in Dubuque, Iowa, on October 24th, the recently organized LWV-Upper Mississippi River Region Inter League Organization (some 50 local LWVs in the four states of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) will be adopting the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategies in their four-state region as a major part of its programming in the next year. The LWV-Lake Michigan Region Inter League Organization has already been a leader in promoting the use of green infrastructure to better manage storm water run off, a hefty contributor to nutrient pollution.

What will the League of Women Voters do to stem nutrient pollution?

- Educate ourselves and our fellow citizens on the issue and identify what we can do on an individual, community, regional, and national level to fix the problem.
- Capitalize on our LWV relationships with the legislators and regulators at every level of government and advocate for needed programs and ways to adequately fund them to alleviate nutrient pollution.
- Use our 501.c.3 status and pool time and resources to apply for grants to help support our educational efforts and projects.
- Facilitate dialogue and collaborative efforts with LWVs in other sections of the country and along the Middle and Lower Mississippi River and Great Lake Regions through our mutual connections to the LWV-US.
- Facilitate collaboration and action among pairs or groups of LWVs and partner with other groups and organizations to work on the issue on a shared watershed level.
- Capitalize on our ability to develop regional positions and serve as advocates for the collective interests of the Mississippi River or Great Lakes regions before Congress and federal agencies.
- Partner with governmental, educational, and environmental groups to share data, gather information, and collaborate on best practices and projects to alleviate nutrient pollution.
- For more information about what the LWV is doing in Illinois to combat nutrient pollution, contact: issues@lwvil.org

LWVIL.org

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