

Recent League Events related to Lake Michigan

ILLINOIS

Krista Grimm and Henrietta Saunders of the LWVLMR hosted a table at the **LWVIL Convention's** workshop day. The goal was to share possibilities for Local leagues that care about Climate Change and want some new program ideas. We suggested that water is a way to engage people in productive conversations about climate issues as this is the biggest threat to Lake Michigan and all of our water resources. Large precipitation events in northern Illinois and elsewhere exacerbate the "traditional" water pollution problems relating to stormwater runoff and nutrient pollution. We handed out cards to send to federal officials on the Clean Water Act Rule, and encouraged Leagues to work toward Coal Tar Sealant bans at the local level.

LWV Highland Park

In August, the Highland Park Library was the setting for an excellent and thorough discussion of the benefits of advocacy for the environment in and around the Great Lakes. The presentation, initiated and introduced by Henrietta Saunders, President of LWVLMR, filled a good part of the library's auditorium and included speakers from five different groups. Highland Park City Councilperson Kim Stone, a watchdog for local environmental practices, reviewed Highland Park's process and progress in developing environmentally correct standards. Kelly Nichols, a Highland Park resident and representative from Mom's Clean Air Force, an advocacy group with nearly 550,000 members, spoke about the goals of the group. One of the primary goals is to watchdog and encourage America's Clean Power Plan, which is crafted by each state. Lake Forest Open Lands, an organization that develops land trusts, was represented by John Sentell. He reported that thus far 800 acres of land in and around Lake Forest have been preserved. Illinois is the number one contributor to a large dead zone in the Caribbean, due to fertilizer and pesticide run-offs from Illinois farms that eventually work their way down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. Ethan Brown from the Alliance for the Great Lakes presented an overview of the current environmental status of the five Great Lakes. Together this valuable resource holds the largest volume of fresh water in the United States and must be protected and used as carefully as possible.

LWVs of Wilmette, Winnetka-Northfield-Kenilworth, Glencoe, Glenview, and Evanston

On October 2014, five Leagues of Women Voters in communities north of Chicago, along and near the shore of Lake Michigan, presented the program, "Managing Storm Water/Protecting Lake Michigan: Determining the Future *Now*." The program was organized in response to severe storms which, in recent years, have seriously impacted these and neighboring communities, prompting a variety of new strategies for managing storm water disposal. Some of these planned or executed strategies involve release of storm water into Lake Michigan. More than 200 people filled New Trier High School West's auditorium to hear a panel of six highly regarded experts provide context, alternatives, a synopsis of two very different approaches to community involvement, use of grey and green infrastructure and, finally, an overview of Illinois regulations.

The forum was moderated by Elizabeth Coulson, distinguished member of the Illinois House of Representatives for 13 years. Speakers and topics were: J. David Rankin, Program Director, Great Lakes Protection Fund, who spoke on "Lake Michigan in Perspective;" Bob Newport, Storm Water Specialist, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, who described "Green Storm Water Tools;" Joe Kenney, Community Development Director for the Village of Glenview who summarized the "Glenview Storm Water Taskforce: Matching Tools and Problems;" Joe Johnson, Vice President of MWH Americas, Inc, and Principal Project Manager, who talked about "Stormwater Management Planning for Winnetka;" and Jeff Hutton and Abel Haile from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency who provided an overview of the "Stormwater Discharge Process for Permits and Public Comment."

INDIANA

During the last twelve months Indiana Leagues have had numerous programs on Above Ground Chemical Storage Tanks, Storm Water and Toxic Algae Blooms. Programs have been presented in all the five counties that have member Leagues in Northwest Indiana. Jeanette Neagu, Indiana delegate to LWVLMR has also given programs addressing these issues in Michigan and Wisconsin.

LWV of Indiana initiated a campaign to get Above Ground Chemical Storage Tanks registered in Indiana. (It was a leak from such a tank that forced Charleston, W.V. and five counties to stop using their tap water for more than a week in 2014.) S.B. 312 became law, and at this time the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is in the process of establishing required regulations.

LWVIN also initiated a program to address the nutrient overload to the Maumee River. As a result of that initiative, an all day Summit meeting on January 24th was sponsored by IDEM, LWVIN, Sierra Club, Hoosier Environmental Council and Save the Maumee. Presentations emphasized what needs to be done to implement the Upper Maumee River Watershed Plan.

LWVIN is represented at the quarterly meetings of IDEM's Office of Water Quality which is attended by the state's major environmental organizations and IDEM staff. At these meetings concerns about Above Ground Chemical Storage Tanks, Combined Sewer Overloads and Nutrient Overloads to our waterways are always addressed.

A new program, "Why is the Water Green?", was developed and is available to all interested organizations in the area.

LWV LaPorte County

Two members attended Great Lakes Days. We had a program on Storm water by Krista Grimm from LWVLMR that we offered at our *Lunch with the League* series and at a local middle school science class. Other *Lunch with the League* topics included the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore featuring the new superintendent and the problems of Non-Point

Source Pollution as by Jeanette Neagu. We observe our Trail Creek Water Commission meetings, and we network with other water/Lake Michigan groups such as Save the Dunes, Green Drinks in Michigan City and the DNR. The LWV LPC Board has chose "Water" as one of its year-long issues for 2015-2016.

MICHIGAN

LWV Michigan

Our state has primarily been focused on energy legislation, but the board has

- Approved action in support of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and Clean Water State Revolving Plan.
- Commented on proposed fracking regulations and legislation.
- Supported proposed plastic microbead legislation.
- Commented on proposed radioactive waste disposal rules.
- Commented to a state task force committee over safety concerns for the 62 year old Mackinac Straights pipeline.
- Submitted comments supporting hydrological separation to prevent Asian Carp in Lake Michigan.

The LWVMI biennial meeting hosted presentations from LWVLMR on stormwater control, driveway sealant information and highlighted zoning regulation tools in use by Michigan communities for fracking.

LWV Flint

Our League entertained a number of "water" questions at our "Flint - After the Emergency Manager" forum held early this year. Mostly, we have shared information on issues at the local & state level and beyond through our Face Book page. Some of these issues are Enbridge's Line 5, updates on the Kalamazoo oil leak, the threat of invasive species (Asian Carp), Canada's proposed nuclear waste storage facility, the west coast drought and more. Locally, there have been two hot concerns: the quality & cost of Flint's water and the Karegnondi pipeline. Lately, there has been a third potential concern that has come to our attention regarding rumors of an intention to privatize the water system; this is something we are just beginning to investigate.

LWV Grand Traverse Area

The topic of the League's April program was preserving and protecting the Grand Traverse Bay watershed. Speakers were Krista Grimm from LWVLMR, Sarah U'Ren, Program Director of the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Center and John Nelson, Grand Traverse Baykeeper. Presentations focused upon storm water run off and resulting contamination of lakes, streams and, ultimately, the Bay. Suggested measures homeowners can take to prevent contamination included installation of rain gardens, eliminating use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and planting natural vegetative buffers near rivers, lakes and streams in residential areas. Krista's comments included a warning about Coal-Tar pavement sealcoats-a product marketed to beautify, protect and extend the longevity of asphalt pavement, but proven to be toxic to humans with dust from the coating carried in

the air, soil and water. Planned for the spring is a program discussing the 2 Enbridge #5 pipelines under the Mackinac Straits.

LWV Holland, MI

Our League partners with 2 local colleges, the City of Holland and the library to present *Living Sustainably Along the Lakeshore Series*. Topics of these monthly programs included water testing, conservation, storm water control and *Project Clarity*, a community collaborative to clean and restore water quality in Lake Macatawa. We remain a coalition partner with the Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance, which educates and advocates for responsible coastal development. Our League also monitor the continuing clean-up of Kalamazoo River, an AOC.

LWV Kalamazoo

As part of the Kalamazoo Environmental Council, LWVKA recognized the 5th anniversary of 1,000,000 gallons of oil being spilled into the Kalamazoo River from an Enbridge pipeline break. Also as part of KEC, LWVKA provided input to the EPA regarding clean-up of the Allied Paper Inc./Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund Site.

LWV Leelanau County

In June 2015, our program was “How Clean Is Our Water?” The topic included leaking septic systems, nutrient and toxic chemical run off from residents and commercial areas, septage spraying on park land and impacts on the water quality of lakes, rivers, stream, watersheds. We hosted Krista Grimm in July, She spoke on the threats to Lake Michigan and explained the role of LWVLMR. At the upcoming October meeting, Liz Kirkwood, CEO of For Love of Water (FLOW), will discuss the potential for catastrophic contamination if the two 62 year-old Enbridge #5 pipelines under the Mackinac Straits spring a leak and updates on the current advocacy to shut down the line immediately.

LWV Manistee County

At our Annual Meeting in May 2015, our speaker was Jeanette Neagu from LWVLMR. She spoke to our members and guests about Lake Erie’s green algae bloom and the consequences of not monitoring lakes and streams for agricultural contamination and nutrient loading. She stressed the need for personal responsibility and action.

WISCONSIN

Supported SB 15 bill to ban sale of products containing microbeads -- Enacted!

Supported AB-105/SB-72, regulating groundwater management and approval of high capacity wells.

Supported four Senate bills (SB 98, 99, 100, 101) which would aid local governments in responding to frac sand mining.

Commented to Wisconsin DNR on diversion of Lake Michigan water by City of Waukesha and ultimately opposed the plan.

With other states, urged LWVUS to add the sustainability of our water resources as a priority under climate change.

With other state Leagues, urged LWVUS to sign the HOW (Healing Our Waters) letter to the Office of Management and Budget, requesting the following:

- \$300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
- \$1.45 Billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund
- Measures to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes, including at least \$3 million to the Army Corps of Engineers for the ongoing Great Lakes-Mississippi River Inter-basin Feasibility Study to quicken the study focusing on Brand Road lock and dam
- Continued strong support for NRCS's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Advocated for funding in the State Budget for

- the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, which protects natural land and water areas used widely for outdoor recreation and sports. (Half of the funding was restored.)
- continuation of 66 fulltime positions at the DNR, specifically the Bureau of Scientific Services and Communication and Education.
- polluted runoff management efforts.

LWV Greater Green Bay

Angela Pierce, Natural Resource Planner, spoke at our June picnic at Bay Beach about the quality of the water and the possibility of again establishing a swimming beach. Angela works with the Bay-Lakes Planning Commission.