

Michigan Water Network

Interesting and important news, data, facts, etc. pertaining to the water-related issues of Michigan and the Great Lakes.

“All things water”

October 2011

Did you know October 11-14 is Great Lakes Week in Detroit? See below for more information on all the events taking place!

Contained in this issue...

Great Lakes Week October 11-14

New Fees for Operator Training and Licensing

EPA Issues Cleanup Directive to Enbridge

Report Shows Mercury Still a Problem in Michigan's Fish

Keep the Sea Free of Debris Art Contest

Bill to Clean Up Great Lakes Beaches Introduced

Michigan Sea Grant Fellows Announced

Great Lakes Observing System Awarded \$1.4 Million

Request for Photographs of Coasting Flooding

Illinois Launches Asian Carp Anti-Hunger Program

GLMRIS High-Risk Species List Reduced

GLFC Solicits Nominations for Awards

Actor Campaigns for Improved Sanitation in India

EPA Funding Awarded to “Put People Back to Work”

Nutrient Crisis Causing Massive Breakdown in Great Lakes

EPA Announces Release of ‘QA Track – Version 2.0’

Upcoming Events

Great Lakes Week Events Scheduled For Detroit, Oct. 11-14

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Great Lakes Week Sponsors organized a week of activities focused on highlighting Great Lakes protection and restoration, identifying emerging issues, and charting a path forward for further progress. Gathering the annual meetings and conferences of various organizations in one place, makes this one of the most wide-ranging Great Lakes summits in history.

For more information on Great Lakes Week, how to register for events and a more detailed schedule visit

www.glri.us/glweek.html.

New Fees for Operator Training and Licensing

Two new fee packages for water and wastewater operator training recently became effective. The packages were part of Public Act 147 and 148 of 2011 that took effect on September 21.

The appropriations for the FY 2011-12 DEQ budget (PA 63 of 2011) assume the revenue generated by the fees established in Senate Bills 447 and 448. The new fees are estimated to raise approximately \$354,000 in revenue for the program. In the current year, the program is funded by \$200,000 GF/GP and funding from the Water Resource Division (WRD) within DEQ. The additional revenue is needed for the program because the \$200,000 GF/GP funding was eliminated in the FY 2011-12 DEQ budget and the WRD funding is no longer available.

Without the statutory authority to collect these fees and the revenues they provide, the DEQ would have a \$354,000 deficit in the FY 2011-12 budget and would have to reduce or eliminate spending in this program.

For a full legislative analysis of these public acts, click here <http://legislature.mi.gov/documents/2011-2012/billanalysis/House/pdf/2011-HLA-0447-3.pdf> (KARLYN, this link only works outside of the server)

EPA Issues Cleanup Directive to Enbridge

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently issued a directive requiring Enbridge to take additional steps to clean up the July 2010 oil spill that damaged over 35 miles of the Kalamazoo River system. The directive requires Enbridge to submit plans by Oct. 20, 2011 for cleanup and monitoring work expected to last through 2012. Failure to comply could result in civil penalties.

The EPA directive lays out a performance-based framework for assessing and recovering submerged oil in the river and cleaning up oil-contaminated river banks. The Enbridge pipeline spill impacted the Kalamazoo River system from Talmadge Creek to Morrow Lake. EPA transferred primary oversight of ongoing cleanup activities along Talmadge Creek to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality on Aug. 5, 2011.

For more information click here <http://www.epa.gov/enbridgespill/>

New Report Shows Mercury Still a Problem in Michigan's Fish

In a report released on October 11, scientists concluded that, despite a drop in emissions from incinerators, mercury continues to be a persistent problem for wildlife and humans.

Michigan has been under a mercury fish advisory for years, and it's unclear whether the recent report will cause the state to update it, officials said.

The three-year study, the largest-ever study of mercury in the Great Lakes, said six of the 15 most commonly eaten sport fish in the region had mercury levels higher than recommended for human consumption. They include walleye, lake trout, largemouth bass and northern pike. The level of contamination depends on the species and the place caught.

The study found that some stretches of Michigan were noted as mercury hot spots and that 60% of all sites sampled around the Great Lakes region showed higher-than-safe levels of mercury in the fish. The report from the Great Lakes Commission also said areas considered pristine -- forested with wetlands -- were among those with the highest tested levels. For example, there were hot spots in the Ottawa National Forest in the Upper Peninsula and in the Adirondack mountains.

Mercury has been emitted into the air since the mid-1800s from mining, smelting, coal, cement plants and incinerators. For more information and to access the full report, click here. <http://www.briloon.org/mercuryconnections/GreatLakes>

Keep the Sea Free of Debris Art Contest

The NOAA Marine Debris Program is proud to again host the annual Keep the Sea Free of Debris Art Contest. The winning artwork will be showcased in a NOAA Marine Debris Program calendar that will help in raising awareness about the global problem of marine debris.

Contest opens on September 16, 2011 and closes October 21.

For details on how to enter this year's contest, click here. <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/outreach/artrules.html>

Alliance for the Great Lakes Applauds Introduction of Bill to Clean Up Great Lakes Beaches

Illinois Sen. Mark Kirk this week joined original sponsor Sen. Frank Lautenberg of New Jersey to introduce the Clean Coastal Environment and Public Health Act of 2011, which would pay for state and local beach health monitoring, speed public notification, and support removal of pollution that can make people sick and close beaches.

The bill, S. 1582, comes on the heels of the largest annual Great Lakes volunteer event — the “September Adopt-a-Beach™ Cleanup.” Thousands descended upon their favorite Great Lakes beaches to clean up debris and monitor water quality. With beaches serving as the economic engines of coastal communities throughout the Great Lakes, days lost to pollution are dollars lost for local businesses.

The Senate bill would amend the federal Clean Water Act to reauthorize the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (“BEACH”) Act through fiscal year 2015. Since its passage in 2000, the BEACH Act has improved public health nationwide by authorizing the U.S. EPA to award grants to develop comprehensive beach monitoring and public notification programs for state and local recreational beaches.

While the BEACH Act has been authorized at \$30 million, no annual appropriation has ever exceeded \$10 million. As a result, many beaches are not tested or are monitored less frequently than needed. Full funding of the act will be necessary to support the elimination of pollution and protection of public health.

More about the Alliance for the Great Lakes is online at www.greatlakes.org.

Michigan Sea Grant Supports Record Number of Fellows

Five students from Michigan universities have been awarded fellowships that focus on coastal, Great Lakes and marine issues. These paid positions help graduate students build professional networks and gain valuable work experience in natural resource management and policy careers.

Knauss Marine Policy Fellows – Kyle Molten (Michigan State University) and Eric MacMillan (Michigan State University)
Great Lakes Commission Sea Grant Fellow – Cassie Bradley (Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Michigan native)

NOAA Coastal Management Fellows – Liz Durfee (University of Michigan) and Zach Hecht-Leavitt (University of Michigan)

For more information or to read updates on the fellows as they make their individual journeys, check out the fellowship blog at <http://msgfellowship.blogspot.com>

Great Lakes Observing System awarded \$1.4 Million

The Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS), working to coordinate and enhance the network of observations and data access in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River system, will receive \$1.4 Million in funding from the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). The 2011-2012 IOOS award is the largest amount GLOS has received from the national program to date.

GLOS is dedicated to developing a fully integrated, bi-national observing system that provides products and services to decision-makers, resource managers and other data users. In partnership with federal, state and local government agencies, research institutions, industries, private corporations, bi-national organizations, and not for profit organizations, GLOS connects data users with data providers in ways that are supportive of policy and decision-making. For more information, visit www.glos.us

Request for Photographs of Coastal Flooding on the Great Lakes

The Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) is assisting FEMA with outreach associated the Great Lakes Flood Hazard Mapping Project. As part of that project, we are seeking photographs of historic coastal flood events on the Great Lakes.

Questions, comments and the photos with information (or inquiries for FTP) should be sent to Jason Hochschild, GIS Analyst/Applications Specialist, at jhochschild@floods.org

Illinois Launches Asian Carp Anti-Hunger Program

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources recently held a public tasting event starring a Louisiana chef turned advocate to start a campaign that may lead to feeding the invasive species to the growing number of people facing hunger.

The idea to exploit Asian carp's nutritional value — nutritionists say it's a good protein source, low in mercury and high in Omega 3 fatty acids — has major obstacles in Illinois. While it's eaten in China and high-end restaurants, among other places, there's no infrastructure yet for netting

the fish in mass quantities, cleaning and distributing it to the masses. Officials also recognize they face an even more intangible challenge: the fish has a bad public image.

Anti-hunger advocates in Illinois are praising the idea of serving the carp, especially with increasing demand for food stamps. An average 1.8 million people rely on the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program each month, according to figures from earlier this year. That's up from 1.2 million people monthly in 2006.

For more information, click here

<http://news.yahoo.com/illinois-launches-asian-carp-anti-hunger-program-070609106.html>

GLMRIS High-Risk Species List reduced to 39

The first white paper from the Aquatic Nuisance Species listed 40 High-Risk Species to potentially transfer between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins through the Chicago Area Waterway System. A late incorporation of a comment made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the secondary agency review reduces the list to 39, as the New Zealand Mudsail, which is already found in both basins, will be removed.

The purpose of the ANS White Paper is to catalog potential non-native species within the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins and identify which high-risk species will be an initial focus in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS).

With the removal of the New Zealand Mudsail from the list, 10 species are high risk for potential transfer to the Great Lakes Basin and 29 are high risk for potential transfer to the Mississippi River Basin.

The identification of the species in the ANS White Paper will aid the GLMRIS Team in focusing efforts toward identifying available prevention and control technologies for further analysis. The Other Pathways Team (Focus Area II) will be using the ANS White Paper to develop site-specific High-Risk Species lists for all other potential aquatic pathways along the basin divide.

View the ANS White Paper at

http://glmr.is.anl.gov/documents/docs/Non-Native_Species.pdf

Explore the 39 High-Risk Species on the GLMRIS Web site at <http://glmris.anl.gov/documents/ans/index.cfm#speciesfs>

GLFC Solicits Nominations for 2012 Awards

Each year, the Great Lakes Fishery Commission honors individuals or groups who have made outstanding contributions to Great Lakes science, policy, and management. The commission is pleased to announce that it is now accepting nominations for three annual awards, described below:

- The Jack Christie/Ken Loftus Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions toward Understanding Healthy Great Lakes Ecosystems
- The Buzz Besadny Award for Fostering Great Lakes Partnerships
- The Vern Applegate Award for Outstanding Contributions to Sea Lamprey Control

The commission welcomes nominations for these awards, which will be presented during the commission's annual meeting in June, 2012.

The form for submitting a nomination is online at www.glfc.org/aboutus/awards.php. Nominations are due by November 4, 2011. Nominations submitted within the previous three years will be considered for 2011 and do not need to be resubmitted.

Actor Campaigns for Increased Sanitation in India

Bollywood icon Shah Rukh Khan has joined a campaign to help cut thousands of easily-preventable deaths across the world through the provision of basic toilet facilities. The 45-year-old star has been named a global ambassador for sanitation and hygiene as part of a United Nations-backed campaign to tackle diseases such as diarrhea, which is the second-biggest killer of children worldwide.

Khan's new role comes as specialists and non-governmental organizations working to improve public health gather in Mumbai this week at a Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) conference. Halving the number of people living without access to basic sanitation by 2015 is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals covering issues from poverty and hunger to education and tackling HIV/AIDS.

EPA Announces Funding to Restore Great Lakes and Put People Back to Work

The EPA announced funding for a number of GLRI projects that will help restore the Great Lakes and put people back to work, using a conservation corps model to hire unemployed workers to improve habitat and clean up shoreline.

Three Toledo-area Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) projects received funding totaling nearly \$2.4 million. The funding includes \$1 million to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to control invasive plants in the Lower Black River and another \$811,252 to restore habitat in the Maumee River Area of Concern. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will receive \$480,000 for conservation, restoration and outreach at the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge on the southwest shore of Lake Erie.

Under the same challenge to put people back to work, the EPA awarded \$592,400 in funding for a GLRI project in the Huron Manistee National Forest. The U.S. Forest Service project will help to restore Lake Michigan. The projects on the Huron-Manistee include habitat restoration for several threatened or endangered species, including the Karner blue butterfly, the piping plover, the Kirtland's warbler and the Massasagua rattlesnake. Two other projects on the forest will address non-native invasive species and stream bank stabilization.

The EPA also announced funding for GLRI projects in Northern Michigan totaling \$1.1 million. The projects will help to restore the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore and Grand Traverse Band watersheds. The National Park Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs projects will receive \$891,225 to expand wetland restoration work in the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The Bureau of Indian Affairs will receive \$255,365 to work with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians on watershed restoration - part of \$876,810 awarded to BIA to allow it to expand its work with tribal governments to complete Great Lakes restoration projects in Indian country. Other tribes that will participate in the project are the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, the Oneida Tribe of Indians of Wisconsin and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

More information on selected projects is available at <http://www.glri.us>

Emerging Nutrient Crisis Causing Massive New Breakdowns in the Great Lakes

The National Wildlife Federation recently released a report documenting new and massive ecosystem breakdowns in the Great Lakes caused by interactions between excessive fertilizer run-off from farms and invasive zebra and quagga mussels.

The report, “Feast and Famine in the Great Lakes: How Nutrients and Invasive Species Interact to Overwhelm the Coasts and Starve Offshore Waters,” details the links between enormous algal blooms in Lake Erie that threaten the health of people and wildlife and a 95 percent decline in fish biomass in Lake Huron.

According to the report, the dual feast-and-famine crises plaguing the Lakes are leading to a collapse of the base of the food web, declines in desirable sport fish populations such as lake whitefish and salmon, and resurgence of toxic algae blooms and the Lake Erie “Dead Zone.”

Read the report and Senate testimony of Andy Buchsbaum at: www.nwf.org/greatlakes.

EPA Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) Announces the Release of QA Track – Version 2.0

GLNPO developed and implemented QA Track, a Web-enabled application, designed to track the submission, review, and approval of quality documentation for all GLNPO-funded projects generating or using environmental data.

The system provides:

- a means to track the status of quality documentation review and approval for contracts, tasks, grants, and Interagency Agreements
- a secure system that is accessible via the Internet
- streamlined data input capability
- detailed activity tracking throughout the life cycle of a project
- the function and space to store files associated with a project such as the quality plans, reviews, email communication, etc.
- time triggers to support quality process flow ensuring required due dates are fulfilled
- automated reports for communicating project status

Those interested in potentially using QA Track for your own quality inventory, tracking and reporting efforts should contact Louis Blume, GLNPO Quality Manager (blume.louis@epa.gov, 312-353-2317). Questions regarding the functionality of QA Track can be submitted to Elizabeth Benjamin (ebenjamin@csc.com) of CSC, GLNPO's QA contractor. GLNPO will provide a demonstration of QA Track at the upcoming Second Annual GLRI Quality Technical Conference held in Chicago, December 6-8, 2011 and it is anticipated this demonstration will be available via Webinar.

Upcoming Events

Great Lakes Commission Annual Meeting

October 10-12 <http://www.glc.org/meeting/>

7th Annual Great Lakes Restoration Conference

October 12-14 <http://conference.healthylakes.org/>

Great Lakes Water Quality Biennial Meeting

Former Vice President Al Gore recently announced as keynote speaker

October 12-14 <http://meeting.ijc.org/>

2011 U.S. Areas of Concern Program Annual Meeting

October 13-14 <http://www.glc.org/rap/aocconference11.html>

Michigan's Clean Water Challenges: The Seventh Annual MiCorps Volunteer Monitoring Conference & Training

October 24-25 <http://www.micorps.net/conference2011.html>

State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference

October 26-27 www.SOLECregistration.ca

State of the Strait Conference (FREE to attend)

November 2 <http://projects.igre.emich.edu/registration/>

25th Annual Michigan Stormwater Floodplain Association Conference

February 29-March 2, 2012 <http://mi.floods.org>

The Michigan Water Network (MWN) is hosted and operated by the Michigan Water Environment Association (MWEA), a member association of the Water Environment Federation (WEF)

www.mi-wea.org

*For more information about the MWN or to submit articles
Please contact Jerry Harte, 517.641.7377 or [jerry@mi-
wea.org](mailto:jerry@mi-wea.org)*