

FRESHWATER



2013-2015 REPORT

FUTURE

STAFF

STEPHANIE ALTROCK, Office Manager
ANN BAUGHMAN, Associate Director for Development
NANCY GOUCHER, Manager, Partnerships
CHERYL KALLIO, Associate Director for Policy
TONY MAAS, Manager, Strategies
JILL RYAN, Executive Director
BECCA TURNER, Program Associate
JESSICA WAGAR, Data and Technology Specialist
APRIL WEPPLER, Program Innovator, Canada

FRESHWATER FUTURE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GARY BELAN, American Rivers
TRACEY COOKE, Invasive Species Centre
CHRIS GRUBB, Great Lakes Citizen, Chair
AUSTIN HOLSINGER, Great Lakes Proud
HOLLY HUGES, Great Lakes Citizen, Vice Chair
ADAM PARKER, Shedd Aquarium
KAREN REINBOLD, DePaul University, Treasurer
MELANIE WELCH, Great Lakes Citizen

FRESHWATER FUTURE CANADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GARY BELAN, American Rivers
TRACEY COOKE, Invasive Species Centre
HOLLY HUGES, Great Lakes Citizen
TIM MORRIS, Great Lakes Citizen, Secretary
LINDSAY TELFER, Canadian Freshwater Alliance, Treasurer

List reflects time of publication.

PHOTO: BRIAN LASENBY | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

COVER PHOTO: BECKY SWORA | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

A long-exposure photograph of a beach at sunset. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a bright orange and yellow near the horizon. The ocean waves are blurred, creating a sense of motion. In the foreground, several pieces of dark, weathered driftwood are scattered on the sandy beach. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Ensuring the Healthy Future of Our Waters



FROM THE Board President & Executive Director

The past few years have been exciting for Freshwater Future. We've seen and supported highly motivated and engaged people from around the Great Lakes basin go above and beyond to participate in and work for what they hold dear. It is an honor to work with these people, and their enthusiasm guides our work; helping to bridge the gap between national decisions that impact the entire country and the critical role of grassroots and citizen involvement.

Individual participation is truly what makes the democratic process work. Thousands of decisions are made every day at the local level that impact how our land, water, air and other resources will be used or preserved. Without individuals participating in those decision-making processes, elected officials may hear only from the company or proponents behind the project. Individuals with local knowledge of how that project may impact the community, its residents and the resource are therefore critical in ensuring important information and voices are at the table.

Continued on page 5

Freshwater Future works hard to encourage these people. By providing funding opportunities to engage, offering low cost consulting, and making connections between citizen groups and policy partners. We are creating a Great Lakes community that takes pride in knowing they are doing their best to help the future of our waters.

Sincerely,



Kristy Meyer
Board President



Jill Ryan
Executive Director



PHOTO, UPPER RIGHT: KENT MURRAY | FREEIMAGES.COM

Democracy IN ACTION



DETROIT | RAIN GARDENS

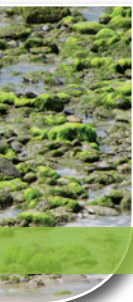


LAKE ERIE | HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS INITIATIVE



OHIO SIERRA CLUB | STATEWIDE CLEANWATER PROJECT

PHOTO CREDITS: SEE RESPECTIVE
STORIES ON PAGES 8-13.





Single House, Entire Block, Large Neighborhood

When the City of Detroit started shutting off water to residents in the Stahelin Street neighborhood, local community advocate Valerie Burris took action. A community already hard hit by economic woes, this decision put many of its residents at risk—particularly elderly and children. Valerie started by knocking on doors, finding out who among her neighbors needed water.

Unbeknownst to Valerie, at the same time Sierra Club staffer Melissa Damaschke* was growing concerned about the impact of raw sewage being frequently dumped into the Detroit River. She knew the City did not have the budget for stormwater treatment that would help to prevent the discharges, but that they were polluting the river.

Valerie and Melissa first met at a community meeting about water affordability. Valerie knew that the rising water rates would lead to more cutoffs for residents, and Melissa felt that the only way to keep water affordable was to find a creative solution for stormwater.



Feeling she'd found a kindred spirit, Melissa persuaded Valerie to join her on a tour of the University of Michigan Dearborn's rain garden. Valerie was skeptical, wondering what rain gardens had to do with affordability and access to drinking water. She quickly understood; watching insects and butterflies hover over blooming native plants, she told Melissa, "I want one of those!"

With the help of Freshwater Future's Climate Program, Valerie's neighborhood group, the Stahelin Street Tigers Block Club, and Melissa's Sierra Club Chapter, installed one of the first residential rain gardens in Detroit. Another community group, the Friends of the Rouge River, helped with the design of the rain garden.

In addition to funding, Freshwater Future's Climate Program helps groups around the Great Lakes basin understand the impacts of climate change on their communities—more frequent rain events, hotter summers, more insect pests, etc. Green infrastructure projects such as rain gardens can help to offset these impacts, slowing water run-off and increasing water retention and absorption. Through our Climate Program, we've been fortunate to work with community advocates like Valerie on neighbourhood-scale projects, as well as larger-scale projects such as the one led by the Grandmont Rosedale Community Development Corporation that saw more than 20 vacant lots revitalized with green infrastructure projects. You can read more about our work in these projects on our website.

In the year following Melissa and Valerie's first meeting, the Stahelin Street Tigers Block Club increased the number of rain gardens and rain barrels in the neighborhood. Now nearly half the homes have similar projects, and are seeing reductions in their water bills as a result. The gardens have also acted as a community builder; strengthening relationships with neighbors helping each other to plant and install rain barrels and rain gardens. But Valerie's favorite thing about her rain garden is watching her beloved nephews care for the plants and learn about the insects.

**Melissa Damaschke is now a program officer with the Erb Family Foundation which supports many of the programs mentioned above—Friends of The Rouge, Sierra Club's Great Lakes Great Communities Campaign, Freshwater Future's Climate Program.*

The Inside Scoop: How We Inspired Action to Address Lake Erie's Toxic Algal Blooms

By now many of us have heard about Lake Erie's harmful algal blooms. They're wreaking havoc in the lake, with the 2014 water crisis in Toledo that left 500,000 people without water being just one recent example.

Luckily, Lake Erie's restoration efforts got a huge boost last June when the Governors of Michigan and Ohio, along with the Premier of Ontario, stood up to say that they were going to address harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie by cutting phosphorus pollution flowing into Lake Erie by 40% by 2025.



This was big news. This promise, called the Western Lake Erie Collaborative Agreement, provides a timeline and represents the political will needed to move solutions forward.

There's a lot of work to be done in 10 years and the deadline acknowledges that there's no time to waste.

What you didn't hear in the news is how the leaders of these three different jurisdictions came to agreement. The Collaborative Agreement was the product of the aspirations of a number of environmental organizations and the creative work of Freshwater Future to bring Ontario into the mix, which was what created momentum for a plan that would extend across most of the western Lake Erie region.

"When we first started talking about getting the region's political leaders to make a public statement, we didn't think the chances of success were very high. The game really changed when Freshwater Future brought the Canadian environmental groups to the table," says Kristy Meyer from the Ohio Environmental Council.

The Canadian organizations thought that the Government of Ontario would be willing to support the proposal, which turned out to be the catalyst needed to get a regional agreement in place. Freshwater Future's unique coordination role was crucial to this process; our binational perspective provided an opportunity to leverage the will of one jurisdiction to motivate action across the region.

Moving forward, Freshwater Future will continue working to bring people and organizations from around the region, on both sides of the border, together to support action on Lake Erie.

PHOTOS AT TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT: SHARI WEINSHEIMER, LAKE ERIE; LAKE ERIE SHORE; WOLF23362; JENNY W.



STATEWIDE CLEAN WATER PROJECT

OHIO SIERRA CLUB

Training Volunteers to Monitor Local Waterways

In 2012, Freshwater Future supported the Ohio Sierra Club with a Project Grant for their Statewide Clean Water Project, which helps to engage and train volunteers to monitor local waterways and help protect them from pollution.

Engaging citizen scientists to test and protect local waterways is a critical program for Ohio's streams, and the Ohio Sierra Club has its work cut out for it in organizing and training over a thousand volunteers for this important job. With any project of this scale, it can be tricky to know the best place to start and how to organize for success. The Ohio Sierra Club reached out to Freshwater Future for help in maximizing their time, energy and resources.



Through Freshwater Future's Insight Services, we are able to assist individuals and organizations to "be the best they can be" with the projects they are undertaking. For the Ohio Sierra Club, that assistance took the form of strategic and program planning, carried out through phone calls, video conferences and an onsite meeting.

What was the result? A powerful in-person working session that engaged staff and volunteers in putting pen to paper, visualizing their shared goals, and determining exactly what they wanted to accomplish over the next two years. In short, they had a strategic plan and a work plan that would provide a roadmap to success.

The group also realized enormous value from having a face-to-face meeting. As a statewide campaign with a broad geographic reach, the group didn't often get to connect in person, and the session allowed them to build stronger relationships within their organization. Matt Trokan, Conservation Director with Ohio Sierra Club observed that the process helped them in "...creating a plan and prioritizing our goals," which in turn allowed them to "spend more time on conservation efforts and less time on the planning process."

By sharing their strategic plan and subsequent reports with members, Ohio Sierra Club was also able to maintain and attract new funders. Matt noted, "Without the support of Freshwater Future we might not have been able to secure as much funding for our campaign." Direct goals led to direct asking, which allowed them to grow their budget by \$50,000, an increase of over 40%.

The most exciting part for Freshwater Future is being able to support an organization like Ohio Sierra Club in achieving its goals of protecting local waterways. Good planning is critical to success in conservation, and we're excited for Ohio Sierra Club for achieving their conservation goals!

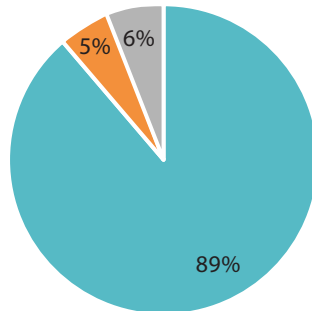
Thank You
to all our donors and
contributors for your
part in making a
difference—you make
this work possible.

FISCAL YEARS

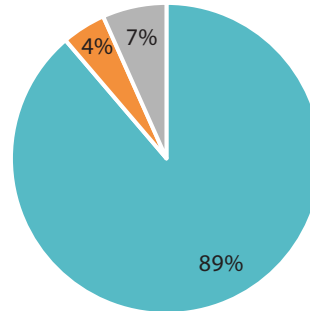
2013-2015

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

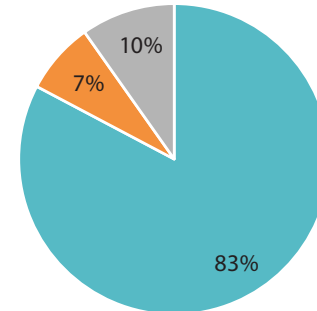
FISCAL YEAR 2013 —
Expense Total \$932,136



FISCAL YEAR 2014 —
Expense Total \$1,038,435



FISCAL YEAR 2015 —
Expense Total \$734,470



■ Program Expenses

■ General and Administrative Expenses

■ Fundraising Expenses

Expense figures based on annual audited financial statements.



P.O. Box 2479
Petoskey, MI 49770

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PETOSKEY, MI
PERMIT #15