



Voices freshwater

2021 SERIES, ISSUE TWO

PIXABAY.COM

What's Inside

Toledo Water
Affordability **PAGE 2**

NO Lead is Safe
PAGE 3

Water Shut Off
Moratoria **PAGE 4**

Building Community
Voice **PAGE 5**

Menominee River
Rebound **PAGE 6**

FRESHWATER FUTURE STEPPING UP: Covid-19 and Access to Clean, Safe Water

2020 changed everything. Water issues and needs were magnified under the pandemic's lens and Freshwater Future's work intensified to ensure people had access to safe and affordable drinking water. At Freshwater Future, we didn't stop our work, instead, we shifted. Like everyone else, we met on Zoom, we worked from home, and we provided innovative solutions to maximize communication tools and online resources to help our partners continue their efforts in protecting our Great Lakes water resources.

Covid-19 and the need to protect public health heightened awareness that millions of people in the US and Canada do not have access to safe, clean drinking water. The rising cost of water utilities and infrastructure upgrades are contributing to more people simply not being able to afford running water in their homes. Freshwater Future quickly moved to get moratoria passed to stop water shutoffs and require water service restoration (*See page 4*) and provided support to

water councils working on debt forgiveness programs and affordability studies.

Staying healthy during Covid-19 deepened the importance of ensuring our drinking water sources are safe and lead free. We ramped up our work with partner communities that have elevated lead levels in their water systems (*See page 3*).

The Great Lakes and tributaries are the drinking water source for 43 million people. When industrial and extraction activities threaten the safety of our waters, we've responded by helping communities and groups voice their concerns (*See page 5*).

Moving forward in 2021 as Covid-19 restrictions ease, we are excited to get back to meeting and gathering face-to-face with our partners and supporters who we've sincerely missed over the last year. But, we're also excited to use our new tools and resources we've developed this past year to further expand our efforts and strengthen our voice.

Learn
More...
**No Lead Is
Safe—Get the
Lead Out!**



Toledo Water Council Makes Progress on Water Affordability

In 2018, the City of Toledo pushed through a plan to regionalize governance of the Toledo water utility that sells water to suburbs at wholesale prices and substantially increases water rates for residents living in the City. Toledo rates are expected to increase by about 60% over the next five years. Even prior to this regionalization, Junction Coalition, a community-based organization in a low-income neighborhood, had been tackling environmental and social justice issues for years. This community organization partnered with a number of local and national environmental organizations to focus on green infrastructure projects which led to the installations of bioswales and rain gardens, urban gardening to combat food deserts, and the transformation of vacant lots in their community to green, usable spaces.

In response to the decision to regionalize water and the rising rates in Toledo, Junction Coalition partnered with Freshwater Future to form the Toledo Community Water Council. While the Junction community stands to be among the hardest hit communities impacted by the rising water rates, the Toledo Community Water Council serves as a platform where concerned citizens all over Toledo can voice their concerns and create opportunities to influence the decisions made around drinking water.



Junction Coalition Volunteers

As a result of this collaborative partnership, amazing progress has been made, such that the advocacy of these residents has now moved the City to accomplish the following:

- Debt Forgiveness Ordinance passed that community members were able to help draft.
- Tenant Landlord Ordinance passed, also with community members helping to draft.
- Hired a premier consultant to conduct a Water Affordability Study upon urging from the community, the Toledo Water Council and Freshwater Future.

Freshwater Future partnered with the City of Toledo and Blue Conduit to submit a grant to use an innovative tool to inventory the city's water distribution lines for lead and educate residents on how to protect themselves from lead-in water. By utilizing these cutting edge tools, the project should help reduce costs of removing lead pipes, thereby reducing further price increases. *(See adjacent story.)*

In addition to ensuring residents have access to safe and affordable drinking water, members of the Water Council are also focusing on educating their neighbors on other environmental justice issues that impact the quality of and access to water such as harmful algal blooms and the public health risks of lead in water.

This collaborative work to help bring the wisdom and strength of residents' voices to the decision-making processes around drinking water has shown that community involvement improves the results by ensuring the needs of residents are at the forefront.

Artificial Intelligence Speeds Up Lead Pipe Removal

The faster cities can replace old lead piping in public water systems the better for protecting public health from the harm caused by lead exposure. But replacing lead water pipes or service lines is expensive (\$3,000-10,000 per home). A portion of this cost is attributed to the trial and error in locating lead lines.

The City of Toledo recently received a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for an innovative approach to work with an engineering company, Blue Conduit, to use artificial intelligence technology to identify the location of lead water pipes, accelerating removal in a cost-efficient way. Freshwater Future is a partner in the project working with grassroots community groups in six Toledo neighborhoods to reach residents to inform and educate about lead in water, proper filter use and maintenance, and reducing exposure during lead line replacements.

We look forward to being a part of this innovative project as a cost-effective way to speed-up lead line replacements that protect public health.



SILVIARITA | PIXABAY.COM



Freshwater Voices is a joint production of Freshwater Future, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization and Freshwater Future Canada, a registered Canadian charity.

STAFF

ALANA HONAKER
Grants and Community
Program Associate
alana@freshwaterfuture.org

ALEXIS SMITH
Community Program and
Technical Associate
alexis@freshwaterfuture.org

ALICIA SMITH
Associate Director
alicia@freshwaterfuture.org

ANN BAUGHMAN
Associate Director
ann@freshwaterfuture.org

BRANDON TYUS
Policy and Community Program
Associate
brandon@freshwaterfuture.org

HILLIARD HAMPTON
Associate Director for Urban
Partnerships
hillard@freshwaterfuture.org

JILL RYAN
Executive Director
jill@freshwaterfuture.org

KRISTY MEYER
Associate Director
kristy@freshwaterfuture.org

LAURIE BREIGHNER
Grants and Administrative Specialist
laurie@freshwaterfuture.org

LESLIE BURK
Communications and
Development Director
leslie@freshwaterfuture.org

STEPHANIE ALTROCK
Director of Logistics and Financials
stephanie@freshwaterfuture.org

FRESHWATER FUTURE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

KAREN REINBOLD
MELANIE WELCH
ADAM PARKER
TRENT STARK
TOM KNOTT
DONALD WIGGINS JR.
STEPHANIE SMITH
ROBERT LETSCHER
LISA HARDEN
LAUREN MCCONNELL

FRESHWATER FUTURE CANADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

KELSEY SCARFONE
LEAH SILVERMAN
TRENT STARK
LINDSAY TELFER

DISCLAIMER: Freshwater Voices is intended to provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas among citizens and organizations working to protect aquatic habitats in the Great Lakes Basin. The interpretations and conclusions presented in this newsletter represent the opinions of the individual authors. They in no way represent the views of Freshwater Future, funders, members, donors, Freshwater Future Canada or any organization mentioned in this publication.

No Lead Is Safe—Get the Lead Out Before You Boil Water

Lead is a toxic metal and no amount is safe in drinking water. Lead can get into drinking water from lead pipes in the water system or the home, solder on pipes, and even from faucet fittings. The only way to know if your water has lead is to have it tested. You can visit our website to find out how to have your water tested for lead (<https://freshwaterfuture.org/lead-in-drinking-water-what-you-should-know/>).

Safety regulations for public water supplies require testing for lead, but the standards are based on assessing whether the water system is properly treating water to reduce corrosion and leaching of lead from pipes. If you live in a community that has known elevated leads levels or test results show lead greater than 1 ppb, you should use a NSF/ANSI 53 water filter and replace filter cartridges regularly. For more information on NSF certified lead filters, go to: <https://www.nsf.org/knowledge-library/lead-in-drinking-water>

One concern that many residents have voiced: “Is it okay to follow a boil water advisory alert if I have elevated lead levels in my tap water?”

Public water supplies must meet a number of water quality standards, and through regular testing procedures, water may be treated with disinfectants for contaminants such as bacteria. When this treatment process is disrupted or there is a problem, a boil water advisory is posted. A boil advisory alert means that residents must boil their drinking water to remove bacteria to ensure it is safe to drink. Since some water actually evaporates during this boiling process, any lead will become more concentrated in the remaining water.

Health experts and scientists advise that if you are served by a public water supply, please remember to flush and filter your water first to remove lead before boiling to remove contaminants.

**Lead is a
toxic metal
and no amount
is safe in
drinking water.**



New York Ensures Water Stays Flowing with a Moratoria on Shutoffs

On May 11th, New York signed into law a water shutoff moratorium extension. The legislation includes protections for renters and bans utilities from placing liens on customer's homes, which can lead to home foreclosure. Thankfully, thousands of New Yorkers will continue to have tap water to protect their health, drink, cook, and for other basic needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated the intrinsic tie between public health and access to residential tap water. A recent Duke University and the National Bureau of Economic Research study concluded that water shut-off moratoria have saved lives and prevented COVID-19 infections. Unfortunately, thousands upon thousands across the Great Lakes are without water due to many states' moratoria lifting, or

the lack of a moratorium on shutting off water ever being in place.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately 1 out of every 20 households had their water shut off due to being unable to pay their water bill. Experts estimate that by the end of 2022, more than a third of all households across the nation will have unaffordable water bills. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated water insecurities across the country.

Access to clean, safe, and affordable water is a basic human right and need. Call your Congressional member today and urge them to pass legislation to ban water shutoffs due to inability to pay and proactively restore residential water services at no cost to the resident.

Making Your Voice Heard is Quick and Easy with Freshwater Future's Online Take Action System

Protecting our drinking water and surface waters is not a spectator sport. Informing decision makers about issues and providing recommendations are cornerstones of democracy. Freshwater Future's online system is now faster and easier than ever before. Hundreds of you have signed petitions and submitted comments using this system, and feedback has been overwhelmingly positive on how easy it is to submit petitions, letters, and comments to your decision makers on issues that are important to you.

If you're signed up to receive our news and alerts, you should be receiving our email notifications on important legislative issues that allow you to contact your elected official based on your local zip code with a few clicks of a button. If you're not already signed up, just go to our website to "stay informed" and sign up today.



FRESHWATER FUTURE

Find Your Elected Officials

Enter your home address information to find and contact your elected officials

Street Address Postal Code [Find Your Officials](#)

[Freshwater Future Website](#)

Paid for for by Freshwater Future

Powered by EverAction

NEW! Elected Officials Lookup Page

Would you like to directly call your state representative or tweet the vice president, but don't know how to contact them? Freshwater Future's online Take Action system makes it easy for you to find contact information. Just go to our elected official lookup page and enter your zip code. Your elected officials will then be displayed with all the information you need to contact them including email, phone, social media pages, and mailing address. Just go to Take Action on our website.



Voice Builder Project—Strengthens Outreach for Community Partners



Thousands of decisions are made daily that directly impact the safety of our drinking water and the health of our lakes and rivers. Who is watching and monitoring these decisions? Community based organizations and grassroots groups all around the region, made up of passionate volunteers willing to take action to ensure our water is safe to drink, wetlands are protected to prevent flooding, and activities like mining don't pollute surface water. For over 25 years, Freshwater Future has helped community groups with their local work with grants and consulting.

Recently, community based organizations across the Great Lakes region told us they need help with developing robust digital tools for communications, fundraising and tracking because these tools are unaffordable or beyond the current expertise of many volunteer-led groups. Because Freshwater Future knows how difficult it is to find the funding and the right consultant to help with these technical issues, we wanted to help, and help in a way that allows groups to more easily collaborate, building a stronger voice from the ground up.

With a generous grant from the Water Funder Initiative (WFI), Freshwater Future is responding to the needs of our community groups by providing a new grant program that offers groups the opportunity to improve their communications to donors, supporters, volunteers, and action takers with the ability to track all of those communications. The project is focused on providing the critical behind-the-scenes tools to help groups more efficiently and effectively communicate about their goals, projects and results through the use of integrated databases and websites.

When complete, these systems will allow grant recipients to:

- encourage people to subscribe for newsletters and information directly through a website,
- accept online donations and purchases, and have that information automatically recorded in a database,
- gather information from database needed for grant or organizational reporting
- manage supporter interests and information to encourage participation in calls to action,
- track website statistics and e-mail success, and
- build a stronger voice for their important issues as well as a strong voice for water!

We are excited to be working with these groups and expect to help additional organizations in the future. If you would like help with your tech and communications, contact us for our consulting/coaching services or look for future grant opportunities.

Freshwater Future Welcomes Alana Honaker to Team



Freshwater Future is pleased to welcome Alana Honaker to the team. Alana is a graduate of the University of Minnesota with a degree in Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, with a focus on Policy, Planning, Law and Society. Alana has interned with Freshwater Future since the summer of 2019, originally at the University of Michigan Biological Station-Pellston, MI lab, helping test water samples for PFAS, then transitioning to assisting in policy work. She is originally from Petoskey, Michigan, and is now residing in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Since starting full-time as the Grants and Community Programs Associate, she has been implementing outgoing grant programs and tracking the outcomes of our grantees. Additionally, she is managing our grant database and other technological needs of Freshwater Future.



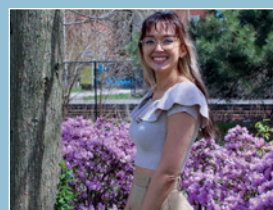
PETER H | PIXABAY.COM

Thank You **SUMMER INTERNS**



Terryl Acker-Carter

Terryl is a recent graduate from Stevenson University, obtaining a degree in Environmental Science with a minor in biology. He joins the Freshwater team as an intern through the Doris Duke Conservation Scholars program (DDCSP) at Yale University. Through DDCSP, he previously worked on a project that created a guide for municipalities on installing green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff in the Great Lakes Region.



Amy Heldman

Amy is a recent 2021 graduate from the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) where she received a BA in Urban Studies and a minor in Sustainable Cities. Before coming to Freshwater Future, Amy assisted in ecological research and visualization for a Chicago architecture firm and interned at the UIC Office of Sustainability. The UIC Freshwater Lab course ignited her passion of fighting for water equity.



Sanchez Rolle

Growing up on the island of Exuma in the Bahamas, Sanchez has always enjoyed the outdoors. He is a 2018 graduate of the historic Tuskegee University where he obtained one degree in Biology and another in Food and Nutritional Sciences. As a current PhD/MPH student, his focus lies on serving underserved communities in regards to environmental public health challenges.

Thank You **WINTER INTERNS**

Kaylie Groff

Kaylie is a student of Theatre at Fordham University. This past winter, Kaylie assisted Freshwater Future with grant research and writing, database work, and communications. She enjoyed getting to learn the ins and outs of grant writing which she plans to use in her pursuit of a career as a theatrical director.

Alicia Joergeris

Alicia is a student at Monroe Community College pursuing a degree in Geography. As part of her capstone project for a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) class, Alicia helped Freshwater Future update our online map that highlights the \$5 million in grants we've given to support over 1,450 projects, as well as develop a new story map feature.

The Menominee River's Rebound—Will it Continue?

The Menominee River that makes up the eastern border between Wisconsin and Michigan has rebounded. Significant amounts of toxic industrial pollution have been cleaned up after decades of investment and work. The prehistoric-looking lake sturgeon are increasing in numbers and spawning again, and whitewater rafting attracts visitors that significantly support the local economy.

Yet, a proposed open pit gold and zinc mine only 150 feet from the shore of the river threatens the health of the Menominee River. Over several years, the Canadian exploration company obtained several permits from Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) including a mining permit, dam safety permit, and wetland permit.

Thanks to the involvement of local advocates, protections for the river and wetlands are being considered. The Coalition to SAVE the Menominee River with funding support from Freshwater Future and the Menominee tribe contested the wetland permit on grounds that the review wasn't adequate for determining the impacts to 11 acres of wetlands. In January 2021, an Administrative Law Judge agreed and denied the permit issued by EGLE. The dam safety permit was overturned in April 2021 after a challenge from the Menominee Tribe.

The company has withdrawn the earlier permits and announced they will be submitting a consolidated mining permit for the new underground mine and a smaller open pit mine in order to compress the timeline and reduce costs. Freshwater Future believes that a redesign of the mine should not be granted an expedited process, and a complete and thorough assessment should be undertaken to provide time for community members to review and comment on the modified design.



DEB NYSTROM | MENOMINEE RIVER | FLICKR.COM

Thank You to All of Our Donors from February 16, 2021 through May 31, 2021

FUNDERS CIRCLE (\$1,000 AND MORE)

Karen Reinbold

MONTHLY DONOR CIRCLE

Stephanie Altrock
Ann Baughman
Leslie Burk
Patricia Hung
Kathleen Mullins
Jill Ryan
Kelsey Scarfone
Alicia Smith
Brandon Tyus
Jill Whelan

FRIEND OF THE LAKES (\$500-\$999)

John and Jan Carroll

SPONSOR (\$250-\$499)

Dawn Casper
Deborah and Robert Elliott
Marian Laughlin
In memory of Jim Gram

SUPPORTER (\$100-\$249)

Johanna Balzer
Robin Bonfiglio
Roger Dreher
Diana English
Bill and Mardy Gast
Kathryn Hanratty

Peter Leschak
Joanne Linder
Elizabeth McCloskey
Susan Riordan
Stanley Rupnow
Jill Ryan and Lori Lind
In memory of
Lindy Buffington
Rachel Webster

MEMBER (\$50-\$99)

Steven Carter
Carole and Clifford Dahl
Elizabeth Doyle
Karen Eclavea
Michelle Gobely
Elizabeth Hohman
Dr. John Hutto
Gerald and Lolly Kamerschen
Nancy Malvick
Cindy Mazurek
Brad Mosher
Louis Mule'
Julie and Ron Napoleon
Denise Simon and Hugh
Melling
Kenyon Stebbins and Susan
Lyman
Helen Surridge
Kenneth Vinciguerra
Edward Warner

David Watt
Robert and Joanne Zayko

CONTRIBUTOR (\$1-\$49)

Karen Aberegg
Ron Bacon
Dan Clarkin
James Cumming
William Delnicki
Edward Gogol
Bill and Diane LaVigne
Julie McHale
Samuel Nastase
William Neal
Becky Norlien
Patti O'Rourke-Steiner
Louise Quigley
Julius Salinas
Carl and Bonnie Sanders
Robert Spiller
Joan Sturtevant
Art Wezel
Willie Williams

ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

Inland Sea Society
Independence Land
Conservancy
Save The River / Upper St.
Lawrence Riverkeeper
Ontario Water Centre
Milwaukee Riverkeeper

Friends of the Jordan River
Watershed

Friends of the Land of
Keweenaw (FOLK)

Friends of the St. Clair River
Watershed

Blue Mountain Watershed
Trust Foundation

Cool Learning Experience
Junction Coalition

Kalamazoo River Watershed
Council

Kent Environmental Council
League of Women Voters

Lake Michigan Region

Native American Educational
Technologies (NAET)

Nearby Nature Milwaukee

Rescue Lake Simcoe
Charitable Foundation

Scugog Lake Stewards, Port
Perry, Ontario

Seneca Lake Pure Waters
Association

St Louis River Alliance

Waukegan Harbor Citizens'
Advisory Group

Western Reserve Land
Conservancy

Wisconsin Historical Society

Friends of Chandler Park

GRANTS

McDougal Family
Foundation
Pisces Foundation
Water Funder Initiative
(WFI)

FLINT COMMUNITY LAB

Chris Dickey
Kimberly Korona
Dana Ross
Peggy Shake
Jeannette Spivey

CORPORATE DONORS



Canada Helps
Amazon Smile

CPI International Generously Donates a Portion of Sales to Freshwater Future

During the month of May 2021, CPI International, a leader in lab supply equipment and materials, donated a portion of sales directly to Freshwater Future and the Flint Community Lab to help ensure the healthy future of our waters in the Great Lakes region. CPI International is committed to making a social impact that promises clean water. CPI International is a worldwide supplier of certified reference material, laboratory consumables, small equipment, and test kits to scientific professionals working in spectroscopy, chromatography, mass spectrometry, and microbiology. To learn more about CPI International, visit their website www.cpiinternational.com.



Join Freshwater Future's Monthly Giving Circle

Consider joining Freshwater Future's Monthly Giving Circle as a giving option. It's easy to sign up and allows you to budget your contribution on a monthly basis while providing a steady and predictable stream of revenue so that Freshwater Future can better budget and plan for the future.

To start your monthly giving, just go online to freshwaterfuture.org, click the donate button and choose monthly under options. For help and questions, please contact leslie@freshwaterfuture.org.



Give the Gift of Helping to Ensure the Healthy Future of Our Great Lakes Waters! Consider making a donation in honor of family and friends to Freshwater Future. The recipient will receive a greeting card with acknowledgement.



P.O. Box 2479
Petoskey, MI 49770

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Fall Cycle Project Grants Deadline September 30, 2021

For more information, go to
www.freshwaterfuture.org/grants

MR. NIXTER | LAKE SUPERIOR | FLICKR.COM

Spam Filters Keeping You Disconnected? IT'S TIME TO DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR IN BOX!

If you've signed up for Freshwater Future's online news and alerts and haven't received our emails, chances are our messages have somehow found their way into your spam or junk folders. To avoid these filters in the future, please locate a Freshwater Future email in your spam folder and mark as "Not Junk" or "Not Spam."

If you're not already a subscriber and would like to receive policy and legislation information, action alerts, and updates on Great Lakes critical issues, go to freshwaterfuture.org and click "Stay Informed."



Upcoming Event in Mackinaw City, Michigan September 4, 2021 | 10am-9pm (EST)

Gathering to celebrate our connection with the water through music, community art and food organized by festival coordinator, Jannan Cornstalk.

For more information, go to Freshwater Future's Facebook page and click on events.



Follow Freshwater Future
on Facebook and Twitter!

facebook

twitter

FRESHWATER FUTURE
P.O. Box 2479
Petoskey, MI 49770
Phone: (231) 348-8200
www.freshwaterfuture.org

FRESHWATER FUTURE
CANADA
PO Box 233
Toronto, ON M5T 2W1
www.freshwaterfuturecanada.ca