

FRESHWATER VOICES



2024 ISSUE 1

“A river cuts through rock, not because of its power, but because of its persistence.”

— Jim Watkins

This Issue:

Women Leaders Making a Difference for Decades

PAGE 2-4

Grassroots Groups Show How to Get Things Done

PAGE 5-6

Thank You Donors

PAGE 7

 @freshwaterfuture

 Freshwater Future

 Freshwater Future

FRESHWATERFUTURE.ORG

FRESHWATER HEROES 20 YEARS of Recognizing Changemakers



This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Freshwater Hero Awards, a milestone moment that reminds us of the profound impact individuals can have on their communities. Over the past twenty years, we have recognized 106 people and groups.

We are honored to recognize an additional ten this year who have dedicated their lives to making a difference and are paving the way for meaningful, lasting change in our Great Lakes region. Their commitment to protecting our communities and water resources is nothing short of inspiring, with many of this year's heroes spending years, if not decades, tackling the complex issues that impact our region.

Despite facing challenges along the way, these heroes remain resolute. Through their tireless advocacy, outreach, research, policy reform, and grassroots initiatives, real progress is being made in addressing water quality, pollution prevention, climate impacts and other critical issues.

Although we didn't set out to focus on women, we recognize that saving water often is championed by women. We are proud to focus on these "Sheroes" this year.

Freshwater Future is honored to recognize these individuals and organizations with our Freshwater Hero Awards. We hope you enjoy learning about their efforts across the region, as well as gain inspiration to help us keep the Great Lakes region healthy.



Scan the QR code or go to:
freshwaterfuture.org/hero-award-recipient
to view our award event recordings or learn more about our past Hero Award recipients.

WOMEN LEADERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR DECADES



**Peggy
Berry**



As a nurse, Peggy Berry witnessed how water and air pollution impacted the health of her patients. Seeing how environmental activism could make a difference, Peggy got involved with several organizations, including Freshwater Future, volunteering to educate residents about how water issues impact public health.

Inspired to do more, Peggy founded a nonprofit called Between the Waters to illuminate and educate on water issues and pollution as well as lift up grassroots activists and organizations working on water issues. She regularly speaks on the health effects of pollution, and pushes for stronger regulations on the use and transport of petrochemicals. Through her work, she has elevated the importance of mental health for activists. An example of her dedication and impact, Peggy supported the East Palestine, Ohio train derailment in 2023 speaking to Ohio legislators on medical surveillance needs for anyone living downwind of the chemical spill. She supports stronger laws to ban vinyl chloride and other petrochemicals, such as PFOA and PFOS. Dr. Berry states, "Water is life, and without potable water you do not have much life."

We are grateful for Peggy's contribution to protecting public health in Ohio and throughout the Great Lakes region. Combining her extensive knowledge and 45 years of experience as a nurse (PhD from the University of Cincinnati), with her caring and compassionate approach, and the dogged fierceness of an advocate, Peggy Berry is making a difference.

**Gwendolyn
Winston**



Gwendolyn "Gwen" Winston has been integral to community organizing in southeast Michigan for decades. Gwen's facilitation skills cultivate spirit-led spaces rooted in healing justice, art-based advocacy, and creating liberating structures.

In 1999, she founded the Wisdom Institute, a grassroots organization dedicated to empowering African American Women and girls through advocacy, education, and spirit-centered healing. This innovative organization provides progressive programs and services that champion reproductive justice, maternal child health, healing, gender and racial justice, water affordability, and the right to counsel for those facing eviction. Wisdom Institute provides space devoted to healing and mentorship because, as she says, "justice will never happen in this land until African American women are healed."

Gwen's contributions to ensuring access to safe and affordable drinking water for maternal health, make her a Freshwater Hero. Water insecurity impedes maternal and infant health, and the ability to care for young children through physical, psychosocial, nutritional and economic pathways. Gwen's leadership and work to infuse drinking water advocacy into the Wisdom Institute's work has been impactful in combating one of the many causes of chronic disparities in African American maternal health and outcomes.

One of Gwen's most recent victories is passing the torch to new leadership at the Wisdom Institute and embarking on a "chosen journey" of her own. Gwen's next chapter will take her around the country to be in community and learn with other spirit-centered women activists. We look forward to learning from Gwen well into the future.



**Pat
Lupo**
Order Saint
Benedictine (OSB)



**Donna
McDuffie**



Pat Lupo has committed decades to fostering environmental awareness and advocacy among youth as well as fighting for water quality in Erie, Pennsylvania. Pat is a respected leader, courageously speaking up and inspiring her community to protect the environment, Lake Erie, and public health.

An example of her impactful leadership is her work to advocate for stricter regulations on the Erie Coke plant. A history of pollution and environmental violations at the Erie Coke plant motivated Pat and other Erie residents to form Hold Erie Coke Accountable (HECA). Participating in the public process around a permit renewal, Pat and HECA's voices influenced the state agency and the City of Erie to pressure Erie Coke to meet compliance regulations. Erie Coke refused and eventually closed the plant in 2019, elevating new concerns related to the clean-up of contamination and job loss for residents. Pat with HECA jumped right in, pushing for transparent clean-up efforts that resulted in meetings with public, governmental and civic groups. They are focused on monitoring the clean-up progress, engaging the community on the site's future use, including pressuring for an Erie Coke Community Working Group to increase transparency and public engagement.

Pat continues to nurture the next generation of environmental stewards through her work at the Inner-City Neighborhood Art House and John E. Harand Garden Apartments. We are confident that because of Pat's brave voice and commitment to growing future stewards, her vision--where toxic facilities are replaced with green spaces accessible to all--will be achieved. Thank you, Pat, for being a Freshwater Hero for the youth and the environment in Erie.

Donna McDuffie's interest in earthy things--flowers and playing outside, started at a young age. Combining her concern for people and the environment, Donna has volunteered, organized, and led efforts to make environmental improvements and upgrades to make her neighborhood, Chandler Park, a greener place to live. It is her willingness to get involved time and time again that makes Donna a Freshwater Hero.

These interests lead to her involvement with a myriad of organizations promoting green stormwater infrastructure. She has organized green-up events in the park, helped construct and distribute rain barrels and installed residential rain gardens and downspout disconnects. This experience was incredibly useful in helping Donna pass courses in advanced landscape and green infrastructure. She recognizes the need for all ages to participate in activities that drive positive changes within the community, particularly our youth, and is currently working on creating an organization that provides structured open spaces for the next generation.

After the extreme rain event in June 2021 flooded the Chandler Park Neighborhood, residents with Donna's leadership have amplified their voices, advocating for green infrastructure projects to reduce street flooding, basement flooding, and blocked storm drains. Working with Freshwater Future, residents have used the Flood Focus App to collect data to document the frequency and extent of flooding.....with over 70 incidents recorded to date.

Donna knows that making a difference in the community is a long-term effort. In Donna's words, "It takes perseverance, tenacity, and the willingness to work on implementing small but impactful projects."



Paula Maccabee



Rachel Havrelock



Paula Maccabee has used the law to protect the rights and well-being of people, communities, and the environment throughout her 43-year legal career. Since 2009, she has served as Advocacy Director and Council for WaterLegacy, an organization dedicated to protecting Lake Superior and the Boundary Waters from sulfide mining and regulatory capture by industry.

One of her greatest achievements happened last year, when the Minnesota Supreme Court reversed a mining company's water pollution permit deemed "arbitrary and capricious" due to improper procedures exposed by WaterLegacy. Paula exposed the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's improper efforts to hide the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's warning that the permit would violate the Clean Water Act. Documenting and uncovering the State's actions to conceal the risks of pollution from the mine required tenacity and patience.

This landmark case established a legal precedent that now helps countless communities facing similar situations. Already, other lawyers and courts are relying on the Minnesota Supreme Court's water permit decision, providing greater emphasis on scientific and legal analysis, and leading to a more rigorous decision-making process.

Another strength of Paula's is working in collaboration with other organizations including the Fond du Lac and Grand Portage Bands of Lake Superior Chippewa. We are grateful to Paula for her leadership in working to prevent pollution and destruction of Minnesota's waters from mining projects.

One of Rachel Havrelock's first projects with water involved bringing people together in the Middle East to help restore the Jordan River. While in Jordan, she noticed that people were quite knowledgeable about water and eager to learn more. In her role as an English professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Rachel found that water was not top of mind.

Recognizing a need, she founded the Freshwater Lab in 2016. Putting her experience with diplomacy and policy to use, she created this innovative program that raises awareness about water issues in the Great Lakes and empowers people to claim and protect this most vital public asset. Over the last eight years, the Freshwater Lab has had a profound impact on water issue literacy in the Great Lakes region. Through Rachel's leadership, she has shifted how we talk about water, helping to elevate it as a priority for all.

One of the Lab's key achievements is inspiring young water leaders and researchers. Through the Freshwater Lab internship program, students are placed in organizations working on water and environmental issues, giving them hands-on experience and amplifying their voices. Through Rachel's mentorship, over 400 alumni have gone through the program to date. Freshwater Future is honored to have hosted some of these talented and enthusiastic interns. Leading by example, Rachel is inspiring a new generation of interdisciplinary researchers to tackle critical water issues.

Rachel is a true Freshwater Hero, we applaud her work to increase understanding of the current and future state of our water resources and foster ongoing public dialogue on issues like oil pipelines, water pricing and affordability.

GRASSROOTS GROUPS SHOW HOW TO GET THINGS DONE



Superior Rivers Watershed Association's water quality monitoring program gives vital baseline data to monitor the health of the Bad River watershed.

Superior Rivers Watershed Association

Superior Rivers Watershed Association (SRWA) started as a group of citizen volunteers in 2002, determined to remedy the lack of water quality data on waters in northwestern Wisconsin. Since then, SRWA has established a solid baseline of water quality data at over 20 locations. Most impactful is how SRWA uses the data to influence decision makers to address threats to the Bad River and other waters.

For example, SRWA utilized the water quality data to protect waters from a proposed pipeline re-route (Line 5) by urging Wisconsin state agencies to require a rewrite of an environmental impact statement that did not fully assess the risk to waterways. In addition, they requested the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deny permits for the pipeline relocation. Currently, they are expanding the monitoring around a proposed pipeline re-route and expansion that will include 41 miles of new pipeline, crossing 186 waterways that all empty into the Bad River (Mashkiiziibii) and Lake Superior. This data collection will allow them to see any potential changes in water quality from blasting, drilling, and forest clearing during the construction of the pipeline.

We applaud SRWA for their advocacy to push for stronger protections based on decades of scientific data. SRWA is well on the way to bringing its vision to fruition, "where community members are stewards of their waters".

Seneca Lake Guardian

When a gas storage and transport hub was proposed on the shores of Seneca Lake in 2011, Yvonne Taylor and Joseph Campbell knew they needed to take action. Acting quickly, they formed Gas Free Seneca to fight back to protect the lake, which is a water source for over 100,000 people. Following this victory, Yvonne and Joseph launched Seneca Lake Guardian, an organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the health of the Finger Lakes, its residents and visitors, its rural community character, and its agricultural and tourist-related businesses.

Seneca Lake Guardian is a Freshwater Hero for their significant role in reducing several threats to public health and waters over the years including:

- Championing efforts to address environmental impacts of a bitcoin operation located in a former power plant along Seneca Lake resulting in a two-year moratorium on using power plants for bitcoin operations in New York.
- Leading the statewide fight against New York's largest landfill for a new permit to extend its operations through 2040. Daily, the landfill produces up to 200,000 gallons of leachate, wastewater contaminated with toxins including PFAS. This leachate is disposed of at municipal wastewater plants without the technology or capacity to remove the PFAS before it goes into their waterways and drinking water sources.
- Testing drinking water for residences near the landfill, utilizing support from a Freshwater Future Project Grant. We are grateful for all of Seneca Lake Guardian's work to protect the waters in the Finger Lakes area.



Seneca Lake Guardian and advocates attend a rally at the State Capital in Albany, New York to raise awareness about the many environmental threats facing the Finger Lakes.

Keep Water Affordable

STAFF

ALANA HONAKER

Grants & Community
Program Associate
alana@freshwaterfuture.org

ALEXIS SMITH

Program Co-Director
alexis@freshwaterfuture.org

ANN BAUGHMAN

Associate Director
ann@freshwaterfuture.org

ANNA BUNTING

Program Co-Director
anna@freshwaterfuture.org

HILLARD HAMPTON

Associate Director for Urban
Partnerships
hillard@freshwaterfuture.org

JILL RYAN

Executive Director
jill@freshwaterfuture.org

KRISTEN HAITAIAN

Program Co-Director
kristen@freshwaterfuture.org

KWAMÉ HAMPTON

Community Program Coordinator
kwame@freshwaterfuture.org

LAURIE BREIGNER

Grants and Administrative Specialist
laurie@freshwaterfuture.org

LESLIE BURK

Communications &
Development Director
leslie@freshwaterfuture.org

LISA ROSS

Database Manager
lisa@freshwaterfuture.org

STEPHANIE ALTROCK

Accounting Director
stephanie@freshwaterfuture.org

FRESHWATER FUTURE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

STEPHANIE SMITH
ROBERT LETSCHER
BETTINA MARSHALL
PAM NYBERG
BRENDA PRICE

FRESHWATER FUTURE CANADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

KELSEY SCARFONE
NANCY GOUCHER
LEAH SILVERMAN



DISCLAIMER: Freshwater Voices is intended to provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas among citizens and organizations working to protect water resources in the Great Lakes Basin. 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.



From the left, Margo Woodacre, Bill Ferguson, and Peter Mrozinski



Lindsay Telfer

In Landenburg, Pennsylvania, a trio of determined residents—Peter Mrozinski, Bill Ferguson, and Margo Woodacre—have sparked a movement to ensure that water remains affordable for all. The three formed Keep Water Affordable after the water system in New Garden Township was bought by a for-profit company and the sewer rates doubled. Even though they didn't win the battle in their community, they wanted to become a beacon of hope for communities grappling with similar privatization threats. Wanting to get the information out to others, they contacted Freshwater Future to partner with them.

This commitment to sharing their knowledge with other communities to protect the rights of residents against privatization and exploitation is what makes Keep Water Affordable a Freshwater Hero. We admire the passion and expertise of these three, Margo's legislative background, Peter's tenacity in local government strategy, and Bill's analytical expertise. Their contributions have changed the playing field for preventing privatization.

Looking ahead, these impactful leaders are steadfast in their commitment to advocate for legislative reform and hold utility companies accountable. As they continue their fight, their message resounds: water is not just a commodity to be bought and sold but a vital resource that must be protected for the well-being of present and future generations. Visit the Keep Water Affordable website to learn more about this issue: www.keepwateraffordable.org.

The Thames River, weaving its way through Southwestern Ontario, contributed to Lindsay Telfer's love of water. Exploring the shores of the river with friends, and searching for crayfish and other critters influenced her career choice focused on connecting people to the power of place and the need to protect our natural environment.

Lindsay co-founded and was the national project director for the Canadian Freshwater Alliance, which advanced federal policy goals around Navigable Waters Act, the Canada Water Act and Natural Infrastructure. Their Lake Erie campaign saw hundreds of kilometers swum and paddled in support of the Lake, reintroduced hundreds of native plants to the landscape, and delivered capacity building trainings throughout the region and across Canada.

Lindsay has brought this love and passion to her current work at the Federation of Canadian municipalities advancing net-zero acceleration across our local communities.

Lindsay served as a board member of Freshwater Future Canada for over 10 years. We are grateful to Lindsay for her service and for sharing her expertise in organizational management. Thank you for all you have done to protect the freshwater in Canada and the Great Lakes region!

THANK YOU to All of Our Donors

November 21, 2023 - March 31, 2024

FOUNDATIONS

The Brookby Foundation
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
James S. McDonnell Family Foundation
The Kresge Foundation
Pisces Foundation
Patagonia

FUNDERS CIRCLE (\$1,000 & MORE)

Carolyn Deacy
Founders Brewing Co.
Ted and Brenda Frey Donor Advised Fund
William Fritz Jr. and Kathleen French
Murray and Jeanie Kilgour
Roger Skrobeck

MONTHLY DONOR CIRCLE

Stephanie Altrock
Ann Baughman
Laurie Breighner
Leslie Burk
Linda Condon
Reginald Gilbert
Kwame Hampton
Nancy Hellman and Glenn Hindbaugh
Patricia Hung
Kathleen Mullins
Lisa G. Ross
Jill Ryan

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

Joanne Arbaugh
Nancy Belton
Kristina Clark and John Kemmerer
Dennis Ferraro
Margie and Michael Fitzsimons
Joseph and Robyn Flanagan
Richard and Jean Marie Shoquist
In Memory of Patti Piccione Frounfelter
Molly Frounfelter and Jeremy Michalek

SPONSOR (\$250-\$499)

Nelson Armour and Kathy Weaver
Ann and Erik Borgen
Daniel Johnson
Rodger Thomann

SUPPORTER (\$100-\$249)

Joseph Bacon
Johanna Balzer
Bart Bella
Jeffrey Benson
Mike and Kathy Bierlein
Dawn Casper
Jill Crafton
Suzanne Dixon
Roger Dreher
Amy Gillard
Krista Grimm
Rachel Havrelock
Billie and Bill Hickey
Doug and Marie Holem
Kim and Robert Holwerda
David Hubbard
Nan Hunt
Tom Keller

Renee Kivikko
Kathleen Koch
Steven and Barbara Lippai
Dave Mayberry
Elizabeth McCloskey
Kathryn Mondrella
Philip Moots
Elizabeth Otto
Kris and Carla Pillai
Susan and Michael Stinson
Peggy Swenor
Rev Barbara Waller

MEMBER (\$50-\$99)

Gretchen and Jim Allen
Todd Ambs
Deb and Mick Baughman
Elizabeth Bishop
Sandra Brogan
The Bunting Family
Gene and Carla Champagne
Dr. Melvin and
Mary Ann Czechowski
Cynthia Donahey and
Art Schoolmaster
Dianna Dusek
Christopher Ford and Ali Hill
Bruce Fraley
Linda Gaska
Chris and Susan Gateley
Cory Gillman
Kristin Hagberg
Bonita Hay
Anuska Khawaunju
Kim Kihnke
Loretta Knight
Martha Lancaster and
Doug Fuller
Duane Lerdal
Nancy Malvick
Jim Maturen
Martin and
Sharon McGladdery
Gord McNulty
Brad Mosher
Donald Munki
Rebecca Norlien
Zen Olow
Bruce Opalka
Linda Rulison
Benjamin Simon
Jill Singer
Charles Slack
Jack Slanina
Alison Stankrauff
Joan Sturtevant
Debra Taylor
William Tennant
June Thaden
Thomas Tisue
Kenneth Vinciquerra
Edward Warner
Jan and Brad Wilkins
In Honor of Jamie Bishop
Bethann Morgan

CONTRIBUTOR (\$1-\$49) ORGANIZATIONS

Anonymous
Ron Bacon
Michael Beck
Kathleen Bradley
Jessica Canjar
Elaine Chandler
Peggy S. Collins
James Cumming
Sue DeRochie
Peter Gagnon
Kristina Gasowski
Edward Gogol
Tanya Goldenstein
James and Jean Goulet
Kristen Haitaian
Dr. Joseph Heininger
Cynthia Hemp
Elizabeth Hohman
James Jackson
Linda Jacobs
Paulette Krom
C. Leonard
Marcia Mahan
Hal P. Munger
Samuel Nastase
Gordon Nelson
Debra Noel
Karen and Keith Phelps
Louise Quigley
Kristen Reilly
Jill Sahagian
Carl and Bonnie Sanders
Debra Shankland
Nancy Simon
Sandra Thiele
Mary and Brett Thompson
David Ullrich
John Vander Ploeg
Cynthia Westerman

FLINT COMMUNITY LAB

United Way of
Genesee County

VOLUNTEERS

Summer Burk
Jamie Cross
Deborah Peabody
Nancy Staley

Blue Fish Canada / Poisson Bleu Canada
Blue Heron Headwaters Conservancy
Bridges//Puentes Justice Collective of
the Southeast
Butte des Morts Conservation Club
Citizens for a Safe & Clean Lake Superior
Coalition to Save the Menominee River
Concerned Citizens of Big Bay
Cool Learning Experience
Glengarry Trappers Council
Just Transition Northwest Indiana
Kingston Field Naturalists
Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy
Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition
Minnesota Point Preservation Society
Naturally Superior Adventures
Need Our Water/Oscoda Citizens
for Clean Water
New Image Life Skills Academy
Nutcase Vegan
Oatka Creek Watershed Committee
Ontario Headwaters Institute
Paradise Lake Association
Protect The Porkies
Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition
S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie
Save The River / Upper St. Lawrence
Riverkeeper
Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association
St. Louis River Alliance
Swan Lake Water Quality Association
Walloon Lake Association and Conservancy
Wellington Water Watchers
Williams County Ohio Alliance

CORPORATE PARTNERS



ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

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



PO Box 2479
Petoskey, MI 49770

FOLLOW US ON
SOCIAL MEDIA

 @freshwaterfuture

 Freshwater Future

 Freshwater Future

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

FRESHWATER FUTURE CANADA
PO Box 1442-STN Main
Guelph, ON N1H 6N9
freshwaterfuturecanada.ca

Spam Filters Keeping You Disconnected? **DOUBLE-CHECK YOUR INBOX!**

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" or scan the QR code for easy access.

SCAN ME

