



Voices freshwater

Ensuring the Healthy Future of Our Waters

2015 Series, Issue One

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

FRESHWATER FUTURE
CANADA
Centre for Social
Innovation—Annex
720 Bathurst Street
Toronto, ON M5S 2R4
freshwaterfuturecanada.ca

Take One Minute To Help — Sign the Asian Carp Petition

Cheryl Kallio



Recently a report was released stating that Asian carp eDNA* was found in downtown Chicago only one block from Lake Michigan. If the carp themselves make it to Lake Michigan, they will be able to spread to all of our Great Lakes.

This is a big deal for all of us that care about the Great Lakes. Following eDNA evidence can be used as an early detection tool to understand the potential movement of Asian carp. Testing results have consistently found carp DNA hits on paths closer and closer to the Great Lakes over the past several years of testing.

But I also have some good news. There is not yet a breeding population of Asian carp in downtown Chicago or in our Great Lakes. That means we can still stop them. However, that also means we need the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to move quickly. The Corps provided a 232-page analysis with eight possible approaches over a year ago. Only two of those options likely prevent the Asian carp from getting into our Great Lakes.

What can we do to move this agency along more quickly towards implementing solutions? Let their bosses, the U.S. Congress know that we want action.

Thanks to thousands of people just like you, we successfully persuaded Congress to do three things recently in the fight against Asian carp:

1. Develop the 2011 Stop Asian Carp Act
2. Pass, with bipartisan support, the Stop Invasive Species Act of 2012
3. Finish the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study

Continued on page 2

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: Helping

Jill Ryan, Executive Director



I always love this issue of Freshwater Voices where we announce the winners of our Grassroots Awards. What strikes me this year is that these grassroots heroes give so much and freely of themselves to benefit something much bigger than they are. In my work I often hear "I can't make a difference, I'm just one person."

But when you think about it that is the only thing that does make a difference: individuals acting by themselves or in cooperation with others to make the world a little better.

Today I want to say thank you to each one of our amazing award recipients. Thanks for helping in your community, thanks for the difference that makes for your friends, family and neighbors, and thanks for what all your work does for our region and our world. Because individuals and groups are willing to act not just in self-interest, but for the common-interest, we live in a world full of hope and inspiration.

While the information we hear on the news can make the world seem a scary place where we each need to care for ourselves; the stories of the amazing groups and individuals working every day to make our world a better place remind me that no matter how small our actions seems to be, we simply need to act. Thank you to each of the amazing heroes receiving our awards this year, and thank you to all of you who we haven't yet been able to honor!

"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do."

~ Edward Everett Hale

Take One Minute To Help — Sign the Asian Carp Petition continued...



STEVEN HUYSER-HONIG | NOVEMBER GALE

While we are headed in the right direction, the job is far from done. Please take a moment and visit <http://act.freshwaterfuture.org/stopcarp2> to sign our online petition today so that we can show a strong, unified voice across the region.

We need the Army Corps of Engineers to start working on the long-term, permanent solution—we need to stop the Asian carp NOW. No more foot dragging. If we are going to sway this Congress to direct the Army Corps of Engineers to move the long-term, permanent solution forward now, we are going to have to make a lot of noise.

Please take a moment and participate in our online campaign today. Encourage your friends, family, and neighbors to do the same. Let's be so numerous and loud we cannot be ignored! Are you with me?

**eDNA, or environmental DNA, is genetic material that has been shed off a living organism and is found in the environment. In this case, it is found in water.*

"We need the Army Corps of Engineers to start working on the long-term, permanent solution—we need to stop the Asian carp NOW."

Visit <http://act.freshwaterfuture.org/stopcarp2> to have your voice heard.



Ontario Introduces New Act to Protect Great Lakes

Nancy Goucher, Water Program Manager, Environmental Defence

One of the first things the Ontario government did when it returned from winter break was re-introduce the Great Lakes Protection Act on February 18, 2015. If passed, this legislation would create new tools to restore and protect Ontario's portion of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin.

We're really excited about some of the new tools that are included in Bill 66, including:

- 1. Targets**—If passed, the new law would allow government to set science-based targets to address the most severe threats to the Great Lakes. The bill specifically requires a target for reducing algal blooms, to be set within two years.
- 2. Great Lakes' Guardian Council**—The new law would create a forum for provincial ministers and stakeholders to discuss Great Lakes' priorities, financial measures, and share information with the aim of improving collaboration on activities.
- 3. Geographically-Focussed Initiatives**—This new tool would empower multi-stakeholder groups to develop action plans with the option of including new legally enforceable policies or other initiatives. The plans would address threats like wetland loss or nutrient runoff in specific geographical areas.
- 4. Community Empowerment**—The bill's grassroots approach creates opportunities for the community to take action, build partnerships, and have a say in Great Lakes decisions.

Over the next few months, Environmental Defence will be encouraging the public to learn about the government's proposed legislation and participate in the discussion about the public consultation process.

For more information or to follow the progress of the bill, please visit www.environmentaldefence.ca/greatlakes.

“That is why we need new initiatives to help the Great Lakes, and why so many are excited to see the reintroduction of the Great Lakes Protection Act this spring.”





Grassroots Advocate Awards 2014

Thank you Bev,
for helping us
work towards our
mission and for
helping us to be
better people!

.....



BEV WARNER

You know that person that always makes you smile? The one that is kind, generous and sincere? The one that exudes positivity and just by being around her you become a better person? Here at Freshwater Future we are fortunate to have that person in our ranks of volunteers.

Bev Warner has shared her positivity, kindness and hard work ethic with us for more than 7 years. Bev primarily helps us with our mailings whether it is newsletters, fundraising, grant announcements—she is always willing to help.

When Bev volunteers we get much more than help with administrative work. Being around Bev helps us to recharge. She is always interested to know how all of our projects are going and about the staff. She not only cares about our work and the organization, she cares about the people that work here.

Thank you Bev, for helping us work towards our mission and for helping us to be better people!

MARGO MILDE

Margo Milde never got lost in over 15 years of inventorying plant life in the Waukegan Harbor. Margo's short stature made her well suited for this arduous task. Her friend and CAG leader, Susie Schreiber threatened to put a bright orange bicycle flag on her backpack—not for Margo's sake, but so she could find her!

Margo's enthusiasm and determination for inventorying all the plants within the Waukegan Harbor Area of Concern and Extended Area of Concern resulted in her covering over 450 acres and found 769 different species of plants. They weren't just ordinary plants either. The inventory includes 15 Illinois State Endangered or Threatened Species and an additional 24 species that were deemed Plants of Concern by the Chicago Botanic Garden.

Why were so many plants important? Margo's inventories give quantitative support for the Waukegan Harbor Citizen Advisory Group's Great Lakes Restoration Initiative \$1.43 million grant to restore and protect Bowen Park's 10,000 year old ecological communities and the new dune and swale habitat forming in the Waukegan Dunal Area.

Not only has her work been integral to the Waukegan Harbor CAG, it has added to the inventory of the Morton Arboretum's Herbarium collection, the Chicago Botanic Garden's Plants of Concern inventory, helped guide the Waukegan Park District on best practices for ravine and natural areas land management in Bowen Park, and the discovery of Oake's Primrose, a species that hadn't been documented in over 100 years!

Margo's diligence surveying hundreds of acres that included wetland and steep ravines and dunes proved how biologically diverse and valuable the ecosystems are within the Waukegan Harbor Area of Concern and Extended Area of Concern. On behalf of the plants, animals and humans living in the Lake Michigan Watershed of the Great Lakes we will be forever thankful.



On behalf of all
life living in the
Lake Michigan
Watershed of
the Great Lakes,
Thank you Margo.

.....



HIGHWAY J CITIZENS' GROUP



Tenacity is a commonly shared trait of grassroots groups working in the Great Lakes and around the world. Thank goodness. One of the best examples of a group with this important trait is Highway J Citizens Group in Richfield, Wisconsin.

When the Wisconsin Department of Transportation proposed a road expansion in 2002 of Highway 164, Jeff Gonyo, Al Wilhemi and many others knew in their guts something was not right. They started to ask the tough questions—why is the expansion needed? What about the sensitive wetlands adjacent

to the existing highway? What about wildlife that uses those wetlands? What about the important and unique geologic features that would be destroyed?

Through perseverance, hard work, and clever strategy, Highway J Citizens Group has won several victories and lawsuits related to the construction of the proposed road. The road has not been built and as a result, wetlands in the area remain healthy and vibrant.

The awareness of the potential environmental impacts from the road led the group to now address another environmental concern, contamination of drinking water from a nearby landfill. They are now involved in helping the residents of the Ackerville area get clean, safe drinking water and a clean-up of groundwater contamination.

Highway J Citizens Group inspires us to never give up! Thank you for helping make your corner of Wisconsin a healthier and better place to live.

BARBARA KING

What doesn't Barbara King do? We at Freshwater Future often ask that question ourselves.

As the Executive Director of Centre for Sustainable Watersheds, Barb has helped the organization grow. Her job description on their web site reads that she works in the "development, management and delivery of Shoreline Living Programs—this includes capacity building and training, development and delivery of hands-on workshops, creation of demonstration sites and management of shoreline stewardship programs in eastern Ontario."

And that is not all!

Barbara is devoted to the preservation and smart environmental choices of Canada. On top of her role as Executive Director of Centre for Sustainable Watersheds, she has been a contributor to Ontario Shoreline Stewardship, consulted with shoreline property owners to make sound decisions in improving the health of their properties, given workshops, and developed environmental training programs.

Oh, and did we also mention she is the cofounder of an environmental consulting company? Whew.

Barbara, thank you for all of the work you do in the region. We are lucky to have dedicated people like you ensuring safe and healthy shorelines for our waters.

Thank you
Highway J
Citizens Group
for helping make
your corner of
Wisconsin a
healthier and
better place
to live.



Barbara, thank
you for all of the
work you do in
the region.



Fracking in the Great Lakes Region

Over 300 million years ago, our region was a vast shallow sea with abundant sea life. This former seabed is now layers of shale thousands of feet below ground and holds natural gas. Breaking up the shale under high pressure and high volumes of fluids, known as fracking, is how the industry releases the gas from the shale.

Almost every Great Lake state and province is impacted by this intensive form of gas drilling. Below are updates on some recent happenings on fracking. Please visit our website at <http://freshwaterfuture.org/ourissues/fracking/> for more detail and to find a citizen group near you that is working on this issue.



New York: Let's start on a happy note! In December 2014, the state of New York banned fracking, referencing a public health study that documented air quality, water quality, earthquake risks and social risks to the community from fracking activity.



Pennsylvania: In the US, 89% of natural gas is being supplied by Pennsylvania, the result of the thousands of wells that were fracked in Pennsylvania over the last decade. A number of different studies have documented drinking water contamination and other impacts. It wasn't until last August that the State of Pennsylvania publicly admitted that more than 243 drinking water sources were contaminated from fracking related activities.



Ontario: Natural gas development in Ontario adds an element that is not legal in the US—off-shore drilling in the Great Lakes. Currently there are a few companies that have expressed interest in fracking shale for natural gas in south western Ontario. In 2013, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of the Environment undertook a requested review of the regulations under the Environmental Protection Act in relation to the management of fracking fluid waste. As of print time the review was not completed and no deadline has been announced.



Illinois: In May 2013 two competing bills—one calling for a moratorium for fracking and another approving specific regulations for fracking went to vote. Unfortunately, the moratorium lost and Illinois was another Great Lakes state ready to enter the fracking boom. The law requires companies to register 30 days prior to applying for a permit. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources website shows only one company has registered to date.



Ohio: The Ohio Supreme Court ruled on February 20, 2015 in a 4-3 vote that local units of government do not have the right to regulate fracking activities. The dissenting opinion by Justice William O'Neill pointed out that "the oil and gas industry has gotten its way.... What the drilling industry has bought and paid for in campaign contributions they shall receive." Ohio's oil and gas industry contributed \$1.4 million into campaign coffers for state officials, \$8000 and \$7,200 to the justices that wrote the majority opinion for the other side (Columbus Dispatch). However, the Attorney General and our partner Ohio Environmental Council are calling for strengthened penalties on operators for violation, full disclosure of chemicals, and increased landowner rights.



Michigan: Lower natural gas prices may be one reason why fracking has been slow to take off in Michigan with only 13 high volume, hydrofracking wells drilled to date in Michigan. Although oil and gas companies continue to lease large areas of state mineral rights. On the regulatory front, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality plans to release new rules to regulate oil and gas drilling sometime in 2015. Separately, a study conducted by the University of Michigan Graham Institute looked to identify "what are the best environmental, economic, social and technological approaches for managing hydraulic fracturing in the State of Michigan."

Thank You to All of Our Donors from November 1, 2014 through January 31, 2015



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

STAFF

- ANN BAUGHMAN**
Associate Director for Development
ann@freshwaterfuture.org
- APRIL WEPPLER**
Program Innovator, Canada
april@freshwaterfuture.org
- BONNIE DANNI**
Fiscal Specialist
bonnie@freshwaterfuture.org
- CHERYL KALLIO**
Associate Director for Policy
cheryl@freshwaterfuture.org
- LISA MATTS**
Office Manager
lisa@freshwaterfuture.org
- JILL RYAN**
Executive Director
jill@freshwaterfuture.org
- BECCA TURNER**
Program Associate
becca@freshwaterfuture.org
- JESSICA WAGAR**
Data and Technology Specialist
jessica@freshwaterfuture.org
- MELANIE NAPOLEON WELCH**
Associate Director of Program
melanie@freshwaterfuture.org
- MAIN OFFICE:** (231) 348-8200

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- Atlantic States Legal Foundation
- Beaver Island Association
- Butte des Morts Conservation Club
- Clean Water Action Council, NE Wisconsin
- Concerned Citizens of Big Bay
- Friends of Big Creek
- Friends of Silver Lake
- Highway J Citizens Group
- Leelanau Forum
- Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation
- Michigan Lake and Stream Associations
- Neighbors Building Brightmoor
- New Image Lifeskills Academy, Inc
- Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
- Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance
- Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association
- Wawasee Area Conservancy Foundation
- Wisconsin Resources Protection Council

RENEWED OR NEW MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

- Blanchard River Watershed Partnership
- Centre for Sustainable Watersheds
- Keepers of the Hill
- Lake Superior Watershed Conservancy
- Library of Michigan
- MN Chapter of the Wildlife Society
- Organic Consumers
- Paradise Lake Association
- Rocky River Watershed Council
- Save Lake Superior Association
- Sierra Club Ohio Chapter
- Sisters Of St. Francis of Sylvania
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FUNDING Available in 2015

With the New Year comes a new round of funding opportunities for your organization.

What funds are available this year?

Project Grants:

This program provides funding ranging from \$500 to \$3,500 (USD) strengthen the role of individuals and community groups working locally to protect and restore shorelines, inland lakes, rivers, and wetlands in the Great Lakes Basin.

Spring application deadline: March 31, 2015

Insight Grants:

Insight Grants provide low cost help for your organization's needs, which could include:

- Bookkeeping and Bookkeeping Training
- Board Training
- Financial Management
- Planning (Strategic, Transition, Succession)
- Fundraising Planning and Assistance
- Strategy Assistance to Win on Your Issues
- Media, Communications and Public Outreach
- And more!

Special Opportunity Grants:

This "Emergency Grant" fund is for river, lake, wetland, and groundwater protection efforts that may not coincide with the application timeline of funding period of our other grant programs, up to \$500 (USD).

Healing Our Waters Grants:

These funds are to assist groups and prepare them for federal applications through baseline studies, collaboration building and more. Awards up to \$15,000.

Climate Grants—Detroit Area:

These funds are available for groups in Detroit, Michigan interested in preparing and responding to climate change impacts. Proposals should include an on-the-ground element and have secondary benefits to the project area. Grant awards range from \$500 to \$3,000.

Visit freshwaterfuture.org to learn more about each granting program and to learn how to become eligible for our grants.

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

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Centre for Social Innovation—Annex
720 Bathurst Street
Toronto, ON M5S 2R4
www.freshwaterfuturecanada.ca

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