

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant (IISG) is part of a national network of 34 university-based programs that promote better understanding, conservation, and use of coastal resources. We are funded through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the University of Illinois, and Purdue University, but IISG also works with key organizations, institutions, and agencies in the Great Lakes region to multiply opportunities for success.

Through research, outreach, and education, we bring together scientists, educators, policy makers, community decision makers, residents, and others to work toward a healthy environment and economy in the southern Lake Michigan region.

Preventing pollution in the Great Lakes



We lead the way in tackling emerging contaminants and pollution prevention in the Great Lakes region. When it comes to unwanted medicines, IISG engages directly with communities to help them establish collection programs to prevent these chemicals from ending up in local waterways or landfills. And with marine debris funding from NOAA, we are working with key partners to develop new public messaging to help reduce plastic waste throughout the Great Lakes.

Enabling safer recreation with buoy data



Lake Michigan has the highest rate of drownings in the Great Lakes due to dangerous currents and swift waves. Our water safety work includes reaching beach goers, boaters, and anglers with information and resources and working with Sea Grant programs around the lake. Add to that, our buoys provide real-time information on water conditions, enabling the National Weather Service to make more accurate forecasts. Plus, with a new buoy near Navy Pier, forecasts will be better still.

By the Numbers



300,000
pounds of medicine
collected since 2008



More than
\$2 Million
supporting research



at 17 Institutions
in Illinois and Indiana
since 2018



976
 teachers trained in
 Great Lakes Literacy



helping to reach
53,750
 K-12 students in 2017-21



410,000
 gallons of rainwater
 diverted to rain gardens
 in 2021



11,000
 acres of coastal
 habitat protected
 in 2021

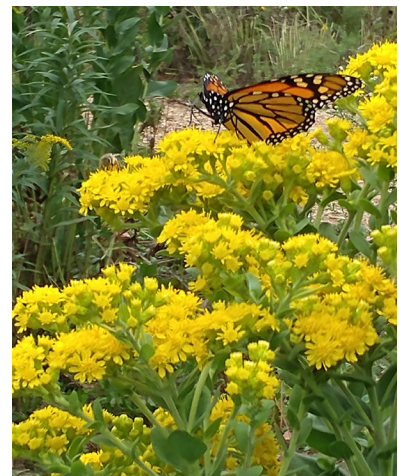
Expanding aquaculture opportunities

Midwest aquaculture producers compete for customers with suppliers of imported seafood, which comes at a much cheaper price. We are working with other Great Lakes Sea Grant programs to identify barriers to industry growth and to support environmentally responsible, competitive, and sustainable aquaculture. For example, by providing food safety and processing training, we helped open doors for fish farmers to expand their businesses to local restaurants and groceries.



Preventing floods with rain gardens

Installing green infrastructure, including rain gardens, can help reduce flooding and protect water quality—rainwater soaks into the ground and pollutants are filtered by plant roots. Through IISG and Purdue University’s Rainscaping Education Program workshops, master gardeners and other community members learn how to install rain gardens and about other rainscaping techniques, all which can improve community resilience. In 2021, this program was adopted by the University of Illinois Extension to expand it throughout Illinois, too.



Understanding the impact of lake levels

Record high Lake Michigan water levels in 2020 caused erosion and flooding, but this followed recent record low water levels. We brought experts together to discuss coastal resilience, increase understanding of lake level impacts, and improve communication. We are also co-funding lake-wide research to assess the impact of water levels, waves, large storms, and human interventions on beaches and nearby communities. The research team is using historical records, a variety of technologies, and resident surveys.

