

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.

Addressing emerging Great Lakes pollution



We are leaders in tackling the problem of PFAS in the Great Lakes region, through outreach and research. For example, IISG-funded research found these “forever chemicals” in every Lake Michigan fish sampled. After bringing experts together to define critical knowledge gaps, new PFAS research is focused on a range of socioeconomic issues, including communicating risk to vulnerable populations. And each year our emerging contaminants conference provides a platform for sharing PFAS research.

Stopping the spread of invasive species



Aquatic invasive species (AIS) pose a critical threat to Lake Michigan's environment and to the economies of nearby communities. For over 25 years, IISG has been engaging with, and providing information to, anglers, boaters, and others to empower them to prevent the spread of AIS. In Illinois, our highly visible Be A Hero message is the official state invasive species outreach campaign. We have over 70 products and programs and have joined with over 100 organizations in these efforts.

By the Numbers



\$802.3 million
in economic benefits
from an \$89.5 million
federal investment in
Sea Grant in 2022



More than
\$2.7 million
supporting research



at 20 institutions
in Illinois and Indiana
since 2018



1,295
teachers trained in
Great Lakes Literacy



helping to reach
60,805
K-12 students in 2017-23



Over 1 million
buoy data points
logged in 2023



990,000
gallons of rainwater
diverted to rain gardens
in 2022

Planting gardens to prevent floods

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. IISG is providing community resources, including Groundwork, a comprehensive online toolkit for designing effective green infrastructure, the Rainscaping program that includes on-the-ground training to install rain gardens, and One Block at a Time, which provided support for improving water resources in two northwest Indiana marginalized neighborhoods.



Supporting tomorrow's workforce

IISG is helping build a community of scientists and outreach professionals focused on critical Lake Michigan issues. Through the IISG Scholars program, 17 graduate students have received funding to further the impact of their research, plus take part in career development training. Since 2011, 55 undergrads have joined our summer intern program, working alongside IISG specialists to learn valuable skills, get real world experience, help focus their goals, and gather insights into careers.



Meeting future Illinois water needs

We joined with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning to develop a regional water demand forecast that informed the analysis of who in Illinois can use Lake Michigan water and how much they are allowed. Unique among the Great Lakes states, Illinois' Lake Michigan water use is limited by a U.S. Supreme Court consent decree. In 2022, permit allocations were updated, ensuring that lake water use remains in compliance with the court and communities can meet their forecasted water needs.

