

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.

Encouraging a healthy fish diet



To make it easier for consumers to find local aquaculture producers, IISG created the searchable Fish Finder Map on the information-rich Eat Midwest Fish website. Fish for Your Health™ informs seafood choices based on mercury levels to encourage safe fish consumption during pregnancy, through the website and a wallet card (also in Spanish). And, in six high schools, IISG has provided equipment, guidance, and now, a new curriculum, to support hands-on aquaponics training to encourage and improve STEM education.

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.



Promoting safer water recreation

Lake Michigan has the highest rate of drownings in the Great Lakes due to dangerous currents and swift waves. To help address this, IISG provides real-time buoy data on water conditions, plus we collaborate with water safety programs and the National Park Service to inform boaters and swimmers about risks and how best to respond. We've developed displays and a video series for the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center, highlighting critical tips for safer water recreation in summer and winter too.

