

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, 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.

### Shoring up coastal resilience



Recent record high and low Lake Michigan water levels reveal that variability is a concern going forward—it can lead to beach erosion and local flooding. IISG has created resources to connect coastal communities with regional experts for input on management strategies. We also funded two coastal resilience research projects that provide insights for managing Illinois and Indiana beaches. We now have two experts on staff with the goal of enhancing community coastal hazard preparedness along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

### Growing the aquaculture industry



With the US seafood trade deficit at over \$20 billion per year, IISG is making it easier for consumers to find local aquaculture producers, including with a searchable Fish Finder Map on the Eat Midwest Fish website. Plus, we are providing training to help producers process their fish, opening new market opportunities. And, in six high schools, IISG has provided equipment, guidance, and a new curriculum, to support hands-on aquaponics training to enhance STEM education and introduce career possibilities.

## By the Numbers



**\$828.3 million**

in economic benefits  
from an \$94 million  
federal investment in  
Sea Grant in 2023



More than

**\$3.7 million**

supporting  
research



**at 20**

**institutions**

in Illinois and Indiana  
since 2018



**1,356**

teachers engaged  
Great Lakes Literacy  
resources



helping to reach

**63,388**

K-12 students since 2017



**1.4 million**

gallons of rainwater  
diverted to rain gardens in  
2024



**334,806**

pounds of medicine  
collected since 2008

### **Training tomorrow's workforce**

IISG is helping build a community of scientists and outreach professionals focused on Lake Michigan and Great Lakes 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, 54 undergrads have joined our summer intern program, working alongside IISG specialists. They learn valuable skills, get real-world experience, gather careers insights, and focus their goals.



### **Planting gardens to prevent floods**

In 2021, the cost for Great Lakes cities and towns to fix infrastructure damage due to flooding was estimated at nearly \$2 billion. Installing green infrastructure, including rain gardens, can help reduce flooding and protect water quality. IISG is providing community resources, including Illinois Groundwork, a comprehensive online toolkit for designing effective green infrastructure, the Rainscaping program that includes on-the-ground training to install rain gardens, and a hazard mitigation planning toolkit focused on green infrastructure.



### **Tackling emerging contaminants**

Too often, unused prescription drugs find their way into the wrong hands, but when flushed or thrown in the trash, these medicines can end up in local waterways. IISG has helped 51 communities establish takeback programs that altogether have collected nearly 335,000 pounds of medicine for proper disposal. When it comes to PFAS, our research found these "forever chemicals" in every Lake Michigan fish sampled. New Great Lakes-wide PFAS research is focused on a range of social and economic issues.

