

WATER

Improve the quality of our state's most valuable economic and natural resource

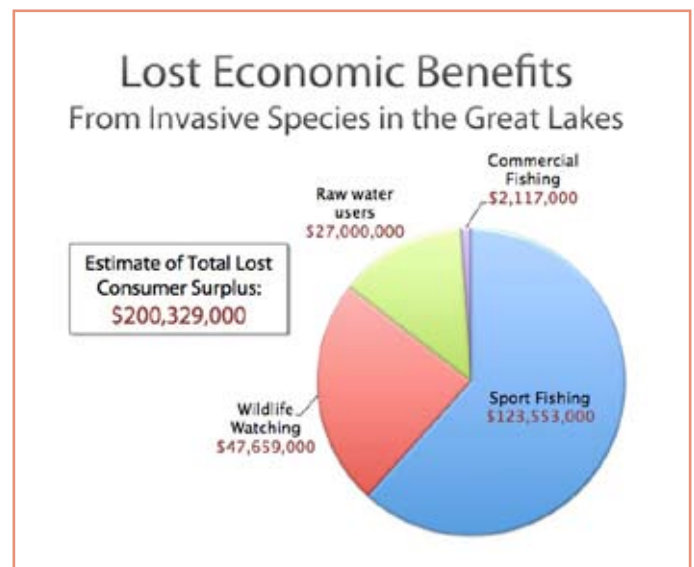


LOCATED IN THE CENTER OF THE PLANET'S GREATEST FRESHWATER RESOURCE, MICHIGAN HAS A UNIQUE ROLE AS STEWARD AND CARETAKER OF THE MAJESTIC GREAT LAKES. They contain almost 20 percent of the world's fresh surface water, and Michigan is the only state entirely within their basin. The rivers, streams,

ponds and groundwater that are the Lakes' lifeblood are also the backbone of the Michigan economy, essential to the health of its ecosystems and vital to our very identity as Michiganders. Unfortunately, our water resources are at continuing risk.

The Facts — Our water resources are at risk

- Decaying sewer infrastructure and increased pesticide and fertilizer runoff from homes and fields are increasingly placing our water resources in jeopardy.
- Toxic fallout from polluting industries and a plague of invasive species have combined with other threats to imperil the watershed. The Great Lakes region is already losing upwards of \$200 million a year due to impacts by aquatic invasive species.¹
- At stake are vast economic resources like a \$7 billion fishing economy and the health of residents who rely on the lakes for water to drink, fish to eat, and recreation for leisure.²



Source: University of Notre Dame's Center for Aquatic Conservation



The Solution— Taking action to protect our waters

Support monitoring and enforcement

Stable funding sources must be secured for basic monitoring and enforcement of laws that protect water and other natural resources.

Maintain and support state wetlands program

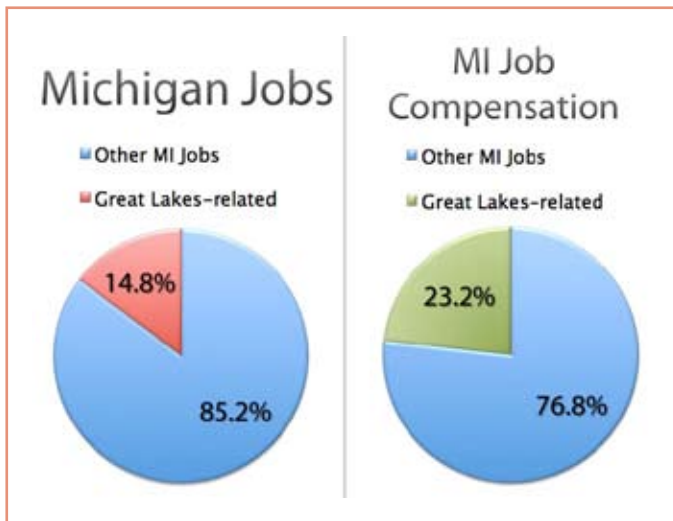
Wetlands play a vital role in protecting Michigan's waters since they filter and cleanse water, provide valuable habitat for fish and wildlife, and absorb stormwater that otherwise would flood streets and basements. Michigan worked hard to keep our state wetlands program, but key to its future success will be increases in permit fees adequate to fund the program. In addition to protecting the state's existing wetlands, Michigan must also move forward with restoration of damaged wetlands.

Prevent the intrusion of invasive species

Halting aquatic invasive species must be a high priority for the state's decision makers. These species have already dramatically altered the lakes' ecosystems and action must be taken to stop further influx of invasives. Working with federal entities, Michigan must closely examine how these species are entering our watersheds and take corrective action.

Improve water infrastructure

Inland lakes and streams need to be protected by requiring regular inspections of septic systems to ensure they are not failing and leaking sewage into our rivers and streams. Better stormwater management is also needed to reduce the amount of sewage released into our waters, either by ensuring that stormwater and sewage pipes are separated or by promoting natural solutions such as rain gardens and low impact development.



Source: Michigan Sea Grant - 2009 Michigan Great Lakes Jobs Report

Who to Contact —

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- Susan Harley, Clean Water Fund (517) 203-0754, sharley@cleanwater.org

SOURCES:

- 1 University of Notre Dame's Center for Aquatic Conservation <http://www.glu.org/fr/node/167>
- 2 Pure Michigan

2010cleanenergy.org/states/michigan