Activity Ideas for Environmental Groups

to Celebrate Lake Michigan Day

Held annually on the second Friday of August

If you work or volunteer with an environmental group, you can celebrate Lake Michigan Day in a variety of ways. Organize one or several of these activities or programs to celebrate Lake Michigan Day in your group/club or community. Scroll down the list below to find out how to do each activity.

The Forum looks forward to a successful Lake Michigan Day this and every year, and hopes your group or community will join the celebrations taking place around the lake.

If you do any of these or other activities, please let the Lake Michigan Stakeholder Group know about your activities so they can be included on the Stakeholders website. This may help you network with others in your area and show the whole basin what is being done to celebrate the lake. Send an email to janeharrison@aqua.wisc.edu.

**What Can You Do to Celebrate Lake Superior Day?**

**1. Use your websites, newsletters, email distribution lists, posters, etc., to talk about:**

Water conservation Rain barrels

Reducing hazardous chemical use at home energy conservation

Eliminating invasive species

Alternatives to motorized vehicles and recreational vehicles

Using recycled products and reducing waste

Planting trees

and all of your other important messages related to Lake Michigan!

This is what your environmental group does best! Try to relate your message to the Lake Michigan watershed if possible and highlight the good work you have already done.

**2.Sponsor a community event.** Invite related groups to set up displays, games, and other educational activities.

**3.Organize a display at the public library about these issues with the librarian.**

Using posters, fact sheets, and library books and materials, work with your librarian to design a display for the month of August. Materials are also available at your state, provincial, or tribal departments of natural resources, from universities, or the US EPA.

**4. Organize a storm drain stenciling project.**

Many storm drains are now being marked so that people know they lead to a local lake, river, stream or ocean, not to a wastewater treatment facility. A storm drain-stenciling project consists of stenciling a message next to the street drain that reminds people **"Dump No Waste--Drains to River."**

The US EPA has a very informative site about how to conduct a project in your community: <http://www.epa.gov/adopt/patch/html/guidelines.html>

The City of Waterloo, Ontario, ran a successful storm drain-marking program: http://www.city.waterloo.on.ca/PWS/Environment/PIP/downloads/YFRInstructorsGuideS ummary.pdf

(Or go to and click on City Government, then Parks and Works Services.)

**5. Organize a beach cleanup event.**

Tell your local newspaper about your event and invite them to report on it or take photographs for publication. Ask a local business to donate garbage bags or pay for the bag disposal fee.

Canada has a national beach cleanup event every year: <http://www.vanaqua.org/cleanup/>

This site describes in detail how to conduct a successful clean up event in any community.

Other websites that details each step in a beach cleanup are [www.litterproject.com](http://www.litterproject.com) and <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/keep-the-coast-clear/organize-the-cleanup.html>.

**6. Do an audit of your group's office to make sure it is as eco-friendly as possible.**

Here are some websites that help you take an inventory of the energy-efficiency of your home or office building:

*Home Energy* magazines mission is to disseminate objective and practical information on residential energy efficiency, performance, comfort, and affordability. Most of *Home Energy’*s content comes from the people researching and employing innovative design, building, and remodeling practices and products. They are the experts using the latest and best building techniques, with an emphasis on implementing sound building fundamentals and curing sick buildings. The organization remains a nonprofit company devoted to getting information out to the public. Visit at <http://homeenergy.org/>

Calculate your houses energy demands and use at <http://hes.lbl.gov/consumer/> by using the Home Energy Saver software online (sponsored by Environmental Energy

Technologies Division at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory)

Take an energy audit of your building with the US Department of Energy at <http://energy.gov/eere/office-energy-efficiency-renewable-energy>

**7. Practice water conservation by installing water-saving devices such as low flow faucet aerators and low-flow toilets in your offices.**

Look for them in hardware stores or on the Internet. These cost very little, but save thousands of gallons of water every year.

The US Environmental Protection Agency also has a fact sheet for download to distribute to your group members at a display or in your newsletter: <http://www.epa.gov/owm/water-efficiency/waterconservation_final.pdf>

**8. Encourage your members to install these devices in their homes.**

By installing these water-saving devices, each household can save 7,800 gallons of water and prevent the release of 460 pounds of carbon dioxide each year. For more information visit: <http://www.epa.gov/WaterSense/products/>

**9. Eliminate pesticides and use natural fertilizers and native plants in your office buildings landscape.**

Encourage your members to use non-hazardous lawn chemicals at their homes.

Americans apply 70 million pounds of pesticides to home lawns and gardens each year, polluting precious water resources. If only 1,000 people stopped using pesticides in gardens and lawns, 950 pounds of toxins each year would be reduced. For more information about eliminating pesticides click here: [www.beyondpesticides.org](http://www.beyondpesticides.org)

**10. Decrease impact of runoff at home or your office by installing rain barrels, rain gardens, or decreasing the amount of impervious surface cover.**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that up to 70 percent of water pollution comes from storm water, only half of which comes from industrial polluters. Additional sources of water pollution come from runoff from individuals and homeowners as a result of chemicals used in household and yard care activities. Installing rain barrels, rain gardens or reducing the amount of surface runoff from impervious surfaces can help reduce water pollution.

For more information on rain gardens, try these sites:

Raingardens.org:

 <http://wmeac.org/raingardens/>

Building Your Own Rain Garden :<http://dnr.wi.gov/wnrmag/html/stories/2008/apr08/raingarden.htm>

Do it Yourself Rain Barrel:

 <http://www.diynetwork.com/how-to/how-to-create-a-rain-barrel/index.html>

Stormwater Management Fact Sheet:

<http://cfpub1.epa.gov/npdes/docs.cfm?document_type_id=3&view=Fact%20Sheets%20and%20Outreach%20Materials&program_id=6&sort=name>

Stormwater Management Resources:

<http://www.cwp.org/2013-04-05-16-15-03/stormwater-management>

City of Duluth rain barrel project: [www.sweetwateralliance.org](http://www.sweetwateralliance.org)

**11. Write a letter to the editor encouraging your members or community to celebrate Lake Michigan Day.**

*Sample letter text:*

Clean water is a basic right and necessity for all life. We're fortunate to be living near one of the world's largest lakes, Lake Michigan. Every day, each of the 10,000,000 human residents of the Lake Michigan basin use water from the lake for drinking, home use, industrial use, or recreation. The lake is also essential for countless fish, birds, animals, and plants.

To show appreciation for the lake (name of your group) is joining other groups, communities, people, businesses, tribes, and churches to celebrate Lake Michigan Day annually on the 2nd Friday of August. Lake Michigan Day is a time set aside for all of us to consider our connection to the water and land resources around one of the world's largest freshwater lakes.

Each year on the second Friday in August, all residents who live, work, play, and worship around the lake can organize events in their communities or take action in their homes, work sites, groups, or churches to help protect this world-class treasure.

I encourage others in this community to celebrate their connection to the lake as members in my organization are doing by (*List your activity here*).

For more information contact me at (your contact information), or go to the Lake

Michigan Stakeholders website <http://www.lakemichiganstakeholders.org/>

**12. If your club or group has a website, link it to this website.**

No approval is necessary, although notifying the Lake Michigan Stakeholders that you’ve added a link is helpful. Contact us at janeharrison@aqua.wisc.edu.

Link your website to the Stakeholders at http://www.lakemichiganstakeholders.org/. You’re also invited to post your activity on the Stakeholders website of activities by sending us an email.

**13. Pass a proclamation designating the second Friday in August as Lake Michigan Day by your group.**

Here is sample text.

**A Proclamation by (Your Group's Leader))**

**To Celebrate Lake Michigan Day**

**On the Second Friday in August**

**Friday, August 14, 2015**

2015 Resolution to Celebrate Lake Michigan Day on August 14, 2015

Lake Michigan is one of the world's largest freshwater lakes and is essential to the quality of life and economic vitality of the cities, villages, towns, counties, and tribes along its shores and in the surrounding basin; and

**WHEREAS**, Water is life and the quality of water determines the quality of life; and

**WHEREAS**, Lake Michigan supports recreational, commercial, tourism, tribal, and cultural activities for its residents and visitors; and

**WHEREAS**, The responsibility for protecting and restoring the quality of Lake Michigan’s waters, land, and wildlife lies with all residents, municipalities, businesses, tribes, visitors, and others who use the lake; and

**WHEREAS**, Elected and tribal officials and others throughout the Lake Michigan basin desire to protect the quality of the water and land that all basin life depends on;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that I (Official's Name), the (Title) of (Organization's Name), establish the second Friday in August (**August 14, 2015), as Lake Michigan Day**, in the (city or Organization) in (State Name of the Organization), as a day to acknowledge and celebrate the lakes importance in enhancing the quality of our lives.

Adopted this (Date) of (Month) of the year 2015.

Signature

(Official) of (Jurisdiction/Organization's Name)

**Who's Doing What?**

For a list of many organizations doing environmental work in the Lake Michigan basin visit: <http://www.great-lakes.net/links/envt/>

Want to learn more about what an environmental group is doing to protect Lake Superior in Canada? Visit **EcoSuperior** at http://www.ecosuperior.com

The goal of this group is to provide residents of the Lake Superior basin with information and motivation for building healthy, sustainable communities. The group pursues projects that help promote water and energy conservation, waste reduction, pollution prevention and urban greenspaces.

In the US, the **Bad River Watershed Association** in Ashland, Wisconsin, is a citizen- based volunteer organization. The mission is to promote the healthy interconnection between the human and natural communities of the watershed by involving all citizens in maintaining the integrity of watershed systems for future generations.

For more information visit http://www.badriverwatershed.org/ **Activity Ideas for Environmental Groups to Celebrate Lake Superior Day**

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