FRESHWATER FUTURE

freshwater Voices

Helping People Protect the Great Lakes

STACY NIEDZWIECKI— EMPIRE BEACH AT SLEEPING BEAR DUNES

2011 Series, Issue 2

In this Issue:

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FRESHWATER FUTURE

Metal Mining in the Great Lakes

Modern times haven't entirely replaced metal with plastics. Demand for metals is high—stainless steel appliances, nickel for batteries, metals for jewelry. Unfortunately, metals easy to mine have been removed. The remaining metals in the ground are much harder to get out. In the Great Lakes region, metals are often found in sulfur containing rocks, which is commonly described as "sulfide mining." These mines are a lot different than iron mines or gravel pits and carry a unique danger. When the rock is crushed and the sulfides come in contact with air and water, an irreversible chemical reaction may occur, creating sulfuric acid. This is commonly called "acid rock drainage." Deemed one of the most serious threats to water quality by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, acid rock drainage from sulfide mining already has polluted more than 12,000 miles of rivers and streams and over 180,000 acres of lakes and impoundments in the U.S.

A second problem associated with sulfide mining is known as "metals leaching." Even if the water at the mine site does not turn acidic, toxic metals may still leach into ground and surface waters from the crushed rock, making it unfit to drink and poisonous to fish and other aquatic species. Acid rock drainage and metals leaching from sulfide mines can devastate rivers, streams, and aquatic life for hundreds, and under the "right" conditions, thousands of years. **There has never been a metallic sulfide mine that has failed to pollute its watershed.**

Freshwater Future has provided nearly 20 grants and consulting services to several groups including Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve, Save the Wild UP, WaterLegacy, Wisconsin Resources Protection Council, Save Lake Superior Association, Northwoods Wilderness Recovery, and Anishinaabe Niijii, to support their efforts to get involved in permit review, pollution cleanup, and education about the impacts of sulfide mining.

Thanks to these organizations and many others—we are making strides to address the impacts of historic sulfide mining and, hopefully, prevent these harmful impacts into the future. The following highlights a few of these efforts.

Emily Whittaker, Executive Director, Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve

Michigan — After all the regulatory and legal avenues had been exhausted and a mine in the Upper Peninsula received its permits for construction, the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve was still not ready to throw in the towel. Emily Whittaker, executive director at the Yellow Dog, participated in Freshwater Future's Climate Symposium. After participating, Emily realized that the new mine had not planned for climate change. How would this impact the level of pollution at the mine? The Yellow Dog applied and received a climate grant from Freshwater Future to inform decision makers about how extractive industries (i.e.

The Salmon Trout River in the upper peninsula of Michigan provides coaster brook trout habitat for spawning. The mining company's leased ore body lies beneath the river.

CHAUNCEY MORAN, YELLOW DOG WATERSHED PRESERVE

Continued on page 3

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Looking Forward to My Paddle…

Jill Ryan, Executive Director

Does Your Group Need Some Extra Funding?

As the first day of summer passed yesterday I began to look forward to organizing my annual summer event to raise funds from my family and friends for Freshwater Future. Each year I pick a run, bicycle or paddle event and share the information through my e-mail list. From there, my friends can easily link to my personal website and sponsor my event in one easy process. All of the proceeds go to Freshwater Future to help us continue to build an effective environmental movement in the Great Lakes region.

Did you know that you can use this simple system to reach out and let your friends and family know about your important work and give them the opportunity to support both your work and that of Freshwater Future? Freshwater Future member groups can create their own local Walk, Paddle and Roll event(s) using our structure and administration and we share the proceeds with you from your event.

Past comments from participants include "this was the easiest ask I've ever made," and "the Walk, Paddle and Roll helped our group move forward with individual fundraising." The beauty of this virtual event is that no actual on-the-ground organizing or event is necessary. Each participant sets up their own walk, paddle or roll, sends an e-mail to their friends and family, and then Freshwater Future takes over. We handle the receipt of funds, thank you letters, administration, provide you with training and even send you a list of folks that donated to your event. Finally, we send you a check for at least 50% of the net proceeds.

If you haven't considered this simple event and need some extra funds, please give us a call at 231.348.8200 or take a look at my personal event page at www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/jill-ryan-1/jillryan10.

Providing these tools to make your work easier and more successful than ever is what Freshwater Future is all about. We hope you will find this event useful to your efforts as well as a way to put some additional fun into your work.

Winning is only half of it.
Having fun is the other half.
~ Bum Phillips

YOU CAN HELP STOP THE ASIAN CARP—

It Isn't Too Late

As you read this, thousands of Asian carp are swimming toward our Great Lakes. The Illinois River is already infested, and this invasive species has been found in other rivers flowing into Lake Michigan and Lake Erie. *If they become established, our $7 billion fishing industry would be at risk along with many of the ways we enjoy our favorite lakes and rivers.*

What are Asian carp? There are two species of Asian carp making their way to Lake Michigan-bighead carp and silver carp. The Asian carp were imported by catfish farmers in the 1970s to remove algae and other nutrients out of their ponds. During large floods in the early 1990s, many of the catfish farm ponds overflowed their banks, and the Asian carp were released into local waterways connected to the Mississippi River.

What's the big deal? Studies show current protection efforts by the Army Corps of Engineers *will not keep smaller carp out of the Great Lakes.* Both species are well suited for our climate. They consume vast amounts of food and reproduce quickly and are wiping out native fish where they thrive. In Illinois, the Asian carp population has doubled every year since it has been in the Illinois River. The silver carp can jump 10 feet high which has resulted in numerous injuries to boaters. If the Asian carp does make it to the Lake Michigan it will:

- Push out native fish populations — lake perch, whitefish and walleye and become the dominant species
- Impact habitat for waterfowl
- Harm our tourist economy that depends on fishing, hunting, and boating—which is over a $7 billion industry, annually
- Make boating unsafe

As of today, Asian carp have NOT made a home in our Great Lakes, which means we still have time to stop them. But we cannot wait any longer to act, there is too much at stake. We must permanently separate the Great Lakes and Mississippi River waterways to prevent entry of these huge carp and other invasive species.

If we fail to act now, the Great Lakes may never recover from this invasion.

There are three things you can do to make a difference:

1. **Sign and send back the postcards you received from Freshwater Future.**
2. **Sign our online petition; found at www.freshwaterfuture.org/asian-carp**
3. **Send the links to your friends and family and post our petition and postcards on Facebook.**

If you would like to do more, please contact us for other volunteer opportunities.

JOHN DYKSTRA—MINER BEACH FALLS

Metal Mining in the Great Lakes continued . . .

Aerial photograph of Eagle Mine in Marquette County, MI. Efforts to minimize impacts continue on the ground and in the court room. CHAUNCEY MORAN, YELLOW DOG RIVERKEEPER

sulfide mining) will be affected by climate change. Preliminary research has found that conventional models used to predict water management for mine discharges are no longer applicable due to climate change impacts. For example, the Soil and Water Conservation Society has data that shows storm events in the Midwest have increased by 46%. Increasing water and air temperature will cause metal discharges to become more toxic thus impacting species such as the Coaster Brook Trout, particularly during spawning. When the research is completed the Yellow Dog will be presenting this information to decision makers with the hope that additional protective measures will be required to prevent pollution.

Minnesota — Wild rice is more than just a plant in Minnesota. It is the State grain, and there are special water quality regulations to protect it. Natural wild rice is very sensitive to elevated sulfates, and can act as the "canary in the mine," signaling ill effects to entire watershed ecosystems. Yet, the first proposed sulfide mine in the state would discharge to the St. Louis River Watershed, already showing evidence of wild rice destruction from 100 years of iron/taconite mining. On behalf of its mining members, the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce filed a lawsuit attacking the sulfate standard for wild rice waters. WaterLegacy interceded, standing up to say, "no, the polluters do not get to make the rules." Diadra Decker of WaterLegacy shared, "Both native and non-native residents who hunt, fish and gather wild rice rely on rigorous enforcement of the rule's limit on sulfate pollution." Sulfate pollution also methylates mercury, increasing toxicity in the food chain, exacerbating fish-consumption advisories and affecting the health of humans who rely on wild-caught fish for food." WaterLegacy and allied groups in the Minnesota Environmental Partnership are working to uphold the wild rice protection rule in agency rule-making and in the Legislature as well as in court.

Wisconsin — One of the newer mines located in Ladysmith, Wisconsin was supposedly the best the industry had to offer in terms of making the argument that sulfide mining could be done in an "environmentally responsible" manner. The mining company's data on file with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, unfortunately, shows that both ground and surface waters at the mine site have been polluted.

Let's go fishing! Laura Gauger, pictured here with the late Roscoe Churchill, believes that protecting the water protects everything we love . . . including bluegills!

Laura Gauger is personally dedicated to preserving clean water and she walks her talk. Laura, along with the Wisconsin Resources Protection Council and the Center for Biological Diversity, filed a Clean Water Act citizen suit in January against the company that owns the mine near Ladysmith. The law suit claims the mining company is violating federal law by discharging pollutants, including potentially toxic metals like copper, iron and zinc, into the Flambeau River and a tributary known as "Stream C" that flows across the company's property. Court dates are set for later this year. Laura shared, "This mine is being showcased by the industry as an example of "environmentally responsible" mining. Sure, the prairie grass and wildflowers planted at the site look okay. But don't let that fool you! As the late Roscoe Churchill of Ladysmith used to say, "It's just grass over a grave." The real question to ask is: "What about the water?" She believes "It's unfit to drink and unfit to support life. Our lawsuit is meant to expose the truth and fix the problem," stated Laura.

Through these citizen-led efforts progress is being made to require stronger regulations, monitor and document impacts, and engage community members in decision making, as well as spurring long-term planning for economic development that is not dependent on mining. As with all citizen-led efforts, Emily, Diadra, and Laura have had lots of help—thousands of hours of volunteer help.

You can help too. Below are some actions you can take related to sulfide mining.

- Educate your elected officials and decision makers about the impacts of sulfide mines on our waters and request stronger regulation to prevent pollution.
- Recycle your metal through local recycling efforts.
- Purchase metal items that contain recycled metals.
- Sign-up for Freshwater Future's email list to receive emails and more action items related to this topic.

For more information, visit these websites:

www.yellowdogwatershed.org
www.waterlegacy.org
www.wrpc.net

STEVEN HUYSER-HONIG—DUNE GRASS AND LAKE MICHIGAN

Freshwater Future Administers Healing Our Waters Coalition Invesment in Actions to Restore the Great Lakes

As you know, the Great Lakes are a crucial component of the economy in our region. A recent report by Michigan Sea Grant reports that more than 1.5 million jobs are directly connected to the Great Lakes, generating $62 billion in wages. Working to restore the health of our Great Lakes does more than benefit the environment it benefits our economy too.

Freshwater Future is an active participant in the Healing Our Waters Coalition (HOW), our Executive Director, Jill Ryan, has served as a co-chair for several years. In addition, Freshwater Future administers the HOW grants program that recently invested $115,000 in nine projects this spring to help improve habitat, address pollution, and enhance Great Lakes Restoration Initiative efforts. Congratulations to the following and good luck with your efforts.

Western Lake Erie Priority Area

Winous Point Marsh Conservancy received funding for the Lake Erie Cooperative Weed Management Area to develop a GIS-based decision support tool to assess phragmites control efforts to better direct future control efforts.

Western Lake Erie Waterkeeper Association received funding for a demonstration project to assess the use of Tile Bioreactors for removing soluble reactive phosphorus and nitrates from agricultural runoff that if successful could be used more widely to reduce nutrient pollution and the resulting algae growth in Western Lake Erie.

Eastern Lake Ontario Priority Area

Save Our Sodus will use HOW implementation funds to update nutrient loading data and prioritize phosphorus pollution sources to insure restorative strategies are successful.

Center for Environmental Information will use funding to identify pollution sources that are contributing to e-coli contamination and nutrient pollution Salmon Creek and the Pultneyville Harbor which is reducing opportunities for recreation.

Saginaw Bay Priority Area

Friends of the Shiawasee River received funding to do a feasibility study for removing the Owosso Dam and restore free-flowing conditions and fish movement.

Huron Pines has received a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant to restore water quality and wildlife habitat for the Rifle River. HOW grant funds will be used to strengthen collaborative efforts and build long-term support for watershed protection.

Great Lakes Lifeways Institute has teamed up with several communities (Bay, Arenac, Tuscola and Huron Counties) to develop a restoration plan to restore wild rice and remove invasive species in the coastal marshes of Saginaw Bay.

The Friends of the Shiawasee River will conduct a feasibility study to remove this dam in Owosso, Michigan. The City is hoping to use this space as a focal point for downtown since it attracts many festival attendees and tourists that come to visit Curwood Castle as well as the Arts Center.

St. Louis Bay and River Priority Area

The Duluth Stream Corps project coordinated by Community Action Duluth has received a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant to implement a variety of efforts to address the St. Louis River Area of Concern (AOC or toxic hot spot). A grant from HOW will be used to reestablish over 20,000 native trees, shrubs and other plants in coldwater stream corridors and install measures to prevent predation by wildlife.

St. Louis River Alliance is engaged in two Great Lakes Restoration Initiative projects that include restoring fish and wildlife habitat and increasing fish and wildlife populations within the St Louis River Estuary. Their HOW project will boost their capacity for work on these projects.

Take Advantage of Your Freshwater Future Membership

Apply for a Grant Today!

As an organizational member you are eligible to apply for our Project Grants, Insight Grants, Climate Grants and our Special Opportunity Grants. Below are the basics about the different grant opportunities. In order to get a grant, you have to apply—don't delay, apply today!

Project Grants:

Provide financial support to grassroots organizations working to influence community and or individual behavior or opinion, corporate conduct, and/or public policy to protect and restore shorelines, inland lakes, rivers, wetlands and other aquatic habitats in the Great Lakes Basin.

Amount: $500-$5,000
Deadline: September 30, 2011

Climate Grants:

This grant program provides funds to grassroots initiatives to make communities better prepared to handle the impacts of climate change and educate and provide tools for decision-makers to incorporate climate change into decision-making.

Amount: Up to $5,000
Deadline: December 15, 2011

Contact Cheryl Mendoza, cheryl@freshwaterfuture.org, to find out more about the HOW Grants.

CARI KIENITZ—FADING SANDCASTLE

2010 HOW GRANT SUCCESS STORY:

Saginaw Bay WIN Uses Infrared to Find Pollution

By Mike Kelly, The Conservation Fund and Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network

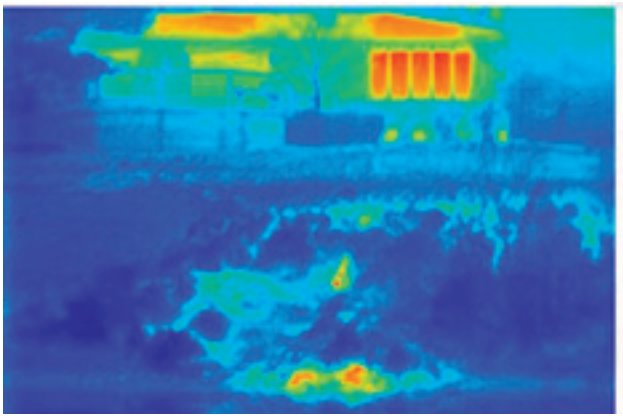
Saginaw Bay on the western middle of Lake Huron is an amazing resource—it is beautiful, provides a ton of recreational opportunities, and is vital to the local economy. However, high bacterial counts are putting a damper on recreation. Since 2005, one of the tributaries, the Kawkawlin River had high coliform (bacteria) levels resulting in body contact warnings for nearly 200 days!

One of the biggest questions has been: What is the real source of bacterial contamination? Over the years, many communities along tributaries that flow into the Bay have spent a lot of money to upgrade water treatment facilities in order to meet discharge standards. Yet one major source of contamination was beyond the control of water treatment efforts.

Failing septic systems, particularly on waterfront properties were considered as a potential source of bacteria. An epidemic across the Great Lakes, often homeowners aren't even aware there's a problem because everything seems fine in their houses. The issue lies underground and shows up in area surface water where they don't see it.

The truth is that homeowners with failing septic systems are in a tough situation. They clearly love the Saginaw Bay area. Why else would they choose to live there? Yet, the necessary improvements can cost upwards of $10,000, straining most people's budgets impossibly.

So the problem was then redefined to be how can we help people make these costly but necessary septic system improvements? The solution was the Septage Source Elimination Program and Revolving Loan Fund that supplies low-interest loans to homeowners with at-risk and failing septic systems.



This infrared thermography photo shows the temperatures in color—warm temperatures are in yellow, orange, and red and cooler temperatures in blue. This site shows warmer water leaving the septic system and entering the river.

Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) and The Conservation Fund, with funding provided by Freshwater Future through the Healing Our Waters grants program, provided resources to develop an invaluable tool to identify what septic systems were failing and had a direct hydrologic connection to surface water. Using infrared thermography, the Bay County Health Department could quickly and visually identify warm septage seeping from homes into surface water. This innovative technology can be used to allow homeowners to "see" and better understand the problems caused by their systems. If a homeowners septic system is found to be negatively affecting surface water they can qualify for a low-interest loan for repairs.

With this important research in place, WIN made the first investment of $50,000 into the county's new loan fund. Additional funding followed from the Bay Area Community Foundation and others, resulting in a $100,000 (and growing!) fund that will be used to replace systems or help homeowners finance the connection to the municipal sewer systems where available.

Together, these investments have taken critical steps toward helping improve the water quality of the Bay, while also providing an important new tool to help determine the source of the problems.

For more information visit, www.saginawbaywin.org.

Insight Service Grants:

Insight Services Grants help grassroots organizations with organizational needs such as strategic planning, fundraising, communications, board development, and issue strategy. Grant funds are used for Freshwater Future staff to provide professional assistance to build your capacity to do your environmental work.

Amount: $500-$2,500
Deadline: No deadlines, applications accepted all year.
Match: 25 %

Climate Grants:

This grant program provides funds to grassroots initiatives to make communities better prepared to handle the impacts of climate change and educate and provide tools for decision-makers to incorporate climate change into decision-making.

Amount: Up to $5,000
Deadline: December 15, 2011

Special Opportunity Grants:

These funds support urgent projects or those that present special, time limited opportunities that do not coincide with our grant deadlines and can be accomplished in for under $500.

Amount: $500 or less
Deadline: No deadline available until funds run-out.

Visit our website, www.freshwaterfuture.org for more info or contact us by phone or email.

ERIC ANDRE—APOSTLE ISLANDS SUNSET

Is it Hot in Here? YOU CAN HELP YOUR COMMUNITY BEGIN TO ADAPT TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE

Stacey Smith (right) with Onondaga Creek Conservation Council and her team meet at Kirk Park to assess conditions for plantings.

The City of Chicago isn't afraid of change. When scientists informed city planners that by the end of this century Chicago would feel more like Baton Rouge—they started to adapt. Since 2006 the city has implemented numerous measures to make the city more adaptable to the changing climate. They have performed infrared studies to find hot spots and planted more trees in those locations, broken up alleyways and installed permeable pavement, and installed green grass roofs. The commitment Chicago made to prepare for change now will strengthen their resilience to the impacts of climate change.

At Freshwater Future we believe that lasting change is often generated by citizens leading the charge. When it comes to climate change—our communities will benefit from being aware and prepared. Freshwater Future's climate program offers trainings and grant funds to help community-based groups get started on climate work. How adaptable and resilient is your community?

Scientists predict the Great Lakes are going to see a variety of changes from climate change including: warmer daily high temperatures, increased evaporation of lakes, shrinking coastal wetlands, and more intense storms year-round.

You can help increase awareness about climate change and what it might mean for protecting the environment in your community. One of the first steps in helping your community adapt to climate change is to start talking about it. Stacey Smith with Onondaga Creek Conservation Council, and a Freshwater Future Climate Grant recipient, started talking with everyone she could about how they could improve the health of a creek that flows through Kirk Park in an urban section of Syracuse, New York. Her conversations resulted in a diverse team of community members representing the municipality, universities, state and federal agencies, elected officials, and volunteers from community groups, including youth and master gardeners. The creek is polluted, vegetation is sparse, and invasive species dominate what vegetation is growing. Stacey's team flushed out a 5-year multiphase project to improve water quality, habitat, and make the creek resilient to climate change. Work has already started with the removal of invasive species. Later this summer native plants—trees, shrubs, and herbaceous species will be planted.

"Neighbors who see us on site have been asking to help out and participate in making their neighborhood better. This project is bringing life to the creek and also to the community." Stacey shared.

Other ways to get started on climate adaptation include:

- Share materials like the ones found at Climate Adaptation Knowledge Exchange or CAKE; www.cakex.org
- Attend Freshwater Future's next Climate Symposium (see info this page)
- Apply for a Climate grant to help your community implement projects to be more adaptable and resilient—next deadline, December 15, 2011.
- Call to discuss project ideas and grant proposals, request Vicki Deisner at 231-348-8200.

Interns for the project prepare native plant seedlings to be planted at Kirk Park in locations where invasive species were removed.

FRESHWATER FUTURE

Climate Symposium:

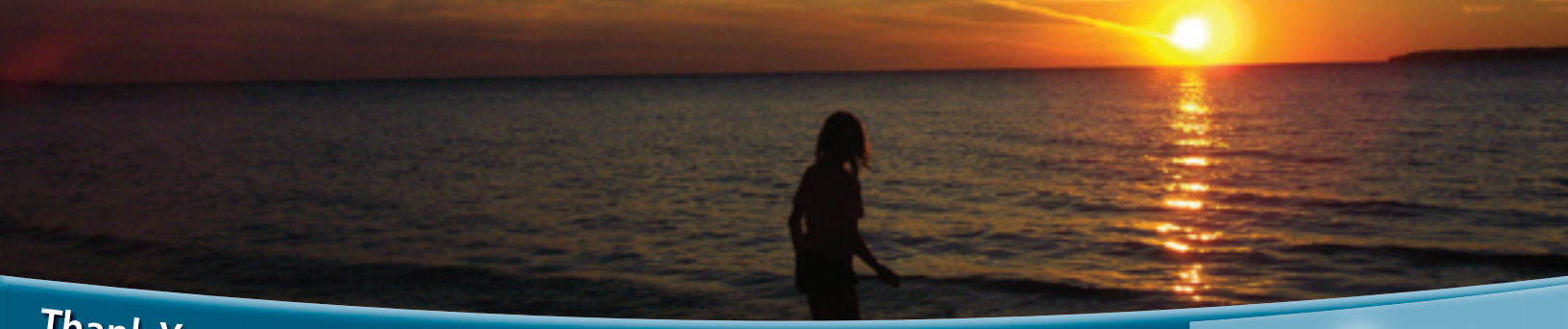
Help Your Community Adapt to Climate Change

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
November 11-12, 2011

Join us to learn—

- What is climate adaptation and why should I care?
- How climate change could impact your environmental work
- What other groups around the Great Lakes and beyond, are doing related to climate change
- About Freshwater Future's Climate grants program

For more details about the Climate Symposium or to register, visit www.freshwaterfuture.org



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THANK YOU TO ALL THE
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Climate Grant Recipients:

- Cayuga Lake Watershed Network, Aurora, New York
- Concerned Citizens of Seneca County, Waterloo, New York
- The Ecologos Institute, Mississauga, Ontario
- Western Lake Erie Waterkeeper Association, Maumee, Ohio

Special Opportunity Grant Recipients:

- Bad River Watershed Association, Ashland, Wisconsin
- WAVE, Marquette, Michigan

Spring 2011 Project Grant Recipients:

- Concerned Citizens of Big Bay, Big Bay, Michigan
- Concerned Citizens of Seneca County, Waterloo, New York
- Environment Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Protect JKP (Jean Klock Park), Benton Harbor, Michigan
- Saugatuck Dunes Coastal Alliance, Saugatuck, Michigan
- WaterLegacy, Duluth, Minnesota

FRESHWATER FUTURE

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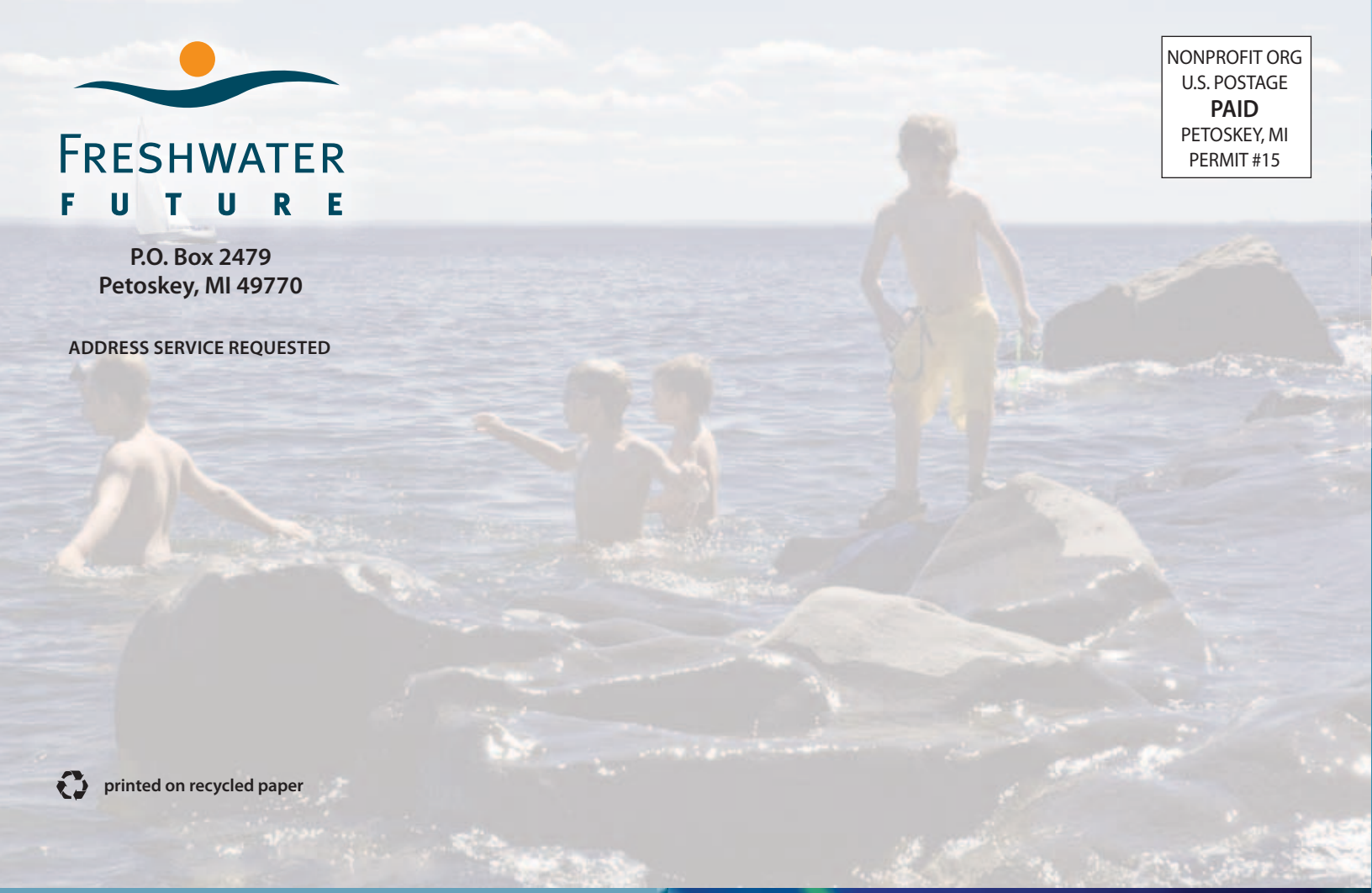

Walk, Paddle, and Roll Your Way to Dough

There is plenty of time to do a Walk, Paddle and Roll event to...

- Raise funds for your organization;
- Increase your confidence and skills with fundraising, and
- Provide a way to share your important work with your friends, colleagues and family.

WALK PADDLE & ROLL

Go to **www.firstgiving.org/freshwaterfuture** and start a fundraising page today.

For more details or help, contact us at **231-348-8200**.

Freshwater Future Fall 2011 Grant Deadline September 30, 2011

Does your group or organization need funds for your work to protect the environment?

If you have a budget under $200,000 and you are engaged in advocacy that will improve your community's environment—you should check out our grants program, www.freshwaterfuture.org.

Follow Freshwater Future on Facebook and Twitter!

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