



**GREAT LAKES**  
REGIONAL CENTER

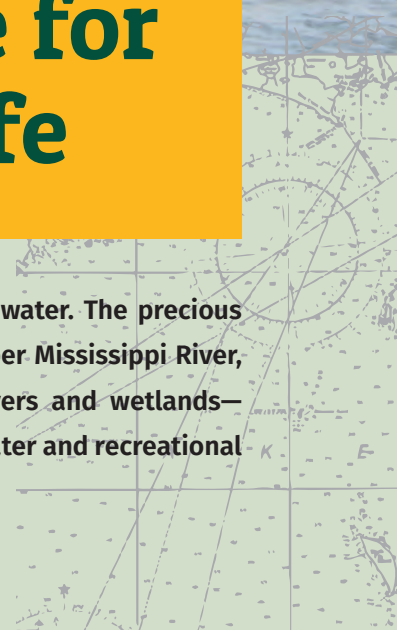


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# A Uniting, Effective Voice for People, Water and Wildlife

People, plants and animals, including all of us, rely on clean, healthy water. The precious water resources that define our region—including the Great Lakes, Upper Mississippi River, Ohio River, Boundary Waters and multitudes of smaller streams, rivers and wetlands—provide habitat for a magnificent array of wildlife, as well as drinking water and recreational opportunities for millions of human residents and visitors.

**We literally cannot live without them.**



## Water and Wildlife Need Champions

Our waters and the wildlife that depend on them are under increasing assault from pollution, climate change, habitat loss and other threats. To survive and rebound from the damage already done, water and wildlife need champions. For more than 80 years, NWF has been uniting a conservation army to build a better future for both people and wildlife. NWF brings unique scientific, legal, policy, communications and advocacy expertise. Beginning in 1982, our Great Lakes Regional Center has built an exceptional team with deep knowledge of our region's conservation challenges. When environmental threats arise, we have the tools and knowledge to respond and win important victories to protect our shared resources.

When communities are healthy, wildlife will flourish too. NWF believes that in order to save wildlife and ourselves, we need to ensure that all people have access to nature, clean air and water, and safe communities, and are protected from the ravages of climate change. Recognizing these basic, urgent needs, shared equally by everybody, is foundational to bringing the conservation movement and ethos into the 21st century.

### How Important are Our Region's Amazing Waters?

1. They supply drinking water to **more than 60 million Americans** — one-fifth of the U.S. population.
2. They provide a flyway for **more than half of North America's migratory birds** and waterfowl and are one of the world's most diverse fisheries, with **more than 150 native fish species**.
3. They provide a **habitat for a rich diversity of wildlife**, from large animals like moose, black bears, wolves and deer to reptiles and amphibians, turtles and frogs to pollinators like bees and monarch butterflies.
4. They support **a multi-billion-dollar outdoor recreation economy** driven by such popular activities as hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, ice fishing, snow skiing and paddling.

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LYNN CLEVELAND



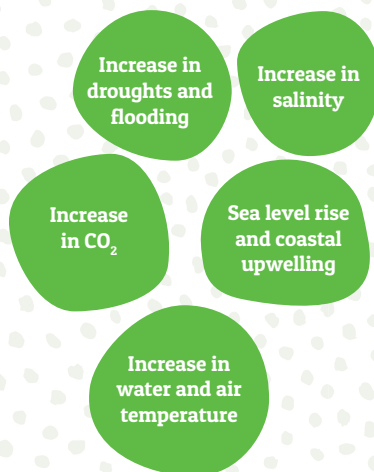
# Battling Unprecedented Threats to Our Region's Waters

Climate change, toxic chemicals and decades of bad policy decisions have created a water crisis in the Great Lakes region, threatening the wildlife and people who make their homes here. The safety and quality of our waters have never been more vulnerable than they are today.

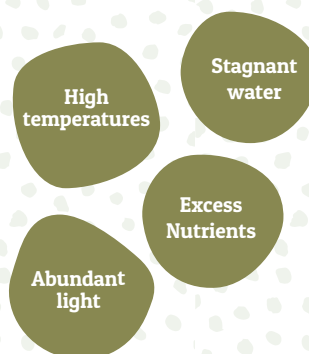
1. **Lead, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs)** and other toxic chemicals are poisoning the drinking water in communities across the region, and low-income households and other marginalized populations are affected disproportionately.
2. **Toxic algae outbreaks** are shutting down recreational areas, devastating small businesses, threatening drinking water and undermining community health.
3. **Invasive species like Asian carp** are disrupting fragile ecosystems.
4. **Neglected, crumbling infrastructure** is leading to tainted drinking water, sewage overflows and bloated utility bills, with people of color affected the most.
5. **Risky oil pipelines under the Great Lakes** are a ticking time bomb for communities, businesses and wildlife.
6. **Climate change is causing more extreme weather**, including stronger storms and longer droughts, devastating habitat, endangering wildlife and hurting people's livelihoods and communities.

## Causes of Algae Bloom

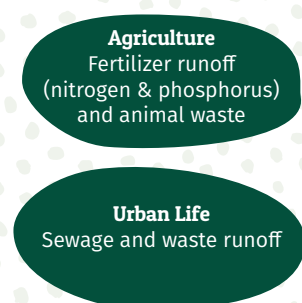
### Climate Change



### Environmental Conditions



### Source of Excess Nutrients



# A Record of Big Wins for Water and People

NWF's Great Lakes Regional Center continually finds creative solutions to the threats facing our waters, wildlife and natural environment. The majority of people in the region care about natural resources, and we have the unique ability to bring them together to advance the cause. A few of our recent victories:

1. Secured federal investments of more than \$3 billion to restore and protect the Great Lakes as part of our leadership of the Healing Our Waters–Great Lakes Coalition.
2. Secured commitments from leaders in the U.S. and Canada to reduce by 40% nutrient pollution from fertilizer, manure and other sources that fuel toxic algae outbreaks in Lake Erie.
3. A significant win in court which forced the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to protect the Great Lakes and other waters from invasive species.
4. Secured \$100 million in federal funding to assist Flint, Michigan in addressing lead poisoning in drinking water.
5. Developed partnerships with schools, houses of worship and other community allies to connect youth and adults with nature, promote conservation and support development of a new generation of environmental leaders.

## PFASs Sources



Fast Food Packaging



Non-stick Cookware



Paints



Stain Resistant Products



Pesticide



Shampoo



Photography



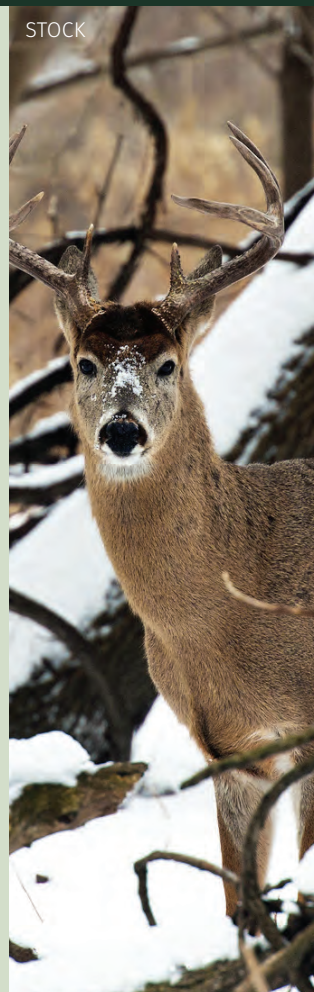
Firefighting Foam

## Our Formula for Impact: Collaboration and Consensus Building

**NWF is effective because we cultivate strong relationships and find common ground with individuals and elected leaders across the political spectrum. Together, we identify pragmatic solutions that transcend ideological differences. Safe and healthy water resources, wildlife and communities are a cause everybody can get behind.**

1. **We advocate for smart, workable public policies** and solutions at the local, state, regional and federal levels.
2. **We build broad, inclusive coalitions**, often as the leaders and conveners of these alliances which include partnerships with those in disadvantaged communities.
3. **We propose evidence-based solutions** supported by consensus among scientists.
4. When necessary, **we litigate, often prevail in court and fight back** when lawmakers and other officials try to roll back environmental protections.

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## Tackling the Most Pressing Conservation Challenges of Our Time, The National Wildlife Federation is currently:

1. Leading a broad coalition to shut down the aging, deteriorating Line 5 pipeline that carries millions of gallons of oil and natural gas along the bottom of the environmentally sensitive Straits of Mackinac every day.
2. Working with state government and business leaders to reduce the nutrient runoff causing harmful algae blooms in Lake Erie, which threaten drinking water supplies and damages the region's vibrant outdoors economy.
3. Pressuring elected leaders to take strong measures to clean up PFASs, the "forever chemicals" that are poisoning drinking water and threatening wildlife across the region.
4. Spearheading a new alliance of 80 public agencies, nonprofits, industry stakeholders and academic experts working to develop a multistakeholder, science-based restoration strategy for the Ohio River.
5. Working to improve wildlife habitat by promoting sustainable management of hardwood forests on public and private land in the Great Northwoods.
6. Growing our next generation of environmental leaders through environmental education, career training and unique outdoor experiences in the Leadership and Environmental Education Program (LEEP), beginning in Detroit high schools (D-LEEP).
7. Creating native habitats and outdoor worship spaces through our Sacred Grounds program at houses of worship, linking faith practices with care for the environment.

CREDIT: NWF GLRC







## An Ambitious Vision for 2025 and Beyond: Join Us in Making It a Reality

MARIO DIAS

**Imagine a future in which the health and vitality of water resources and wildlife habitats are top national and regional priorities ...**

1. Where everybody has affordable access to clean, safe water for drinking and recreation ...
2. Where beaches never have to close due to toxic algae ...
3. Where communities never have to worry about a pipeline leak devastating nearby habitats ...
4. Where battling climate change unites people of all political orientations and backgrounds ...
5. Where massive public investments in restoring and protecting the environment are highlights of every federal and state budget ...
6. Where every child has opportunities to connect with nature, enjoy the benefits of experiencing the great outdoors, and receive the support and encouragement they need to become the next generation of environmental leaders.



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**We're making steady, tangible progress toward this more sustainable future in the Great Lakes region, and we have ambitious plans to do even more over the next five years. Our goal is to secure \$20 million in new funding by 2025 to help advance our priorities. This includes:**

**\$8 million to protect the region's waters by ...**

1. Implementing a permanent solution to the invasive species wreaking havoc on our lakes and streams.
2. Stopping the flow of oil through aging pipelines that threaten sensitive habitats and vulnerable communities.
3. Cleaning up PFASs and other hazardous chemicals that poison drinking water supplies.
4. Partnering with communities of color and urban centers to build an inclusive conservation movement representing and driven by historically marginalized voices.



### **\$8 million to invest in restoration and resilience of land and water habitats by ...**

1. Securing federal funding to restore the Great Lakes, Ohio River and Upper Mississippi watersheds.
2. Supporting state-level and federal-level action to confront climate change and help communities and wildlife adapt.
3. Helping develop and implement sustainable forest management plans in the Great Northwoods.

### **\$4 million to reverse habitat loss while fostering the next generation of environmental stewards by ...**

1. Developing conservation leaders through the Leadership and Environmental Education Program (LEEP).
2. Engaging houses of worship in promoting healthy habitats and strong communities through the Sacred Grounds program.
3. Encouraging young children to play in natural outdoor areas through the Early Childhood Health Outdoors (ECHO) program.



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### **Our Commitment to Racial Equity and Justice**

#### **Wildlife will only thrive when human communities are healthy and equitable.**

Polluted rivers and streams prevent fish from thriving and clean water from flowing. Dirty air and invasive plants make it hard for wildlife to live healthy lives and for people to breathe. And when people are disconnected from one another—whether through historic injustices, racism, or lack of resources to live full lives—healthy communities and healthy habitats cannot reach their potential. Only by confronting these barriers and biases head-on will we be able to meaningfully and effectively achieve our conservation goals.

NWF has made a commitment to center equity and justice in all of our work. We are focusing on racial equity and becoming an anti-racist organization both internally and in our partnerships and advocacy work. Our mission depends on it: We will only succeed if people of all backgrounds are fully represented with no systemic barriers to participation.



## Protecting Our Great Lakes Region

Our plan includes you. We need you as a partner both for the financial support we depend on and as an advocate lending your voice to the growing chorus demanding action. Only by working together for our Great Lakes Region can we change, grow, and learn to become a 21st century wildlife organization, ensuring people and wildlife thrive in a rapidly changing world. Join us.

**Thank you for considering a contribution to the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Regional Center!**



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JOHN KARL

**If you would like to learn more about our work or have any other questions, please don't hesitate to contact us. We love to hear from our supporters.**

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