

Lake Michigan LWV 2013 Annual Meeting Overview

by Anita Rappe

The Lake Michigan League of Women Voters had their Annual Meeting on October 15-17, 2013 at Blue Harbor Resort, in conjunction with two other organizations involved with Great Lakes issues. They were: State of Lake Michigan (SOLM) and Great Lakes Beach Association (GLBA). This joint conference brought together public officials, professors, business men, and interested citizens concerned with our great resource, the Great Lakes.

The LMLWV held their meetings entirely on October 15th, with a plenary session starting at 1 PM. It was decided that the emphasis of our efforts and study this coming year would be on watershed, and the combined sewage overflow problem. Invasive species would take a back seat, as studies have shown that they are not the threat we thought they would be-----at least for now.

After a wine and cheese social at 4:30 PM, we traveled to the Sheboygan Yacht Club for a wonderful dinner and a presentation by the Ripon LWV about the pollution to the rivers in their area by the megafarms runoff.

The next two days were filled with many programs offered by a variety of experts about the many issues concerning Lake Michigan, the Great Lakes in general, and especially the beaches. Some of the emphasis was on studies presented on the dredging efforts on several river heads, especially the Sheboygan River. A tour was offered to those interested to see the results of the dredging process.

Another study of particular interest to us locally was Green Bay area. A portion of southern Green Bay was deemed a "dead zone" already, and it was predicted that in 10 years, a large portion of Green Bay would be a dead zone if there was nothing done. The problem was two-fold, one being the phosphate, nitrate, and dissolved oxygen in the water, and the other problem was the rising temperature of the lake waters, due to global warming. Lake Michigan (and Green Bay) is not freezing over in late years. This was only a small part of the sessions offered.

The consensus of those attending was that it was definitely worth the time and money to join with the larger organizations concerned with Great Lakes issues to further our cause in the upcoming years. This conference will occur again in 2015.