

## **EPA grants UWO another \$1 million to make beaches safer**

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/20638/epa-grants-uwo-another-1-million-to-make-beaches-safer/>

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced seven Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grants - including two for the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh - totaling more than \$2.6 million, to improve water quality at Great Lakes beaches in Michigan and Wisconsin.

The grants were announced Aug. 28 by EPA Regional Administrator and Great Lakes National Program Manager Susan Hedman at Samuel Myers Park in Racine, one of the beaches targeted for work under the grants.

UW Oshkosh was awarded \$1 million (two grants of \$500,000 each) to redesign eight Wisconsin beaches to reduce bacteria levels, resulting in fewer swimming bans and beach closures. The beaches include: Samuel Myers Park, Racine; Red Arrow Park Beach, Marinette; Crescent Beach, Algoma; Red Arrow Park Beach, Manitowoc; Thompson West End Park, Washburn; Grant Park, South Milwaukee; and Simmons Island and Eichelman Parks, Kenosha.

"This federal grant will continue to help our UW Oshkosh research teams ensure Wisconsin's beaches and waterways are safe and hospitable to the tens of thousands of people in counties throughout northern, eastern and southern Wisconsin who enjoy them each year. It's an important element of sustainability within many of our state's communities," said Nilay Sheth, a UW Oshkosh Masters graduate and research assistant in the Environmental Research and Innovation Center.

The federal grant is the fifth in three years for UW Oshkosh, bringing the total grant money awarded to the University through the GLRI to more than \$3.2 million.

Over the last three years, GLRI has provided more than \$29 million for 78 projects to protect and restore Great Lakes beaches. This funding has paid for sanitary surveys at 400 beaches, allowing beach managers to identify contamination sources and to implement projects that reduce or eliminate pollution. The GLRI has also funded eight projects to better forecast beach conditions and to develop technologies such as Smartphone apps to issue real-time alerts about swimming bans and beach closures.

Since 2003, UW Oshkosh's GLRI research and field work has involved student interns at regional laboratories collecting and analyzing water samples from dozens of sites in 10 different Wisconsin counties on behalf of EPA. The research program has grown to include more than 150 UW Oshkosh graduate and undergraduates who, beyond their high-impact lab work, have presented findings at scientific forums and conferences.

The field work and beach engineering solutions are preventing pollution, protecting public health and increasing revenues for communities that rely on beaches for summer recreation and tourism.

"These Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grants will improve water quality, allowing people to enjoy

more days at Great Lakes beaches,” Hedman said. “The projects will make beaches safer, by eliminating harmful bacteria and other sources of contamination.”

Other GLRI projects announced include:

- \$179,700 to the City of Marquette, Michigan, to lower health risks and to improve water quality at two Lake Superior beaches in Marquette by using green management practices to reduce contamination.
- \$500,000 to the City of Marysville, Michigan, to install rain gardens and other green infrastructure to reduce contaminated stormwater runoff and to deter geese at Chrysler Beach on the St. Clair River.
- \$500,000 to the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority for green infrastructure to reduce contaminated stormwater runoff at Lake St. Clair Metropark (Metro Beach.)
- \$217,015 to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to construct rain gardens, plant native grass and install a filtration system to improve water quality and reduce health risks at Sherman Park and Four Mile beaches in Sault Ste. Marie.
- \$263,188 to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality to build a green stormwater infiltration system at New Buffalo City Beach to reduce bacteria and nutrient levels.

The GLRI, initially proposed by President Obama in February 2009, is the largest investment in the Great Lakes in over two decades. EPA is one of 16 federal agencies working to implement the GLRI Action Plan, which is available at <http://www.glri.us>.

*The USEPA provided information for this report.*

Learn more:

- [Environmental research and Innovation Center](#)
- [US Environmental Protection Agency](#)