

Illinois–Indiana Sea Grant Impacts

Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant (IISG) is one of 32 programs in the National Sea Grant network. IISG combines research, education and outreach to empower southern Lake Michigan communities to achieve a healthy environment and economy. Here is a sample of the program's impacts on issues that address local and regional concerns.

- ◆ To help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS) that lead to serious economic and ecological harm, IISG has supported research, informed managers and policy makers, raised awareness, and changed public behavior. In 2007, the City of Chicago passed an ordinance banning 26 AIS--this legislation was informed by Sea Grant-funded research results.
- ◆ In Porter County, Indiana, which includes lakefront natural areas, small towns, and valuable farmland as well as a growing population, Sea Grant has worked closely with local officials as they develop and implement smart growth policies for future land use decisions.
- ◆ IISG has a new online GIS-based decision support system that allows local officials in Indiana to develop economic plans that best fit their community and identify the natural resources that support these plans. Maps rich with research data in education, economics, health, government, land use, housing, and natural resources are providing key input to three pilot counties updating their comprehensive plans.
- ◆ Contaminated sediment in four designated Areas of Concern has been removed from lakes and rivers through Great Lakes Legacy Act funding, with more sites to follow. Throughout the process, IISG is on the ground, providing information and guidance to local residents as they plan remediation and restoration efforts.
- ◆ IISG has helped 1,500 underserved families make informed choices concerning fish in their diet--raising awareness through teacher training workshops, new curriculum, displays at ethnic festivals, and student-led community stewardship projects.
- ◆ Prescription drugs often end up in wastewater treatment plants and can then contaminate waterways. IISG has developed a resource kit and held workshops to help communities starting unwanted medicine take-back programs. In one of many success stories, in Sangamon County, Illinois, seven 55-gallon drums of household medicines were collected for safe incineration.
- ◆ IISG empowered a team of Extension educators in Illinois and Indiana to provide guidance to aquaculture producers through workshops or one-on-one consultations. In Indiana, five new aquaculture facilities started operations with help from IISG, including one who obtained a Federal Services Agency guaranteed loan.
- ◆ IISG-funded research found that flood peaks in the Chicago area are higher than they used to be, and they are higher than estimates currently used by water managers. Underestimating or overestimating 100-year flood levels can result in large economic losses or increased environmental degradation.



For more information about Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, visit www.iisgcp.org.