

1 Program Outline

Illinois is dedicated to protecting and managing the natural and cultural resources along our magnificent 63 mile stretch of Lake Michigan shoreline. Over the last two centuries, Illinois' coast has undergone nearly a complete metamorphosis. We have modified its hydrology, developed the infrastructure that supports a world class industrial and transportation center, and invented the skyscrapers that today grace our shoreline. With all these changes, it is remarkable that our coastal resources still contain some of the richest, rarest, and most diverse populations of plant and animal species and natural habitat areas in the state.

Lake Michigan is a tremendous resource for our state. It provides recreational and commercial resources as well as a water supply. Our coastal counties' Lake and Cook are currently home to 6 million people and they are projected to grow to nearly 6.8 million people by 2030. It is estimated that more than 20 million people visit the Lake Michigan shoreline each year. Illinois Beach State Park alone has over 2 million visitors annually. Lake Michigan provides drinking water to nearly 7 million Illinois residents (over half of the state's entire population).

Our shoreline is subject to considerable stress because it is highly urbanized. However the environmental legacy of our industrial development must be balanced against the needs and demands of a growing and vibrant urban community. The Coastal Management Program will increase the capacity of our coastal communities to strike this balance as we invest in programs that seek to restore our ecosystems and meet the increasing demands for open space, recreation, and public access.

Coastal Management Program Goals:

The Illinois Coastal Management Program (ICMP) will work to preserve, protect, restore, and where possible, enhance coastal resources in Illinois for this and succeeding generations. The program will also work to improve the quality of decision-making by the state and coastal communities resulting in more effective outcomes. The ICMP will achieve this by:

- Enhancing the state's role in supporting and coordinating partnerships among local, state and federal agencies and organizations in the planning and management of these efforts. The ICMP will strengthen local stakeholder capacity to initiate and continue effective coastal management consistent with identified state standards and criteria.
- Facilitating the development of a shared vision for the protection, restoration and enhancement of our coastal resources. The ICMP will shape coastal ecosystem management policies, streamlining procedures, and providing a clearinghouse for information on regulatory programs governing our coast. The program will also increase public awareness, involvement and opportunities for citizens to participate in decisions affecting our Lake Michigan coastal resources.
- Coordinating agency and stakeholder efforts that identify regional priorities and implement local projects to address those priorities. The ICMP will advocate for the wise and balanced use of the coastal environment and the recognition in federal, state, and local policies of the uniqueness of the coastal environment.

- Leveraging ICMP resources and other funds to maximize the impact of local projects. The ICMP will assist in the implementation and enforcement of existing programs that manage coastal uses impacting the environment. Resources will be prioritized where gaps or weaknesses are identified.

Coastal Management Program Priorities

The ICMP will address the following program areas which are also outlined in the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy. The ICMP will describe desired outcomes, prioritize strategies for achieving them, and suggest site specific projects:

- **Invasive Species.** The ICMP will support mitigation, and long term sustainable solutions to terrestrial invasive species. Strategies for controlling aquatic invasive species will focus on the Chicago and Sanitary Ship Canal, and the hydrologic/ecological separation of the Illinois River basin from the Lake Michigan basin.
- **Habitat, Ecosystems and Natural Area Restoration.** The ICMP will prioritize the undeveloped portions of shoreline in Cook and Lake Counties immediately north of Chicago to the Wisconsin state line, and south of Chicago to the Indiana state line. These areas include, North Point Marina and Illinois Beach State Park including the Dead River and Kellogg Creek Watersheds, Waukegan Beach, the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Spring Bluff forest preserve, and wooded ravines along the Lake Michigan bluffs.
- **The Chicago River, North Shore Channel Corridors, and Wilmette Harbor** are increasingly important habitat areas and will be included. The Little Calumet and Grand Calumet River corridors, Lake Calumet, Calumet River, and the surrounding wetland areas are important habitat. These areas contain some of the most degraded industrial sites, and will also be included.
- **Areas of Concern (AOC).** Waukegan Harbor is the only designated AOC in Illinois. Six of 14 use impairments have been identified for the Waukegan AOC. The impairments include restrictions on fish and wildlife consumption, benthos degradation, restrictions on dredging, beach closings, degradation of phytoplankton populations, and loss of fish and wildlife habitat. The ICMP will develop a priority list for projects in Waukegan Harbor, Waukegan Lakefront, and Waukegan River Watershed to remove these impairments.
- **Persistent Bio-Accumulative Toxins.** Toxic issues in Northeastern Illinois are generally legacy issues from our industrial past. They are mostly well-documented, and tend to be concentrated in the river sediments, brownfields, and superfund sites. The ICMP will develop site specific strategies for each property, and develop priorities for long term restoration strategies as appropriate.
- **Sustainable Development.** The Illinois coast is primarily urban, with the few exceptions mentioned previously. The ICMP will develop strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, which includes reducing individual carbon footprints, and expanding the use of our natural resources to act as carbon sinks.
- **Non-Point Source.** Non-point source pollution in Illinois is primarily related to storm-water which is managed, treated, and ultimately discharged away from the Lake Michigan Basin. Despite the investment of billions of dollars over the decades, basement flooding, and diversions of untreated

sewage into Lake Michigan are not uncommon. The ICMP will facilitate an important discussion of expanding the use of green infrastructure to control storm-water, promote groundwater recharge, and reduce flooding.

- Information and Indicators. The ICMP will identify existing and ongoing data collections and indicators. It will also identify gaps in data, and develop priorities for future data collection efforts. The ICMP will assist in the collaborative development of sustainability indicators for the region.

Coastal Management Program Additional Priorities

- Public Access and Recreation. Illinois' shoreline is increasingly used for recreation. The demand for public access to Lake Michigan and recreational resources has outstripped the supply, and is likely to continue to grow in the future. There will always be a need for additional, and improved, recreational facilities and services. The ICMP will provide technical and financial assistance to acquire new, or improve public recreational sites and facilities.
- Economic Development. Our coastal communities are essential components of a strong Illinois economy. The ICMP will provide assistance to these communities to improve management programs, and support efforts to identify, and designate areas especially suited for economic development. These areas may include ports, waterfronts, and harbors. The ICMP will also provide technical and financial assistance in the regional planning process for energy transmission and transportation routes.
- Climate Change. Climate models project a decline in ice cover, and a greater rate of evaporation in the Great Lakes causing a drop in the level of Lake Michigan. These changes will affect ecosystems, water quality, water supply, and navigation. Warmer water temperatures and increased run-off from higher intensity rainstorms will likely increase the risk of water-borne diseases. The ICMP will support projects focused on adaptation to the effects of climate change in North East Illinois.

The ICMP will assess emerging issues, develop policies and management approaches, undertake programs and projects in partnership with communities and local agencies, and enforce program policies to balance development and conservation.

Public Outreach

The ICMP has established a strong track record of transparency, public outreach, and stakeholder involvement, beginning with an effort to identify special management areas. A meeting was held for municipal and government officials on January 25, 2005 at Gillson Park in the Village of Wilmette.

A questionnaire was distributed at the meeting requesting input on general resource areas, and specific geographic areas, meriting special attention in developing and implementing a coastal management program. The questionnaire also requested input regarding establishment of the coastal boundary, the need for increased public access, and to identify potential projects or needs eligible for ICMP grant funding. The questionnaire was also sent to a broad list of interest groups in April 2005.

In May and June of 2005, the IDNR met individually with the 15-shoreline municipalities, and the villages of Skokie and Lincolnwood to discuss ICMP preliminary plans and goals. In July 2005, a meeting was held with the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association representing the communities along the

Little Calumet, and the Grand Calumet Rivers. These meetings sought specific input on coastal boundary lines, roads, and on areas meriting special program attention.

The first series of ICMP open houses was held during July 2005 in Waukegan, Highland Park, and at Loyola University-Chicago Lake Shore campus, respectively. Another open house was held in (south) Chicago on September 2005. A second series of four open houses were held at the same locations in November 2005. From 2006 to 2010, IDNR drafted and worked closely with NOAA to edit the program document, and additional detail can be found in Chapter 11. A final public meeting was held February 18, 2011 to receive public input on the completed program document prior to submission to the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration for formal approval.

The public hearing was staged from 12:00 to 3:00 pm CST and included an hour long webinar component during which participants who were unable to attend in person could gain audio and visual access to the presentations. The hearing consisted of three presentations: *The Illinois Coast – Geologic History, Human Impact, and Management Challenges*; *The Illinois Coastal Management Program*; and the *Illinois Clean and Green Marina Program*. Following the presentations, attendees and webinar participants were given an opportunity to ask questions to the presenters. All questions and comments were recorded and addressed.

In establishing program goals, and priorities for the ICMP, it is important to note that as a new program, the ICMP will need flexibility to develop, mature, and change to address the needs of the federal, state and coastal communities. Full participation and engagement by the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) is the key to maintaining this flexibility by providing a broader perspective when evaluating a course of action.

The level of engagement in the Great Lakes among policymakers is higher than it has been in the last several years. Working cooperatively with other states and provinces, the ICMP will strengthen the planning, policies, and programs to address the wide range of Great Lakes issues, and aid in developing a sound comprehensive management program for Lake Michigan and the entire Great Lakes basin.

