

What is the Lake Michigan Coastal Program?

What the Lake Michigan Coastal Program is:

The purpose of the Lake Michigan Coastal Program is to support coordination and partnerships among local, state and federal agencies and local organizations to preserve, protect, restore, and where possible, develop coastal resources in Indiana's Lake Michigan watershed. The Lake Michigan Coastal Program is based on Indiana's existing laws.

What the Lake Michigan Coastal Program is not:

The Lake Michigan Coastal Program is not a zoning document. It is not a restrictive plan that threatens to take away local control from local communities. It does not create any new laws or bureaucracy.

Who participates in the program?

In cooperation with public input, many federal, state, and local agencies manage resources in the coastal region of Indiana. That will not change. The fundamental roles of these agencies will remain the same. The Lake Michigan Coastal Program will encourage a coordination of agency efforts in the coastal region to streamline government processes. The Lake Michigan Coastal Program will provide opportunities for federal, state, and local stakeholders to cooperatively identify priorities for the coastal region and to implement local projects to address those priorities.

What's in it for us?

The most important outcome will be the protection and sustainable use of the natural and cultural resources in this vital Indiana region. The program will enhance ecological, recreational, and economic opportunities for northwest Indiana and provide funding for a grants program to implement local projects.

The icing on the cake:

Development of the Lake Michigan Coastal Program will make federal funds available to communities in northwest

Indiana. It is estimated that Indiana will receive more than \$600,000 annually to implement the Lake Michigan Coastal Program and the Coastal Grants Program.

Examples of how these funds might be used include:

- Protection and restoration of significant natural and cultural resources.
- Programs to prevent the loss of life and property in coastal hazard areas.
- Improved public access for recreational purposes.
- Revitalized urban waterfronts and ports.
- Improved coordination among government agencies in policy and decision-making processes.
- Pollution prevention initiatives, including non-point source pollution into coastal waters.

Who implements this program?

The lead agency to implement the Lake Michigan Coastal Program is the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. This agency has taken an active role in working with northwest Indiana governmental leaders and local residents to identify and address regional priorities.

Federal funding for state and local programs comes from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In 2000, \$58 million was sent to states and territories to help implement coastal programs and deal with critical coastal areas.

Thirty-three of the 35 coastal states participate in the program. Of the remaining states that have coastlines, Indiana and Illinois are the only states that have not yet participated.

Local and state agencies and non-profit organizations would be eligible to apply for and receive funds from the Coastal Grants Program. A few examples of how other communities have used these funds in the past include:

- Low-cost construction projects such as dune walkovers and boat launches.
- Planning and creation of beach access points.
- Reinvigorating economically depressed waterfront areas.
- Preventing and monitoring beach erosion.
- Providing technical assistance on shore protection and bluff stabilization.
- Providing assistance for local planning in coastal areas.

These are examples of how other states, local governments, and non-profit organizations have used their funds. The types of activities that can be funded are broadly defined and left to the creativity of state and local governments, and organizations, as long as the goals of the Lake Michigan Coastal Program are addressed.

What can you do to help?

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources is asking for your input, comments, and questions concerning the Lake Michigan Coastal Program. Please attend the public meetings this summer to submit your ideas on what should be in the Lake Michigan Coastal Program's draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). After the DEIS is written, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources will ask for your participation in public meetings this fall to discuss the contents of the plan. Your comments are a valuable part of this program development process.

For more information on the Lake Michigan Coastal Program, please contact:

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