



# Preserving Our Past, Protecting Our Future 2015 Annual Report



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**Action  
Network**



In April, Clean Wisconsin celebrated 45 years of preserving and protecting Wisconsin's clean water, clean air, and special places. We've faced many challenges along the way, but one thing is certain: we've been a consistent, steady, voice for those who demand that our air, water, and natural resources are clean and safe for all Wisconsinites.

We experienced many great victories and dealt with many big challenges in 2015.

In July, Wisconsin celebrated the signing of a ban on plastic microbeads. This makes us the seventh state to pass a law aimed at keeping microplastics, commonly found in cosmetic products and toothpastes, out of our waters and Great Lakes.

We also celebrated our 2nd year of work collaborating with municipal agencies and community organizations in Milwaukee's 30th Street Corridor to install green infrastructure projects to help manage stormwater and mitigate flooding.

But we also saw a growing cause for concern for our water resources across our state. In Kewaunee County, many families can't drink the water in their homes because their wells are contaminated by bacteria and nitrates. Clean Wisconsin filed a petition with the Environmental Protection Agency asking the agency to identify the source of the contamination.

Waukesha County filed for approval to divert water from Lake Michigan to deal with their water quality and quantity issues and has received preliminary approval from the Department of Natural Resources. With our coalition of allies and stakeholders, we've filed an alternative plan that will save the residents of Waukesha money without drawing a drop of water from Lake Michigan. And the issue of high capacity wells continues to be a key priority for Clean Wisconsin. With a need for comprehensive legislation on this issue, and with a wide variety of bills being considered by the Legislature, we will continue to work toward ensuring that our groundwater resources are responsively and respectfully managed.

Healthy waters, fresh air, and protected natural wonders are Wisconsin's promise to all her people. In the coming year, we face uncertain times with unknown outcomes. But regardless of what befalls us in 2016, we will be here, protecting Wisconsin's natural heritage through hard work and unwavering perseverance, just as we have for the past 45 years.



**Mark Redsten**  
**Executive Director**

*Mark Redsten*

## Looking Ahead

The year to come is sure to bring many challenges. With the nearing end of the legislative session, continued review of Waukesha's proposed diversion of water from Lake Michigan, and the election year on the horizon, environmental issues will certainly be topics of conversation, debate, and disagreement. While there is great uncertainty in the upcoming year, Clean Wisconsin will continue to be a patient and consistent voice working toward common-sense solutions. In 2016, we have several priorities including:

### **Keeping a careful eye on groundwater protections**

With the water quality and quantity challenges faced by many parts of our state, including Kewaunee County and the Central Sands, Clean Wisconsin will continue to monitor the management of our groundwater and influence state and federal agencies to ensure that everyone has access to clean and abundant water.

### **Collaborating for Clean Energy**

With our stakeholder partners, we will continue to encourage utilities to invest in an energy portfolio powered by the wind and the sun, as well as continue to engage in projects from the Clean Power Plan to Focus on Energy to move Wisconsin into a clean energy future.

### **Working to uphold the Great Lakes Compact**

With Waukesha's diversion plan moving through the steps of review, Clean Wisconsin will remain steadfast in working to uphold the protections in place to preserve our Great Lakes. We will be active in the review process by voicing our concerns and suggestions to the review committees and to the public at large.



**PHOTO** Whitefish Dunes State Park | By John S. Adams, Clean Wisconsin

# 2015 Success Stories

Since 1970, Clean Wisconsin has worked hard to defend our clean air, clean water and special places. Through the years, we've effectively done this by enacting or strengthening environmental policies; defending those policies when they are threatened; holding polluters and elected leaders accountable; and educating members, decisionmakers and the public on the importance of protecting our natural resources.

## In 2015, we had numerous victories:

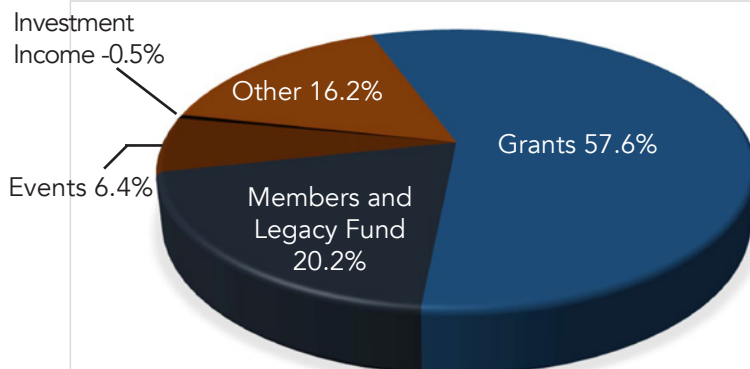
**Microbeads Ban Passed** In July, Gov. Scott Walker signed a ban on microbeads in products sold and used in Wisconsin. Microbeads — the small bits of plastic used as as exfoliants in toothpastes and cosmetics — make their way into our lakes, rivers, and streams where they impact ecosystems and wildlife and get in our drinking water. Wisconsin is the seventh state to pass a microbead ban, and that state-level pressure led to adoption of a nationwide microbead ban. Clean Wisconsin played an integral role in educating lawmakers and supporters on the issue, and getting it signed into law.

**Building on Success in Milwaukee** We entered 2015 with our second year of work in Milwaukee's 30th Street Corridor, engaging with community groups and municipal agencies to implement green infrastructure projects. This neighborhood, which has long seen a decline in economic investment, is prone to systemic flooding during rainstorms. Green infrastructure, from rain gardens to rain barrels, help mitigate the effects of flooding and aid in stormwater management. Our work has helped this neighborhood see a decline in street and basement flooding.

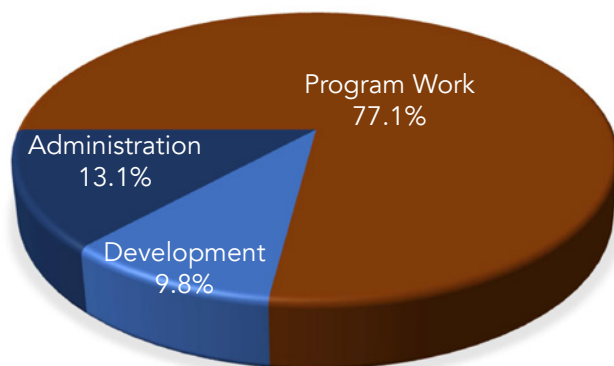
**A New Plan for Waukesha** In collaboration with our partner organizations in the Compact Implementation Coalition, Clean Wisconsin drafted an alternative plan to Waukesha's proposed diversion of water from Lake Michigan to address their water quality and quantity issues. Our proposed alternative was the result of more than a year of work with two independent firms with expertise in water supply engineering, water treatment and hydrogeology. Our experts determined that the City's current supply is a viable alternative to Lake Michigan water, and updating its outdated technology to "best available" technology for removing radium and other contaminants could alleviate existing contamination issues. We believe that our plan is a realistic alternative to the proposed diversion, and we will continue to work with our coalition partners to uphold the important protections in the Great Lakes Compact.

# Fueled by your generosity

## 2015 Support & Revenue: \$1,456,702



## 2015 Total Expenses: \$2,073,129



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