



ALLIANCE FOR THE GREAT LAKES

ENSURING A LIVING RESOURCE FOR ALL GENERATIONS

CONSERVE WATER, PROTECT GREAT LAKES

The Great Lakes contain 20 percent of the world's and 90 percent of North America's surface freshwater. These glacial remnants from 10,000 years ago see less than 1 percent of their water renewed each year by rain and snow. This slow recharge rate means we must take care to maintain the amount of water in the lakes.

Great Lakes Water: Here Today, Here Tomorrow

It would take 100 years for nature to replace a gallon of water lost from the Great Lakes today. That means if depleted, the lakes won't be back in our lifetime. Good Great Lakes stewardship means using less water now to ensure it's there in the future. Conserving water also:

- Conserves the electrical energy needed to pump and treat billions of gallons of water, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the effects of global warming.
- Reduces wear and tear on expensive pipes and pumps, keeping local tax bills lower.
- Ensures a sustainable source of drinking water for the 40 million people living in the Great Lakes region and the businesses that invest in them.
- Preserves the wetlands, fisheries, wildlife, beaches and sand dunes dependent on the Great Lakes.

Congress approved the landmark Great Lakes Compact in 2008 to ban diversions of Great Lakes water, with limited exceptions, and to set smart water use standards within the basin. The compact is in the process of being implemented by each of the eight Great Lake states.

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Formed in 1970, the Alliance for the Great lakes is the oldest citizens' Great Lakes organization in North America. Its mission is to conserve and restore the world's largest freshwater resources using policy, education and local efforts, ensuring a healthy Great Lakes and clean water for generations of people and wildlife. The Alliance is headquartered in Chicago with offices in Cleveland, Milwaukee and Grand Haven. More about the Alliance is online at www.greatlakes.org.



Forty million people rely on the Great Lakes for drinking water, and everyone has a role to play in protecting them.
Photo: Lloyd DeGrane

How You Can Help

You help save water and the Great Lakes if you:

- Install low-flow showerheads and toilets.
- Look for the U.S. EPA's WaterSense label when shopping for appliances.
- Water lawns and gardens less often and in the early morning rather than during the day.
- Use rain barrels and a rain garden to catch water on your property during storms.
- Ask your state environmental agency for strong protections under the Great Lakes Compact.

www.greatlakes.org