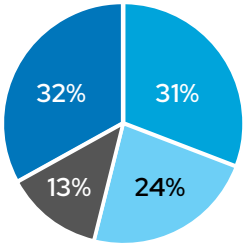
WISCONSIN SEA GRANT

Putting Coastal Science To Work for Wisconsin

For 57 years, Wisconsin Sea Grant has been a locally focused, federal-state outreach partnership supporting research, education and outreach.

Funding Sources

- Core Sea Grant **32%**
- State Investment **31%**
- Leveraged Funds **24%**
- Other Sea Grant **13%**



FROM DISCOVERY TO APPLICATION

Restoring a $15M Market for Wisconsin Products

Wisconsin fishing industry representatives asked for help addressing a negative sustainability rating by the World Wildlife Fund for Great Lakes fish roe (eggs or caviar) that stopped roe distribution in Sweden. The Great Lakes roe industry has an estimated economic value of $15 million. An estimated 100 U.S. commercial fishers (state and tribal) are impacted economically by any changes in the Great Lakes roe industry. Sea Grant provided the Swedish Seafood Forum with sustainability information. This information directly resulted in the World Wildlife Fund changing its rating for Wisconsin's Lake Superior whitefish and cisco commercial harvest from "avoid" to "best choice," and the $15 million in sales resumed.

Good for Business, Good for the Environment

The Wisconsin Clean Marina Program is another way industry benefits from Sea Grant programs. This statewide program provides critical information and technical assistance to Wisconsin's marine industry to promote clean and safe waterways. Wisconsin has an estimated 149 marina businesses, which account for over $310 million in economic activity. Of those, 26 are certified through our program to have met federal and state pollution and safety laws and another 18 are pursuing certification. In a survey, clean marinas noted increased business due to certification.

BY THE NUMBERS

ALL FIGURES FROM 2024 REPORTING

$84 MILLION
In economic impacts

117
University students supported

15
New and continuing research projects

Safeguarding Fish Health

Viruses continually emerge in fish and may threaten Wisconsin's cherished recreational fishing, an activity that is worth $1.9 billion annually, according to the American Sportfishing Association. Knowledge of naturally circulating viruses prepares fisheries managers should any of these viruses emerge to cause disease in the future.

Wisconsin Sea Grant funded researchers to conduct the first-ever survey of Wisconsin sport fish to identify circulating viruses. The researchers identified 19 viruses, 17 of which were previously unknown. One of these viruses, in walleye, is a new coronavirus and the first of its type to be identified in a fish. Results are being used by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to prepare action plans for future emergence of viruses in Wisconsin's sport fish. A database of fish viruses is also being prepared in partnership with the U.S. Geological Survey.

Helping Flood-Prone Communities

Several communities in the Fox River, Green Bay, Lake Michigan Watershed, particularly along the East River, have seen repeated flooding and extensive property damage. A team of Wisconsin Sea Grant outreach specialists addressed local flooding concerns through tool sharing, field trips, e-newsletters, meetings and webinars. They developed a new tool in conjunction with local officials: an East River Interactive Flood Map. Officials are using the map to view and compare the impacts of different flooding scenarios in the East River Watershed. Grants from the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and the Fund for Lake Michigan will help the specialists develop a survey and gather feedback from the community. The goal is to bring those perspectives to the table when municipalities start planning projects.

Probing PFAS

Sea Grant researchers discovered that PFAS are concentrated in the foam that piles up on lake shores on windy days. This can happen even when the water doesn't contain much PFAS. Researchers warned the public not to handle foams.

Sea Grant researchers are also developing effective ways to communicate with Wisconsin residents about PFAS. Their goal is to increase understanding, avoid undue fear and provide recommendations for things people can do to reduce their risk of exposure to PFAS. They will share their results via webinars, news releases and collaborations with Spanish-speaking media, as well as developing resources for environmental and health communication professionals.

BY THE NUMBERS
CONTINUED

51,400
K-12 and lifelong learners reached

21
New tools and resources for environmental understanding

540
Natural resources managers assisted

938
Fish-related industry personnel assisted