



Working Together to Improve Beaches and Coasts

John Dickert
Mayor of Racine, WI, USA

Why Do Beaches and Coasts Matter?



- Environmentally
- Socially
- Economically

Environmentally

- Beaches are important habitat for many species: plants, fish and animals
- Link in chain of coastal processes

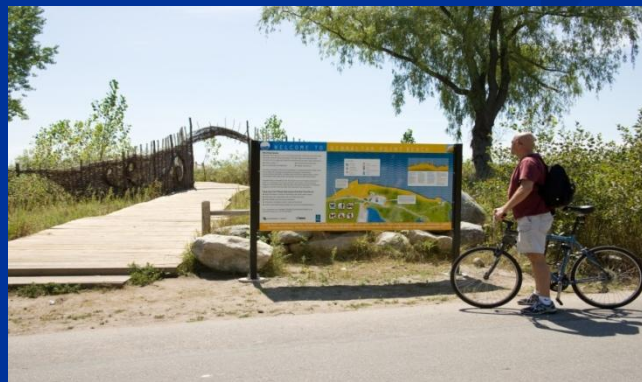


Photo credit: Ministry of
Natural Resources

Socially



- Beaches and coasts help define “sense of place”
- Source of community pride and “personality”
- Democratic, multi-generational, multi-cultural
- Encourage recreation, sports and activity
- Key measure of environmental quality of Great Lakes



Economically



- Great Lakes beaches are valuable
 - Value of US Great Lakes beaches \$1.1 to \$1.4 billion (Shaikh, 2004)
 - Recreational value of Ontario's Great Lakes beaches \$200 to \$250 million (Krantzberg, 2008)
 - Average day at the beach estimated at \$30- \$50 per person
- Beaches are a powerful local economic engine
- Beach improvements = smart investments

Local Government in Action



- Many communities are beach leaders
 - Racine, Wasaga Beach, Chicago, Toronto, Niagara
 - Sanitary Surveys and other best management practices
 - Many beaches are internationally eco- certified Blue Flag beaches
 - Meet 33 criteria
 - Port Stanley Beach (Lake Erie) recently received Blue Flag
 - Growing community recognition that beaches are treasures
 - Growing interest in integrated coastal management
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What is the US doing?

■ Funding

- Proposed increased funding of BEACH Act - *stalled*
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

■ Standards

- EPA still working to revise standards
- Rapid test methods

■ Action

- Clean Beaches Initiative
- Great Lakes, Great Beaches and Coasts webpage



What is Canada doing?

■ Funding

- No dedicated Canadian federal funding
- One Provincial public health funding envelope to public health units for all mandates including beach monitoring

■ Standards

- New proposed Canadian federal water quality guidelines

■ Action

- Cities / Ontario beach workshop April 2010
- Cities / Ontario commitment to create new beach and coast network
- Great Lakes, Great Beaches and Coasts



At the Shoreline:
A Mayors' Collaborative Action
Plan to Protect the Great Lakes



On May 5th, 2009, the Great Lakes Mayors and Chairs Committee presented their report, *At the Shoreline: A Mayors' Collaborative Action Plan to Protect the Great Lakes*, to the Ontario Ministers of Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs at the first Provincial-Municipal Great Lakes Summit in Toronto. The report consists of a five-point action plan and key recommendations to forge a stronger relationship and strategic coordination among the three orders of government to protect and promote the Great Lakes.

Racine, WI



■ Coastal Areas are a **Community Asset**

- Successful beach and riparian restoration projects
- Culmination of political will, municipal teamwork, sound science, local business investment, and citizen stewardship
- Achieved environmental sustainability while successfully marrying economic development and community need for an accessible recreational outlet



A Community Asset for 100 Years



284 Bathing Scene, North Beach, Racine, c. 1907



North Beach - 1907

North Beach - 2009



North Beach Awards



- WI first “Blue Wave” beach
 - US equivalent to International Blue Flag
 - Certified since 2004
 - Governor’s award for environmental performance, 2008
 - National Resource Defense Council
 - Noted as one of 200 popular US swimming beaches (2009)
 - EVP Pro-Am Beach Volleyball Tour
 - World Championship Host City, 2009
 - Midwest Living Magazine
 - “2010 Best of the Midwest” recognition for best urban beaches
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Economic Return



- Spirit of Racine Triathlon (2009)
 - \$1,042,500
 - Expected to double in 2010
- EVP Pro Beach Volleyball Tournaments (2009)
 - \$175,000
- World Series of Watercross (2010)
 - \$200,000
- Property value increase
 - Increase of \$10/foot in relation to North Beach
 - Increase of \$2/foot for proximity to Lake Michigan in general

How do you make a great thing even better?



Innovation and Education!



- Improved handicap access
 - Installed June 2010
 - Mobi-Mat® RecPath by Deschamps
 - Covers over 600 linear feet of sand
 - Direct access to the waters edge without environmental disturbance
 - Makes the beach experience even more fulfilling to those with mobility issues



Center for Coastal Management

- Improve understanding and appreciation of the Great Lakes
- Advance cutting edge research on monitoring and restoration
- Provide a link between local government and academia
- Provide professional development opportunities
- Serve diverse constituencies



A collaborative effort...



- Chicago, Milwaukee, and Racine
- Create collaborative municipal/academic partnerships along the western coast of Lake Michigan
 - Work within respective university systems
 - Curriculum Development
 - Student placement
 - Collaborative research
- Create consortium of research and service facilities
- Providing extensive, multidisciplinary freshwater research and education of global significance



Funding...



- The City of Racine and partners have secured programmatic funding in support of this effort
 - Current initiatives and future funding
 - Beach Sanitary Surveys, pollution source identification, restoration
 - Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), City of Racine
 - \$280,000 for beach sanitary surveys
 - Milwaukee County to WI/IL state line (including Racine)
 - Rapid Methods
 - GLRI, Water Environment Research Foundation, WI Coastal Management Program
 - Lab-based and models
 - \$400,000 (direct monetary support and work products)

Moving Forward



- How can we continue to work together to improve beaches and coasts?
 - Identify and Address Gaps
 - Build on what we already have
 - Form a Mayors' working group on beaches
 - Develop a strategy to improve coastal health
 - Create a dialog to discuss: monitoring, management, collaboration, communication



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