

**Kansas Department of  
Wildlife and Parks**

512 SE 25th Ave.  
Pratt, KS 67124  
620-672-0702 Phone  
Fax 620-672-2972



**MIDWEST**  
Association of  
Fish & Wildlife  
Agencies

**Ollie Torgerson CWB**

Executive Secretary  
107 Sutliff Ave.  
Rhineland, WI 54501  
(715) 365-8924  
(715) 365-8932 fax  
[Ollie.Torgerson@wi.gov](mailto:Ollie.Torgerson@wi.gov)  
<http://www.mafwa.iafwa.org>

July 11, 2008

Ben Grumbles, Assistant Administrator  
Office of Water (4101M)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Mr. Grumbles:

As you are aware, many lake and reservoir fisheries are being greatly impacted by degradation of essential habitats, including water quality. Our state fish and wildlife agencies are asking your help and the leadership of your agency to solve this problem. The traditional tools available to fisheries managers have, in many cases, failed to produce measurable and observable results. I think we all agree our lakes and reservoirs need help and deserve a better shake. The question is how can we make this happen? It is our opinion the Clean Water Act's Section 314 Clean Lakes Program is the perfect model, a comprehensive approach with well documented successes.

Our interests are expressed in two attachments, our resolution and a Position Statement of the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS). We wish to work with our state congressional delegations, you, your agency, NALMS and other partners to reinvigorate funding and application of the Clean Lakes Program. This resolution was unanimously approved by the membership of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and asks your assistance in renewing separate funding for the Clean Lakes Program. Our interest is an acknowledgement of the many issues impacting the water quality of our lakes and reservoirs and the close association between water, fish and recreation. We also acknowledge leadership and involvement of your agency is critical to our ability to meet public expectations relative to the health and well-being of lakes and reservoirs.

Our resolution, Protecting and Enhancing the Value of Our Nation's Lakes, will be taken to the September meeting of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and member states will be asked for their comment and approval. The intent of this effort is to increase public understanding of the present status of lakes and reservoirs, their economic value, and their importance to people. Our goal is to work with your agency, NALMS, other partners and non-profit organizations to increase support and level of funding targeting the special needs of our nation's lakes and reservoirs. To this end, we ask you to include separate funding for the Clean Lakes Program in EPA's the next budget cycle.

Sincerely,

Jeff Ver Steeg, President

Cc: Corky Pugh, President, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Gordon Robertson, Executive Vice-President, American Sport Fishing Association  
Chris Horton, Conservation Director, Bass Anglers Sportsman Society  
State Congressional Delegates

Colorado, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska,  
North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan

**North American Lake Management Society**  
**Position Statement #9**  
**Protecting and Enhancing the Value of Our Nation's Lakes**

**Background**

Throughout our nation's history, natural and constructed lakes have provided many benefits. Early settlers used lakes for transportation, food, drinking water, irrigation, industrial supply, and waste disposal. Recreation and habitat have come to be recognized as equally important lake uses. Many of our great cities are located along lakeshores and many reservoirs have been constructed to meet human needs. The Clean Lakes Program, Section 314 of the Clean Water Act, was developed to protect and enhance lakes. Yet lack of stewardship has caused deterioration of many of our lakes while population growth has increased demand for the many services provided by lakes. Every two years, states report on the condition of their waters and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides a summary report of this information to Congress. In 1996, states found that of the surveyed lakes, 39% were partially or fully impaired, with water quality threatened in an additional 10%. The 2002 National Water Quality Inventory, the most recent one published, listed 47% of assessed lakes and reservoirs as impaired and an additional 5% as threatened. Greater investment in lake and reservoir protection, rehabilitation and management is necessary to support designated uses of these valued resources.

**Economics of Lake Management**

Economic assessment of lake resources has quantified the value of lakes to people and concluded that lakes are of great economic importance to the associated communities. Among numerous studies, work by Boyle and colleagues determined the net economic value of lakes to Maine's annual economy to be at least \$6.7 billion, and a study by Todd estimated fishing, lodging and other recreation-related activities to contribute \$506 to \$830 to Minnesota's economy per lake acre. Egan and others found that lakes generate in excess of \$1.6 billion of spending annually in Iowa and create nearly 12,000 jobs. Lakes with better water quality had more value than lakes with poorer water quality. The same relationship holds for lakes with regard to invasive species and associated plant nuisances. The benefits associated with well-conceived lake improvement efforts exceed costs, and surveys indicate that people are willing to pay for significant improvements in lake condition. The results of successful lake management include not only significant increases in lake use but also more spending and jobs, essential elements of local, regional and state economies.

The 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation revealed a 12% drop in the number of anglers since the 2001 survey and confirmed an important finding of previous surveys; lakes, including reservoirs and ponds, are the most popular fishing spots for the nation's 30 million anglers. Over 304 million days of fishing per year and an annual expenditure of over \$17.2 billion were estimated. While the Great Lakes support 1.4 million anglers, with 18 million days of fishing and expenditures of \$1.5 billion per year, the vast majority of trips are taken under 50 miles from home, underlining the importance of each public waterbody and emphasizing the relative importance of lakes close to larger population centers. There is a clear need for better management of our waterbodies to meet a wide range of uses across a broad geographic area, with quantifiable economic benefits to be gained.

**Achieving the Goals of the Clean Water Act**

The U.S. Clean Water Act was designed to ensure that the water resources of the United States could fulfill a variety of beneficial, designated uses. Yet a major share of our nation's lakes are not meeting the "swimmable and fishable" goals set forth in the Clean Water Act. Without even considering the habitat benefits, the documented significance of lakes to people and the economy highlights the need for greater

public awareness of the plight of our nation's lakes and a stronger partnership among those responsible for the protection and improvement of these valuable public assets.

Lakes should receive more national attention and increased funding for protection and restoration. Federal programs target the special needs of wetlands, estuaries and coastal zones. Watersheds also benefit from much needed funding, with program dollars used to implement "Best Management Practices" that target the loss of valuable sediments and nutrients. Yet the Clean Lake Program (Section 314 of the CWA) has not been funded since 1994 and only 5% of the Section 319 Non-Point Source Program funds are designated for lake management. NALMS supports a national effort specifically designed to address the special needs of lakes, independent of size or origin. Research has documented many of the issues that reduce the quality of these valuable resources. States need and deserve the leadership and funding support of a strong federal partner, a commitment far greater than that enjoyed in recent years.

### **NALMS Positions**

1. NALMS will work with its partners to improve public understanding of the value of lakes and reservoirs to people and kindle awareness of issues that reduce public use and economic value of lake and reservoir resources.
2. NALMS will work to strengthen partnerships between governments and stakeholders to ensure proper protection, management and rehabilitation of lakes and reservoirs for present and future uses.
3. NALMS will provide leadership in the development of guidance on lake and watershed management issues for state and federal water resource agencies, state and federal fish and wildlife agencies and to all other interested groups.
4. NALMS will work to diversify its membership and encourage all stakeholders to become more involved in the development of national policies directed at lake and reservoir protection and improvement.
5. NALMS will identify and assess state and federal programs that provide financial and other support for lake management, and work to increase federal funding to augment state, local and private financing of lake protection and improvement projects.
6. NALMS recognizes the strengths and continued applicability of the Clean Lakes Program (Section 314 of the Clean Water Act), including science-based assessments, use of watersheds as management units, appropriate emphasis on in-lake projects, being locally driven but with state and federal matching funds, and requiring proper planning, implementation, and follow-up assessment and maintenance to ensure success.
7. NALMS supports the comprehensive, watershed-based approach used in the Clean Lakes Program and advocates the use of this model in the pursuit of support and funding for lake and reservoir protection and improvement.