

PROJECT PROFILE

SYNOPSIS

- **Project Title:** Great Lakes Reporting Project
- **Grantee Organization:** University of Michigan – Michigan Radio, The Environment Report
- **Project Team:**
 - Michigan Radio contributors: Mark Brush, Producer; Tamar Charney, Program Director; Steve Chrypinski, Marketing Director; Vince Duffy, News Director; Mercedes Mejia, Producer; Lindsey Smith, Reporter/Producer; Rebecca Williams, Reporter/Producer
 - Non-Michigan Radio contributors: Adam Allington, KWMU; Jennifer Jordan, The Allegheny Front; Jess Mador, Freelance Journalist; Peter Payette, Interlochen Public Radio; Chuck Quirmbach, Wisconsin Public Radio; David Summerstein, North Country Public Radio; Lewis Wallace, Freelance Journalist
- **Contact Person:** Ellen Han
- **Grant Amount:** \$35,000
- **Time Frame:** April 1, 2012-March 31, 2014
- **Focus Areas:** Stewardship
- **Brief Project Summary:** *The Environment Report* at Michigan Radio implemented the *Great Lakes Reporting Project*, a news and information initiative that promoted public awareness, appreciation, and concern for the changing ecology of the Great Lakes and its fish population. Over the course of two years, Michigan Radio produced and aired public radio news reports; developed multimedia and online resources; held public forums/discussions; and distributed copies of the media work as educator resources.

PROJECT IN CONTEXT

The *Great Lakes Reporting Project* was a one-time public radio series that enabled Michigan Radio to devote more resources and feature more in-depth coverage on the ecology of the Great Lakes and its fish population on *The Environment Report* (TER), a four minute segment that airs Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8:55am and 5:45pm.

The *Great Lakes Reporting Project* reached a broad audience through Michigan Radio's three signals, which span thirty-one counties in the southern half of Lower Michigan, from Grand Rapids (WVGR 104.1 FM), to Ann Arbor and Detroit (WUOM 91.7 FM), to Flint (WFUM 91.1 FM). More than 500,000 people tune-in to Michigan Radio each week while in their car, at home, at work, etc. In addition, Michigan Radio serves a virtual audience through its website (220,000 unique visitors/month, michiganradio.org) and social media sites (54,800 combined fans/followers on Facebook, "Michigan Radio," and Twitter, "@MichiganRadio"). Stories from the project were also broadcast on Interlochen Public Radio (IPR), which extended the reach of the program to an additional 23,000 weekly listeners in Northwest Lower Michigan in the Manistee (WLMN 89.7 FM), Traverse City (WICA 91.5 FM), and Harbor Springs (WHPB 90.1 FM) areas.

As a news organization, Michigan Radio can't solve the ecological problems facing the Great Lakes; but, perhaps more than any other resource, public radio has the ability to bring these issues to the attention of general audiences, legislators and community leaders who can take action and make positive change. In this way, the project helped to amplify the reach and

impact of the GLFT stewardship program and further the Trust's goal to increase awareness and understanding of the ecology of the Great Lakes.

GOALS OF THE EFFORT

The overall goal of the *Great Lakes Reporting Project* was to harness the power of news media to promote public awareness, appreciation, and concern for the changing ecology of the Great Lakes and its fish population. The objectives of the project were: 1) To produce and air eight public radio feature reports; 2) To produce and air two, five-part special radio series; 3) To provide online resources for each radio report/series; 4) To produce two, multi-media online features; 5) To hold two public forums; and 6) To distribute audio and visual resources to Michigan educators.

RESULTS

Implementation of the *Great Lakes Reporting Project* enabled Michigan Radio and TER to bring important, in-depth stories about the Great Lakes ecology to tens of thousands of public radio listeners throughout the state, from Flint, Detroit and Grand Rapids to Manistee, Traverse City and Harbor Springs. Specifically, we produced and aired more than 80 minutes of public radio reports, published online resources for each report, produced two online videos, convened two town hall forums with over 100 people in attendance combined, and distributed 44 CD copies of the stories to educators. Please see *Products and Resources* for a complete list of publications and activities.

PRODUCTS AND RESOURCES

The following media resources were published as part of the *Great Lakes Reporting Project* and can be found on the Michigan Radio website (michiganradio.org), or by clicking on the links provided below:

- **Public radio feature reports:**
 - *March 19, 2013 – [A New Life for Waste from Michigan's Lumbering Era](#) (4min), by Rebecca Williams*
 - *March 26, 2013 – [Michigan Chefs Experiment with Asian Carp](#) (4min), by Peter Payette*
 - *Thursday, April 11, 2013 – [A surprising comeback for Lake Huron's native fish](#) (4 min), by Peter Payette*
 - *Tuesday, May 28, 2013 – [The curious history of a tasty little Great Lakes fish](#) (4min), by Peter Payette*
 - *Thursday, May 30, 2013 – [Prehistoric fish species with 'personalities' get help from humans to survive](#) (4 min), by Lindsey Smith (with photos online)*
 - *Thursday, July 11, 2013 – [Unlocking the secrets of sea lamprey love](#) (4 min), by Rebecca Williams (with photos online)*
 - *Thursday, August 29, 2013 – [Hunting for plastic pollution in the Great Lakes](#) (4min), by Lewis Wallace (with photos online)*
 - *Thursday, September 5, 2013 – [A good summer for raising baby sturgeon in northern Michigan](#) (4 min), by Lindsey Smith*
 - *Tuesday, October 8, 2013 – [Algal blooms causing concern in northern lakes](#) (4min), by Peter Payette*

- November 5, 2013 – [Lake Erie has 2% of the water in the Great Lakes, but 50% of the fish](#), by Mark Brush (with video online)
- Thursday, December 12, 2013 – [Go Lake trout! Native fish overcome seemingly “insurmountable” challenges in Lake Huron](#) (4min), by Peter Payette (with photos and video online)
- **Special public radio series:**
 - *Media series I: Asian Carp and the Great Lakes*
 - September 10, 2012 – [Separating the Basins \(Part One\)](#) (4 min), by Adam Allington
 - September 11, 2012 – [Industries Worry about Basins Separation \(Part Two\)](#) (4 min), by Adam Allington (with photos online)
 - September 12, 2012 – [Other Pathways for Carp \(Part Three\)](#) (4 min), by Rebecca Williams (with photos online)
 - September 13, 2012 – [What if the Carp Make a Home Here? \(Part Four\)](#) (4 min), by Rebecca Williams (with photo online)
 - September 14, 2012 – [Investing in Carp \(Part Five\)](#) (4 min), by Adam Allington (with photo online)
 - *Media series II: In Warm Water: Fish and the Changing Great Lakes*
 - Monday, September 30, 2013 – [A chilly Lake Superior warms up](#) (4min), by Jess Mador (with photos online)
 - Tuesday, October 1, 2013 – [Great Lakes fish on a diet](#) (4min), by Chuck Quirnbach (with photos online)
 - Wednesday, October 2, 2013 – [A mystery at the bottom of the Great Lakes food web](#) (4min., 1sec.), by David Summerstein (with photos online)
 - Thursday, October 3, 2013 – [Too warm for your fried perch dinner?](#) (4min), by Jennifer Jordan (with photos online)
 - Friday, October 4, 2013 – [Warmer waters fuel toxic algal blooms in the Great Lakes](#) (4min), by Rebecca Williams (with photos and videos online)
- **Multi-media online features:**
 - September 12, 2012 – [VIDEO: Keeping Asian carp out of the Great Lakes in Indiana](#), by Mercedes Mejia
 - November 5, 2013 – [VIDEO: Lake Erie has 2% of the water in the Great Lakes, but 50% of the fish](#), by Mark Brush
- **Public discussion forums:**
 - *Issues & Ale: Asian Carp in the Great Lakes*
September 18, 2012 at the Kirby House, Grand Haven, MI ([watch VIDEO](#))
 - *Issues & Ale: Fish and the Changing Great Lakes*
October 1, 2013 at Mark Ridley’s Comedy Castle, Royal Oak, MI ([watch VIDEO](#))
- **Free audio CDs for educational use:**
As of May 2014, Michigan Radio has a limited number of audio CDs still available for educational use. The CDs contain the two media series for this project, *Asian Carp and the Great Lakes* and *In Warm Water: Fish and the Changing Great Lakes* along with photo slide shows and videos. The CDs can be ordered on a [special page](#) on the Michigan Radio website or by calling Michigan Radio’s main number, 734-764-9210.