The Rochester League of Women Voters has decided that its advocacy work will include protecting Lake Ontario and addressing issues affecting the lake.

During a meeting last week, the group adopted a position drafted by the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters, an interstate organization of league chapters around Lake Michigan. The position spells out specific concerns applicable to the Great Lakes system as a whole. It calls for limiting the use of fragile shoreline areas, controlling the spread of invasive species through non-toxic measures, protecting water quality, and strengthening land-use management within the lake basins.

The position also opposes inefficient and excessive water use, destruction of wetlands, toxic discharges into the air and water, and new or increased diversions of lake water outside of the basins.

The Lake Michigan organization developed and adopted the position in the 1970’s and has updated it several times since. The Rochester league is applying it to Lake Ontario.

“We can, through our committee work, begin to explore where we go with that,” says Georgia DeGregorio, president of the Rochester league.

The Lake Michigan League of Women Voters has asked league chapters in Great Lakes states to support its position. Great Lakes issues are impacted by local, state, and federal policies and advocacy work is necessary at all levels of government. So the idea is to get leagues to support the position and engage on appropriate issues.

“It’s just a way of encouraging advocacy and protecting and preserving the Great Lakes,” says Suzanne Dixon, director of natural resources for the Michigan state League of Women Voters and a board member of the Lake Michigan League of Women Voters.

Of particular importance is advocacy for federal Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding. Congress committed to providing money for ecological preservation projects and anti-pollution efforts in the Great Lakes, but after the first year started backing away from its promise.

Lake Ontario has had its environmental success stories, and SUNY Brockport professor Joe Makarewicz likes to talk about those first when he discusses the Great Lakes ecosystem. For example, efforts to reduce phosphorous pollution have paid off, he says. And pesticides like DDT and mirex aren't nearly as prevalent in Lake Ontario as they used to be.

But the lake still has environmental problems, such as invasive species. Makarewicz laid out some of the lake's issues for Rochester league members in a presentation last week.

One of the most visible issues has been near-shore water pollution, particularly nutrient pollution which feeds problematic algae blooms, he says. Local, state, and federal agencies have been trying to identify and address sources of the pollution.

And there's an emerging issue that could also affect near-shore water quality. Because of the state's booming yogurt industry, Governor Andrew Cuomo says he wants to make it easier for dairy farmers to increase the size of their herds. To do that, he says he wants to relax the threshold for farms that have to comply with state regulations for concentrated animal feeding operations, which are essentially farm operations with several hundred head of livestock.

But CAFO regulations require farmers to develop plans for managing manure, which can serve as a source of nutrient pollution in water bodies. Larger unregulated herds could result in increased nutrient pollution within the Genesee River watershed and the Lake Ontario basin, Makarewicz says.
DeGregorio, of the Rochester League, says that local members expressed interest in exploring the CAFO issue further. They’re also interested in examining ballast water regulations for ocean-going ships entering Lake Ontario, she says.

Tags: News, pollution, water quality, development, environment, League of Women Voters, Lake Ontario

SPEAKING OF...

Regional cap and trade program tightens limits
by Jeremy Moule

A hostel for Rochester?
by Jeremy Moule

Elected officials voice fracking concerns
by Jeremy Moule

COMMENTS (1)

Showing 1-1 of 1
add a comment

Hey LOWW! If you truly want to make a difference and prove your worth and strength as a group, here is what you do. Go to www.battletheboom.com and study up as a group on the actual biggest problem facing Lake Ontario. That problem is the collapse of the food chain caused by the New York Power Authority "Ice Boom". It stops the nutrient conveyor that fed your lake every spring at the correct and crucial time. Anything other than fighting to get Lake Ontario’s food source back is a waste of your time and resources. This is the elephant in the room no one talks about. You can also Google Joe Barrett/Ice boom for details and interviews. Thanks and good luck. Truly, Joe Barrett

Posted by Joseph B. Barrett on 11/15/2012 at 12:35 PM

Subscribe to this thread:  
By Email  
With RSS

Like Send

Readers also liked...

MORE BY JEREMY MOULE

A pre-session push on campaign finance reform
by Jeremy Moule

Hydrogen hopes
by Jeremy Moule

MORE IN NEWS

Degrees of debt
by Tim Louis Macaluso

Clock ticking for RCSD?
by Tim Louis Macaluso

Utilities deal under review
by Jeremy Moule

Regional cap and trade program tightens limits
by Jeremy Moule

A hostel for Rochester?
by Jeremy Moule

Elected officials voice fracking concerns
by Jeremy Moule

League focuses on Lake Ontario | News | City Newspaper

http://www.rochestercitynewspaper.com/rochester/league-focuses-on-L...
Housing march planned
by Christine Carrie Fien
Better eating in the RCSD
Several years ago, students staged a mini revolt
over the food they were being served in the
Rochester school district. To prove their point,
they brought a hamburger from a district
cafeteria to a school board meeting, but couldn't
find a board member willing to take a bite.
by Tim Louis Macaluso