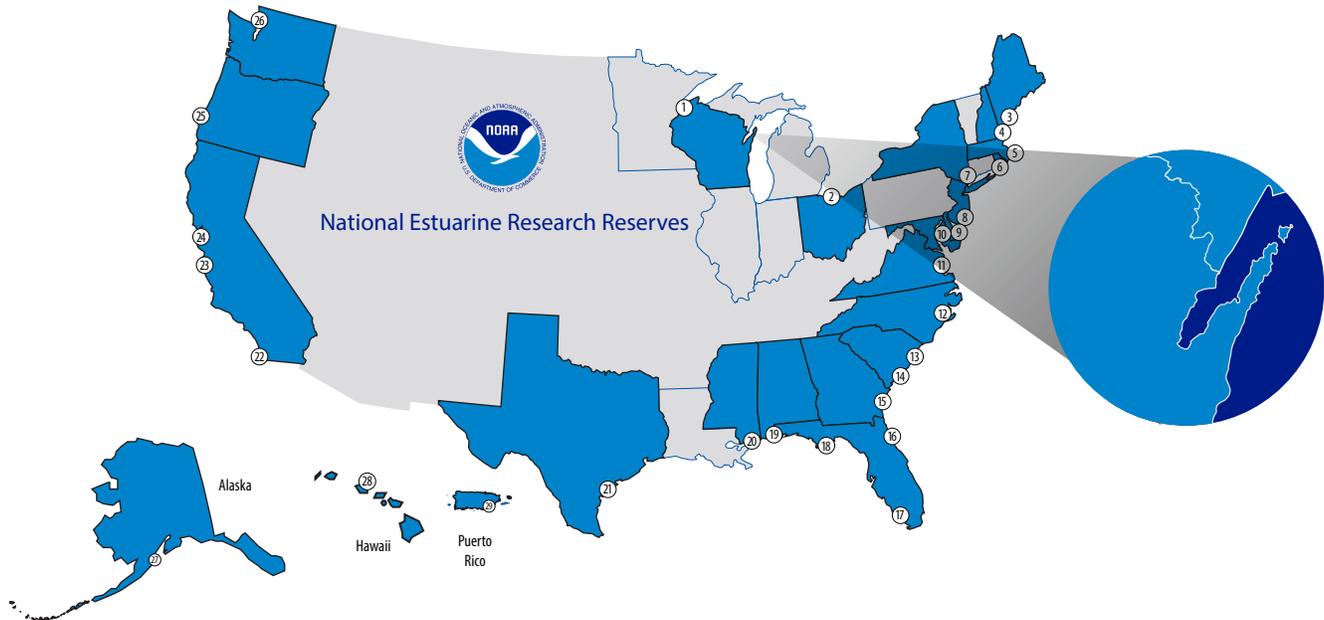


Proposed National Estuarine Research Reserve: **LAKE MICHIGAN**



National Estuarine Research Reserve System

This network of 29 sites protects and conserves more than 1.3 million acres of coastal and estuarine habitat and is managed by a partnership between NOAA and coastal states. NOAA provides federal funding and oversight, while state agencies or universities oversee day-to-day operations. Reserve staff work with local communities to address challenges related to natural resource management, such as nonpoint source pollution, habitat restoration, invasive species, and more.

Value of Establishing a Lake Michigan Reserve

Wisconsin is pursuing the designation of a reserve on the world's largest freshwater estuary, Green Bay on Lake Michigan. The designation would add a third research reserve to the Great Lakes region and would be the first to represent Lake Michigan estuarine habitats.

Reserve System Snapshot

(Rounded numbers)

- 1.3** million acres of public lands and waters
- 4,500** miles of waterfront and diverse habitat
- 280** monitoring stations
- 3,000** educators and **81,000** K-12 students receiving outdoor STEM education
- 36,000** volunteers supporting the reserves

The health of this area's ecosystem, economy, and communities will benefit from the designation of a research reserve. In addition to preserving an area for use and study, the programs found within a research reserve will complement and extend the work of existing partnerships, programs, and academic institutions by providing additional opportunities for research, training, stewardship, and education. Local programs and partners include the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, Wisconsin Coastal Management Program, Wisconsin Sea Grant, and academic institutions such as the University of Wisconsin System campuses at Green Bay, Madison, and Milwaukee.

Programs and Potential Focus Areas

Each reserve administers four core programs using similar protocols. The programs are focused on meeting national and local goals and needs. Illustrative details are provided below.

**Research and
Monitoring**

Training

Education

Stewardship

Educational Opportunities for Learners of All Ages

Research reserves are living laboratories where K-12 students can experience and learn about natural systems; where educators receive the training needed to bring local estuary science to the classroom; where college-age students gain firsthand experience through fellowship programs; and where workshops and other activities help adults see how their day-to-day activities impact the environment.

Training for Coastal Decision-Makers

Regional and local workshops, skill-building opportunities, and consensus-building training for coastal decision-makers represent an important part of the reserve's training efforts. This Lake Michigan reserve will support the local environmental data and information needs of officials and business leaders.

Science and Stewardship that Matters

Many of the science and management challenges that impact Great Lakes communities are unique to the region. If designated, the Lake Michigan reserve will conduct research on coastal management challenges, such as harmful algal blooms, lake level variability, and chemicals of emerging concern. Long-term water quality and climate data collected through the nationally implemented System-Wide Monitoring Program will address data needs, and the site will be eligible for competitive grants focused on research undertaken with local partners. These components come together to inform best management practices specific to the area.

Community Engagement and Volunteerism

Research reserves create opportunities for citizen science and volunteerism, which in turn fosters a deeper appreciation of the environment. These efforts also help raise awareness of coastal management challenges.

Support for the Proposed Lake Michigan Reserve

The designation process for the Lake Michigan research reserve is being led at the state level by the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Throughout the designation process, there are several opportunities for public input. For more information about the designation process, please go to uwgb.edu/national-estuarine-research-reserves.

National Estuarine Research Reserves

coast.noaa.gov/nerrs

