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GARY STORM WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (GSWMD) HOSTS ITS 15th ANNUAL CLEAN WATER CELEBRATION

Gary, Indiana-June is Lake Michigan Coastal Awareness Month in Indiana (CAM). The month gives Indiana residents an opportunity to learn more about the Lake Michigan Coastal Program and celebrate the area's splendor by increasing their awareness of the region's importance. In observance of the month, the City of Gary will host the 15th Annual Clean Water Celebration June 20 – 22, 2019 at Marquette Park! All are encouraged to get outside and explore the Lake Michigan area of northwest Indiana.

The Gary Storm Water Management District (GSWMD) in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Affairs/Green Urbanism will present a 3-day event with support from Gary Parks & Recreations, and other clean water partners. The city's Water Quality Partners have coordinated activities centered on the theme, "Celebrate Our Coast: Fresh, Water Fun!" Through sponsorship from various partners, the City will offer free activities to the public.

The celebration begins with a Green Infrastructure Champion Workshop & Site Tour in partnership with the Great Lakes Commission on June 20, 2019 starting at 9:00 a.m. at the Genesis Convention Center. A Native Landscaping Adventure at the Field Museum of Chicago will be held on Friday, June 21, 2019 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This tour is intended to encourage gardeners and homeowners to integrate native planting into urban farming and community gardens which support our unique natural ecosystem. Please RSVP to Delores Brown at (Delbrown@ci.gary.in.us) Space is limited.

Saturday June 22, 2019, the Clean Water Festival will be a day of free recreational, educational, and fun-filled activities for both youth and adults to enjoy. This outdoor event will begin at 10:00 a.m. in Marquette Park near the lagoons in Area 5. Activities include free canoe training and paddling on the Lagoon, free paddle boat rides, kayak rides, beach safety, fishing education, nature creative art demonstration, water quality presentations, fitness in the park, nature hike, informational booths and refreshments.

"The Clean Water Festival is one of many outdoor recreational and learning activities we're planning for this summer which are proven to improve children's health and wellbeing," stated Mayor Karen Freeman Wilson. "We encourage parents to bring their children out for some fun and excitement while learning."

This year's event is also in line with Gary Youth Service Bureau's goals under the Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) stewardship program. Gary received a grant from the National League of Cities under its Children & Nature Network. CCCN helps cities develop nature connection strategies that reflect community values, assets and strengths, in complement to key goals related to health and wellness, parks and green space access, green infrastructure, education, out-of-school time, climate resilience, and equity.

Everyone can play a role to keep our water clean by taking the Clean Water Pledge. "The educational focus is to increase public awareness about clean water and how we all can play an important role throughout our community to protect and preserve Gary's natural resource through pollution prevention practices and control of erosion and storm water run-off," stated Green Urbanism Director Brenda Scott-Henry. Henry believes that collaboration and coordination with various groups and organizations is pivotal to achieve these common goals. This activity promotes physical activities and healthy food choices for youth; and our Parks and Public Safety Task-Force will conduct a presentation promoting safe and wise uses of Lake Michigan waters. Review June's calendar of events that will occur in various communities at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/lakemich/6202.htm>.

The Clean Water Celebration will also include information and activities supported by GSWMD's Storm Water Public Education and Outreach Program as well as other projects and programs by local organizations, business, and environmental organizations.

The primary purpose for this public education and outreach activity is to provide local residents, businesses, and youth with information on the effects of storm water run-off on water quality and quantity and how to implement storm water pollution prevention practices in our daily lives, says Dan Vicari, GSWMD Executive Director.

The Gary Storm Water Management District and the City of Gary Common Council enacted a modified Storm Water Ordinance in July of 2006 as mandated by the US EPA Phase II of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting program. The Phase II regulation requires six minimum control measures for inclusion in the NPDES permit. These measures are: 1. Public Education and Outreach 2. Public Involvement/Participation 3. Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination 4. Construction Site Runoff Control 5. Post-Construction Storm Water Management in New Development and Redevelopment 6. Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Municipal Operations Activity booths are available upon request for governmental and environmental-related organizations promoting protection and preservation of our waterways and natural resources. For more information, contact Brenda Scott Henry, Director at (219) 882-3000 or bhenry@ci.gary.in.us.

Lake Michigan is a source of recreation, drinking water, and industry. The 45 miles of shoreline in Indiana is the most diverse in the Great Lakes region. The State of Indiana's Lake Michigan Coastal Program, along with local community and non-profit partners, is working to preserve this natural and cultural gem for the children of tomorrow.