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New EPA panel should facilitate lakes projects

March 18, 2013
The Mining Journal

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency last week announced the membership list of the first Great Lakes Advisory Board, a group of scientists, business leaders and non-profit representatives.

The 18-member board is intended to provide advice to the administrator of the EPA. That agency is responsible for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, a \$1 billion program that aims to improve the Great Lakes ecosystem. We hope the newly crafted panel will continue the good work already being done by the initiative, which has already had a positive local impact.

The city of Marquette, in conjunction with the Superior Watershed Partnership, received word last fall that Marquette would get nearly \$180,000 from the GLRI in order to implement green management practices to reduce bacteriological, algal and chemical contamination.

That money was intended to be used, in part, to create 1,000 feet of green infrastructure along a ditch that drains storm water into Lake Superior. Surveys of the lake area adjacent to the ditch has shown elevated levels of E. coli contamination.

The grant funding, the city said, would result in a combination of practices, including engineering and native plant restoration, which would result in naturally filtered water.

Similarly, the city was hoping to redirect a portion of a previous GLRI grant to craft a plan for a redesign of Marquette's South Beach, which has also shown elevated E. coli levels.

Additionally, the GLRI is working to clean up more than two dozen toxic locations across the Great Lakes region, including the Upper Peninsula's Torch Lake, Deer Lake and Manistique River.

To this point, the initiative has been a boon to the area, and the newly formed advisory panel - which includes two professors, a city administrator and the executive director of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative - should only help to accelerate and inform the work being done.

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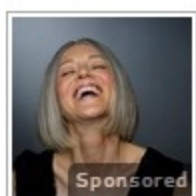
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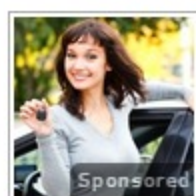
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