



WISCONSIN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



Wisconsin Water Library
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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Wisconsin Water Library at UW-Madison and Wisconsin Library Association to Partner on Great Lakes, Great Read

Program aims to connect Wisconsinites to the Great Lakes Watershed Through Reading

(Madison, Wisconsin) The Wisconsin Water Library at UW-Madison and the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) are pleased to announce plans for Great Lakes, Great Read, a basin-wide community read program scheduled to launch in 2024.

Water Library Director Anne Moser says the program is based on the need for greater education about the Great Lakes as an important natural resource. While approximately 34 million people in the U.S. and Canada live in the Great Lakes watershed, recent surveys, such as the International Joint Commission Great Lakes Regional Poll in 2021, show a lack of understanding of the threats facing the greatest freshwater resource in the world. “It’s difficult to care about something you know nothing about,” said Moser. “Education, in this case, environmental literacy, is central to cultivating stewardship of the Great Lakes and of water resources more broadly.”

WLA Executive Director Laura Sauser says that the “one book, one community” model, already adopted by many libraries, is a natural fit for the idea of a basin-wide community read, and Wisconsin is the perfect state to pilot this idea, catalyzing other Upper Midwestern states and Canadian provinces to engage and inspire passion and connection to the freshwater seas through reading. “Wisconsinites have a deep connection to water through culture, economy, tourism, and way of life. This connection, coupled with the WLA’s network of academic, public, and special libraries, gives us strong foundation for success.”

Supported by a grant from WiLS, the Great Lakes, Great Read program will officially kick off on Feb. 1. The selected titles will be announced on Earth Day (April 22) 2024. Two books, one for adults and one for children, with themes related to the Great Lakes watershed will be announced.

All Wisconsinites will be encouraged to read these titles, and libraries around the state will be encouraged to engage their residents through book discussions and related activities. While program designs are still being finalized, Moser says the plan is to host public presentations by the selected authors and to host a website that includes book discussion questions and other ideas for engagement for anyone interested.

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Established in 1964 by the University of Wisconsin Water Resources Institute (WRI), the Wisconsin Water Library (formerly known as the Water Resources Library) is unique among UW-Madison's many libraries for its collection of 30,000 volumes about the waters of Wisconsin and the Great Lakes. The library's mission is to collect, preserve and provide science-based resources in support of the UW Aquatic Sciences Center and the two programs it administers, the WRI and the Sea Grant College Program.

The Wisconsin Library Association is a professional organization representing all types of libraries – school, public, academic, and special. Its membership comprises more than 1300 librarians and support staff, library trustees, friends of libraries, and business vendors who advocate and work for the improvement of library services for all Wisconsin citizens.
www.wisconsinlibraries.org.