



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative Funds Local Schools**

*Aim is to connect schools and communities in stewardship of Lake Superior and its watershed*

HOUGHTON – The Lake Superior Stewardship (LSSI) announces \$51,750 in mini-grants awarded to eleven schools in Houghton, Keweenaw and Baraga counties for the 2011-12 & 2012-13 school years.

The following schools received funding this school year: Hancock Middle School, Washington Middle School, Chassell High School, C.J. Sullivan Elementary, Dollar Bay High School, E.B. Holman, C-L-K Elementary, BRIDGE High School, Jeffers High School, Barkell Elementary, and Hancock High School. Lake Linden-Hubbell Middle School and Elementary School, Horizons High School, and Pelkie School received grants last year.

LSSI brings together innovative and dedicated teachers and community partners in the design and implementation of environmental stewardship and community service projects that address needs in local communities.

“LSSI is one of the most effective educational initiatives of the Western UP Center for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education,” asserts Dennis Harbor, CCISD superintendent. “I’ve heard a lot of positive comments from school superintendants. These mini-grants are helping local schools in a time of severe budget cuts.”

Fourteen school-community teams involving 79 K-12 teachers, 2236 students, and 50 community partners are actively making a positive impact in their schools and communities.

“Students become active informed citizens who are viewed by their community as valuable assets,” explains Linda Rulison, retired Hancock Middle School teacher and Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative Advisory Board member.

A wide variety of projects have been implemented with the aid of community partners.

Calumet-Laurium-Keweenaw Elementary and Pelkie Elementary teams have created school vegetable and flower gardens that engage elementary students in learning where their food comes from and the benefits of native plants to increase birds, butterflies and honey bees.

Lake Linden-Hubbell Elementary and Middle School have created a disc golf course to promote affordable outdoor family recreation, together with an interpretative nature trail on the former Superfund Site on Torch Lake at the Village Park.

C.J. Sullivan Elementary partnered with Plum Creek Timber, the U.S. Forest Service and the Village of L'Anse to create a three-mile nature trail in the school forest adjacent to the school building that is used as an outdoor classroom and provides a recreational trail for the community.

Jeffers High School partnered with Michigan Nature Association and Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) to develop boardwalks and two viewing platforms at the Robert Brown Nature Sanctuary, and a trail with interpretive signs around Lake Perrault.

E.B. Holman School with help from scientists at MTU established and monitors long-term tree and vegetation plots to better understand a variety of habitats at its school forest and the Keweenaw Land Trust (KLT) Marsin Nature Preserve. Hancock Middle School has partnered with the Keweenaw Land Trust (KLT) to study water quality, cultural features, trees and soils at the Paavola Wetlands and have shared their work by hosting family nights and developing interpretive materials for the trailhead kiosk at the Preserve.

“We really appreciate the work of the students,” observes Evan McDonald, executive director of the Keweenaw Land Trust. “As a small non-profit, we don’t have enough “hands” to do all the work that is needed to care for these preserves and we look to these capable students as future stewards of protected lands in the Keweenaw”

Hancock High School has created a new course offering that engages students in a wide range of activities including water quality monitoring at Swedetown Creek, conducting biological surveys and trail improvements at Hancock School Forest, partnering with the USDA Forest Service to develop a management plan for the Sturgeon River Gorge, working with MDNR and KLT at Boston Pond to collect fish population data to assess the potential for future stocking and to better inform management of the fishery.

Washington Middle School has partnered with Calumet Township to conduct a semi-annual *Adopt-a-Beach* and public education program.

“The 7<sup>th</sup> grade students design informative posters that communicate the quantity and type of trash found during our clean ups,” explains seventh grade science teacher, Darrell Hendrickson. “Cigarette butts are the most common form of trash that the students find.”

BRIDGE High School has created a rain garden in the school parking lot across the street, stenciled the city's storm drains with the message "Dump No Waste, Drains to the Portage."

"Our goal is to educate our students to become the future stewards of Lake Superior. We want our students to love their lake!" exclaims math teacher, Cathy Hill.

Dollar Bay High School is working with Isle Royale National Park to design and use a Remotely-Operated-Vehicle (ROV) that can gather underwater data. The ROV will be used to monitor boats entering the park for evidence of Zebra or Quagga Mussels, both invasive aquatic species that propose a significant threat to the park's nearshore aquatic ecosystem.

Chassell High School conducted a school-wide energy audit and presented the results to their school board. Their work resulted in the district adopting more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable practices. Now they are partnering with the Pilgrim River Watershed Project to help with trail construction and invasive species removal.

Horizons High School is working with Houghton Township to conduct a local adopt-a-beach program near Eagle River.

Barkell Elementary will initiate their first project this spring with plans to establish a rain garden to catch the storm water runoff from the school parking lot and remove invasive species from their school playground.

**Since 2008, LSSI has provided \$205,700 in mini-grant funds to 16 school teams** to conduct a wide range of projects that benefit students, teachers, schools, communities, and Lake Superior and its watershed.

LSSI is one of eight regional hubs of the statewide Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative whose mission is to connect schools with local community partners to provide active stewardship of the Great Lakes watershed. LSSI is funded by grants from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust and the Wege Foundation.

To follow the work of LSSI, visit <http://lakesuperiorstewardship.org> or find Lake Superior Stewardship Initiative on Facebook.

For more information, contact the LSSI leadership team: Shawn Oppliger (482-0331) or Joan Chadde and Lloyd Wescoat (487-3341) with the Western U.P. Center for Science, Math and Environmental Education.

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