



## Media Release – UPDATE April 01, 2021

*Please be advised that the deadline for completion of events supporting this major International Rotary Service Project has been extended from April 24 to June 1 on both sides of the Border. Details on this extension due to Ontario Covid 19 restrictions have been added to the end of this release.*

### **Rotary Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup**

Mobilizing Rotarians, Rotaractors and community partners in one of the largest volunteer undertakings by Rotary International to support a clean environment!

### **Earth Day 2021**

April 22, 2021 is Earth Day!

Since it was established in 1905, Rotary International has had six areas of focus: 1) Promoting peace; 2) Fighting disease; 3) Providing clean water, sanitation and hygiene; 4) Saving mothers and children; 5) Supporting education; and 6) Growing local economies. Source: <https://www.rotary.org/en/our-causes>

This year, officially launching in July, Rotary is adding a seventh area of focus: Protecting the environment.

This initiative is also being promoted by District 7090 as part of it's Healthy Communities Initiative.

### **The Great Lakes Watershed**

The Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup initiative is an effort that has grown from a District 7090 service project covering a small portion of Lake Ontario and Erie to a multi-district plan to focus Rotarians' attention to all 5 of the Great Lakes and streams and waterways feeding them. Our goal is to make this the single largest cleanup event ever planned and coinciding with Earth Day 2021 on the Great Lakes Watershed. The Great Lakes contains almost 20% of the world's fresh water and is arguably the largest source of fresh water on the planet. It borders 8 States and 2 Provinces and has 9,577 miles (15,323 kilometers) of shoreline. So far 15 Districts, 100's of Clubs and thousands of Rotary volunteers have agreed to participate. We will be joining over one billion people worldwide working on projects together in their communities on Earth Day.



Trash, plastics and other littered items plague our waterways. This trash poses a threat to terrestrial and aquatic life, often becomes microplastics and harmful toxins and pollutes one of the most precious and limited natural resources. Shopping carts, tires, furniture, trash, foam cups, plastic containers and aluminum cans contaminate our waterways and greenways. More than 22 million pounds (10 million kilograms) of trash and plastic pollution ends up in the Great Lakes each year.

Cleanups from numerous NGO's, community groups and individual volunteers are critical to reducing the amount of garbage that collects in our watersheds each year. In order to track our success, the second goal will be to tabulate the amount of debris collected from each of the individual cleanup events. And the final and most important goal will be to educate the public to the importance of protecting our waterways and to instill a sense of stewardship towards our Great Lakes.

The deadline for completion of Great Lakes Watershed events is being extended from Saturday April 24<sup>th</sup> to **Tuesday June 1<sup>st</sup>**.

This collaborative work project has generated much excitement and enthusiasm among the planners and is reflective of the upcoming addition of The Environment as a new area of focus of Rotary International. It also reflects our desire to be People of Action and to promote the good work of Rotary.

### **Rotary in the Great Lakes Watershed**

The Great Lakes Watershed spans 2 Provinces, 8 States. There will be involvement from 18 Districts in Canada and the USA, approximately 900 clubs and 27,000 Rotarians and Rotaractors! Rotary and Rotaract Clubs across the Watershed are coordinating and organizing events to support this initiative.

### **Rotary/Rotaract Objectives**

1. Improve the aesthetics of the Great Lakes by removing garbage from public areas and roadsides.
2. Reduce the amount of plastic and litter on our lands and in our waterways.
3. Remove waste that could potentially be ingested by pets and other wildlife.
4. Provide an opportunity for public participation in collaborative activities.



**Rotary**  
District 7090



5. Educate the public about the effects of littering, the importance of recycling and to instil a sense of stewardship.
6. Collect and report back to organizers cleanup metrics to track the impacts of all the cleanups.

### Links

- Volunteer or partner with your local Rotary Club  
<https://rotary7090.org/ClubDirectory>
- Great Lakes Watershed Cleanup Facebook Group  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/814977885733650>
- Rotary District 7090 GLWC Information Page  
<https://rotary7090.org/Stories/great-lakes-watershed-cleanup>
- District 7090 Healthy Communities Initiative.  
<https://rotary7090.org/sitepage/healthy-communities-initiative>

### Contacts

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Robert Burns, USA  
Rotary Club of Trenton, MI., U.S.A.  
District 6400  
Friends of the Detroit River  
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For additional information on filling out and sending back the event cleanup metric data collection sheet please contact: event coordinator Kaylee Peterson at [pete1174@msu.edu](mailto:pete1174@msu.edu)



**COVID-19 UPDATE: The deadline for completion of Great Lakes Watershed events is being extended from Saturday April 24th to Tuesday June 1st.**

The completion date for this major International Rotary Service Project has been extended from April 24 to June 1 to complete for both sides of the Border.

Given the current situation in Ontario regarding further Covid 19 restrictions and in consultation with other Districts this extension is in order to provide Clubs who are participating more options to complete their project.

All Clubs who are participating are being directed to closely follow Provincial and State Public Health Guidelines along with local public health directives to ensure maximum safety for participants and a successful event.

