



Manistee County Board of Commissioners

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MANISTEE COUNTY GREEN TEAM/RECYCLING COMMITTEE

Friday, December 2, 2011
10:30 A.M.

Manistee County Courthouse & Government Center
Board of Commissioners Meeting Room

AGENDA

- 1) 10:30 A.M. - Manistee High School Green Team - Kevin Summers & Students
- 2) Update on Lake Michigan Trash Investigation (APPENDIX A)
- 3) Other Items From Committee Members
- 4) Adjournment

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Everything Michigan

Medical waste, other trash that hit West Michigan beaches came from Milwaukee, report says

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By **John S. Hausman | Muskegon Chronicle**

An environmental group reports that massive mystery wash-ups of trash onto West Michigan beaches in 2008 and 2010 came from Milwaukee: untreated sanitary sewage and storm water flooding into Lake Michigan.

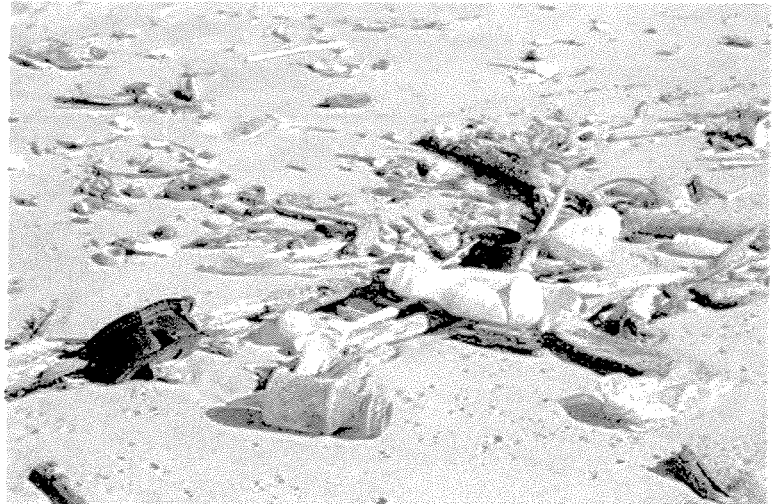
Alliance for the Great Lakes cited an investigation by the U.S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency.

According to documents the alliance obtained through the federal Freedom of Information Act and released Monday afternoon, the Coast Guard/EPA investigation cited the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District's combined sewer overflows as the "logical suspect" behind both summer washups.

The beach trash included syringes and other medical waste.

The records show Milwaukee released some 686 million gallons of combined sanitary sewage and storm water June 7-9, 2008, and 1.9 billion gallons July 22-25, 2010. Floods struck the Milwaukee area both times after summer rains, overwhelming the sewage treatment plant and causing big releases into the lake.

The "mystery trash" along some 50 miles of West Michigan coastline included food wrappers, bottle caps, plastic bits, syringes and woody debris. Plastic materials likely originated from a recycling center. The source of medical waste has not been identified, the alliance reported.



Associated Press file photo

A sampling of hundreds of pounds of garbage that washed onto a 10-mile stretch of Lake Michigan beaches in Manistee and Mason counties is seen on July 14, 2008, in Manistee.

INVESTIGATION REPORT

- **Download the U.S. Coast Guard and the Environmental Protection Agency report in .PDF format**

The EPA and Coast Guard have closed their investigations, with the EPA finding no federal permit violations because the Milwaukee sewer district is allowed to release the combined sewer overflows in some circumstances.

Lake Michigan beach trash was found Aug. 12, 2010, as far south as Little Sable Point in Oceana County's Golden Township. In preceding days, waste had been reported washing ashore in Mason and Manistee counties.

Garbage showed up in 2008 in scattered locations as far south as Saugatuck and as far north as Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. That's a roughly 200-mile zone.

Milwaukee combined sewer overflows were suspected all along in both washups. The federal investigation confirms those suspicions.

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