

For Immediate Release
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Outstanding Journalists and Media Outlets Named Winners of Great Lakes Leadership Award

Great Lakes Protection Fund Honors Peter Annin, Dan Egan, Tom Henry, Great Lakes Now, Institute for Nonprofit News and U.S. Water Alliance

The Great Lakes Protection Fund—the world’s first ecosystem endowment—named three individuals and three organizations as recipients of the 2020 Great Lakes Leadership Award for Communication Excellence. This award celebrates the recipients’ outstanding storytelling efforts— better connecting their audiences to the ecosystem, its challenges, and efforts to solve those challenges.

The Fund created the Leadership Awards to celebrate efforts that accelerate new actions for protecting and improving the Great Lakes for the benefit of the basin’s people and environment. The 2020 awardees consistently make complicated issues accessible and remind us that powerful narratives can inspire action.

Winners of the 2020 Great Lakes Leadership Award for Communication Excellence are:

- **Peter Annin**, long-time environmental reporter and author of *The Great Lakes Water Wars*, who says we are leaving the century of oil and entering the century of water.
- **Dan Egan**, a reporter for *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and author of *The New York Times* bestseller *The Death and Life of the Great Lakes*, who was a Pulitzer Prize finalist twice for his coverage of invasive species in the Great Lakes.
- **Tom Henry**, reporter for *The Toledo Blade*, who has covered the Great Lakes full-time longer than anyone else.
- **Great Lakes Now**, a monthly television program and multi-media news hub elevating stories about how we enjoy, study, restore, and experience the world’s largest supply of surface freshwater.
- **Institute for Nonprofit News**, which, with its partners, produced *Rust to Resilience*, a reporting series about the impact of climate change on the Great Lakes and surrounding cities.
- **U.S. Water Alliance**, a national nonprofit organization that advocates for racial justice, innovation, and progress in the management of water, including drinking water, in the Great Lakes region and across the country.

"One of the world’s hardest jobs is telling clear and compelling stories about the environment. These recipients have mastered it. They make the complex clear, help us

focus on what is important, and celebrate the victories when they happen,” said David Rankin, Executive Director of the Great Lakes Protection Fund.

This year’s recipients have covered a range of threats to the Great Lakes – including invasive species, toxic algae blooms, climate change, racial inequities, stormwater runoff, outdated water infrastructure – and delivered solution-oriented stories of positive ecological impact.

Rankin continued, “The Great Lakes are fortunate to have these storytellers showcase the hard work that is securing this valuable resource for future generations.”

The Great Lakes Protection Fund was established by the governors of the Great Lakes states and for more than thirty years has invested in new solutions and innovators who are improving the health of the lakes and ensuring a future with clean water. The Fund has invested \$90 million into 291 project teams throughout the region.

This is the second year for the Great Lakes Leadership Awards. In 2019, the Fund recognized leadership in water technology innovation. The winners of the 2019 award were: AquaHacking, the Cleveland Water Alliance, Current, The Everglades Foundation, Imagine H2O, and The Water Council.

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The Great Lakes Protection Fund’s mission is to “identify, demonstrate, and promote regional action to improve the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem.” The Fund is a permanent, private, not-for-profit corporation that launches innovative solutions to improve the health of the Great Lakes. Since 1989, the Fund has awarded more than \$90 million in support to catalyze the continuous development of new technologies and practical regional actions to improve the health of the Great Lakes.

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