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THE GREAT LAKES WATER AUTHORITY RECOGNIZED BY FIVE NATIONAL WATER ORGANIZATIONS AS A “UTILITY OF THE FUTURE TODAY” FOR THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR

GLWA honored for its watershed health and protection efforts which help ensure wastewater is returned to its sources in an environmentally-sustainable way

DETROIT – The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) announced it has received national recognition as a [“Utility of the Future Today”](#) (UoFT) for the third consecutive year and in a new area based on its work in watershed health and protection. A group of five national professional organizations, led by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), awarded GLWA as one of 65 leading water utilities across the nation for its work in transforming its operations through new technologies and innovative approaches.

Watershed stewardship refers to utility investments and actions to improve water flow and quality conditions outside of the traditional methods used. Distinguished for the third year, GLWA improved water quality through advancements at the Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF), including the launch of the [Rouge River Outfall Disinfection Facility \(RRO\)](#) which ensures every drop of water discharged into the Rouge River from the WRRF is entirely screened, treated and disinfected. The operation of the RRO addresses what had been GLWA’s single-largest annual point of discharge of treated, but non-disinfected wet weather flows – ensuring disinfection of treated water and killing present bacteria before they are discharged into the river.

In addition to the RRO, the awards committee highlighted GLWA’s ongoing efforts to greatly reduce phosphorus levels in the Western Lake Erie Basin. In fact, six years ahead of its deadline, the Authority had already surpassed federal and state regulators’ goal of reaching a 40 percent reduction in phosphorus levels by 2025.

The awards committee also commended GLWA on its efforts in developing a regional Watershed Hub Workgroup, convening watershed advocacy groups and stakeholders throughout its eight-county service area as a part of its extensive Member Outreach program. The group has two goals: 1) to develop a regional water quality and flow monitoring program that is accessible and useful to end-users and 2) to build a user-friendly database for priority regional watershed data (historical and current) that all stakeholders – even the public – can access.

“It is an incredible honor to receive this national recognition of our team’s efforts,” said Sue F. McCormick, Chief Executive Officer, GLWA. “GLWA is devoted to serving as a leader in water and wastewater services across the nation, and we are doing this by focusing on innovation as part of our core business practices. The sustainability of our regional system and the health of its source water is one of GLWA’s top priorities.”

Under the UoFT program, utilities like GLWA are recognized for their transformational work in community engagement, watershed stewardship and recovery of resources such as water, energy, and nutrients. The program celebrates the achievements of water utilities transforming traditional wastewater treatment systems to resource recovery centers and for being leaders in the overall sustainability and resilience in the communities served.

“The innovations coming to the water sector present an opportunity for a paradigm shift in the way utilities think about and solve long-standing challenges to clean and reliable water,” said Jackie Jarrell, Water Environment Federation (WEF) President. “WEF is excited to recognize the Great Lakes Water Authority for embracing innovative ways to better serve their communities.”

The Utility of the Future Today program was launched in 2016 by NACWA, WEF, the Water Research Foundation (WRF), and the WaterReuse Association, with input from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). GLWA was recognized in 2018 for innovation in biosolids reuse at its Biosolids Drying Facility, as well as in 2019 for its partnership and engagement initiatives.

GLWA will be recognized during a virtual awards ceremony on Oct. 9 at 11 a.m. ET during [WEFTEC Connect](#).

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About the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA)

The Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) is the provider-of-choice for drinking water services to nearly 40 percent, and efficient and effective wastewater services to nearly 30 percent, of Michigan’s population. With the Great Lakes as source water, GLWA is uniquely positioned to provide those it serves with water of unquestionable quality. GLWA also has the capacity to extend its services beyond its 88 member partner communities. As part of its commitment to water affordability, the Authority offers a Water Residential Assistance Program to assist low-income households in participating member communities throughout the system. GLWA’s board includes one representative each from Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties, two representatives from the city of Detroit, and one appointed by the Michigan governor to represent member partner communities outside of the tri-county area.