

For Immediate Release, November 1, 2023

For More Information:
Amber Meyer Smith
Program Officer, Daybreak Fund
(608) 347-6026
amber@fundforlakemichigan.org

New Local Fund Investing \$1.4 Million to Fight Climate Change and Improve Water Quality in Western Lake Michigan Region

The Daybreak Fund has announced its inaugural round of funding, awarding some \$1.4 million in grants to local nonprofits and community groups to help fight climate change, improve water quality, and address social inequities.

Launched in spring 2023, the Daybreak Fund, fiscally sponsored by Windward Fund, is a collaborative of nine philanthropic partners seeking to protect the environment and support communities along the western shores of Lake Michigan in Wisconsin and Lake County, Illinois. The central goal is to use nature-based solutions to improve lives while safeguarding the natural world.

“We’re very excited about this first round of grants and were absolutely thrilled with the enthusiasm and amazing ideas so many applicants presented to us,” said Amber Meyer Smith, Program Officer for the Daybreak Fund.

Projects receiving funding included a buffalo reintroduction program on the Menominee Reservation, an agrivoltaic system where sheep graze under solar panels, and the integration of nature into community healthcare initiatives.

In total, the Daybreak Fund supported 12 projects that offer creative solutions to address both environmental and societal challenges. In particular, the grants focused on innovative projects that can lead to systems change, with an emphasis on impressive partnerships and projects led by frontline organizations and people of color.

“The Fund is committed to investing 40 percent of its resources in communities that are historically disinvested, underserved, and otherwise overburdened by pollution,” said Vicki Elkin, Executive Director of the Fund for Lake Michigan, a partner in the funding collaborative. “We surpassed this goal significantly with 61 percent of the grants meeting that pledge.”

Elkin added that every project offers multiple, interconnected benefits and was directly informed by the communities served.

In its inaugural year, the Daybreak Fund will provide funding to these organizations:

- [Brushwood Center at Ryerson Woods](#)
- [Clean Wisconsin](#) in partnership with Michael Fields Agricultural Institute, Savanna Institute and Wisconsin Grasslands 2.0
- [Eco-Justice Center](#)
- [Fondy Food Center, Inc.](#)
- [Lake Michigan Bird Observatory](#)
- [Medicine Fish](#)
- [Reflo](#), on behalf of 13 youth serving environmental organizations

- Renew Environmental Public Health Advocates
- [Sand County Foundation](#)
- [Savanna Institute](#)
- [Sherman Park Community Association and Slipstream](#)
- [Sixteenth Street Community Health Centers](#)

For more details about each project, please visit: www.daybreak.fund/2023-grantees.