



COUNCIL OF THE
GREAT LAKES REGION
Solving for Sustainability®

CGLR Program Overview & Circular Economy Initiatives

Plastics Open House

August 19, 2026

Ally Walker



The Council of the Great Lakes Region

Mission: We accelerate the regional transition to a sustainable future by uniquely bringing diverse perspectives and interests together to explore and solve our socioeconomic and environmental challenges as one North American Great Lakes region

Vision: To create the first sustainable region in the world



Water
Stewardship



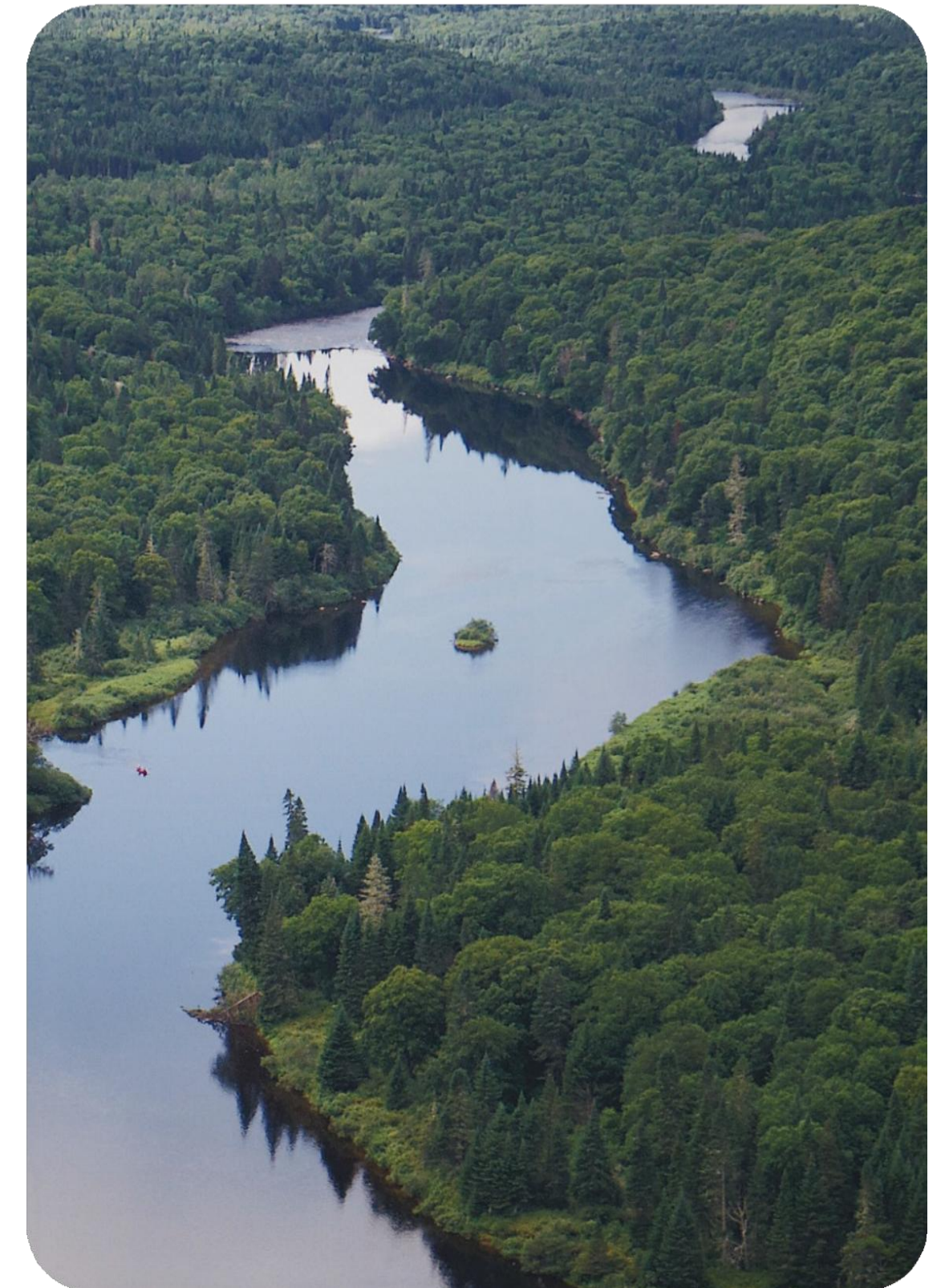
Circular
Economy



Research &
Knowledge
Exchange



Land Use
Management



CGLR:

Supporting Cross-Sector & Cross-Border Solutions



Educator and Connector

Help stakeholders understand implications and pathways through webinars, advisory groups, regional summits, and stakeholder briefings.



Strength in Cross-Sector Collaboration

Circular Great Lakes convenes over 40 partners from Industry, government, NGOs, and academia. Programs focus on engaging key cross-sector stakeholders.



A Regional Approach

Regional Cohesion in policy making ensures stronger solutions to issues facing the shared Great Lakes.



CGLR Programming



WATER STEWARDSHIP

- Great Lakes WISE (Water Innovation and Stewardship Exchange)



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

- Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup
- Circular Great Lakes



LAND USE MANAGEMENT / BIODIVERSITY

- ALUS Defiance Pilot Project



RESEARCH & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

- Great Lakes Higher Education Consortium
- Great Lakes Insights
- Great Lakes Sustainable Growth Forum



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Circular Great Lakes
FORGING A FUTURE WITHOUT WASTE

Circular Economy Programming

Circular Great Lakes Initiative



Circular Great Lakes

Forging a Future Without Waste

- Launched in 2020.
- Brings together 30+ partners.
- Designed to reduce plastic waste, support sustainable materials management, and protect the Great Lakes.
- Works toward creating **systems needed for a circular economy** by focusing on 4 priorities

1. Capture and Cleanup

Focuses on removing existing waste and litter from the environment.

Projects:

- Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup
- Dart Stormwater Grant

2. Collection Processing and End Markets

Focuses on creating innovative supply chains for hard-to-recycle materials through the creation of strategic partnerships along the value chain.

Projects:

- Boat Wrap Recycling
- Return to Retail
- Secondary Sortation Pilot

3. Consumer Education and Engagement

Promotes behavior change and community action through engagement and education.

4. Policy Modernization

Promotes legislative frameworks that support circular solutions.

Projects:

- Legislative Outreach and Education
- Bottle Bill Study

The Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup (GLPC)

Get Involved:

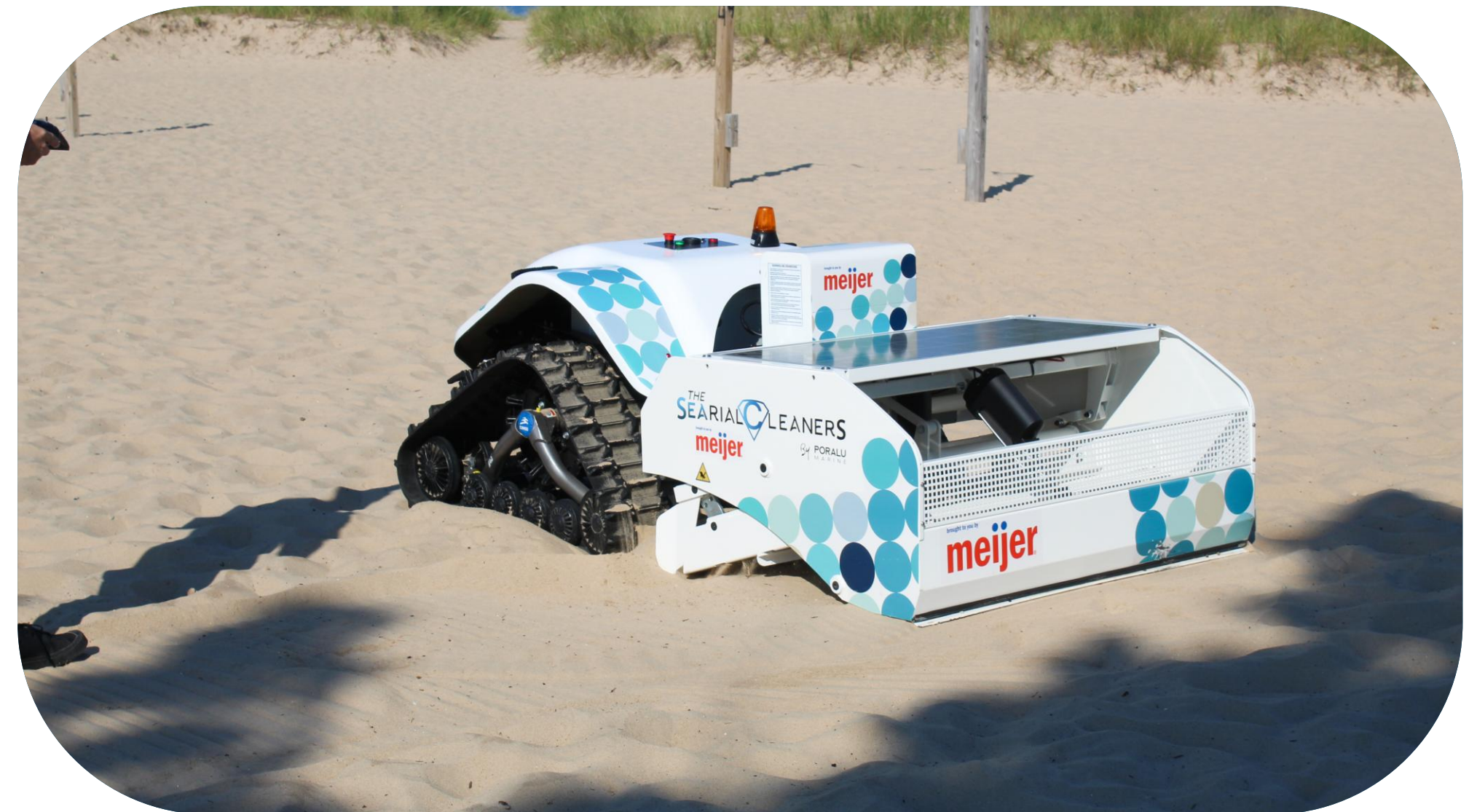
- **Sponsor cleanup technology** in a Great Lakes community.
- **Fund a local GLPC deployment** or expansion.
- **Host an employee cleanup or volunteer event.**
- **Connect CGLR with communities or organizations** where cleanup technology could have an impact.
- **Support education and public engagement** around plastic pollution.
- **Use your expertise** to help identify solutions to materials frequently found through cleanup and characterization.



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Return to Retail

Get Involved:

- **Fund or sponsor the pilot** to help move the project from planning to implementation and scale.
- **Participate in the pilot** by providing collection sites, infrastructure, or operational support.
- **Strengthen the value chain** by providing hauling, processing, manufacturing, or end-market capacity.
- **Share expertise and data** to help identify challenges, test solutions, and improve the model.
- **Create demand for recovered material** by exploring opportunities to incorporate recycled content.
- **Connect us with partners** across your supply chain who can help build and scale the system.



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Legislative Outreach and Education

Get Involved:

- **Identify priority issues** - flag legislation and circular economy topics where more education is needed.
- **Educate decision-makers** - share industry expertise, data, and real-world impacts.
- **Join the conversation** - participate in briefings, webinars, and roundtables with regional policymakers.
- **Leverage CGLR's network** - help bring industry perspectives into policy discussions across the Great Lakes.
- **Support the work** - fund research, educational resources, and policymaker outreach.



Get Involved

Business leadership is critical to the success of our initiatives.

- ✓ **Join** CGLR Programs as a Corporate Activation Partner
- ✓ **Support** on the ground projects
- ✓ **Sponsor** Technology as part of the Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup
- ✓ **Participate** in Webinars and Great Lakes Insights

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