

Meijer Expands Commitment to the Great Lakes with \$1.5+ Million in Donations to the Council of the Great Lakes Region Since 2022

Efforts will bring innovative drone technology to 18 new sites along Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin lakeshores this year

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., April 17, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Meijer strengthened its commitment to Great Lakes stewardship today by expanding its partnership with the Council of the Great Lakes Region (CGLR) to clean up Midwest beaches and waterways.

Since 2022, the retailer donated more than \$1.5 million to the charitable arm of Council in the United States, the CGLR Foundation, to expand deployment of two types of innovative litter capture and clean-up technologies, the [BeBot and Pixie Drone](#), to 18 new locations along Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin lakeshores as part of the council's Great Lakes Plastic Cleanup Program.

"It's a privilege to live near the Great Lakes, and it's one we don't take for granted, which is why we're continuing to take steps to protect them," said Erik Petrovskis, Director of Environmental Compliance and Sustainability at Meijer. "Meijer was the first retailer to support the innovative technology in the Great Lakes last year, and thanks to our ongoing relationship with the Council of the Great Lakes Region and local NGO partners, we're able to expand our hands-on efforts to ensure their viability for generations to come."

The retailer kickstarted its participation in the council's cleanup program last year with [a \\$1 million donation and to support the pilot testing](#) of the BeBot and Pixie Drone at Pere Marquette Beach and a nearby marina in Muskegon, Mich. by the Annis Water Resources Institute at Grand Valley State University. Their efforts resulted in the collection of 6,130 items, including thousands of plastic fragments, cigarette butts, foam pieces and plastic fibers.

The BeBot is an eco-friendly and remote-controlled electric (solar and battery powered) beach cleaning robot that mechanically sifts sand, rakes seaweed and levels sandy areas to remove plastic waste and other debris without harming the local environment. It cleans 32,000 square-feet per hour and collects plastic litter and other waste – bottles, cans, food wrappers and cigarette butts – in a basket for disposal and recycling.

The Pixie Drone is a floating eco-friendly and remote-controlled water drone that navigates through marinas and other waterways to collect waste – organic, plastic, glass, metal, paper and rubber – and other water data, such as temperature, pH, salinity, turbidity and dissolved oxygen. It can collect up to 200 pounds of material per use and can be operated in salt, fresh and brackish waters.

This year, the devices will now be deployed to 18 different locations in Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin. Meijer and the CGLR will lead the cleanup projects at the local level working with a variety of community, state, and environmental NGO partners, including the Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin Sea Grant organizations and GVSU. Each project will collect, sort, weigh and itemize waste materials to better inform – and educate – the public, regional companies, and policymakers at all levels on the problem and the solutions.

"These lakes represent a fifth of the world's surface freshwater, and our partnership with CGLR has already contributed to their conservation," Petrovskis said. "But there is more work to be done and these innovative technologies will help in that effort."

"We are thrilled to be continuing and growing our partnership with Meijer, a sustainability leader in the Great Lakes region, to ensure our beaches and waterways are free of plastic litter," said Mark Fisher, CGLR President & CEO. "The work we are doing will not only protect the health of these vital waters for generations to come, the data collected will help us drive change when it comes to recycling and building a future without consumer waste."

To learn more about the Meijer sustainability strategy or how this donation fits into the company's broader efforts to support its communities, visit <https://meijercommunity.com/sustainability>.

About Meijer: Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer that operates 501 supercenters, neighborhood markets, Meijer Grocery and Express locations throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive apparel departments, pet departments, garden centers, toys and electronics. For additional information on Meijer, please visit www.meijer.com. Follow Meijer on Twitter at twitter.com/Meijer and twitter.com/MeijerPR or become a fan at www.facebook.com/meijer.

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