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NEWSLETTER

– Save Water, Save Lakes –

International Lake Environment Committee Foundation

This newsletter is also available in Japanese.



World Lake Day | WLD (Aug 27)

An international day established by the UN in December 2024 to promote awareness of the importance and challenges of lakes and their sustainable use. August 27 marks the opening of the first World Lake Conference, held in Otsu, Japan, in 1984.

On this second WLD, ILEC shared messages from around the world on the importance of protecting lakes.

Report 1



World Lake Day 2026 International Event

– My Lake, My Story: Creating Environmental, Social, and Economic Value for Lakes

On Thursday, August 27, ILEC, in collaboration with the Shiga Prefectural Government, organized an international event at AEON MALL Kusatsu. Youth from Japan joined in person, while youth from around the world joined online to present their local lake conservation activities. Through their actions and ideas, participants explored the future of lakes and communities and shared a “Youth Declaration” ahead of the 21st World Lake Conference in Tanzania in 2027.

Opening

Mr. Yasuo Takahashi, ILEC Vice President, in his opening remarks, stressed the importance of continuing local efforts to protect lakes and passing them on to future generations. He expressed hope that young people worldwide would share experiences, learn from one another, and inspire new cooperation and action.

In a video message, Dr. Susan Gardner, Director, Ecosystems Division, UNEP, highlighted the importance of lakes to people and nature, noting that half of the world’s largest lakes are shrinking. She called for global cooperation across countries and generations to protect their future. Mr. Taizo Mikazuki, Governor of Shiga Prefecture, called for expanding lake conservation efforts from the local to the global level and promoting harmony between lakes and people.



Commentators



① Mr. Masaru Azuma | Vice Governor of Shiga Prefecture

② Ms. Junko Nishikawa | Director, Office of Environmental Management of Coastal Seas, Ministry of the Environment

③ Dr. Shigeo Fujii | ILEC Director; Director-General, Lake Biwa Environmental Research Institute

④Ms. Adelina Santos-Borja | Chair, ILEC Scientific Committee




An elementary school group is exploring the issue of plastic waste through surveys along the shores of Lake Biwa.

R Kid's Efforts to Reduce Plastic Waste

The Shiga Local SDGs Learners Youth Team

Japan

01




We propose an early warning system to prevent mass fish deaths in lakes.

KOYO SIAGA: THE OXYGEN PULSE OF RANU KLAKAH LAKE (A Local Wisdom-Based Early Warning System for Upwelling Mitigation in Ranu Klakah Lake, Lumajang)

MAN 2 Kota Malang

Indonesia

02



We see rice paddies, waterways, and Lake Biwa as one basin, study local nature and wildlife, and share what we learn at WLC and other events.

Creating Value through Watershed-Based Experiential Learning Connecting Rice Paddies, Waterways, and Lake Biwa

TANAKAMI Children's Environmental Club

Japan

03



At Lake Poso, we aim to achieve both biodiversity conservation and sustainable local livelihoods through the conservation of endemic species, environmental education, and ecotourism.

For the Sustainability of Our Lake

Kurniawan Palindondaya Bandjolu

Indonesia

04



On Okishima Island in Lake Biwa, we work to preserve island life and traditions through festivals, the restoration of traditional houses, and hands-on farming and fishing activities.

Students as Island Infrastructure

Za Okishima

Japan

05



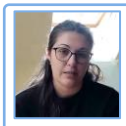
Through water quality and spring water surveys and fishing experiences, we foster children's curiosity and environmental awareness while sharing the appeal of the local community.

Be a Researcher Tour in BIWAKO

MLGs Team, International Volunteer University Student Association (IVUSA)

Japan

06




We map activity sites around the lake to facilitate communication.

Building Youth Communities around Lake Balaton: A Network Open to Everyone

West-Balaton Youth Association / Extázis Youth Organization

Hungary

07



We remove the invasive plant known as water primrose and share our experience from Lake Biwa with other regions.

From Lake Biwa to Japan and the World: University Students Collaborate with the Local Community to Remove Invasive Alien Aquatic Plants

Team OOBANA, IVUSA

Japan

08



We work with companies to turn high school students' ideas into reality, such as developing products from underutilized fish species in Lake Biwa.

Stepping into the Future: How High School Students Connect Through Lake Biwa

Ritsumeikan Moriyama High School

Japan

09



Through school workshops and lake cleanups, we deepen our connection with nature and foster environmental awareness.

From Awareness to Stewardship: Empowering Youth through Citizen Science and Urban Lake Action in Kuala Lumpur

The Planet Prodigy

Malaysia

10



Through our community's initiative to make soap from used cooking oil, carried on for 45 years, we are sharing its bonds and spirit of caring for the environment with the next generation.

Passing the Spirit of the "Soap Movement" to Protect Lake Biwa on to the Next Generation

NPO Ai-no-Machi Eco Club

Japan

11

Youth Declaration & Presentation Materials

Explore the Youth Declaration, presentation summaries, and materials below:

https://ilec.or.jp/en/youth/#topics

Report 2

Commemorating World Lake Day: Strengthening Global Cooperation for Sustainable Lake Management

On August 27, a high-level event commemorating World Lake Day was held at UN Headquarters in New York. The event was organized by UNEP and brought together a wide range of stakeholders from approximately 70 countries, including representatives of Permanent Missions to the United Nations, international organizations, researchers, Indigenous Peoples, and youth. Dr. Kenzo Hiroki, ILEC Director, moderated a panel discussion representing HELP (the High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters) as one of the co-organizers. Dr. Kazuhiko Takemoto, ILEC President, delivered the closing remarks.The meeting highlighted the importance of managing lakes in an integrated manner within their broader basins and connected ecosystems, using scientific knowledge and evidence to inform management decisions, and engaging a diverse range of stakeholders.







Global Perspectives on Lakes

Shared by Countries, International Organizations, and Youth

① Take an integrated approach to lakes and their surrounding basins

The discussion underscored the importance of protecting entire lake basins—from rivers and forests to agricultural and urban areas—and recognizing lakes as part of the identity, history, and natural heritage of local communities. It also highlighted practical approaches, including reforestation, pollution prevention, and improved sanitation and hygiene, as well as efforts to connect environmental conservation with agriculture, ecotourism, education, and local economic development.

② Bridge science and data to policy and action

The importance of accurately monitoring the condition of lakes and using this information to inform policies and conservation efforts was emphasized. UNEP introduced the “Global Wetland Watch,” which uses satellite observations and other technologies to monitor lakes and wetlands over time.

③ Translate international cooperation into concrete actions

Putting lake conservation into practice requires more than sharing principles and knowledge. It also requires sustained funding, technology, and human resources. The importance of international cooperation to support concrete actions, including monitoring, wastewater treatment, ecosystem restoration, technology transfer, and capacity development, was highlighted.

④ Promote the engagement of diverse stakeholders

The discussion emphasized the value of involving a broad range of stakeholders—including governments, experts, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, and youth—from the outset of decision-making. It also highlighted the importance of respecting knowledge passed down through local communities and recognizing young people as key actors in ongoing efforts.

Closing Remarks



Dr. Kazuhiko Takemoto,
ILEC President

The challenges facing lakes are complex. Achieving sustainable lake management for generations to come will require sound scientific knowledge and evidence, stronger connections between science and policy, and the diverse perspectives and expertise of stakeholders. It will also depend on sustained international cooperation to bring these efforts together and move them forward.Through the World Lake Conference (WLC), ILEC has worked to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience among countries and to foster international dialogue and cooperation on lake-related issues. Building on the expertise and international networks we have developed over the years, we hope to work with UNEP, other international organizations, and a wide range of stakeholders to strengthen institutional frameworks for lake management and advance concrete action on the ground.

Report 3

Sharing Our Message at the WLD Event in Hungary



A commemorative World Lake Day (WLD) event was also held on September 8 in Balatonfüred, Hungary, by the local host for the 19th World Lake Conference. Dr. Kazuhiko Takemoto, ILEC President, was invited alongside senior officials from Hungary and the EU and delivered a video message. He described Lake Balaton as one of the world's most important lakes, with a long history of practical lake management, and said it was a fitting place to host the WLD conference. He expressed confidence that the exchange of knowledge and recommendations at this event would help promote sustainable lake management worldwide.

Earlier, at an event held on August 27, Dr. Masahisa Nakamura, ILEC Science Advisor, gave a presentation entitled "From Lake Biwa to Lake Balaton, Living with Lakes Across Generations."

Report 4

Connecting Lakes Around the World: WLD Online Event



An online event under the theme "Many Lakes, One Mission" was organized through collaboration among lake stakeholders from around the world, including North America, Africa, and Asia.

The event introduced efforts to conserve lakes and engage youth in different regions. The Chair of the ILEC Scientific Committee noted that "Many Lakes, One Mission" also means "Many Actors, One Mission," emphasizing the importance of diverse stakeholders working together toward sustainable lake management, each bringing their own role and strengths. She also expressed hope for greater youth participation in lake conservation.

Save the Date

The 21st World Lake Conference

(Mwanza 2027)

Host | Water Institute, Ministry of Water, United Republic of Tanzania

ILEC

Date
August 4 (Wed)–7 (Sat), 2027

Venue
Mwanza, Tanzania
Malaika Beach Resort

Theme
Our Lakes, Our Future: Uniting Science, Policy, Management Action, and People for a Water-Secure World

We sincerely thank Kinki Labour Bank and Kansai Mirai Bank for their generous donations, which were used to support events related to WLD.

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