



Protect Our Blue Campaign

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STC 551: Case Studies in Public Relations

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Dec. 1, 2025

A big part of Michigan's identity is its water, as the state is highly recognized as the Great Lakes State. For example, family weekends at the lake to drinking the flowing water into homes across the state. The Great Lakes shape how people live, work and carry themselves. Today, these waters are threatened by a growing microplastic pollution. Microplastics are entering the Great Lakes at an alarming rate. Harsh plastics and chemicals are now showing up in drinking water, fish, wildlife and human bodies. This issue is no longer an environmental concern. It is a public health, economic, and cultural challenge that directly impacts Michigan families.

The Protect Our Blue campaign addresses this urgent problem through a new partnership between the Detroit Lions and the University of Michigan Health. By combining the Lions' ability to unite communities with U-M Health's expertise in public health and prevention. The campaign uses teamwork, education and local pride to inspire real action. Protect Our Blue aims to raise awareness about microplastics, engage residents in statewide cleanup efforts and reinforce the importance of protecting Michigan's water to protect Michigan's people. This paper outlines the research, audiences, programming and objectives behind the campaign to show how this partnership can make a meaningful and long-lasting impact.

Research

Client Research

The Detroit Lions are one of Michigan's most recognized and influential organizations. Beyond football, the team represents resilience, pride and unity, which are values deeply tied to Detroit's spirit and the state's identity. Through Lions Give Back and the Detroit Lions Foundation, the organization has earned a strong reputation for community involvement, focusing on youth empowerment, education, health, and socioeconomic responsibility.

Every year, the Lions invest time and resources into programs like Touchdown in Your Town, Character Playbook, Crucial Catch, Game on Cancer, and Inspire Change. These initiatives show the team's long-term dedication to improving lives across Michigan and using its platform for positive social change.

The Protect Our Blue campaign builds on that foundation through a new partnership between the Detroit Lions and University of Michigan Health. Both organizations share a mission to support public well-being and strengthen Michigan communities. Together, they aim to unite Lions pride with environmental care by addressing an issue that directly affects the state's identity and health: microplastic pollution in the Great Lakes.

The Great Lakes define Michigan's landscape, economy and lifestyle. As the world's largest freshwater system, they provide drinking water to over 40 million people, support tourism and recreation, and drive a multi-billion-dollar fishing and boating industry. However, studies from the Rochester Institute of Technology show that about 22 million pounds of plastic enter the Great Lakes each year, with Lake Michigan alone receiving roughly 11 million pounds. These plastics break down into tiny particles that pollute water, harm wildlife, and threaten human health.

This issue connects directly to both the clients' missions. The Lions focus on teamwork and community impact, while U-M Health emphasizes public health and prevention. Together, they can spread awareness and encourage action by rallying fans, families, and healthcare professionals to protect Michigan's greatest natural resource.

The Lions bring passion and visibility while U-M Health brings science and credibility. Combined, they show environmental health is community health, leading to teamwork, education, and shared pride. Pride is creating real change across communities.

Problem Research

Microplastic pollution in the Great Lakes is one of the region's most urgent environmental and public health problems. Research shows it is growing and deeply connected to Michigan's culture, economy, and identity.

A 2023 study published in *Environmental Science & Technology* by Koski et al. revealed that the Great Lakes contain among the highest microplastic concentrations in North America, with over 112,000 particles per square kilometer in some areas. These particles are commonly found in surface water, sediments, and aquatic organisms. The study highlighted that microplastics act as "chemical sponges," absorbing toxins and heavy metals that can then enter the food chain, posing long-term risks to both ecosystems and human health.

Another article from *Frontiers in Environmental Science* (2022) examined public perception of microplastic pollution and found that while most residents view the Great Lakes as central to their regional identity, awareness of microplastic pollution remains low. Many people underestimate their personal role in contributing to the problem through littering, improper recycling, or single-use plastics. This shows the need for more education and awareness.

A 2021 report in the *Journal of Great Lakes Research* emphasized addressing plastic pollution requires multi-sector collaboration between governments, businesses, nonprofits, and communities. Researchers found that public engagement and volunteer-based cleanups not only reduce pollution but also build civic pride and environmental literacy. These findings support the Protect Our Blue campaign's emphasis on education, engagement, and community action.

According to the *Alliance for the Great Lakes* (2024), more than 15,000 volunteers participate annually in beach cleanups during the Adopt-a-Beach program. This program collects an average of 35,000 pounds of litter each year, mostly plastic. Despite this progress,

microplastic levels continue to rise due to constant inputs from urban runoff, synthetic textiles, and degraded packaging materials.

A 2024 *Planet Detroit* article revealed that microplastics are now found in drinking water, fish, and even beer brewed with Great Lakes water. This raises serious public health concerns, including possible hormonal and chemical effects. The article argues that public health organizations should play a greater role in communicating the connection between water quality and human health. This aligns perfectly with the partnership between U-M Health and the Lions.

MLive and *Crain's Detroit Business* both noted that environmental responsibility is becoming a key part of corporate social responsibility in Michigan. The Detroit Lions, already known for community leadership, have an opportunity to expand that reputation by addressing an issue that affects every fan, family, and business across the state.

Microplastic pollution is not just an environmental concern, it's a public health, economic, and cultural issue. Michigan's tourism and recreation industries depend on the Great Lakes' image as clean and vibrant. Public health experts are warning that plastic particles have been found in human blood and lungs, signaling potential long-term risks. Socially, the issue strikes at the heart of what it means to live in Michigan: a state surrounded by freshwater that shapes both its economy and identity.

By positioning the Detroit Lions and U-M Health as advocates for clean water and community wellness, the Protect Our Blue campaign addresses a problem that directly affects fans, families, and future generations. It connects the Lions' platform of teamwork and pride with a statewide call to action: making environmental responsibility an extension of what it means to be part of "One Pride."

Audience Research

The audience profiles developed for this campaign are grounded in the research completed earlier in the semester. That report found that Lions fans form a highly engaged, emotionally connected group defined by resilience, loyalty and shared identity. Survey findings showed that over 80% of respondents feel the Lions strongly represent Detroit's values, using words such as "grit," "family," and "community." Social media observations from Lions Facebook groups and Reddit forums also revealed that fans consistently express a desire to participate in community events, charity work and service projects, indicating they are especially receptive to hands-on initiatives. These findings support the conclusion that Lions fans are a primary audience for Protect Our Blue because they already demonstrate behaviors that match teamwork, volunteerism and pride in Michigan.

The Detroit Lions report also showed how Michigan residents outside the core fan community express strong environmental interest. Reddit threads show residents actively seeking volunteer opportunities for environmental cleanups, beach protection and water conservation. Many commenters stated they wanted to help preserve Michigan's beauty or meet others who care about the Great Lakes. This goes along with our campaign's goal to engage residents who already show concern for environmental and public health issues.

Additionally, research on U-M Health supporters shows they trust science-based information and are motivated by prevention and community wellness, which are themes that directly connect to microplastic education and drinking water protection. These findings showed up repeatedly in our early research, and U-M Health supporters and healthcare audiences were included as a key audience group for this campaign.

Finally, our earlier Detroit Lions research identified that youth programs, schools and community groups frequently partner with the Lions, from Detroit Lions Academy to leadership assemblies and youth football initiatives. This history of involvement validates our decision to include schools and educational institutions as important secondary audiences. Their existing connection to Lions-led outreach makes them an ideal partner for long-term engagement and educational programming within Protect Our Blue.

Environmental groups such as Alliance for the Great Lakes and its Adopt-a-Beach volunteer network are also key secondary audiences for Protect Our Blue. Our earlier research into these organizations revealed that they consistently mobilize thousands of volunteers each year and have strong credibility among Michigan residents. Their social media content regularly features posts about microplastics, shoreline cleanups and community action. This showed that their followers are already motivated, informed, and willing to participate in environmental efforts. Because these groups share the same mission of protecting water quality, they provide a built-in community of volunteers, local leaders and advocates who can expand the reach and long-term sustainability of this campaign.

Primary Audiences

1. Detroit Lions fans represent a loyal, emotionally invested community defined by resilience, teamwork, and pride. The “One Pride” message perfectly fits the campaign’s goal of uniting people for a shared cause.

Demographics:

- Age: 15–65+
- Gender: All
- Location: Statewide and Great Lakes region

- Values: Loyalty, teamwork, pride, authenticity, community spirit

Psychographics:

- Proud of Michigan and Detroit's comeback story
- Motivated by family, teamwork, and giving back
- Drawn to causes tied to the team's values

Media Channels:

- Social media (Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok)
- Lions' website, YouTube, ESPN, and local sports news

Motivators:

- State pride and belonging
- Family-friendly volunteer opportunities
- Lions-led community events

2. Michigan residents share a deep emotional and cultural connection to the Great Lakes.

The state's economy and recreation depend on clean water. Michiganders take immense pride in their environment including the Great Lakes, forests, and parks define the state's lifestyle and culture. The campaign taps into that pride, encouraging residents to see protecting the lakes as part of protecting their home.

Demographics:

- Population: ~10 million
- Age Range: All ages (focus on families and youth)
- Location: Statewide
- Values: Environmental protection, community involvement, family well-being

Psychographics:

- View the Great Lakes as part of who they are and Michigan's identity
- Care about future generations
- Trust familiar, credible organizations like the Lions and U-M Health
- Likely to engage with hands-on, visible initiatives

Preferred Communication Channels

- Local television and radio news
- Social media groups focused on Michigan pride, environment, and local news
- University, nonprofit, and school communications

Motivators:

- Local pride and sense of belonging
- Concern about the health, recreation, and economic value of the Great Lakes
- Belief that small, personal actions (volunteering, reducing plastic use) contribute to big change
- Desire for hands-on involvement (volunteer cleanups, education events)

3. Supporters of U-M Health includes healthcare professionals, students, and families who believe in prevention, wellness, and science-based outreach.

Demographics:

- Age Range: 18–65 (healthcare professionals, students, parents)
- Education: College educated
- Location: Ann Arbor, Detroit, Flint, statewide network
- Values: Wellness, prevention, community leadership

Psychographics:

- Trust research-based health messages
- Support U-M Health's reputation for medical innovation and community care.
- Motivated by prevention and community health improvement.
- View environmental action as part of long-term wellness.

Media Channels

- Email newsletters, LinkedIn, internal health system communications, U-M Health social media pages.
- Health-focused local news stories and university media.

Motivators

- Protecting community health through prevention
- Strengthening U-M Health's public outreach and impact
- Partnership with the Lions adds local reach and visibility

Secondary Audiences

1. Local schools play an important role in shaping lifelong habits and community pride.

Partnering with K-12 districts and Michigan universities builds long-term awareness with the younger audiences.

Roles and Benefits

- Integrate environmental lessons with civic pride and health education.
- Provide student volunteers for cleanup and awareness events.
- Benefit from Lions branding to promote teamwork and responsibility.

- Groups like the Alliance for the Great Lakes, Adopt-a-Beach, and Keep Growing Detroit already engage volunteers and have strong reputations in local environmental work.

Roles and Benefits

- Provide expertise, resources, and local networks.
- Strengthen credibility of campaign messaging.
- Help coordinate cleanups, workshops, and educational events.

- Media outlets like *MLive*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Planet Detroit*, and local news stations help spread awareness and shape public opinion about Michigan's identity, environment, and health.

Roles and Benefits

- Share campaign updates, success stories, and calls for volunteers.
- Highlight positive brand collaboration between the Lions and U- M Health.

- Michigan-based companies such as Meijer, Comerica, and Faygo can extend visibility by incorporating campaign messaging into corporate responsibility initiatives.

Benefits

- Demonstrate local pride and environmental commitment.
- Offer funding or volunteer hours to support cleanups and education.

Audience Group	Motivation	Preferred Channels	Engagement Type
Lions Fans	Team pride, belonging, visible impact	Social media, games, local news	Volunteerism, pledges, digital campaigns
Michigan Residents	Environmental protection, family health	Local TV, schools, community orgs	Cleanups, donations, education events
U-M Health Supporters	Health prevention, science credibility	LinkedIn, newsletters, health platforms	Advocacy, data sharing, education

Audience Group	Motivation	Preferred Channels	Engagement Type
Schools and Colleges	Youth education, civic engagement	School bulletins, teacher networks	Student volunteering, classroom tie-ins
Environmental Orgs	Collaboration, credibility	Partnership meetings, social channels	Co-hosting events, resource sharing
Media Outlets	Storytelling and local pride	News features, interviews	Coverage, amplification
Businesses/Sponsors	CSR visibility, community pride	Email, internal comms	Funding, employee volunteerism

Across all audiences, one unifying factor stands out: Michigan pride. Whether its fans shouting “One Pride” on game day or residents enjoying weekends at the lake, Michiganders share a sense of belonging rooted in their environment and community. The Protect Our Blue campaign leverages that shared pride to turn awareness into action by educating residents about the dangers of microplastic pollution, engaging them through service, and empowering them to protect their home.

The campaign’s educational efforts, community cleanups, and health partnerships allow each audience to participate in meaningful ways: fans volunteer, families learn, students engage, and organizations collaborate. By combining the trust and reach of the Detroit Lions with the expertise of U-M Health, the campaign speaks to both the heart and the mind — showing that protecting Michigan’s waters is more than environmental — it’s personal, communal, and essential to the state’s identity.

Objectives

The objectives of the Protect Our Blue campaign aligns with the Detroit Lions’ commitment to community outreach and the University of Michigan Health’s mission to improve

public well-being. The campaign seeks to increase awareness, inspire behavioral change, and build long-term engagement through education, pride, and teamwork.

1. Impact Objectives

- **Informational Objectives**
 - By August 15, 2027, the Detroit Lions and U-M Health Partnership will educate 5% of Lions fans and Michigan residents about how microplastics enter the Great Lakes, how they harm wildlife and water quality, and how simple, everyday behaviors can reduce plastic pollution.
- **Attitudinal Objective**
 - By August 15, 2027, increase positive perceptions of the Detroit Lions and U-M Health partnerships as a trusted, collaborative force that protects community well-being and the environment by 5%.
- **Behavioral Objective**
 - Recruit at least 1,000 volunteers statewide to join cleanup and service events by August 15, 2027.

2. Output Objectives

- Write a press release.
- Post one collaborative video per month featuring a Lions player and U-M Health expert discussing microplastic health impacts.
- Write a media advisory.
- Pick out 3 design options for the reusable water bottles.
- Design a digital flyer to recruit volunteers.

- Post one story per month highlighting a volunteer, family, or community group making an impact.
- Email a quarterly e-newsletter for campaign partners with updates, data, and upcoming events.
- Order t-shirts and lanyards for volunteers and event staff.
- Get permits and cleanup supplies for the event location.
- Create a press kit with logos, key messages and visuals for media use.
- Create a fact sheet linking environmental and human health.
- Reach out to local news outlets.
- Reach out to national news outlets.

Programming

Theme: #ProtectOurBlue

Key Messages:

- The Detroit Lions and University of Michigan Health are committed to protecting Michigan's water and community health through education, partnership and statewide engagement.
- The Detroit Lions and University of Michigan Health are dedicated to inspiring positive attitudes about environmental health by connecting Lions pride with Michigan pride.
- The Detroit Lions and University of Michigan Health motivate community action by giving residents meaningful, hands-on opportunities to protect Michigan's drinking water.
- The Detroit Lions and University of Michigan Health strengthen Michigan communities through long-term environmental stewardship and ongoing clean-water initiatives.

Media

Controlled Media:

- Detroit Lions website
- Social media posts
- Flyers, event posters, and digital toolkits for schools and businesses

Uncontrolled Media:

- Photos/videos
- Press releases
- Media advisory

Social Media:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- TikTok
- X
- YouTube

Event/Action: The WOW Moment

The heart of the Protect Our Blue campaign is a large-scale, statewide event called “Protect Our Blue: One Pride Cleanup Day.” This event is designed to unite fans, families, students, healthcare workers, environmental organizations, and Detroit Lions players in a coordinated effort to remove microplastics and litter from Michigan’s waterways. While the event will certainly clean beaches, its deeper purpose is to educate the public about how microplastics enter both the Great Lakes and the state’s drinking water systems. It will show that

protecting Michigan's environment is directly connected to protecting public health, and it aims to inspire a sense of shared responsibility and community pride.

The flagship event will take place at Belle Isle Beach in Detroit, with coordinated satellite cleanups held simultaneously in Grand Haven, Saginaw Bay, Alpena, and Traverse City. All sites will follow the same schedule to create unity across the state. Volunteers will begin arriving at 7 a.m. to check in, pick up their Protect Our Blue shirts and receive safety gear, reusable water bottles, gloves and instructions for the day. Registration areas will be clearly marked with large banners, tents, and directional signage so that the participants can move smoothly through the space. Lions staff, U-M Health volunteers and community partners will manage the check-in process, which will include participant waivers, safety briefings and zone assignments.

At 8 a.m. the opening ceremony will begin with a welcome from Detroit Lions staff and environmental partners. Then Coach Dan Campbell will take the stage for the official kickoff. His enthusiasm, authenticity and leadership will set the tone for the entire event. He will speak about pride, teamwork and responsibility, not just as values for football, but as values for living in Michigan. Standing on a temporary stage decorated with blue and silver banners, with Lions players and families behind him, he will deliver the message that "We win together. We protect together. One team, one mission, One Pride." His speech will be interpreted in ASL and broadcast live so that volunteers at satellite locations can experience the moment simultaneously.

In addition to the livestream of the opening ceremony, a drone team will provide continuous livestream footage throughout the entire event. The livestream will rotate between Belle Isle and the satellite cleanups, giving viewers a real-time look at volunteers working across the state. The drone footage will show sweeping views of the beaches, groups of volunteers in

matching shirts, Lions players interacting with fans and U-M Health teams leading educational activities. This continuous aerial coverage will help unify all locations, create excitement on social media and allow people who cannot physically attend to still take part in the movement.

After the countdown, volunteers will disperse into designated cleanup zones across beaches, walkways, wooded trails and shoreline areas. Each zone will be color-coded to help direct traffic and ensure full coverage of the beach and surrounding areas. Cleanup captains, including Lions community relations staff, U-M Health team leads, and trained environmental partners, will oversee operations, restock supplies and monitor safety. Volunteers with mobility needs will have roles specifically designed for accessibility, such as cleaning paved walkways, sorting recyclables at seated stations, handing out gloves, assisting with hydration tents and managing data collection. Every person, regardless of age or physical ability, will be able to meaningfully contribute.

What makes this cleanup so unique are the WOW factors that elevate it from a volunteer day to a statewide movement. The plastic collected during the cleanups will be transformed into custom-made Detroit Lions patches, designed by the players themselves. Each player's patch will represent their personal connection to Michigan's lakes, clean water and Lions heritage. The recycled material used in the patches will symbolize the tangible results of the day's work, turning pollution into pride. Volunteers will receive limited-edition versions of those patches, while players will wear theirs proudly on practice uniforms, uniting the team and community in a shared mission.

Every volunteer will also receive a co-branded reusable water bottle featuring both the Detroit Lions and the University of Michigan Health logos. These bottles serve as more than souvenirs because they are a reminder to reduce single-use plastics. Each bottle will include a

QR code linking to facts about how plastics enter drinking water, advice to help at home and upcoming cleanup opportunities. To build camaraderie, participants will wear matching Protect Our Blue t-shirts with their own names printed on the back. Symbolizing everyone, whether a fan, a player, or a volunteer, is all part of the same team.

The event atmosphere will be a festival celebrating Michigan pride. Each cleanup site will feature live music from a unique small Michigan band, giving each location its own personality and style. Belle Isle will host The Whiskey Charmers, Grand Haven will feature Deerfield Run, Saginaw Bay will welcome The Dangling Participles, Alpena will enjoy Blake Elliott & The Robinson Affair and Traverse City will have Chirp performing throughout the day. These bands were chosen because they are rooted in their local Michigan communities, regularly perform at family-friendly festivals and outdoor events and reflect the authentic, down-to-earth character of their regions. Their presence at the events helps show Michigan talent while creating a warm welcoming atmosphere that is personal and community driven.

Additionally, Eco-friendly food trucks will provide lunch options using compostable materials, and a family-friendly Blue Pride Kids Zone will offer educational games, eco-friendly crafts and a mini-cleanup challenge for children. Meanwhile, U-M Health volunteers will staff wellness tents offering sunscreen, hydration and brief explanations about how microplastics impact public health. The combination of learning, music and community activity will create an environment that is both energetic and meaningful across all five cleanup locations.

As the day progresses, the final cleanup sweep will take place, and volunteers will return their bags of collected waste to the designated sorting stations. At 2:30 p.m., participants will gather for the event's grand finale. Cleanup captains will help organize volunteers into the shape of a Lions paw over a blue heart, symbolizing love, protection and unity for Michigan's water. A

drone will fly overhead to capture a stunning aerial photo that will appear on social media, in news outlets and on the Ford Field scoreboard during a future Ford Field halftime segment. This image will become the visual centerpiece of the entire campaign.

The closing ceremony will bring Coach Campbell and a U-M Health representative back to the stage to reveal the first player-designed recycled patch and announce the total pounds of litter collected statewide. Their message will emphasize that this event is not just a cleanup, it's a step toward removing microplastics from the water people drink every day. They will highlight the importance of ongoing action and invite volunteers to participate in future events and educational programs.

Accessibility will remain central throughout the event. ASL interpreters, multilingual volunteers, wheelchair-friendly zones and adaptive tools will ensure that every Michigander can participate fully. The planning reflects the core belief that clean water is everyone's responsibility and everyone should be able to contribute to protecting it.

The impact of One Pride Cleanup Day will extend far beyond the event itself. Schools will use the experience to begin environmental projects, businesses will be encouraged to adopt more sustainable practices and families will continue using their reusable water bottles long after the event. The player-designed patches will serve as permanent reminders of collective accomplishment, and the drone photo will symbolize a movement larger than any single person or team. Together, the Detroit Lions, University of Michigan Health, and Michigan communities will create a legacy of environmental protection, public health awareness, and shared pride.

By combining football, science and community, Protect Our Blue transforms Lions pride into a legacy of health, resilience and environmental stewardship. It proves that when Michigan

comes together, we can protect more than our lakes; we can protect the water we drink, the communities we love and the pride that connects us all.

Event Schedule:

- 7:00 AM – 8:00 AM: Volunteer check-in, distribution of shirts, water bottles, gloves, safety vests
- 8:00 AM – 8:30 AM: Opening ceremony with Coach Dan Campbell
- 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM: Cleanup activities
- 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Lunch break (eco-friendly food trucks, hydration tents)
- 12:30 PM – 2:30 PM: Secondary cleanup sweep, recycling and sorting
- 2:30 PM – 3:00 PM: Closing ceremony, patch reveal, drone photo

Principles of Effective Communication

1. **Two-Way Communication:** The campaign invites feedback and engagement through social media, volunteer surveys and event participation. By hearing people's thoughts and feedback, the campaign builds trust and makes everyone feel like part of the team.
2. **Source Credibility:** People believe messages from sources they trust. The Detroit Lions are a symbol of pride and community, and U-M Health brings medical and scientific knowledge. Together, they make the campaign strong and believable. When fans hear about clean water from trusted voices, they're more likely to care and act.
3. **Audience Participation:** Getting people involved is what makes this campaign work. Whether someone joins a cleanup, signs the Protect Our Blue Pledge, or

shares a post online, participation turns awareness into action. When people help, they feel proud and connected, just like being part of a team.

4. **Salient Information:** The campaign provides information that matters directly to Michiganders: how microplastics affect their drinking water, their families' health, and the Great Lakes they use and love. Because this information is relevant and meaningful, people are more likely to pay attention and change their behavior.
5. **Group Influence:** Fans, families, student groups and community organizations feel a sense of belonging and identity. When these groups support the campaign, their members feel positive pressure to join in. The Lions' "One Pride" community creates a powerful group influence that encourages collective action.

Evaluation

1. Impact Objectives

- Informational Objective: By August 15, 2027, the Detroit Lions and U-M Health Partnership will educate 5% of Lions fans and Michigan residents about how microplastics enter the Great Lakes, how they harm wildlife and water quality, and how simple, everyday behaviors can reduce plastic pollution.
 - Will be evaluated by conducting before and after surveys, social media analytics, website traffic, and media exposure.
- Attitudinal Objective: By August 15, 2027, positive perceptions of the Detroit Lions and U-M Health partnerships as a trusted, collaborative force that protects community well-being and the environment by 5%.

- Will be evaluated by conducting short on-site and online surveys.
- Behavioral Objective: Recruit at least 1,000 volunteers statewide to join cleanup and service events by August 15, 2027.
 - Will be evaluated by counting how many participants showed up to volunteer at the events.

2. Output Objectives

- Write a press release.
 - Will be evaluated by whether a press release was written.
- Post one collaborative video per month featuring a Lions player and U-M Health expert discussing microplastic health impacts.
 - Will be evaluated by whether one video was posted monthly.
- Write a media advisory.
 - Will be evaluated by whether a media advisory was written.
- Pick out three design options for the reusable water bottles.
 - Will be evaluated by whether three designs were picked out for the water bottles.
- Design a digital flyer to recruit volunteers.
 - Will be evaluated by whether a digital flyer was made.
- Post one story per month highlighting a volunteer, family, or community group making an impact.
 - Will be evaluated by whether one story was posted per month.
- Order t-shirts and lanyards for volunteers and event staff.
 - Will be evaluated by whether t-shirts and lanyards were ordered.

- Get permits for the event location.
 - Will be evaluated by whether permits were obtained.
- Create a press kit with logos, key messages and visuals for media use.
 - Will be evaluated by whether a press kit was made.
- Create a fact sheet linking environmental and human health.
 - Will be evaluated by whether a fact sheet was made.
- Reach out to local news outlets.
 - Will be evaluated by whether local news outlets were contacted.
- Reach out to national news outlets.
 - Will be evaluated by whether national news outlets were contacted.

Conclusion

The Protect Our Blue campaign brings together the strength of the Detroit Lions and the University of Michigan Health to address one of Michigan's issues concerning microplastic pollution in our lakes and drinking water. Through research-driven planning, this campaign asks audiences to act and use their shared values — pride, teamwork and community connection. In hopes of guiding meaningful engagement. By combining educational messaging, hands-on volunteer opportunities and a statewide event that unites Michiganders across locations. The campaign turns awareness into action and reinforces that environmental health and public health are deeply connected.

The programming plan, including One Pride Cleanup Day, demonstrates how strategic communication, partnerships and community participation can create real impact. Local bands, accessible volunteer roles, player involvement and recycled patch initiatives all help transform

the event into a memorable experience that strengthens the relationship between the Lions, U-M Health and Michigan residents. The campaign's objectives and evaluation methods make sure that progress can be measured clearly and effectively. This helps keep the focus on long-term change and continued collaboration.

Ultimately, Protect Our Blue shows what is possible when sports, healthcare and community come together for a shared purpose. By educating residents, inspiring positive attitudes and mobilizing volunteers, the campaign lays the foundation for a healthier environment, a more informed public and a stronger, more unified "One Pride" Michigan. Protecting our water is protecting our future, and this campaign gives Michiganders the tools, support and inspiration to do exactly that.

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Appendix A
Reusable Water Bottle



Appendix B

Dan Campbell's Opening Speech

I am excited to announce a new partnership with the University of Michigan Health. This partnership is a statewide initiative on an ongoing issue of our surrounding Great Lakes. We are asking residents, fans and the community to join us in protecting our turf. Water is essential for everyone to live a healthy life. Unfortunately, oil, harsh chemicals, pollution, and improper treatment are affecting our water we need to survive. U-M health professionals are providing education and preventive tips on how we can slow down this problem.

Practicing better maintenance and partaking in sustainable choices is important. On Saturday, August 15th, from 7 am to 3 pm, we are asking everyone to come out to Belle Isle Park for a One Pride Clean Up Day. This event is open to the public and registration will go live on our official website, our social media sites, and a QR code located on our flyer. Let's come together and spread the word using social media and word-of-mouth. Hope to see you there!

Appendix C

Digital Flyer



Appendix D

Press Release



DATE
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Detroit Lions and University of Michigan Health to Partner for "Protect Our Blue" Campaign

Detroit, MI —The Detroit Lions are partnering with University of Michigan Health to announce the launch of "Protect Our Blue: One Pride Cleanup Day", a statewide campaign uniting communities to raise awareness about microplastic pollution, which is increasingly found in Michigan's lakes, rivers, and even drinking water systems.

Volunteers will take part in a morning kickoff program, followed by organized cleanup activities led by Lions players, U of M Health teams, and environmental partners. Accessibility and community participation remain central to the event's mission.

The main cleanup will be held on Belle Isle Beach, with simultaneous satellite events in Grand Haven, Saginaw Bay, Alpena, and Traverse City, making this one of Michigan's largest coordinated environmental efforts. Each location will feature local Michigan bands, eco-friendly food trucks, hydration stations, and a family-friendly Blue Pride Kids Zone.

A signature element of the campaign is the transformation of collected plastics into custom Detroit Lions patches designed by players. Volunteers will receive limited-edition versions of the patches, symbolizing their contribution to cleaner lakes and safer drinking water.

"Protect Our Blue brings Michigan together around a shared goal—cleaner water and a healthier future," said David C. Miller, CEO of U-M Health.

Further details will be available on Detroit Lions and U of M Health community pages.

Appendix E

Media Alert



Media Alert: Protect Our Blue Community Campaign

The Detroit Lions are collaborating with University of Michigan Health for a community park cleanup.

June 27, 2026

WHO: Dan Campbell, Jared Goff, David Montgomery, volunteers, and Detroit Lions fans, U-M Health partners.

WHAT: The Detroit Lions are hosting a community cleanup event as part of our team's "Protect Our Blue" initiative. A campaign dedicated to preserving the Great Lakes and raising awareness about microplastic pollution. Participants will remove litter and debris from the Detroit River shoreline while learning about the impact of plastic waste on Michigan's waterways and wildlife.

WHEN: Aug. 15, 2026

WHERE: Riverside Park
1001 W Jefferson Ave Detroit, MI 48226

WHY: The Great Lakes provide drinking water, recreation, and economic benefits for millions across the region. However, it also causes increasing threats from pollution and microplastics. The Detroit Lions are committed to protecting our shared waters through action, education, and community engagement.

MEDIA: Members of the media are invited to attend and cover this community event. Interviews can be arranged with event organizers, Lions players and staff. This event offers a feel-good story highlighting community impact, An opportunity for broadcast, print, and social media content.

CONTACT:

Name: Abigail Lomoro, Event Coordinator
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Appendix F

Fact Sheet



Protect Our Blue

WHAT IT IS

A statewide volunteer cleanup led by the Detroit Lions and U-M Health to address microplastic pollution in Michigan's waterways.

MISSION

To protect Michigan's water by removing microplastics, educating communities, and inspiring statewide pride in environmental stewardship.

Clean water, healthy communities, One Pride.

WHY IT MATTERS

- Microplastics are increasingly found in the Great Lakes, rivers, and municipal drinking water systems.
- Removing plastics helps protect both environmental and human health.
- The event highlights how everyday actions—like reducing single-use plastics—can make a measurable impact.

GOALS

- Remove significant amounts of litter and microplastics.
- Increase public understanding of water contamination.
- Encourage long-term plastic reduction habits.
- Build a statewide culture of environmental conservation.

LEARN MORE

Contact: Ally Meske, (248) 214-3783, media@detroitlions.com

- Detroit Lions Community: detroitlions.com/news/community
- U of M Health: michiganmedicine.org/community