



**Text of remarks given by Jody Henseler, science educator and artist**

Unveiling event for Wisconsin Sea Grant 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary mural  
Located at Sturgeon Bay City Hall  
Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin  
Oct. 15, 2022

Lake Michigan.

It is the water.

Pure and simple.

Those magical, mystical molecules that mesmerize and enchant.

The Lake is constantly changing her appearance -- from a deep dark foreboding blue to a warm summer-like seafoam green or a bone-chilling, icy-cold teal.

All dependent on how the sunlight dances off her surface.

It's that ever-changing look and mood of Lake Michigan, as the sun's angles change its appearance throughout the day, that captures my attention.

But then my mind starts to wonder.

What is IN that water?

A single drop of water?

A single drop of water from Lake Michigan -- our Great Lake?

What is in that?

Hopefully -- there are plankton.

The heartbeat of our Lake's food web.

Phytoplankton & zooplankton.

Psychedelic looking diatoms & cladocerans like the ones featured in our mural.

Living throughout the water column -- from the surface to down over 100 feet deep.

They are the base of all the food sources for Lake Michigan creatures.

Microscopic.

Plankton are the lungs of our planet.

Absorbing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen.

As a matter of fact they produce roughly **half of all the oxygen** on Earth.

And did you know that depending on the species, up to a million plankton can fit in a single drop of water?

We need everyone to know about plankton!

We know how beautifully clear our Lake is now.

Well, that comes at a cost.

Clarity in the water means very few plankton.

And remember plankton are the heartbeat of our Lake's food web -- they are the base.

They keep the Lake ALIVE!

It is with organizations such as Sea Grant, who we celebrate 50 years with here today, and the Center for Great Lakes Literacy, who we need to continue leading the way in Great Lakes education. By quietly creating intersections like this mural -- marrying art & science -- ebbing & flowing into our consciousness.

So as much as water unifies all of us in our need for it.

It is the general understanding and reverence for water, **Lake Michigan water**, that must unite us.

Each of us values water in our own way -- whether you fish, paddle, sunbathe, swim, or paint, we need to be bonded together -- like water molecules held cohesively together to form a puddle -- a stream -- a Great Lake -- and an ocean.

It is our job to help preserve and save our Great Lake Michigan!

***Thank You Sea Grant for 50 years of educating us & here's to at least 50 more!***