



## **Freshwater Future's Great Lakes Walk, Paddle, and Roll Event Organizing Tips**

### Collecting pledges

- Set a goal amount you would like to reach and include that goal in your pledge requests.
- Use your individualized First Giving webpage sponsored by Freshwater Future to easily email pledge requests, collect donations, and send updates to family, friends, and colleagues. Note: While groups can collect pledges directly from people who prefer to pay with a check or cash, encouraging the use of the First Giving site has proven to be an incredibly efficient and simple way to solicit and collect pledges.
- Send at least four emails to potential donors to 1) make the pledge request, 2) thank those who have already supported and encourage those that have not to now support and 3) keep sponsors and potential sponsors abreast of how far you are to reaching your goal, and 4) after the event, let everyone know how it went and thank them for their support.

### Event Organizing:

- Ask group members, friends, or community members who are avid bikers, kayakers, or walkers to volunteer to lead the walk, kayak or bike.
- Ask a volunteer who has good organizational skills to order and distribute t-shirts at the event.
- Ask a volunteer to set up water at the end of the event for participants to drink.
- While not necessary, to close the event, hold some sort of a wrap up such as a pot-luck lunch at a local park or ask a local restaurant to donate food. Be sure to thank everyone for participating and announce approximately how much was raised. This is also a great opportunity to let folks know about all the good work your group is doing!

### Collecting Sponsors

While not a necessary component of the Great Lakes Walk, Paddle, and Roll, asking local businesses and corporations to sponsor your event can greatly increase the amount of funds raised. A suggested approach includes 1) either mailing or dropping off a letter describing the event and asking for a sponsorship (Freshwater Future will provide this letter) 2) following up with a phone call to see if they are willing to become a sponsor and 3) sending a thank you note to those that sponsor. Some tips include:

- When either dropping off or mailing the request letter, let the potential sponsor know you will be following up in a week – and be sure to do so. If you can, find out exactly who you should be contacting along with the best time and number to reach them at.
- A good starting point for targeting potential sponsors is to look at what relationship members of your group have with area businesses and corporations – can they help make the connection for you or make the request?
- Be sure to thank your sponsors “live” at the event. This could be done by a simple announcement or the use of a banner or other signage.