



The Quarterly

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

Planning that is Credible, Credentialed, and Connected

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SWMPC Receives People and Land Mobilization Grant

SWMPC recently received a grant from People and Land (PAL) to continue its efforts in building regional collaboration in economic development with its 360 Group. The 360 Group is composed of economic development practitioners, educators, business people, and agencies of State government and is facilitated by the SWMPC. With the assistance of PAL, the SWMPC will further develop a “curriculum” of presenters and information resources to enhance the 360 Group’s link to the “State of the Region.” The Group will also help the SWMPC create a common regional vision for economic development and develop regional goals and objectives. PAL has observed the synthesis between this SWMPC effort and their “Pillars of Prosperity” including thriving agriculture, tourism, jobs creation, highly competitive schools, and lifelong learning opportunities and natural resource management for the benefit of recreation.

People and Land (PAL) is an organization focused on growth and change in Michigan, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Every day, decisions made by local officials and state leaders about how Michigan’s land is used have great impact on both regional quality of life and our state’s economic future. These decisions tend to be made ad hoc without consideration across a broad range of impacts over time. PAL is focused on an agenda to reinvent Michigan as a global economic player but in the process, Michigan should seek to carefully plan how communities and regions grow. Ultimately, communities linked through sound land use decisions will share outstanding quality of life, economic prosperity, and be strategically positioned to be contributors to the New Economy.

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SWMPC Staff Departures
Shelley Klug and Kelly Getman-Dissette
The SWMPC would like to thank both Shelley and Kelly for their tremendous contributions to the SWMPC and to the communities of southwest Michigan. We wish them both well.

TRANSPORTATION

Call for Transportation Projects

FY 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Programs

The SWMPC has announced a call for projects for the Twin Cities and Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Studies (TwinCATS and NATS) FY 2010-2013 Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP).

The TIP applications are available on the SWMPC website in PDF format at www.swmpc.org/tcats_tipapp.asp and www.swmpc.org/nats_tipapp.asp. Submitting agencies should complete a separate application for each project for which federal funds are sought, even if the project is listed in the FY 2008-2011 TIP.

Completed applications are due to the SWMPC on or before the January 2009 NATS/TwinCATS meetings. Applications can be submitted via e-mail, postal mail, or fax.

Please contact the SWMPC with any questions.



80 Attend Trails Workshop

Middleville, Michigan was the host community for the trails workshop, *Trails: Build It~They Will Come*, sponsored by Friends of the Kal-Haven Trail, Sauk Trails RC&D Council, Potawatomi RC&D Council, and O'Boyle-Cowell-Blalock & Associates, Inc. The workshop attracted participants from all over the nine county region of southwest Michigan, Grand Rapids and northern Indiana. The workshop covered trail planning and development in varied community settings, along with innovative funding sources for trails. In addition, the new Executive Director of the West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition, Sharon Nunnelee was introduced to the group. Workshop information can be found at www.swmpc.org/smart.asp.

TwinCATS/NATS Obligated Federal Funds, FY 2008

Each December, the SWMPC publishes a listing of the previous fiscal year's obligated transportation projects from the TwinCATS and NATS areas. The FY 2008 listings are available online at the web addresses listed below.

TwinCATS:

www.swmpc.org/tcats08obligated.asp

NATS:

www.swmpc.org/nats08obligated.asp

For additional information or for hardcopies, contact the SWMPC.



9-County Non-Motorized Plan

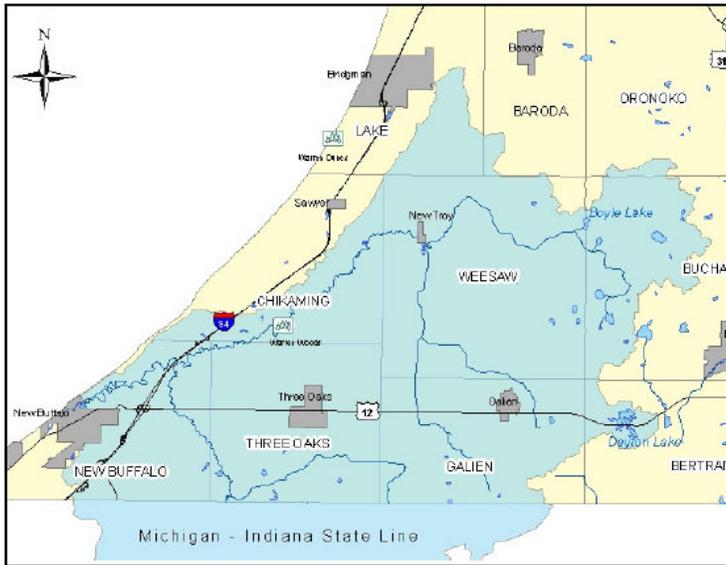
The SWMPC has prepared a proposal to develop a comprehensive, regional Non-Motorized Transportation Plan for MDOT's Southwest Region (Allegan, Barry, Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties). This plan will be developed with extensive public input. The process will build consensus for a connected non-motorized network within the region and with five neighboring regions in Michigan and Indiana. This project builds from and utilizes data and maps developed by the SWMPC for the MDOT funded Non-Motorized Trail Mapping Project (2006). Data will also be collected to update the popular Non-Motorized Trail Map during the planning process.

Communities and trailway groups planning for or extending non-motorized trailways should contact SWMPC to ensure that all projects are included in this process.

Contact Marcy Colclough colcloughm@swmpc.org or Suzann Flowers flowerss@swmpc.org.

ENVIRONMENT

Galien River Watershed

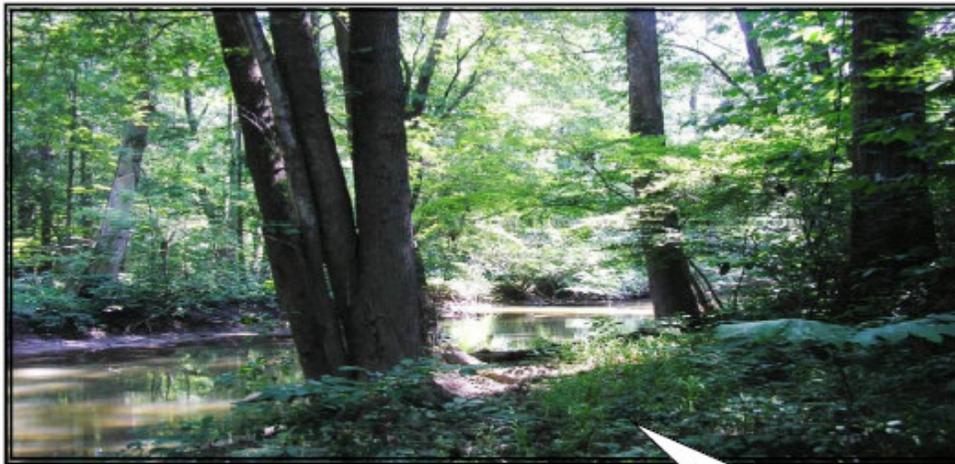


The Galien River Watershed (GRW) winds through southwestern Michigan in Berrien County and northwestern Indiana, emptying into Lake Michigan at New Buffalo, Michigan. The entire basin contains 112,222 acres, the majority of which (82,665 acres) lies in Michigan.

A management plan for the watershed was created because contaminate loads exceeded the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements and did not meet water quality standards. Initial findings of inventory and water sampling indicated impaired water quality at high enough levels to classify E. coli, sediment, nutrients, and possibly pesticides as high priority concerns in the watershed.

What has been done in the Galien River Watershed?

- Chikaming Open Lands has completed 13 conservation easements in the watershed.
- Three river clean-ups have tackled all the road stream crossings in the watershed area.
- The Berrien County Road Commission has worked on 39 road stream crossings to reduce sediment, and these new practices have been incorporated by the Road Commission throughout the County.
- Berrien County's NRCS Office is now helping landowners with wetland restorations on their property.



Partners involved:

- Berrien County Conservation District
- Berrien County Road Commission
- Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
- The Conservation Fund
- Sauk Trails RC & D
- USDA - Natural Resources Cons. Service

The El Topo Conservation Easement protects 3.5 acres of floodplain along the Galien River.

Lowering the amounts of pollutants that enter the waterway is a long-term goal of watershed plan.

What are the next steps for the Galien River Watershed?

- There will be a public outreach campaign that will involve door-to-door surveys in the watershed area.
- Surveys about water quality will be mailed to randomly selected watershed residents.
- Maps will be created for townships to use for their zoning and land use practices.

Learn more about the GRW by visiting www.swmpc.org/galien_river.asp



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Calendar of Events

January 2009

14th 7:00 p.m. Two Rivers
 Coalition (Geneva Twp. Hall)
19th SWMPC Offices Closed
20th 12:00 p.m. SMART Webinar
21st MSU Citizen Planner
22nd 7:00 p.m. Bloomingdale Joint
 Recreation Plan public
 input session (Village Hall)
26th 9:30 a.m. TwinCATS
27th 1:30 p.m. NATS

February

11th 7:00 p.m. Two Rivers
 Coalition (Geneva Twp. Hall)
16th SWMPC Offices Closed
23rd 9:00 a.m. TwinCATS
24th 1:30 p.m. NATS

March

11th 7:00 p.m. Two Rivers
 Coalition (Geneva Twp. Hall)
16th 9:00 a.m. TwinCATS
24th 1:30 p.m. NATS

NATS=Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area
 Transportation Study meets in Niles
TwinCATS=Twin Cities Area
 Transportation Study meets in Benton
 Harbor

www.swmpc.org/calendar.asp

2009 Board Meeting Schedule

SWMPC Full Commission Meeting

Location: Five Pines Ministries-Berrien Center, MI
 February 3, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.

Location: To Be Announced
 April 21, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.

Location: Van Buren Conference Center-Lawrence, MI
 July 21, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.
 October 20, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.

SWMPC Administrative Committee Meeting

Location: Vincent Place Conference Room-Benton Harbor, MI
 March 17, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.
 June 16, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.
 September 15, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.
 December 15, 2009 at 9:30 a.m.