



The Quarterly

Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

Planning that is Credible, Credentialed, and Connected

Paw Paw River Restoration

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This fall a major restoration project was completed on the Paw Paw River in Watervliet. The spillway and diversion dams located east of M-140 were removed. The removal will result in cleaner water, improved fish and aquatic habitat, and a safer experience for river users. The project also included the restoration of the river channel, repair of the stream banks, and landscaping with native trees and shrubs.

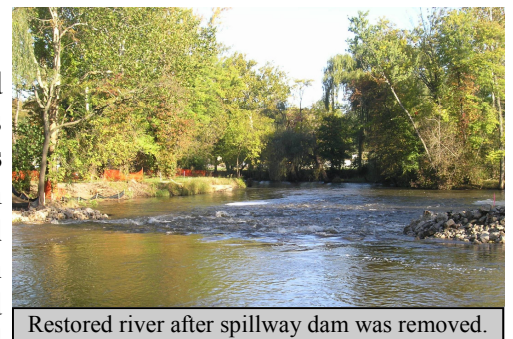


Spillway dam before removal.

The dams were constructed in the early 19th century for the former paper mill. The dams and mill site are owned by **Berrien County Redevelopment Authority**. **Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC)** and **Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. (ECT)** assisted Berrien County with securing funding and implementing the project.

With over 40 fish species, the **Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Division** and **The Nature Conservancy** consider the Paw Paw River one of the highest quality freshwater systems in the Great Lakes Basin. The spillway dam was the only obstruction on the Paw Paw River from Lake Michigan to the Maple Lake dam in Paw Paw Village. Restoration of this area connected over 100 miles of river and streams.

Major implementation and monitoring funding was provided by the **Great Lakes Restoration Initiative** through the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**. NOAA funded \$922,759 with additional funding of \$25,000 from **Berrien County**, \$56,198 from the **Michigan Department of Natural Resources**, and \$100,000 from the **US Fish and Wildlife Service**. The total project cost was \$1,103,954.



Restored river after spillway dam was removed.

For more information visit www.swmpc.org/watervlietdam.asp

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ENVIRONMENT

Wetland Restoration Workshop



Jim Hazelman presents at the workshop.

In December **The Conservation Fund** hosted a Wetland Restoration Workshop with assistance from SWMPC. The event provided landowners with resources and financial and technical programs available to complete a successful wetland restoration or protection project. Jim Hazelman of the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** explained the Partners for Wildlife Program, and Sherman Reed from Berrien County's **Natural Resources Conservation Service** office described the Wetlands Reserve Program.

Over half of the wetlands in the Galien River Watershed have been drained or filled. Wetlands filter, clean, hold and infiltrate rain and storm water runoff, which reduces water pollution, flooding, and erosion and increases ground water storage. The wetlands also provide habitat for fish, wildlife and plant life, and add to the beauty of the watershed.

Workshop Looks At Barriers to Fish Migration

SWMPC and the **Friends of the St. Joe River (FotSJR)** assisted with the development of a study that inventoried dams and road/stream crossings in select sub-watersheds of the St. Joseph River Watershed. Undersized/improperly placed culverts cause severe erosion and damage to roads and streams. The final report is meant to provide guidance and justification for the funding of culvert replacement projects and fish passage studies by local partners.

FotSJR hosted a workshop offering guidance on properly assessing, designing and installing/replacing culverts to reduce erosion and extend culvert life. Workshop attendees enjoyed a field trip where they visited and discussed impacts of dams and design considerations of good and bad road/stream crossings. A road/stream crossing on Redfield Road in **Cass County** was visited. This structure is planned for replacement in 2012 and will be an excellent showcase of a well designed road/stream crossing.



Road/stream crossing in Cass County

Berrien County Road Commission with assistance from SWMPC has secured a grant from **US Fish and Wildlife Service** to replace a problem culvert on Red Bud Road which will also improve fish passage and reduce erosion and flooding. SWMPC also assisted **Van Buren County Road Commission** in securing a grant to replace a failed culvert with a bridge on 30th Avenue and Brandywine Creek in Covert Township. To learn more about the fish passage workshop and Friends of the St. Joe River visit: www.fotsjr.org

CEDS UPDATE

The 2011 CEDS (Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy) Annual Update is posted on the SWMPC website at www.swmpc.org/ceds.asp. There you will find previous updates and the most recent news on the Economic Development activities by the SWMPC. This 2011 CEDS Update is a prequel to the completely new CEDS to be written over the course of 2012.

The 2011 Update contains

- Economic health descriptions of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties (Region 4)
- The current economic development planning projects happening in Region 4
- The Call for Project List

Please take some time to read the updates and send comments to Matt Aslesen aslesenm@swmpc.org.

TRANSPORTATION

Walk and Roll Updates



Planner Trevor Thomas at a Walk and Roll meeting.

The Twin Cities Area Transportation Study Area is pleased to announce the completion of its TwinCATS Walk and Roll Plan. The plan identifies obstacles to walking and bicycling in the Twin Cities region, provides graphic representations of: age distribution in the area, access to personal cars, car crashes involving pedestrians, and safety statistics. This plan represents a refined focus the TwinCATS committees on the integration of bicycling, walking, and transit into the transportation network. This plan was formally amended into the 2009-2035 TwinCATS Long Range Transportation Plan. www.swmpc.org/walkbiketwincats.asp

NATS and TwinCATS Committees Going Digital

Beginning in January 2012, the Twin Cities Area Transportation Study and Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study will begin to utilize a more technology based approach to displaying meeting information as a means of cutting back on the amount of paper used. Meeting information can be found online at least five days prior to the scheduled meeting date (www.swmpc.org/fy_2012_twincats.asp and www.swmpc.org/fy_2012_nats.asp). Information will be displayed digitally to ensure that any visitors have the same access to information as committee members. In addition, individuals with their own laptop computers can access the wireless network at each meeting location.

MASTER PLANS

Master Plans are the fundamental documents outlining the future of communities across southwest Michigan. As is legally required, the SWMPC receives notice when a community's plan is available for public comment. **Milton Township** (Cass County) has recently made their draft plan available for public comment. We encourage each of our regional partners and board members to spend time with these plans.

- To view Milton Townships Draft Master Plan visit www.swmpc.org/miltontwp.asp
- The City of South Haven's Master Plan is completed. To view final plan visit www.swmpc.org/southhaven.asp.
- Ontwa Township's Master Plan is completed. To view final plan visit www.swmpc.org/ontwatownship.asp.

The City of New Buffalo's Master Plan and Recreation Plan

SWMPC has been working with the **City of New Buffalo**, a local steering committee, and residents, to develop a comprehensive master plan for the city's future growth and development. SWMPC just completed an online survey to gather public input on the future of New Buffalo and its parks and recreation. SWMPC also hosted two public input meetings on Oct. 25th and 27th at New Buffalo City Hall where city residents discussed and selected improvements for the city, and future goals.

For more information visit www.swmpc.org/newbuffalo.asp



New Buffalo residents at the public input meeting



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*The SWMPC Mission is to promote a sustainable high quality of life through
 facilitation of sound planning and decision making*

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Calendar of Events 2012

January

2nd SWMPC Offices Closed
 16th SWMPC Offices Closed
 23rd 9:30 a.m. TwinCATS monthly meeting**
 24th 1:30 p.m. NATS monthly meeting*

February

20th SWMPC Offices Closed
 27th 9:30 a.m. TwinCATS monthly meeting**
 28th 1:30 p.m. NATS monthly meeting*

March

1st Low Impact Development Workshop
 10th Landscaping for Clean Water Workshop
 19th 9:30 a.m. TwinCATS monthly meeting**
 27th 1:30 p.m. NATS monthly meeting*

*NATS Meeting 1345 E. Main Street, Niles, MI

**TwinCATS Meeting 1123 Territorial Road, Benton Harbor, MI

For more information and other events visit: www.swmpc.org/calendar.asp

2012 SWMPC Board Meeting Schedule

SWMPC Full Commission Meeting

*Location: Southwestern Michigan College
 Mathews Room West-Dowagiac, MI
 January 31, 2012 9:30 a.m.*

*Location: Van Buren Conference Center
 490 South Paw Paw Street Lawrence, MI
 April 10, 2012 9:30 a.m.
 July 17, 2012 9:30 a.m.
 October 16, 2012 9:30 a.m.*

SWMPC Administrative Committee Meeting

*Location: Vincent Place Conference Room
 Benton Harbor, MI
 March 20, 2012 9:30 a.m.
 June 19, 2012 9:30 a.m.
 September 18, 2012 9:30 a.m.
 December 18, 2012 9:30 a.m.*