



The Quarterly

SWMPC
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Communities in Southwest MI Participate in Unique Trail-Based Economic Development Planning Initiative

Several public meetings took place this fall in Buchanan, Bridgman, New Buffalo, St. Joseph, and South Haven in which local officials and trail advocates worked to explore new ways to expand trail-based tourism and provide accessibility. Trail enthusiasts, business leaders, and citizens interested in the economic potential of trail-based tourism participated in the public meetings.

Supported in part by a service grant through Michigan's Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP) known as the Great Lakes Trail Towns Planning Initiative, local officials and trail advocates from Buchanan are working together to determine ways to better leverage and maximize the economic potential of trail-based tourism within the community, a strategy often referred to as "Trail Towns." The strategy aims expand the recommendations of the Lake Michigan Water Trail Plan completed in 2014. The planning initiative is being led by the Land Information Access Association (LIAA), a nonprofit service organization based in Traverse City, along with Access Recreation Group, LLC.

Harry Burkholder, Executive Director at LIAA, said the Trail Towns service grant is designed to make communities more aware of the economic opportunities that come from trail-based tourism. Burkholder said; "Trails were once considered to be undesirable and unnecessary infrastructure in most communities. People worried that trails would bring crime and unwanted activity into their neighborhoods. However, in reality the opposite happens.

Trails not only increase nearby property values, they contribute to sense of place and offer new economic development potential."

As an example, Burkholder cited a recent study by the Michigan Department of Transportation that values the total economic impact of bicycle tourism throughout Michigan at \$668 million annually.



Photo from New Buffalo Trail Town Event

The Trail Towns service grant will bring together local officials and trail advocates to identify specific ways the community can attract trail users. According to Burkholder; "There are many small things the community could do through better planning, design, and marketing that could make Buchanan a primary biking and paddling destination for the region and a must-stop for trail users."

Local officials will also be working with the state's leading accessibility expert to identify opportunities to provide universal accessibility to local trails and trail amenities. Developing trailheads, paddling launches, and related infrastructure such as restrooms and parking lots with universal accessibility in mind helps to improve paddling and recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities. Burkholder specified that; "The initiative will identify specific projects that address accessibility and we anticipate these will be included in local recreation plans and therefore be eligible for grant funding."

Under the Great Lakes Trail Towns Planning Initiative, in addition to Buchanan, the cities of Bridgman, New Buffalo, St. Joseph, and South Haven participated along with nine other communities along the Lake Michigan coastline.

New US 12 Heritage Route Website Online



US 12 Garage Sale 2nd weekend in August

The new US 12 Heritage Route website homepage

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission in partnership with LIAA has created the new US 12 Heritage Route website. This new site allows people to plan a trip by creating their own personal list of attractions along US 12. They will also have the ability to get directions, specific details, and contact information for the places they would like to visit along the US 12 Route! This new site helps highlight attractions that the towns, villages, and cities have to offer that are along the US 12 Heritage Route that runs from New Buffalo to Detroit, Michigan. This website also hosts the information for the US 12 Annual Garage Sale that takes place on the 2nd weekend of

August. This last US 12 Garage Sale had over 50,000 page views for the weekend of the sale. It's a vital resource for the communities along the US 12 Route.

If you know of a business, attraction, or historical site that is not listed on the website but is along the US 12 Route please email the information to kmartin@swmpc.org and we would be happy get that online!

Visit the website: www.us12heritagetrail.org

Do you need a ride to work? Why not share a ride to work!

Do you want to save money, reduce fuel costs, or spend more quality time with co-workers?

If so, then sign up today! It is free to register at: www.mywaythere.org/carpool.asp

Rideshare is a free, easy and convenient service that connects people throughout the Southwest Michigan region who are interested in carpooling.

Rideshare is an on-line program that can help you find a ride or a passenger by identifying people who are going the same direction at approximately the same time of day in their commute to work.

To get started all you need is an email account and the address of where your commute starts and ends. For more information about this service please call 269-925-1137 or visit www.mywaythere.org/carpool.asp today to find out if there are passengers or drivers going your way. There is an opportunity to win a gas card just for registering! You can hear radio ads promoting carpooling in Southwest Michigan on 98.3 FM and 103.7 FM on the air right now!

Fall Water Quality Tips for Southwest Michigan

With autumn here, leaves are falling from the trees. Residents are asked to help keep the stormwater drains free and clear of leaves and grass clippings by please avoiding raking or blowing leaves into the street. Leaves in the street eventually end up in the storm sewer, clogging pipes and causing flooded streets. Clean stormwater runoff not only helps keep drinking water clean and safe, it also helps protect aquatic life.

Another tip is when mowing a lawn, make certain that you do not blow grass clippings into the street. When mowing, make the first few passes with the lawnmower blowing the grass clippings into the lawn NOT the street. If there are grass clippings on the street or sidewalk,



use a broom or leaf blower to blow them back into the lawn. Do not use a hose to wash them into the street or storm drains. Grass clippings that are blown into the street eventually enter the street storm drain. The grass clippings can form blockages in the storm drains. Grass clippings contribute nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous, which cause unwanted and uncontrolled growth of algae and aquatic weeds in the waterways.

STORMWATER BASICS

MANAGING STORMWATER IN OUR COMMUNITY

Stormwater can pose a risk to our water resources. Pollutants in stormwater can impact lakes, streams and rivers. We can all do little things to help our community.

WHAT IS STORM WATER RUNOFF?

Stormwater runoff is rainfall or snowmelt that runs off impervious surfaces like roads, buildings, and compacted soils. Stormwater runoff is collected and conveyed

through storm sewers directly into streams, rivers, and lakes without being treated.

THE PROBLEM

Pollutants accumulate on impervious surfaces between rainfall events. Frequent, small rains wash pollutants into streams, rivers, and lakes. These pollutants negatively impact water quality.

As communities grow, impervious areas tend to increase. Greater impervious surfaces cause the volume and rate of stormwater runoff to increase. This can result in flooding, stream channel degradation, and increased water pollution in our surface waters.



AWARENESS & RESPONSIBILITY

Daily activities can impact water quality. Most rainfall drains untreated to streams and lakes through storm drains in neighborhoods. There are many ways you can prevent stormwater pollution:

1. Wash your car at a carwash or on the lawn, not the driveway.
2. Re-direct roof drains to gardens or other vegetated areas not into the street or driveway.
3. Properly dispose of all hazardous household waste
4. Minimize use of fertilizers and follow manufacturing guidelines and use phosphorus-free fertilizer
5. Clean up after your pets and dispose of waste properly

For more tips on water quality visit:

www.swmpc.org/what_can_i_do.asp

Staff Departure

We would like to wish our staff member Ryan Soucy the best of luck at his new job as the Bath Township Zoning and Planning Administrator.

We would like to wish our staff member Nancy Perry a happy retirement. She worked at the Planning Commission as our Business Administrator and Accountant for over 10 years.



Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

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

Save Paper by Receiving our Newsletter Electronically: email rosep@swmpc.org

Calendar of Events 2015-2016

SWMPC

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Onsite Consultant

Debra Panozzo,
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November	December	January
11 th SWMPC Office Closed	14 th 9:00 am TwinCATS TAC & Policy Mtg**	1 st SWMPC Office Closed
16 th 9:00 am TwinCATS TAC & Policy Mtg**	15 th 1:00 pm NATS TAC & Policy Mtg*	18 th SWMPC Office Closed
24 th 1:00 pm NATS TAC & Policy Mtg*	24-25 th SWMPC Office Closed	25 th 9:00 am TwinCATS TAC & Policy Mtg**
26-27 th SWMPC Office Closed	31 st SWMPC Office Closed (afternoon)	26 th 1:00 pm NATS TAC & Policy Mtg*

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

**TwinCATS Meeting location: Kinexus , 499 W Main St, Benton Harbor, MI 49022 Anchor Rooms A+B

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

SWMPC Board Meeting Schedule	
<p>SWMPC Full Commission Meetings</p> <p><i>Location: Lake Township Hall, 3220 Shawnee, Bridgman, MI</i></p> <p>January 26, 2016 9:30 am</p>	<p>SWMPC Administrative Committee Meetings</p> <p><i>Location: SWMPC Conference Room Benton Harbor, MI</i></p> <p>December 14, 2015 9:30 am</p>