

# NATURAL RESOURCES PLANNING

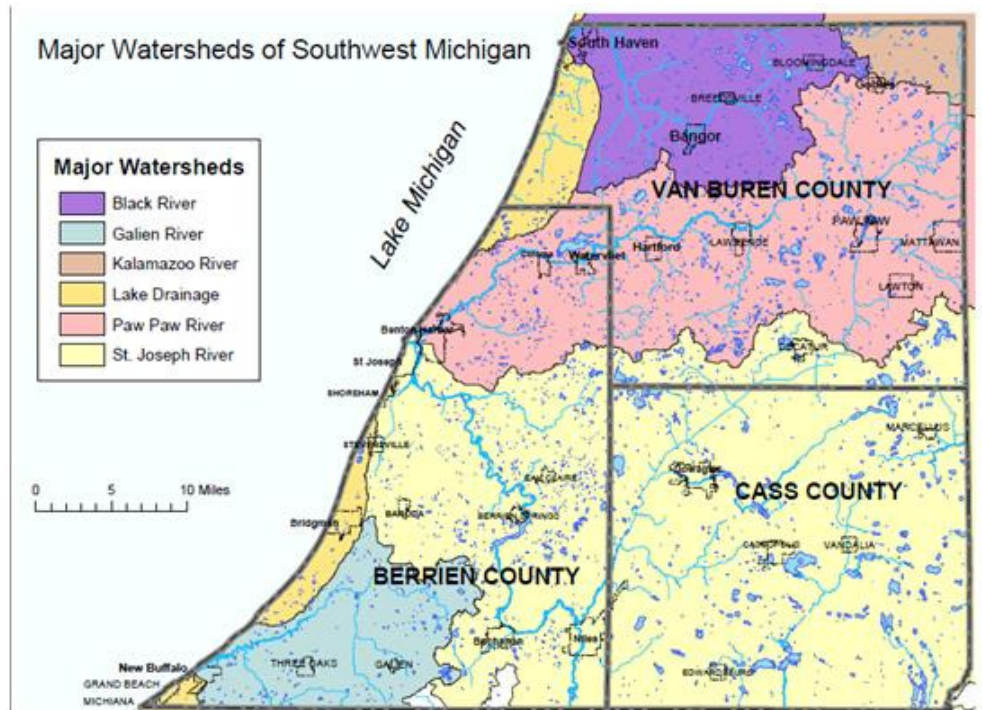
The natural beauty, wildlife, rivers, lakes, farmland, and recreational opportunities in southwest Michigan make it a wonderful place to live and work while also attracting many visitors. A clean supply of water is needed for farming, industry, and residential use. Our water and natural resources are of major environmental, social, and economic value, but they face enormous threats from pollution and sprawling development.

For years, SWMPC has been bringing local, state, and federal partners together to address water and natural resource issues. SWMPC has partnered with many to bring in hundreds of thousands of grant funds every year to increase recreational opportunities and to protect and improve water and natural resources.

## WATERSHEDS

### St. Joseph River Watershed Projects

SWMPC is working on several projects to protect and improve water quality and wildlife habitat in the St. Joseph River Watershed. SWMPC was instrumental in securing a \$115,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for advancing efforts to protect and restore wetlands. SWMPC along with other local, state, and federal partners throughout the watershed (Indiana and Michigan) are participating in a Wetland Partnership to implement the EPA funded project. [www.fotsjr.org/WetlandPartnership](http://www.fotsjr.org/WetlandPartnership)



Michigan have ranked at the top: Watervliet Dam on the **Paw Paw River**, Pucker Street Dam on the **Dowagiac River**, and Buchanan Dam on **McCoy's Creek**.

SWMPC assisted Berrien County in securing over \$1 million in funding from Michigan Department of Natural Resources, USFWS, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to remove the Watervliet Dam. SWMPC will be responsible for the public outreach associated with the project.

SWMPC is assisting EPA to increase stakeholder involvement in the **Ox Creek Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)** project. This study will identify pollutant reductions which are needed for Ox Creek to meet water quality standards.

[www.swmpc.org/oxcreek.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/oxcreek.asp)



As part of the fish passage initiative, SWMPC wrote a \$150,000 USFWS grant for Berrien County Road Commission to replace a failing culvert for fish passage.

SWMPC is also a partner in a U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) funded project to inventory and rank fish passage barriers in the St. Joseph River Watershed. Barriers include dams and road crossings (failed or undersized culverts). Three dams in southwest

## **WATERSHEDS** *continued*

### **Black & Paw Paw River Watersheds Projects**

SWMPC provides Two Rivers Coalition, a newly formed non-profit working to improve and protect the Black and Paw Paw River Watersheds, with capacity building, strategic planning, grant writing, and project implementation assistance.

SWMPC assisted the Berrien and Van Buren Conservation Districts with securing a grant to conduct volunteer trash cleanups in each county.

SWMPC secured a \$22,000 grant for the Van Buren County Road Commission and Drain Commission to replace a culvert and complete stream bank stabilization in Covert Township which will serve as a demonstration site for showcasing how road stream crossings projects can improve water quality and reduce sedimentation.

## **EDUCATION**

SWMPC provides services for the **Berrien and Cass Counties** stormwater public education plan. In 2010, SWMPC hosted two workshops, Lawn Care for Water Quality and Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development. [www.swmpc.org/gi.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/gi.asp)

SWMPC presented to the **St. Joseph River Harbor Authority** about the causes and sources of sedimentation and initiatives to reduce sediment in the St. Joseph River.

SWMPC is working with Stevensville Village to convene stakeholders and facilitate efforts to protect and improve water quality and habitat in the **Hickory Creek Watershed**. [www.swmpc.org/hickory.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/hickory.asp)

## **TRAILS**

SWMPC has been working with Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan stakeholders to develop a **Great Lakes Water Trail** for canoeing and kayaking along the shores of Lake Michigan.

SWMPC has supported efforts of a corridor committee to plan and implement **US Bike Route 35** which will be part of a national bike route system. US BR 35 will come into Michigan at New Buffalo and follow Lake Michigan to Sault St. Marie. [www.swmpc.org/usbr35.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/usbr35.asp)



*SWMPC Planner Marcy  
Colclough with IMRVT team*

### **Galien River Watershed Projects**

SWMPC worked with a consultant to complete a build-out analysis for the Galien River Watershed. This same analysis has been done for the Paw Paw and Black River Watersheds. The analysis presents expected impacts to water quality as land use changes according to local land use plans. In 2011, SWMPC will work with municipalities to incorporate strategies into master plans based on the analysis's results to encourage compact and low impact development techniques.

[www.swmpc.org/grw.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/grw.asp)

### **Lake Michigan Projects**

SWMPC is a member of the Lake Michigan Watershed Academy (LMWA) along with other regional planning commissions with watersheds contributing to Lake Michigan. SWMPC received a \$10,000 grant from LMWA to support watershed efforts in southwest Michigan. The Lake Michigan Watershed Academy's website highlights regional projects. [www.lakemichiganacademy.org](http://www.lakemichiganacademy.org)



SWMPC partnered with the Van Buren Conservation District on a Wetland Wonders Tour for local officials in celebration of World Wetlands Day.

SWMPC has supported several local trail planning efforts including:

- **Harbor Country Hike and Bike Plan**  
(New Buffalo, Three Oaks, and Chikaming Townships)
- **Blue Star Trail** (South Haven to Saugatuck) [www.swmpc.org/bluestar.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/bluestar.asp)
- **Indiana–Michigan River Valley Trail**  
(Niles, MI to Mishawaka, IN) [www.swmpc.org/inmitrail.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/inmitrail.asp)