

Appendix 11. Existing Efforts

The Van Buren Conservation District worked with several teachers and opportunities exist with Gobles, Lawton, Lawrence, Hartford and Mattawan schools to do water quality/macro-invertebrate monitoring with schools.

The Village of Mattawan applied for a grant to install plantings along Mattawan Creek and to monitor water quality.

The VBISD owns 35 acres in Lawrence along Brush Creek, which is being developed as an outdoor education center. The VBISD is working on curriculum and plans to open this center up to all Van Buren County schools for learning opportunities.

The Red Arrow Corridor Group has conducted an economic development study. This group involves the municipalities along Red Arrow (and the Paw Paw River) from Coloma to Mattawan. The study indicated that the Paw Paw River is a under utilized asset to the local economies of these small towns. The study also recognized the need to protect the natural areas and small town atmospheres. Van Buren County Economic Development led this effort.

As a result of the Red Arrow economic study, the Paw Paw River sub-committee was formed. This group hosted a municipal summit on November 3, 2003. The summit was organized by SWMPC and TNC. The group is interested in increasing Protection, Education and Awareness of the Paw Paw River. (The PEA plan!)

Partners including the MDNR, TNC, SWMPC and Berrien County, are working to remove the Watervliet dam on the Paw Paw River. In 2008, a USFWS grant was secured and TNC has applied for an MDNR Inland Fisheries Grant.

In 2004, SWMPC helped Watervliet secure a grant from Great Lakes Basin to install an Urban Stormwater BMP Demonstration Site along the Paw Paw River off M-140. A porous pavement parking lot, rain garden, riparian buffer and interpretative signs have been installed.

In 2004, SWMPC worked with Watervliet and Coloma Cities on a Cool Cities grant application. The main focus of the grant was on the Paw Paw River (connecting the two cities with a water heritage trail and connecting the downtowns with the river). This grant was not awarded.

SWMPC organized a Watershed Short Course offered in Berrien County in the spring of 2005. The targeted audience included the Galien, St. Joseph and Paw Paw River Watersheds. (This course was partly funded by SWMPC, MSUE and the Galien River Watershed 319 grant.)

TNC has designated the Paw Paw River Watershed as a target area for preservation. TNC created a poster that showcases the different habitats in the Paw Paw River Watershed. It also recognizes the river corridor and headwaters as priority conservation areas.

Over 1,800 acres in the watershed are protected or managed by the Sarett Nature Center, SWMLC, TNC and Michigan DNR.

SWMLC owns a preserve along the river corridor.

SWMLC is partnering with TNC to plan for the preservation of ecologically diverse areas in the watershed.

SWMLC is partnering with Sarett Nature Center and fostering protection efforts in the western part of the watershed.

FOTSJR Assoc. has developed a watershed management plan for the entire St. Joseph River Watershed, which includes the Paw Paw River Watershed. The Plan has identified the Paw Paw River as a high priority preservation area.

In 1991, the Van Buren Conservation District completed a groundwater study in the Paw Paw River Watershed.

The VBCD worked with Partners for Fish and Wildlife to restore 300 acres of wetland in the watershed owned by the VBCD.

The Maple Lake Association and the Village of Paw Paw continually dredge Maple Lake and Briggs Pond. There is interest to better understand the source of sediment and implement BMPs upstream to address the problem.

In 2007, the Paw Paw Lake Foundation hired Spicer Group to study pollutants, causes and sources in Paw Paw Lake.

Benton Harbor area is included in Phase II for stormwater regulations. Because the Phase II program affects less than 1/3 of the Paw Paw River Watershed, the watershed is still eligible for 319 funding.

The Pokagon Band is doing water quality monitoring in the PPRW near Hartford and is developing a land use plan for its property.

Van Buren County Planning Commission is pursuing a ban on the use of phosphorus fertilizer. The Paw Paw Lake Association is pushing for a similar ban in Berrien County.

The Village of Paw Paw, and others, have supported the inclusion of the the west brancy between Michigan Avenue and 60th Street to the south as part of the Gates Drain. This would put the management of the total Gates Drain under one agency which

would work with all parties to implement best management practices. As of this date, a Board of Determiners had approved the extension of the Gates Drain but a group has filed circuit court action in opposition.

The Maple Lake Association and the Village of Paw Paw are interested in learning more about weed management and the re-establishment of a fishery in Maple Lake. Such is now primarily pan fish where other species had been found.