

Adapting and Planning for Climate Change

Certain communities in Michigan that are economically dependent on tourism and agriculture are vulnerable to the effects of a changing and variable climate. A team of Michigan State University (MSU) Extension specialists and educators have received funding from the Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessments Center (GLISA). The team will collaborate with GLISA researchers, relevant decision-makers, and stakeholders in two Michigan local government units to increase community resiliency by incorporating climate variability and change adaption strategies into local land use master plans, long range transportation plans and policies. A second goal is to create an assessment tool that can be used by other communities throughout Michigan to plan their adaptation needs.

The Twin Cities Area Transportation Study MPO was chosen along with the City of Marquette as the partner communities in 2013. The TwinCATS MPO consists of 13 jurisdictions in southwest Michigan. They will review the data collected and incorporate this data in the most appropriate planning documents. Andrea Dewey, Transportation Planner with the Federal Highway Administration-Michigan Division (FHWA) stated; "As a transportation partner in the SWMPC area, FHWA is committed to improving transportation mobility and safety while protecting the environment, reducing GHG emissions, and preparing for climate change effects on the transportation system. FHWA is encouraged by this effort to actively initiate, collect, and disseminate climate change-related research and to provide technical assistance to the SWMPC stakeholders."



Photo of Lake Michigan at Warren Dunes

The TwinCATS MPO was chosen because Berrien County is vulnerable to the effects of climate change, due to its economic dependence on tourism and fruit production, its transportation infrastructure that includes major highways, and its diverse mix of rural and urban communities.

A Community Conversation on Climate, open to the public, will be held on February 27th 2013 at 6 pm at Michigan Works! 499 West Main Street Benton Harbor, MI 49022. This event will be hosted by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC), Great Lakes Integrated Sciences and Assessment Center (GLISA), Michigan State University Extension, Two Rivers Coalition and Michigan Works!. We want to begin a conversation about how the region can be more resilient in the face of climate variability and change. We will also be asking questions to get an understanding of how climate and weather has impacted you and your community. We are looking for your feedback and to hear your story! This event is free and light refreshments will be served. People RSVP'ing and attending the event will be entered into a drawing **to win Meijer Gift Cards!** To RSVP or learn more, email kmartin@swmpc.org or call 269-925-1137 x 21. Or visit us online at: www.swmpc.org/climatechange.asp