

# Buchanan stream project gets award

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BUCHANAN - The McCoy Creek Watershed Improvement Project is this year's winner of the The Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Effort Award, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission has announced.

The project improved the waterway in Buchanan.

The process required dismissal of a controversial dam and dredge strategy to maintain a functioning millrace. The process established a watershed solution that restored white water, established fish habitat and re-established a viable millrace.

The award "recognizes the value of cross-jurisdictional, regional cooperation. These projects utilize limited resources efficiently, combine goal-setting, and visualize the world as nodes of regional resources," SWMPC Executive Director John Egelhaaf said in a news release. "The players in this thankless process are frequently not recognized, so to those who search for collaborative change, SWMPC appreciates your work."

Egelhaaf said the project was "a model for creative, collaborative problem solving, persistent advocacy and successful broad-based funding."

He said the Watershed Committee saved an estimated \$113,000 throughout the project.

The improvement project committee included the city of Buchanan, Friends of McCoy Creek, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Buchanan High School, Buchanan Preservation Society, Friends of the St. Joseph River, Michigan Gateway Community Foundation;

Michigan Historic Preservation Network, Padnos Redbud Recycling and Louis and Helen Padnos Foundation and River Tenders Inc.

SWMPC also participated in the project.

American Electric Power, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, St. Joseph Valley Fly Fishers, Buchanan State Farm Insurance, Trout Unlimited, Frederick S. Upton Foundation and the Laura Jane Musser Fund.

Sauk Trails RC & D Council participated but has since disbanded.

This award was established in 1987 to honor former Dowagiac Mayor Graham Woodhouse and is presented annually by SWMPC for projects that exemplify cooperation by local units of government.