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The Quarterly

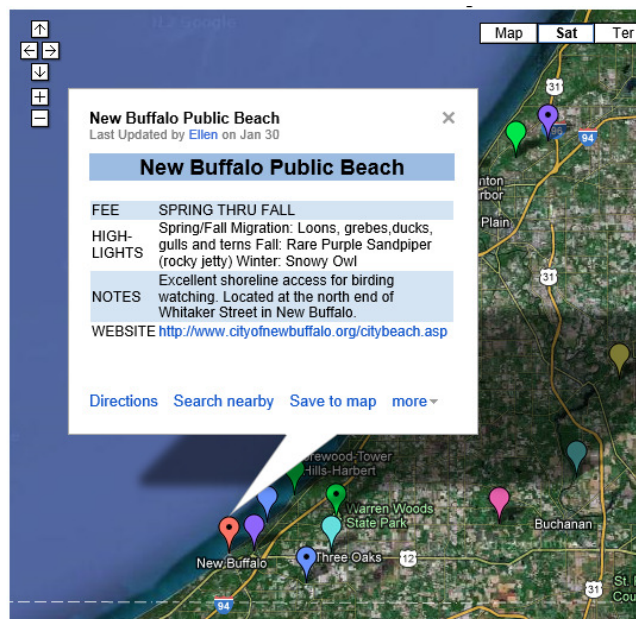
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

Planning that is Credible, Credentialed, and Connected

Berrien Bird's Eye View

Just in time for spring migration, bird watching destinations in Berrien County can be found online. This new interactive map points to all the locations found on "Berrien County Birding Destinations" brochure created last year. By selecting a destination, a pop-up menu will show the local birding highlights and helpful hints on how to get there. The map was built as an enhancement to the Birding Brochure, a collaborative project between SWMPC, Berrien County Parks, Fernwood Gardens, Michigan State University Extension, and Sarett Nature Center.

Berrien County features a diversity of inland forests, wetlands and agricultural areas boarded on the west by Lake Michigan and spectacular wooded dunes. This diverse medley of habitats, proximity to the southern end of Lake Michigan and an active birding community has resulted in an exceptional Michigan count list - 353 species have been recorded here through 2011 - and it has made Berrien County a popular destination for birders throughout Michigan and the Midwest for many years.



A view of the new online Birding Map on the web.

View this interactive map on the Berrien Birding Club webpage:
<http://berriencounty.org/Parks/Birding>
 Or http://www.swmpc.org/berrien_birding.asp

Hard copies of the map can be picked up at Fernwood, Sarett, Love Creek, and the Southwest Michigan Tourist Council. To have the brochure mailed to you, send your request and your mailing address to lovecreek@berriencounty.org.

EARTH DAY Since April 22, 1970 this has been a worldwide annual event. Try walking, biking, or carpooling to work or school. Plant a tree, pick up trash, or go to www.epa.gov/earthday/tips.htm for more ideas.

GRAHAM WOODHOUSE AWARD

Lakes to Grapes Wayfinding Honored

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) announced the selection of the **Lake to Grapes Corridor Wayfinding Program** for the 2013 Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Cooperation Award during the February 5, 2013 Board meeting. 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. Recipients receive the Award in recognition of outstanding cooperative effort in problem solving. The criteria used in evaluating project nominations include relative degree of effort by local units, methodology, scope, and project dimension.

Commenting on the excellence of the finalists, Executive Director John Egelhaaf said; "By no means is the selection of the winner a slam dunk. The depth and quality among the submissions for the Award has been getting stronger every year and the decision process is challenging."

Beth McNeil, Bridgman Lake Township Economic Growth Alliance Chair, spoke about the communities' experience. The process began as far back as 2010 with the recognition of decreasing area manufacturing activities and of the potential for increased tourism to fill the economic vacuum. The "Lake to Grapes" theme was chosen and the geographic limits defined as those communities along the route from the shores of Lake Michigan to the banks of the St Joseph River in central Berrien County. McNeil said a "we, not me, attitude" prevailed throughout.



Martin Smith, Professor of Architecture at Andrews University, spoke of the design side, illustrating the public participation workshops and the development of the graphics used for the signage. Next, Joshua Arnold, AU graduate, talked of the value of students having this type of experience.

According to the nomination submitted by Aaron Anthony, Bridgman City Manager; "The Bridgman Lake Township Economic Growth Alliance is an agent of the City of Bridgman and Lake Township. This program invited participation of four additional governments and other business associations into cooperative effort. A study team was formed consisting of representatives of each participant. The program is designed to welcome people to southwestern Michigan, remove current sign clutter, and stimulate a sense of discovery."

With the first 12 signs now in installed, the committee is moving to the design and installation of business identification kiosks to be strategically placed in downtown locations providing business identification, maps, and QR (quick response) codes for specific business information and directions.



Entities recognized by the Award:

- Andrews University, School of Architecture, Art and Design
- Indiana Michigan Power
- City of Bridgman
- Villages of Baroda and Berrien Springs Townships of Baroda, Lake and Oronoko Baroda Area Business Association
- Bridgman Chamber of Commerce
- Bridgman Lake Township Economic Growth Alliance

Representatives pictured at left

Learn more: www.swmpc.org/gwhistory.asp

TRANSPORTATION

TWINCATS and NATS

Open House Sessions

Public input requested! The Twin Cities Area Transportation Study (TwinCATS) and Niles-Buchanan-Cass Area Transportation Study (NATS) invite all community members to be involved in exploring how federal transportation funds in the Benton Harbor/St. Joseph and Niles-Buchanan-Cass areas will be spent on local projects in the years 2014-2017. Transportation staff are also updating the 2013-

2040 Long Range Transportation Plans. Topics for discussion include how to maintain and improve the transportation system for everyone including transit riders, pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and freight haulers.

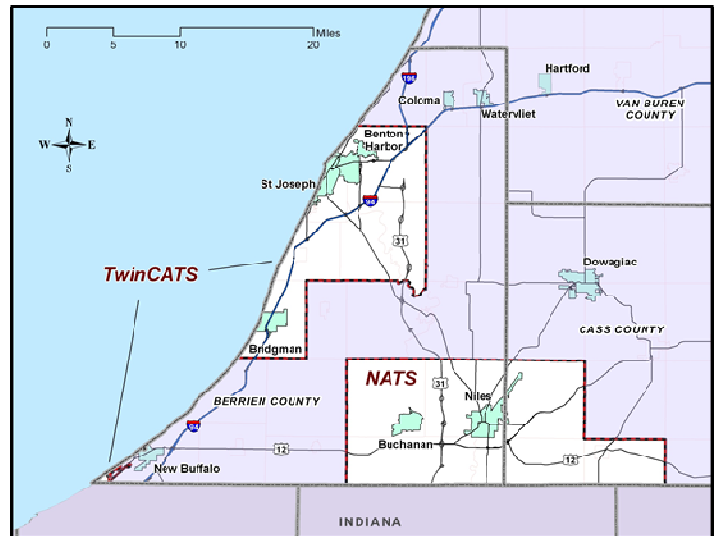


To gain comments from members of the community, TwinCATS and NATS will each host two more open house sessions over the coming months. Transportation staff will be presenting sections of the plan and taking feedback and questions. A formal presentation will be at 5 pm and 6 pm at each session with roundtable discussions afterwards.

Comments welcome anytime!

Submit to
Gautam Mani at
manig@swmpc.org or
269-925-1137 x 24
or Suzann Flowers at
flowerss@swmpc.org or
269-925-1137 x17.

<http://www.swmpc.org/transportation.asp>



TwinCATS Long Range Plan Public Hearings:

Wednesday April 17 & Wednesday May 22

5 pm -7pm

Michigan Works! Anchor Room ([499 West Main Street, Benton Harbor, MI](#))

LRP draft sections can be found at:

www.swmpc.org/twincats2040.asp

NATS Long Range Plan Public Hearings:

Wednesday April 24 & Wednesday May 29

5 pm -7 pm

Niles Public Library ([620 E. Main St, Niles, MI](#))

LRP draft sections can be found at:

Save the Date!

Community Conversation on Climate!

Wednesday, May 8th forum at **6 pm** will provide an opportunity to report back on climate vulnerabilities identified by participants, learn about climate change data specific to the region and comment on resiliency goals. There will also be a discussion about potential climate impacts that can influence long range transportation planning in the region, including; safety, state of good repair, and environmental sustainability.

The event will be held at Michigan Works! 499 West Main Street Benton Harbor, MI from 6pm-8pm
RSVP (optional) kmartin@swmpc.org or call 269-925-1137 x 21 Visit www.swmpc.org/climatechange.asp

Welcome Debra Panozzo, Mobility Consultant to the SWMPC team!
Reach her by email at
panozzod@swmpc.org **or by phone at**
269-925-1137 x 19.



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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 mooret@swmpc.org

Calendar of Events 2013

<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>
17th 5pm TwinCATS TIP & LRP Open House**** Planning & Zoning Course 19th 9:30am NATS TAC & Policy Mtg* 24th 5pm NATS TIP & LRP Open House*** 30th 9:30am TwinCATS Mtg** Planning & Zoning Essentials	8th 6pm Climate Meeting Project **** 22nd 5 pm TwinCATS TIP & LRP Open House**** 27th Memorial Day Office Closed 29th 5pm NATS TIP & LRP Open House***	18th 9:30am TwinCATS Mtg** 26th 1:30pm NATS Mtg*

*NATS Meeting 1345 E. Main Street, Niles, MI **TwinCATS Meeting 1123 Territorial Road, Benton Harbor, MI

Niles Public Library 620 E Main St. Niles, MI *Michigan Works! 499 W Main St. Benton Harbor, MI

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

2013 SWMPC Board Meeting Schedule

SWMPC Full Commission Meetings

*Location: Van Buren Conference Center
 490 South Paw Paw Street, Lawrence, MI*
 April 23, 2013 9:30 a.m.
 July 16, 2013 9:30 a.m.
 October 15, 2013 9:30 a.m.

SWMPC Administrative Committee Meetings

*Location: Vincent Place Conference Room
 185 East Main St. Benton Harbor, MI*
 June 18, 2013 9:30 a.m.
 September 17, 2013 9:30 a.m.
 December 17, 2013 9:30 a.m.