

NATURAL RESOURCES PLANNING

Water and natural resources are of major environmental, social and economic value and SWMPC brings local, state and federal partners together to address these issues.

WATERSHEDS

St. Joseph River

SWMPC continues to serve on a bi-state **Wetland Partnership** which was formed to increase wetland protection and restoration in the St. Joseph River Watershed. This project is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency. Outreach and education efforts to landowners and municipalities are planned for 2012.



35 workshop participants, from both Indiana and Michigan, visited road/stream crossings to discuss solutions.

In partnership with the Friends of the St. Joe River and others, SWMPC co-hosted ***Reducing the Impacts of Road Stream Crossings & Dams in the St. Joseph River Watershed*** workshop. The results of a fish migration barrier inventory and prioritization process for the watershed were presented. The negative effects of dams and road/stream crossings have on local stream ecology and hydraulics were explored. SWMPC presented funding options and building partnerships to improve water quality by repairing road stream crossings and removing dams. SWMPC assisted the Van Buren and Berrien County Road Commissions to secure funding to replace problem road stream crossings and improve water quality.

SWMPC is facilitating the **Hickory Creek Watershed Partnership**, which includes representatives from Stevensville, Lincoln Township, St. Joseph Township, St. Joseph City and more. The Berrien County Drain Commissioner and Road Commission have been involved in this effort. The group has conducted a creek clean-up and future plans involve high school students testing for pollutants.

Paw Paw River and Black River

Over 600 acres of wetlands have been protected preventing 73,560 pounds of total suspended solids, 67 pounds of phosphorus and 1,338 pounds of nitrogen from entering the Paw Paw and Black Rivers every year.

SWMPC assisted the Van Buren Conservation District with a Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) grant funded project to protect and restore wetlands in the Paw Paw and Black River Watersheds.

SWMPC secured an MDEQ grant to monitor bacteria levels in the Black River and Pine and Mill Creeks (subwatersheds of the Paw Paw River Watershed). A local committee will work with SWMPC to raise awareness about E.coli from urban and agricultural sources and what can be done to eliminate this dangerous pollution in our rivers and lakes.

SWMPC also secured a grant to work with agricultural producers to reduce sediment to the Paw Paw River. The implementation of agricultural best management practices in 3 sub-watersheds near Watervliet and Hartford (Mud Lake Drain, Mill Creek and Pine Creek) will result in a significant reduction of sediment loading improving conditions in the St. Joseph River harbor and Lake Michigan.

The Watervliet Dam Removal Project presented several opportunities to educate local officials and residents about water quality and watershed issues. In conjunction with the dam removal, SWMPC hosted a fish monitoring observation day and a VIP event in Watervliet.

www.swmpc.org/watervlietdam.asp



Galien River Watershed

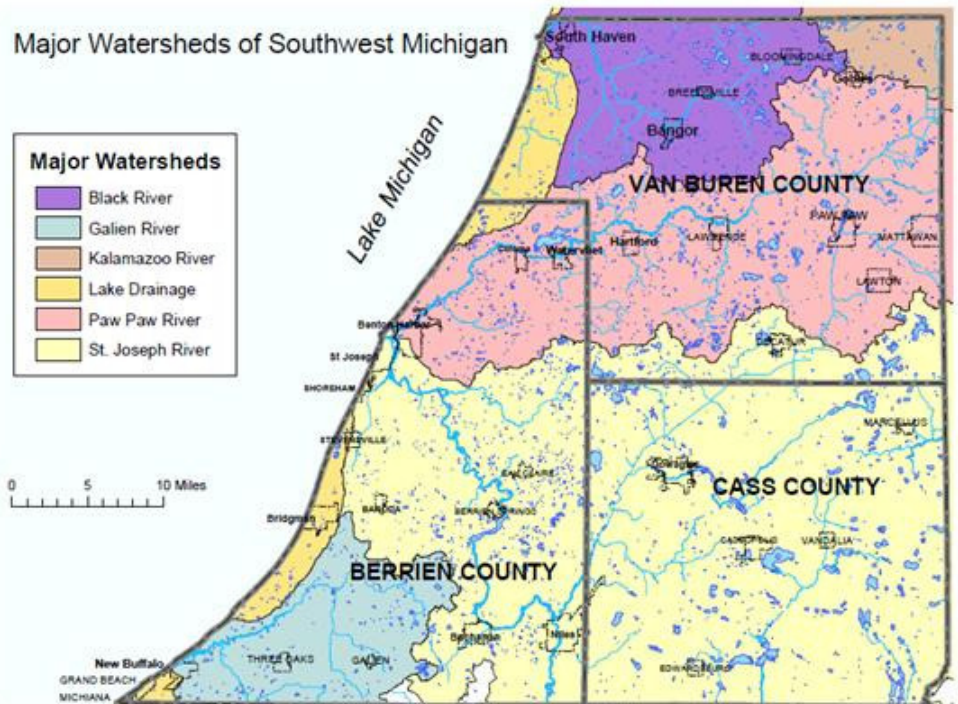
SWMPC and partners continued an educational campaign on septic system maintenance in the Galien River Watershed. A summer intern went door to-door to talk with residents about septic systems. At a well water testing night, residents of the New Troy area learned about proper maintenance of septic systems. A natural features inventory workshop was held to map special places in the Galien River Watershed with results being incorporated into local land use plans. SWMPC participated in the Galien River Watershed Tour and discussed the connection between land use and water quality. This watershed has lost over 65% of the wetlands in the last 200 years, so a major focus has been on wetland protection and restoration. www.swmpc.org/grw.asp

Lake Michigan

SWMPC continues to serve on the Lake Michigan Watershed Academy and collaborates with EPA and other regional planning agencies around Lake Michigan. SWMPC has also been participating in the process to develop the Lake Michigan Biodiversity Plan with The Nature Conservancy.



Pump your septic tank every 3 years.



The watersheds in southwest Michigan have lost over 50% of their wetlands in the last 200 years.

EDUCATION

Presentations

Wetlands, water quality protection, business practices to reduce polluted runoff, land use, and Green Communities were covered in presentations to:

- Southwest Michigan Drain Commissioners Region
- Michigan's Great Southwest Sustainable Business Forum
- Exchange Club of Benton Harbor/St. Joseph
- Stewards of Southwest Michigan – Cornerstone Alliance
- Lakeshore Rotary Club
- Three Oaks Village



Stormwater Public Education Plan (PEP)

SWMPC revised the PEP for Berrien and Cass counties for submission to Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The PEP outlines efforts to increase awareness of the connection between individual actions and the health of the watershed.

Watershed Workshops

SWMPC hosted a well attended Transportation and Water Quality workshop which included representatives from both the Berrien and Cass County Road Commissions. SWMPC has worked with Berrien and Van Buren County Road Commissions to secure grants to replace road/stream crossings improving water quality and habitat.