



## The Quarterly

**SWMPC**  
376 West Main Street,  
Suite 130  
Benton Harbor, MI 49022  
Phone: (269) 925-1137

[www.swmpc.org](http://www.swmpc.org)  
[www.facebook.com/swmpc](https://www.facebook.com/swmpc)

## 2016 Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Award

On April 18<sup>th</sup> the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) awarded the 2016 Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Effort award for the Berrien Springs-Oronoko Charter Township M-139 Corridor Improvement Plan and the M-139 Water and Sewer Project. The Award is presented annually for projects that exemplify cooperation between and among governments, non-profits, and private entities. It was established to recognize and reward the partners who execute complex, regional problem solving that breeds the efficient use of limited resources. This kind of problem-solving is often much more difficult than traditional methods but the rewards tend to be greater and more far-reaching. The partners involved were deemed deserving for their resourcefulness, dedication, and diligence.



Award recipients of the 2016 Graham Woodhouse Intergovernmental Award at SWMPC's Board meeting on April 18th 2017.

The M-139 projects were executed for purposes that complement one another. The Corridor Improvement Plan is a single vision for growth along a corridor that crosses through two jurisdictions, the Village of Berrien Springs and Oronoko Charter Township. The plan also includes a joint zoning overlay district with rules that apply uniformly. It will be administered by a new joint planning commission and joint zoning board of appeals. The Plan was timed so that it would be in place prior to the completion of the new water and sewer upgrades. The M-139 water and sewer project extended infrastructure after a contentious history of attempts. The new project was based on three fundamental principles: only those who want the utilities should contribute; taxes would not be raised; and property owners would not be forced to connect. The new infrastructure will promote better health and well-being for residents, commercial growth, and improved environmental conditions. The funding composition was an innovative mix of public and private entities.

A diverse partnership made the entire vision a reality. Leadership across federal, state, and local government coupled with the non-profit and private sector talent and resources made it possible for the projects to be a success.

# Traffic Count Request for 2017

Spring has arrived and we are gearing up for our traffic counting season.

The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission offers a traffic counting service at **NO CHARGE** to local jurisdictions in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties. Counts are usually taken between mid-April and November.

## What are the counts used for?

Thousands of traffic counts are collected on Michigan roadways each year by various agencies. Locally, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission collects counts on various locally controlled Federal Aid eligible roads. This information is used to produce traffic volume, vehicle classification and speed as well as traffic forecasts, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) figures, reports, maps and analysis. Traffic data products are used in safety evaluation, pavement design, funding decisions, forecasting, modeling, and much more.



## How do I request a traffic count?

Local jurisdictions can submit their request using our online form that can be found at this link: [www.swmpc.org/trafficcountform.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/trafficcountform.asp). Up to three count requests can be submitted at a time using the online form.

You should be ready to provide the following information before you begin:

- Detailed description of traffic count location (road name, intersection, landmarks, businesses, natural land forms, etc)
- National Functional Classification (NFC) of Road
  - o Berrien NFC Map
  - o Cass NFC Map
  - o Van Buren NFC Map
- Type of Count (Weekday, Weekend, 24 Hour, 48 Hour)

## What if I need a count on a non-federal aid local road?

Requests for counts on non-federal aid local roads are fulfilled first come first serve basis. Locally controlled Federal Aid road count requests receive first priority during the traffic counting season.

## What if I need a count for a state route or interstate?

Traffic counts for trunkline roads are available from the Michigan Department of Transportation. Contact Kevin Krzeminski by phone at 517-335-2274 or by email at [Krzeminskik@michigan.gov](mailto:Krzeminskik@michigan.gov)

If you have any questions or would like to speak to someone regarding the SWMPC Traffic Counting program, please contact our Transportation Planning Department.

**Brandon Kovnat** Email: [kovanatb@swmpc.org](mailto:kovanatb@swmpc.org) Phone: (269) 925-1137 x 1524

**Kim Gallagher** Email: [gallagherk@swmpc.org](mailto:gallagherk@swmpc.org) Phone: (269) 925-1137 x1518

# Water Quality Tips for the Spring

It's spring time in Southwest Michigan and we are fortunate to have an abundance of high quality lakes and streams that everyone can benefit from, whether it is swimming, boating, fishing, drinking water or simply enjoying the view! We can all do our part to help keep our water, lakes, and rivers clean!

When rainwater falls on a natural landscape the vegetation and soil collects and absorbs it. However, when rainwater falls on a manmade surface like parking lots or roof tops, it quickly runs off into storm drains, drainage ditches, or it can flood a lawn or a road.

While proper drainage is needed to protect your home and property from damage, the storm water can pick up fertilizer, sediment, pesticides, and other pollutants, rapidly carrying them into waterways as it runs off your property. Eventually these waterways connect to lakes, streams, rivers, and other bodies of water that can be harmed by these pollutants and also lead to flooding.

When looking at doing landscaping around the home or business this spring, look at ways to landscape with water quality in mind. There are attractive, low-cost landscaping techniques, widely available in our region, which protect the quality of Michigan's lakes and streams.



## Rain Gardens

One landscaping technique that every home or property owner can do is to create a rain garden. A rain garden is a slightly depressed area created to collect rainwater with a coarse or porous soil mixture of sand or gravel beneath a bed of native plants. Gutters and downspouts from roofs can be directed to a rain garden and you can create it where water pools up on your property naturally. Rain and storm water collects in the rain garden, soaks quickly into the soils and is absorbed by the plants in the garden. As the water soaks into the ground, pollutants are filtered out and the groundwater is recharged.



## Buffer Zones

Another technique that home and property owners who live along lakes, ponds, drainage ditches, storm drains, streams, rivers and wetlands can do is to grow a vegetated buffer zone. To create a buffer zone one can simply stop mowing a section of land along the water's edge or you can plant native species consisting of trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers. Like a rain garden, buffer zones filter and trap sediment, fertilizer, and pollutants flowing off site. These buffer areas next to streams and lakes are critical, a sort of last line of defense, for filtering polluted run-off and protecting our waters.

Native plants are perfect for planting in rain gardens and buffer zones. "Native plants can help prevent erosion from polluted run-off by increasing the infiltration of the water into the soils, slowing the water flow, and reducing the chance of flooding out roads and rivers during heavy rain events," Nancy Carpenter, administrator for the Berrien Conservation District says. "Native plants have deep roots that hold the soil in place and allow water to soak into the soil, which leads to less erosion."

These deep roots also allow for less watering and don't require fertilizer in order to grow successfully. They also provide great habitat for birds, insects, wildlife and add natural beauty to any landscape. Native plants can be found at your local greenhouse or at plant sales from the Berrien, Cass and Van Buren County Conservation Districts. These tips were provided by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission working to protect streams, rivers and lakes in southwest Michigan. To learn more about what you can do to protect our water resources visit [www.swmpc.org/what\\_can\\_i\\_do.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/what_can_i_do.asp).





## Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

376 West Main Street, Suite 130 • Benton Harbor, MI 49022-3651  
www.swmpc.org • (269) 925-1137

*The SWMPC Mission is to promote a sustainable high quality of life through  
facilitation of sound planning and decision making*

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## Calendar of Events 2017

### SWMPC Staff

K. John Egelhaaf,  
Executive Director  
[egelhaafj@swmpc.org](mailto:egelhaafj@swmpc.org)

Patrice Rose,  
Office Manager  
[rosep@swmpc.org](mailto:rosep@swmpc.org)

Marcy Hamilton,  
Senior Planner  
[hamiltonm@swmpc.org](mailto:hamiltonm@swmpc.org)

Kim Gallagher,  
Senior Planner  
[gallagherk@swmpc.org](mailto:gallagherk@swmpc.org)

Ryan Fellows,  
Associate Planner  
[fellowsr@swmpc.org](mailto:fellowsr@swmpc.org)

Kris Martin,  
Associate Planner  
[kmartin@swmpc.org](mailto:kmartin@swmpc.org)

Jill Plescher,  
GIS Specialist  
[plescherj@swmpc.org](mailto:plescherj@swmpc.org)

Brandon Kovnat,  
Associate Planner  
[kovnatb@swmpc.org](mailto:kovnatb@swmpc.org)

May	June	July
15 <sup>th</sup> 9:30 am TwinCATS TAC & Policy Mtg**	19 <sup>th</sup> 9:30 am TwinCATS TAC & Policy Mtg**	4 <sup>th</sup> SWMPC Office Closed
23 <sup>rd</sup> 1:30 pm NATS TAC & Policy Mtg*	27 <sup>th</sup> 1:30 pm NATS TAC & Policy Mtg*	17 <sup>th</sup> 9:30 am TwinCATS TAC & Policy Mtg**
29 <sup>th</sup> SWMPC Office Closed		25 <sup>th</sup> 1:30 pm NATS TAC & Policy Mtg*

\*NATS Meeting location: Niles District Library 620 E. Main Street, Niles, MI

\*\*TwinCATS Meeting location: Michigan Works!, 499 W Main St, Benton Harbor, MI  
49022 Anchor Rooms A+B

For more information visit: [www.swmpc.org/calendar.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/calendar.asp)

### SWMPC Board Meeting Schedule

**Administrative Committee Meetings**  
Location: SWMPC Conference Room 376  
West Main Street, Suite 130  
Benton Harbor, MI  
June 20, 2017 9:30 am  
September 19, 2017 9:30 am  
December 19, 2017

**Full Commission Meetings**  
Location: MCC West, Southwestern  
Michigan College  
58900 Cherry Grove Dr.  
Dowagiac, MI  
July 18, 2017 9:30 am  
October 17, 2017 9:30 am