

# WMSRDC

West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

April/May 2019

## What's Inside:

Integrated Asset Management Summits

Nature Preserve Goes Native

Coastal Wetland Reclamation

CEDS Strategy Committee Update

Transportation Work Program Complete

Environmental Justice in Transportation Planning

Homeland Security Update

Small Town & Rural Development Conference

Staff Gets Award



Join Us Wednesday  
MAY 15  
AT FRAUENTHAL CENTER  
STARTING AT 6:00 PM

A Muskegon Lake Film & Community Conversation

**BACK FROM THE BRINK**

FREE EVENT

**Event Schedule**

6:00PM - Doors Open (Concessions Available)  
6:30PM - Film Screening  
7:00PM - Community Conversation & Audience Participation  
8:00PM - Meet & Greet (Concessions Available)

EVENT INFORMATION IS LOCATED ON FACEBOOK "BACK FROM THE BRINK"

## Muskegon Lake - Action for a Sustainable Future

The Muskegon Lake Watershed is in transition. As a soon to be delisted Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOC), all of the major contamination clean ups and large-scale habitat restoration projects have been completed, or will be, over the coming year.

The Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership and WMSRDC have developed the Muskegon Lake Action Plan, a plan to ensure ongoing

See Muskegon Lake on page 8



## Walter Samuel Taranko Jr. October 19, 1943 - April 8, 2019

Newly elected WMSRDC Board Chairman Walter "Wally" Taranko peacefully passed away surrounded by family on April 8, 2019 at the age of 75. Wally was a longtime resident of Ludington and devoted his life to serving his community and country. Wally lived his life to the fullest and made an impact on the lives of many. A memorial service was held on April 17 in Ludington. WMSRDC is forever grateful for Wally's leadership and for his fun loving spirit. He will be greatly missed.



## SPOTLIGHT PROJECT:

### Integrated Asset Management Summits

As part of the FY19 Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) grant funding, the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance will host two sets of Integrated Asset Management Summits. Each summit will feature two identical sessions on the same day to accommodate attendees. The first of the summits will be in May 2019. The purpose is to initiate a regional conversation around improving Michigan's infrastructure asset management, as well as increase communication and coordination around infrastructure projects including transportation, water (drinking, waste, and storm), utilities, and communications.

TRANSPORTATION • WATER • UTILITIES • COMMUNICATIONS

# May 16, 2019

#### WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- Practitioners
- Managers • Elected Officials
- Public Infrastructure Owners • Private Infrastructure Owners

Join the Regional Conversation:  
**Improving Michigan's  
Infrastructure Asset Management**

#### WHY SHOULD I ATTEND?

- Learn • Contribute to the Conversation
- Collaborate with Peers • Prepare for Asset Management Plans

**DATE:** Thursday, May 16, 2019

**TIME:** 9:00 – 11:30 or 1:30 – 4:00 (Choose one)

**LOCATION:** Muskegon Community College Stevenson Building, Room 1200, 221 Quarterline Rd., Muskegon, MI 49442

**COST:** FREE

**REGISTER:** [scopeland@wmsrdc.org](mailto:scopeland@wmsrdc.org) or call 231-722-7878 X10

Unable to attend the Summit in your Region? Visit [www.michigan.gov/MIC](http://www.michigan.gov/MIC) for a listing of summits being held across the state.



West Michigan  
Regional  
Prosperity  
Alliance



## Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve Goes Native

WMSRDC has received Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/Great Lakes Commission Regional Partnership to restore and enhance native habitat at the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve within the Muskegon Lake Area of Concern (AOC). The project will address 7.9 acres of degraded habitat with the removal of unnatural fill and invasive species, and the hydrologic reconnection of this jewel on Muskegon's Lakeshore.

Located at the mouth of the Muskegon River, the Muskegon Lake Nature Preserve (MLNP) is uniquely located to maximize improved wildlife habitat and to provide educational and recreational opportunities to local communities and regional visitors. It is open to the public and provides an important public access at the east end of Muskegon Lake. The MLNP is owned and operated by the Muskegon Environmental Research and Education Society which provides environmental education opportunities to hundreds of students annually. It is also a mecca for hikers, bikers, birders, and anglers.

Historically, the site was shrub swamp and emergent marsh. Over time it became an abandoned landfill. Invasive species, including Japanese Knotweed, Bittersweet, Glossy Buckthorn, Honeysuckle, Black Locust, and Spotted Knapweed have overgrown much of the property. Wetlands have been filled with broken concrete, foundry sands, and even mill debris in some areas.

This project will enhance ephemeral wetlands, emergent wetlands and shoreline areas. Invasive species will be replaced with native species targeted to increase biodiversity and wildlife opportunity. During Phase I of the project, consultants will obtain data and consult with the landowner to maximize project design and minimize disturbance. This phase will be completed during spring and summer of 2019. Phase II (construction) will follow and carry over to 2020 for completion.

The project will also help delist Muskegon Lake as an AOC by removing one of its beneficial use impairments. Another component will be to provide the landowner with a management plan to assist with the future needs of the preserve.

## Coastal Wetland Reclamation

The former Standard Oil/Amoco/BP Marine Terminal property is situated on the south shore of Muskegon Lake, just north of the restored Ruddiman Creek estuary. The property was created by filling nearshore open water and wetlands with sawmill debris and later foundry and industrial waste such as slag, metal and broken concrete. The terminal stored refined petroleum products and fuel additives at the property from the early 1920s through 1990.

WMSRDC has received \$230,060 in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)/Great Lakes Commission Regional Partnership for engineering and design for future restoration to reconnect approximately two acres of wetland, remove debris in 7.6 acres of the nearshore lake area, stabilize 200 feet of shoreline, install two elevated boardwalk paths over newly recovered wetland, and remove 1,000 feet of concrete wall.

Design targets include moving Muskegon Lake closer to meeting Great Lakes Areas of Concern delisting targets, reclamation of coastal wetlands, removal of barriers isolating the lakeshore from natural coastal wetlands, removal of pedestrian barriers, and improving the resilience of the shoreline/nearshore habitat from wave energy that threatens the Lakeshore Trail with erosion.

Bike path, previously restored shoreline, and concrete wall at mouth of Ruddiman Creek.



Behind the concrete wall, out of sight, but still impacting the lake.

## EDA Representative Visit

The WMSRDC region is an Economic Development District designated by the United States Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). One benefit of this designation is guidance provided by the EDA Regional Office in Chicago, through an Economic Development Representative (EDR). The EDR assists in preparing potential projects for EDA investment and also notifies the region of various federal economic development resources and grants, as they become available.

The EDR for WMSRDC, Mr. Lee Shirey, paid a visit this past April to meet with a number of local communities and discuss potential projects for EDA investment. EDA offers many funding programs, such as Public Works, Economic Adjustment, and Planning. Contact WMSRDC for more information or to discuss how EDA might be able to support economic development projects in your community.

SYNERGY:

**“The combined power of a group of things when they are working together that is greater than the total power achieved by each working separately”**

*-Cambridge Dictionary*



## CEDS Strategy Committee Update

The Winter Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee meeting took place on March 8 at the Big Hart Brewery in the Oceana County community of Hart. Economic development representatives from across the WMSRDC region were in attendance. The meeting featured a presentation from Kitty Tuinstra regarding the housing needs in the area, as well as the mission and efforts of Oceana's Home Partnership. The need for all types of housing is common in communities throughout the WMSRDC region.

The CEDS Strategy Committee convenes quarterly over lunch to discuss the region's CEDS document, discuss the latest economic news and events throughout the region, and network over a meal at a local restaurant. The next CEDS Strategy Committee meeting will be scheduled for late May or early June and will be held in Mason County.

WMSRDC, which is responsible for recruiting members to the committee, recently expanded membership to include Great Lakes Energy, DTE Energy, West Michigan Works!, and Michigan Works! West Central. The committee is currently composed of twenty individuals representing local government, higher education, workforce development, business development, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and utilities.

## Fiscal Year 2020 Unified Work Program Complete

The Fiscal Year 2020 Unified Work Program (UWP) was approved by the WestPlan MPO Policy Committee at its April meeting. The Michigan Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration are currently reviewing the document for final approval, which is expected in July. The UWP outlines the budget and activities for the MPO for the next fiscal year. Budget estimates for the UWP are provided by MDOT, and are allocated to several different program areas for the MPO.

The UWP is a federally required document, which is reviewed and approved by the MPO Policy Committee on an annual basis. Some of the key roles for the MPO that are outlined in the UWP include:

- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP): The LRTP outlines plans for meeting long-term transportation needs with constrained finances including the use of local, state, and federal transportation goals and objectives to guide transportation plans and projects.
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP): The primary purpose of the TIP is to identify programs and projects to be funded with federal aid in accordance with federal law and the regulations of the Federal Highway Adminis-

tration during the next three year period. Projects are selected from the LRTP based on need, local initiative, and requirements of the federal government through the current transportation legislation.

- Air Quality Planning: Promote voluntary emission reduction activities through marketing and outreach programs.
- Non-Motorized Planning: Develop and expand non-motorized transportation options in the region.
- Performance Measure Planning: Identify and implement strategies that will aid in planning for the entire transportation network.
- Public Involvement: Support and facilitate early and continuing public involvement in the development and review of plans and programs.
- Technical Assistance: Provide technical assistance to interested community groups upon request.
- Special needs: Seek out and consider the interests of people traditionally underserved by the existing transportation system.
- Data Gathering: Data collection for Highway Performance Monitoring Systems (HPMS) for eligibility of highway safety funds, based upon certified public road mileage, for road improvements.

## Asset Management

WMSRDC staff recently attended training for the Commission's annual Asset Management program. The data collection process for federal aid roads begins in May. Annually WMSRDC staff, along with a Michigan Department of Transportation employee, and a county road commission employee, collect data for all the federal aid roads within the region. These ratings are the first step in a planning process known as Asset Management. Asset Management is based on an inventory of each local road network within each of the municipalities, which is then applied to identify the correct fix or maintenance based on the rating.

## Environmental Justice in Transportation Planning

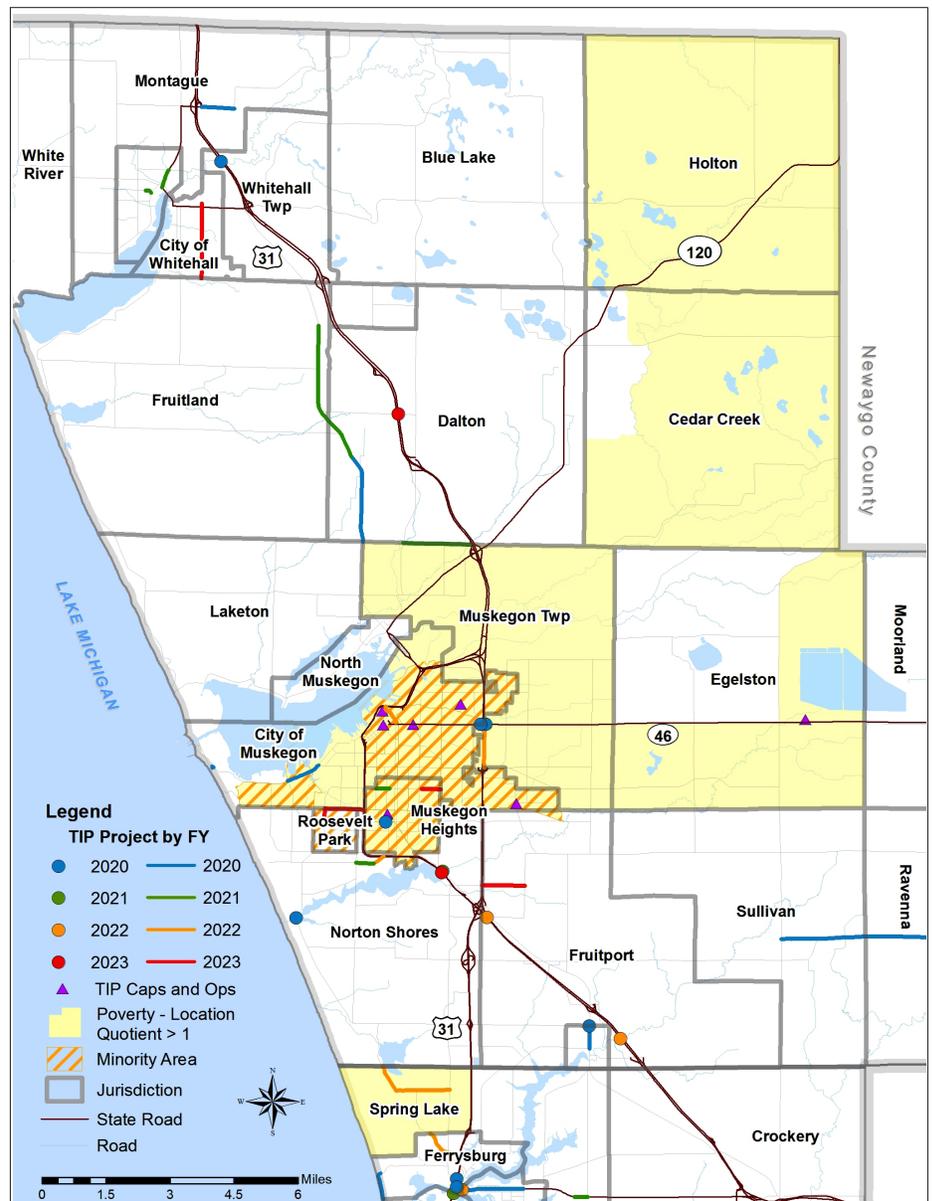
WMSRDC is developing the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Muskegon and northern Ottawa county areas. TIP projects must meet the principles of Executive Order 12898 relating to environmental justice (EJ). Specifically, the plans must identify and address any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs and policies on minority populations and low-income populations.

The process undertaken in analyzing the principles of Executive Order 12898 included mapping the areas of impoverished and minority population concentrations. See map below. These concentrations were overlaid with the 2020-2023 TIP projects and subjected to a visual analysis of potential impacts.

Analysis of potential impacts center on three potential major areas of concern:

- Disproportionately high adverse impact to impoverished and minority areas.
- Minimizing/blocking access of low income areas and minority areas to the transportation system.
- Neglect of the transportation system in low-income areas and minority areas.

This analysis finds that the proposed roadway and transit projects do not result in violations of Executive Order 12898. Furthermore, to supplement this analysis, the continuing public participation process undertaken during the design of the TIP made a concerted effort to reach out to traditionally disadvantaged populations to ascertain the potential effects and or impacts of the proposed projects.



## Homeland Security Update

After serving as the Region 6 Homeland Security Program fiduciary for the past 10 years, WMSRDC will no longer serve in this capacity effective June 1, 2019. This decision was made official and announced to the Region 6 Planning Board and MSP-EMHSD in September 2018. Since then, WMSRDC has been working with the Region 6 Planning Board to secure a new fiduciary to allow for a smooth and seamless transition.

WMSRDC will continue to work with the Region 6 Planning Board to close the FY16 Homeland Security Grant on May 31st and transition the remainder of the FY17 Homeland Security Grant activities to the new fiduciary starting June 1st. The FY18 Homeland Security Grant will open with the new Region 6 fiduciary as they take over in June.

Although it was not always easy, the Region was able to work together to build a program that has resulted in a highly prepared, trained, and equipped region. WMSRDC applauds the dedication and leadership of the county emergency managers as they continually strive to improve the capabilities of the region through this valuable program.

WMSRDC thanks the staff at MSP-EMHSD for the leadership and direction they have provided throughout the years. We at WMSRDC believe in this valuable program and the vital work being done by the Region 6 Planning Board for the communities we live in.

## Staff Recognized for Environmental Leadership Efforts

Amy Haack, WMSRDC Air Quality & Communications Program Manager, recently received a Muskegon Area Sustainability Champion Award for her efforts in leading the Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council (MCECC).

The MCECC promotes cooperation between government, community groups, regulators, and local business throughout Muskegon County. Amy was elected chairperson of the group in 2018 and has increased meeting attendance, created a social media presence, and has been successful in garnering additional interest in the group and its mission.

The Muskegon Area Sustainability Awards Ceremony was held on April 23, 2019 at Weesies Brothers Garden Centers & Landscaping in Montague. Additional recipients were honored for their efforts in Muskegon County.



Vicki Luthy presents Amy Haack with a Muskegon Area Sustainability Champion Award

## Small Town and Rural Development Conference

WMSRDC staff attended the Small Town and Rural Development Conference on April 16 and 17 at the Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville, Michigan.

The annual event, which is organized by the Michigan Rural Council, offers valuable networking opportunities and information about funding and technical assistance opportunities for rural communities. Breakout sessions featured presentations from local, state, and federal agencies on full spectrum of topics facing today's rural communities.

Thank you to Consumers Energy for encouraging WMSRDC staff to attend, and for providing a small scholarship to cover the conference registration fee. As a result of attending the conference, WMSRDC is better equipped to serve rural communities throughout the five-county region.



## Muskegon Lake

continued from page 1

stewardship of the restored resources into the future. The action plan outlines goals and objectives that will keep the lake healthy. It provides a framework for the continued stewardship and involvement of local communities, state and federal partners, non-governmental organizations, schools and businesses.

To kick off this new era of stewardship and sustainability, the public is invited to participate in a free event at the Frauenthal Center in Muskegon, Michigan on Wednesday, May 15 at 6:00 p.m.

The event, Back from the Brink, will showcase a new short film about the cleanup of Muskegon Lake, followed by a community conversation and discussion about how we can work together to sustain and improve Muskegon Lake's natural resources for the good of the environment, economy and the residents' quality of life.

We hope you will join us!

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission is a federal and state designated regional planning and development agency serving 120 local governments in Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana Counties. WMSRDC is also responsible for the management and administration of the homeland security program for the counties of Clare, Ionia, Isabella, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, and Ottawa. WMSRDC is also the planning agency for the metropolitan transportation planning (MPO) program for Muskegon and Northern Ottawa Counties.

Wally Taranko, Chairperson, Mason County Commissioner  
Bonnie McGlothin, Vice-Chairperson, Councilperson, City of Muskegon Heights  
Dale Nesbary, Secretary, Muskegon Community College  
Kay Beecham, Councilperson, City of Norton Shores  
James Brown, Oceana County Commissioner  
Burt Cooper, Newaygo County Board of Commissioners  
Dean Gustafson, Oceana County Board of Commissioners  
Jennifer Hernandez, Supervisor, Muskegon Township  
Marcia Hovey-Wright, Muskegon County Commissioner  
Charles Lange, Mason County Commissioner  
Andrea Large, WMSRDC Appointee  
Joseph Lenius, Councilperson, City of Ludington  
Howard Lodholtz, Lake County Commissioner  
James Maike, Newaygo County Commissioner  
James Rynberg, Mayor, City of Fremont  
Bob Scolnik, Muskegon County Commissioner  
Ron Steiner, WMSRDC Appointee  
Byron Turnquist, Commissioner, City of Muskegon  
Rillastine Wilkins, Muskegon County Commissioner  
Crystal Young, West Shore Community College  
Vacant, WMSRDC Appointee

Erin Kuhn, Executive Director

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