



West Michigan Watershed Partners (WMWP)

January 16, 2025

Meeting Notes

Attendance: John Stivers, Tom Tissue, Garry McKeen, Rich Pugsley, Erin Kuhn, JoAnn Barrett, Ray Schinler, Matthias Bonzo, Robert Smart, Kathy Evans, Meredith Freeby, Sara Kane-Smart, Grayson Kosak, Chris Bobryk, and Fallon Chabala

1. Current Funding Opportunities
 - [NOAA Transformational Habitat Restoration and Coastal Resilience Grants](#)
 - [NOAA Coastal Habitat Restoration and Resilience Grants for Tribes and Underserved Communities](#)
 - [National Coastal Resilience Fund 2025 Request for Proposals | NFWF](#)
2. WMSRDC/NFWF Resilience Planning for Drown River Mouth Systems
 - Outcome is a prioritized list of nature-based projects in Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana Counties compiled with input from the communities and this group. A few projects will go to follow the NFWF pipeline. The remaining list can be used by this group to seek other funding opportunities.
3. Little Cedar Creek post-restoration fish survey data synopsis attached.
4. Watershed Updates
 - White: White Lake is launching a remote sensing buoy in May for 24/7 data, [2024 study of the Lake by AWRI](#) showed nitrogen loading along the causeway so the group is looking at funding for further study/monitor this area. TU is looking at implementing a bank stabilization and habitat restoration project at Carlton Creek and Skeels Road, Geotech investigations for two road stream crossings on Flint Creek. Macro sampling event May 3rd on Mena Creek, currently recalibrating temperature loggers for accuracy before deploying, website updates are ongoing, other volunteer macro event on May 10th, and planned didymo surveys for the next two years.
 - Stony: Fishing platform is currently being constructed (contact Garry if you know of access to telephone poles to use in this project), trees are being planting on site, the County is planning a grand opening for June 20th, although increased fish populations have been visualized, GVSU will be conducting post monitoring surveys this summer.
 - Pentwater: Friends of the Pentwater Watershed are looking at ways to stabilize Big Sandy Bend on their own with volunteers and putting in four temperature loggers this summer. Crystall Valley submitted a permit to repair the dam to EGLE.
 - Mona Lake/Black: WMSRDC is working with GVSU and local stakeholders on a project in Little Black Creek. Muskegon Conservation District is completing a watershed management plan for the entire Mona Lake Watershed.

- Muskegon: Federal funds are paused on the Maple River project, the Army Corps of Engineers are still moving forward with their portion of the project, Penoyer Creek project has moved forward to the contract and engineering of dam one and made progress with landowner contacts, micore monitoring and didymo monitoring, and building capacity for fresh water mussel work. The Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership will have their annual clean-up on April 27th, working on funding for restoration and public access at Grand Trunk and a former coal ash site where the South Branch meets the lake, PFAS has been a concern on the lake, and trying to find funding for a watershed management plan for the Muskegon Lake Watershed. Kathy is lobbying for increased funding for the NERR program.
- Duck: Working on a bridge at the Fruitland Township park site as well as a invasive species management plan.
- Pere Marquette: CRA is working on Wildroots plantings within the watershed, 44 acres of non-commercial aspen regeneration around the planting locations, working on a volunteer planting this fall with TU, working on a stream crossing improvement on North Cole Creek, instream habitat on the Little South Branch, and the Baldwin Dam removal project is at 60% design with work to finalizing location of sea lamprey barrier, grant proposals have gone in for construction, and reaching out to landowners downstream on the Baldwin regarding streambank erosion.
- Manistee: TU work on Clay Bank Creek is paused.

5. Other:

- New staff at Oceana Conservation District
- Oceana is hosting an MSU Extension MI Conservation Stewardship Program. Believe Newaygo is hosting one again this year.
- Congressional Directed Spending message sent to email list prior to meeting minutes being sent out.
- Federal funding update on the sea lamprey program:
 - i. <https://www.michiganpublic.org/environment-climate-change/2025-03-26/sea-lamprey-control-program-receives-ok-to-rehire-federal-workers-after-initial-scare>
 - ii. https://www.glfc.org//pubs/pressrel/2025_PR_TreatmentSchedule.pdf

6. Updates after the meeting from Muskegon Conservation District:

- Whitehall Celery Flats: a feasibility study is funded by the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. Ducks Unlimited will be conducting the engineering for this project. We will be starting soon, so at the next update I should have more information. We are hoping to have this done in 18 months so that we may move forward with the plan. Our goal is to make flow and habitat better for fish and waterfowl and the hope of finding a way to create a public access point.
- Little Flower Creek: we currently are working with funding from the Great Lakes Commission for ACPF mapping relating to cover crops and sustainable practices. To help support this work we are applying for 2 grants to host a workshop on renewable energy and sustainable practices this summer. We also submitted a NOAA grant for some work on culverts on a few places on Flower Creek to improve fish passage.
- Mona Lake: All final QAPP reports have been submitted to EGLE for review. While we wait for those revisions we are working on the plan writing. The hope is to have the first draft of the plan submitted to EGLE in June, pending their review schedule for the QAPP reports.

7. Next Meeting Dates: July 17th and October 16th