

# West Michigan Watershed Partners

## Zoom Meeting Summary

April 16, 2020

**Participants** – Tom Tisue, White River Watershed Partnership; Marty Holtgren, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly; Dennis Kirksey, Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership; Rich Pugsley, Pentwater Lake Association; Joel Jarvis, Mona Lake Watershed Council; Jeff Henry, Pere Marquette River Watershed Council; Anne Pawli, White River Watershed Partnership (zoom technical issues / listen only mode); Greg Mund, Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership; Erin Kuhn, WMSRDC; Kathy Evans, WMSRDC (10)

The Zoom meeting began at 1:30 pm and introductions were made by all.

Kathy provided a brief update on the West Michigan Watershed Collaborative (WMWC) statewide, sustainable watershed funding initiative. Strategic input was received from several southeast Michigan watershed group leaders in late February, 2020. WMWC participants will receive information on the funding initiative's next steps from Kelly Goward, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council.

**Watershed Advisory Group** - West Michigan Watershed Partners (WMWP) discussed the formation of a Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) for the WMSRDC five-county Region. The purpose and benefits of a WAG include: enhanced networking and coordination among the West Michigan Region's watershed groups, partners and stakeholders; education and awareness on local and regional watershed needs and priorities; and the selection of proposals under the future statewide sustainable watershed funding initiative (under development).

The group discussed how West Michigan communities and watershed stakeholders generally "define" a Watershed Group. Discussion revolved around the following principles, concepts and structures:

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| a. Operations to improve water quality function above and beyond regulatory water quality requirements alone. | c. Public meetings are held, accessible and opportunities for public input are provided. Additional community involvement and volunteer opportunities may be provided. | d. A goal to improve or protect water quality and natural resources is established in organizational documents (mission statement, bylaws, 501 c 3, articles of incorporation, other operating rules). |
| b. Geographic focus area includes the watershed drainage area/s in addition to the water body itself.         |  |  |

**WAG Makeup** - The WAG makeup was discussed. The group desired a makeup that would reflect local and regional watershed priorities, the needs of individual watershed groups, and the roles of communities and other watershed stakeholders within the Region. It was noted that the potential, future, sustainable watershed funding would not be limited to members of the WAG only. Any organization that is eligible for local, state or federal grants would be eligible to submit a funding request/proposal to the WAG. WMSRDC would administer the funding process with oversight by the WAG. The WAG would advise and vote on the selection of funding requests/proposals.

Each Watershed Group will be responsible for designating two WAG representatives (one technical and one policy oriented), with an eye toward maintaining an overall balance of watershed stakeholders that reflect the five-county West Michigan Region, including the following (*examples*):

1. **Conservation and Environmental Organizations**
  - watershed groups, conservation districts, lake associations, lake boards, fishing and conservation groups
2. **Public Sector**
  - local governmental units, counties, road commissions, drain commissioners
3. **General Public**
  - watershed residents, seasonal watershed residents
4. **Business and Industry**
  - business representatives, chambers of commerce, economic development agencies
5. **Educators**
  - teachers, educational professionals, intermediate school districts
6. **Philanthropic, Civic and Volunteer Groups**
  - community foundations, united way, rotary
7. **Academia**
  - universities, researchers, graduate students
8. **Non-voting members**
  - Tribes, State Agencies, Federal Agencies

## WMWP Updates

Updates on current and proposed West Michigan Watershed Projects were provided by participants. The meeting wrapped up with round table updates on watershed priorities and projects, including updates on the following:

- **Little Flower Creek** Watershed Management Plan – LFC Watershed Partnership / GVSU AWRI / WMSRDC grant proposal to EGLE NPS 319
- **Little Cedar Creek**/Muskegon River Fish Passage, In Stream Habitat, Wetland Restoration – WMSRDC NOAA grant proposal with Muskegon County Road Commission
- **Muskegon River** 319 Watershed Planning Grant – Muskegon River Watershed Assembly grant
- **Pere Marquette River** Fish Passage, In Stream Habitat, Coastal Wetland Restoration – WMSRDC NOAA grant proposal
- **White River** Fish Passage, In-Stream Habitat, Wetland Restoration – WMSRDC NOAA grant proposal with Newaygo and Oceana County Road Commissions
- **Pentwater River** Soil Erosion / Sediment Control, In-Stream Habitat, Coastal Wetland Restoration – WMSRDC NOAA grant proposal with MDNR Pentwater State Game Area and Pentwater Lake Association
- **Mona Lake** Watershed Projects with the Mona Lake Watershed Council - focused on high water concerns for erosion around the shoreline of Mona Lake