



**West Michigan Watershed Partners
(WMWP)**

January 19, 2023

Meeting Notes

Attendance: Suzie Knoll, Sky Harsch, Mark Tonello, Garry McKeen, Rich Pugsley, Thomas Tissue, Erin Kuhn, Jake Lemon, Kathy Evans, Carl Ruetz, Fallon Chabala

1. National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERR)
 - a. Letter from the Governor has been resent to NOAA and just waiting from a response from NOAA.

2. Current Funding Opportunities
 - a. [GLFT | Great Lakes Fishery Trust |](#)
 - i. Due February 24th
 - ii. Up to \$500,000
 - iii. Match encouraged
 - b. [Sustain Our Great Lakes 2023 Request for Proposals | NFWF](#)
 - i. February 14th
 - ii. Recording of a webinar out now
 - iii. \$200,000 – 1,000,000
 - iv. 4 categories
 - v. Match encouraged
 - vi. 2-3 year funding source
 - c. NOAA Regional Partnership
 - i. Not out yet but starting to collect ideas now.
 - d. Ideas
 - i. Invasive species treatments needed at the new Stony Lake Nature Preserve
 - ii. Ryerson Creek project in Muskegon resubmit past proposal.
 - iii. Crystal Valley Dam restoration
 1. Still need to make sure property owners are willing to move forward with restoration.
 - iv. Potential to resubmit projects that were not submitted in the current partnership.

1. However, continuation of Big Sandy Bend has funding to 60% design with Coastal States Alliance. The contractor is Limno Tech. WMSRDC submitted under a different NOAA funding to continue through implementation. We are waiting for results. If awarded Limno Tech could bid for the project and be selected to continue.
3. NOAA/WMSRDC Regional Partnership Projects (Current)
 - a. Little Cedar Creek: 2 road stream crossing culvert replacements and in-stream habitat restoration
 - i. Working on NEPA approval with additional SHPO requirements
 - ii. Likely to have road stream crossing this spring and post monitoring this summer.
 - b. White River: 4 road stream crossing replacements and in-stream habitat restoration
 - i. Almost ready to submit designs for permits.
 - ii. Monitoring not likely until summer of 2024.
 - c. Stony Creek/Marshville Dam: dam remnant removal, two bridge removals, one bridge replacement, and in-stream habitat restoration
 - i. Almost to 100% designs hope to have permits submitted soon
4. WMWP Participants / Round Robin
 - a. White River/Lake: Working through road stream crossing inventory and identifying priorities. Potentially some for the regional partnership. 24 miles of in-stream habitat mapping, focusing on the upper South Branch above White Cloud and the North Branch. Report out in the next few weeks. More work on the North Branch next year. Worked with the WR Watershed Partnership to deploy two real-time monitoring stations, one on Carlton Creek and one on the South Branch in Hesperia (monitormywatershed.org). Planted roughly 3,000 trees in the watershed in the last year or so. Martin Creek had woody debris work in collaboration with USFS. Stream clean up last fall. Economic impact study of the WR with GVSU. Salmon in the classroom in Hesperia. Looking at groundwater influence on coldwater stream in MI, currently in the data phase.
 - i. Also, a fisheries survey, mark recapture survey, on the North Branch downstream of Arthur Rd. Found a robust wild brown trout population, wild steelhead population, and juvenile Chinook salmon and Coho salmon.
 - ii. Turn over on the White Lake Board. Fallon will reach out to invite them to these meetings.
 - b. Little Flower Creek: No update
 - c. Stony Creek: Bridge pricing has gone up for the Stony project, but the group was able to shift funds to cover that cost. Still waiting on tree planting funding proposal that was submitted. Once permits are in hand, the project will go out to bid for a construction contractor.

- d. Pentwater River/Lake: Household survey of the watershed to engage watershed awareness. Working with Amanda Buday with GVSU. Have \$2,700 from Fly Fishers International. Still need about \$5,000. Looking at asking the Oceana County community foundations. Studies of the road stream crossings using the TU app. Working on a website for the Friends of Pentwater River Watershed. Need a new watershed plan for the Pentwater.
 - i. Fish surveys on the North and South Branches. South at 96th Ave, on the warm side. There was a lot of non-game species, but brown and brook trout were also caught. North at 104th Ave, has a nice brown trout population, lots of juvenile steelhead and Coho, several large lake-run brown trout, and some resident rainbow trout. Hope to have reports out this winter.
 - ii. Project idea to work on habitat restoration on the South Branch and placing some monitoring stations. Pentwater flies under the radar on funding opportunities due to smaller amounts of public and state land. Not sure where improvements on the South Branch should be done. Looking upstream of Heart Impoundment might be difficult for NOAA funding since it does not have the strong connection to lake Michigan. South Branch has lots of sedimentation and not a lot of canopy cover.
 - iii. Pentwater plan done in 1999 no longer qualifies. 319 is not funding planning anymore. They will help with review and approval if funded by a different source. Plan is needed to receive implementation funds.
- e. Crystal Creek: TU placed temp loggers when in the area in July. August average upstream was significantly lower than the downstream of the Dam. The County has data from Spicer, who did a general survey of the Dam. The County has asked for six months to looking for funds to repair. As reference, Crystal Creek flows into the North Branch of the Pentwater.
- f. Mona Lake/Black Creek/Little Black Creek: No update
- g. Muskegon River/Muskegon Lake/Bear Creek/Lake: As part of the AOC delisting on Muskegon Lake a group of watershed partners are hosting a Eutrophication and undesirable algae event to discuss how the beneficial use impairment will be removed, but the lake will still experience these harmful algae bloom (HAB) events. Muskegon Lake is not the only place experiencing HAB. Event is on February 23rd includes a film screening of The Erie Situation followed by a panel of experts. Additional information sent with the email sharing these notes. Hosting monthly habitat work on invasive species management at many restored locations. Working on a plan to restore Ryerson Creek area. Public access is a hot topic on Muskegon Lake. Feel free to call Kathy if you are interested in further discussion. The February monthly meeting on the 7th with include PFAS discussion with EGLE representatives. Feel free to reach out to Fallon, if interested in attending.
- h. Duck Creek/Lake: Tropic status shows amazing resilience, zebra mussels have come and gone, and watermilfoil hybrid has spread throughout the lake. Pentwater Lake recommended that chemicals are not the answer for

watermilfoil. Native plant diversity is the best thing you can do. Pentwater is happy to share more of what they learned. DNR has documentation on weed treatments they can share. If interested, contact Mark Tonello.

- i. Pere Marquette River/Lake: No update

- 5. Next Meeting Date: Next meeting is April 20th, 2023