



## West Michigan Watershed Partners (WMWP)

October 17, 2024

### Meeting Notes

Attendance: Garry McKeen, Rich Pugsley, Erin Kuhn, DJ Shook, Paul Haan, JoAnn Barrett, Armas Soorus, Sky Harsch, Laura Ackerman, Larry Fife, Ray Schinler, and Fallon Chabala

1. National Estuarine Research Reserves (NERR)
  - NOAA is supportive of the NERR in West Michigan; however, they still do not have the resources to start the process of a new NERR. WMSRDC and GVSU has been meeting with legislators to try and move the process forward.
2. Current Funding Opportunities
  - [Inflation Reduction Act Community Change Grants Program | US EPA](#)
  - [EGLE - Michigan Coastal Management Program Grant Funding Opportunity NOAA Great Lakes Fish Habitat Restoration Partnership Grants | NOAA Fisheries](#)
    - i. WMSRDC is submitting this year for road stream crossing projects in the White River in partnership with TU and the local road commissions.
    - ii. Action item to set up a meeting for with Little Manistee and project partners for road stream crossing projects for the application round next year.
    - iii. Also looking at next year's application for Pentwater for Big Sandy Bend and road stream crossings.
3. NOAA/WMSRDC Regional Partnership Projects (Current)
  - Little Cedar Creek: 2 road stream crossing replacements and in-stream habitat restoration
    - i. Completed post-restoration monitoring. Results from GVSU monitoring may be presented at the January meeting.
  - White River: 4 road stream crossing replacements and in-stream habitat restoration
    - i. GVSU also completed post-restoration monitoring at the 144<sup>th</sup> and Pierce crossing with Swinton Creek. Buchanan and Swinton Creek is complete. Roosevelt and Cushman Creek is almost complete. Post-restoration monitoring for those two sites will be done next summer by GVSU.
  - Stony Creek/Marshville Dam: dam remnant removal, two bridge removals, one bridge replacement, and in-stream habitat restoration
    - i. NOAA construction at this site is complete. Post-restoration monitoring will be conducted next summer by GVSU.
4. Boys & Girls Club: shoreline restoration

- Un-natural fill was removed from the lake, and over 500 feet of shoreline softening/stabilization is complete

## 5. Watershed Updates

- White: The watershed partnership completed 8 macroinvertebrate samplings, half of which was completed by the Muskegon Conservation District. All sites scored good or very good. 4 loggers were retrieved, but data still needs to be retrieved. 4 more to loggers to be retrieved. 5 DIY sensor stations within the watershed. One needs solar panel replacement.
- Little Flower: no updates
- Stony: CRA has awarded the contract for the fishing platform and hoping to start construction work mid-November. CRA funds will complete a large tree planting effort in the bottom lands of the project next spring. Oceana CD is continuing site prep work for their GLRI reforestation funds.
- Pentwater: The lake improvement board has hired a shoreline manager to conduct natural shoreline improvements. A grant has been submitted to the DNR fisheries funds for this work starting at the road ends. The local CISMA has submitted a request for funding of European frog-bit surveys and education on collection training within Pentwater Lake. Big Sandy Bend is still a top priority. The watershed partners cleared out the south branch of the river below Hart Dam, so it is now possible to kayak this stretch to the lake. The group talked to Hart Dam manager about flows of the dam for kayaking purposes downstream, as well as, systems for monitoring water quality above and below the dam. Some data is viewable on the view my watershed website. TU put in 3 data monitors that will be removed for the season soon. The county commissioners have an updated study for cost on paths forward with Crystal Valley Dam. TU did site a 14 degree difference above and below the dam. The county is planning to submit a permit regarding the plan to repair the dam. Funding has not been acquired. Watershed group is planning an education program for the watershed based on survey results from GVSU. Programing would be in coordination with Oceana CD. Will be starting with the documents already produced by Duck Lake.
- Mona Lake/Black: WMSRDC is working with GVSU and local stakeholders for multiple funding sources for a project in Little Black Creek. The first is EGLE funds to conduct pollution monitoring. The second is a Community Change grant for local input regarding the pollution monitoring results and restoration efforts at Johnny O Harris and Mona Lake Parks.
- Muskegon: MRWA is conducting macroinvertebrate sampling. Working on the planning phase of three dam removals in Penoyer Creek. Preliminary work on bank stabilization to improved sturgeon spawning grounds with synergistic work for trout habitat. The Maple River project is working on funding for the designs of 2 road stream crossings associated with the project. Muskegon Lake watershed partnership is working on areas to gain additional public access and funds for a watershed management plan.
- Duck: no updates
- Pere Marquette: 4 loggers were retrieved. CRA is working with the Forest Service and Ruffled Grouse Society for aspen regeneration and riparian restoration. Working on a stream bank stabilization project on state land with Mason-Lake CD. The Pere Marquette rail-road project is wrapping up with just seeding and planting happening this fall and next year. Baldwin River has designs and permit applications are being submitted. The project has grown to include the DNR trail bridge. A partner meeting will be planned once the field data collected this summer is compiled. Volunteer tree planting event planned.
- Manistee: CRA is working with the Lake County Road Commission on the design of 10 road stream crossing in the Pine River. They are currently at 30% and CRA will be looking

for implementation funding soon. A proposal has been submitted with help from the Forest Service to expand forest canopy in need of restoration after ash die-off. Using LEAH for modeling work in this project. The Little Manistee watershed group had a survey about a natural river designation, but not all landowners are interested in moving forward. DNR is moving into the initial phases of this designation work. 2 mayfly monitoring stations are in the river. 4 projects with CRA on eroding stream banks. 15 road stream crossing sites in need of replacement. Macroinvertebrate studies are complete for this year, and expecting good results.

6. Other Discussion: The Michigan Conservation Stewardship Program is run by MSU Extension, could be a great resource for the education program planning mentioned above under Pentwater.
7. Next Meeting Dates: January 16<sup>th</sup>, April 17<sup>th</sup>, July 17<sup>th</sup>, and October 16<sup>th</sup>