

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Survey and Control Grant

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative provided a \$600,000 grant to survey and control the spread of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid along the lakeshore and inland streams of Ottawa, Muskegon, Oceana, and Mason Counties. This project will improve forest health in these four West Michigan counties by surveying and controlling the spread of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, a non-native invasive pest that has degraded forest ecosystems throughout the Northeastern forests from Maine to Michigan. WMSRDC will work with the West Michigan Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (WMCIS-MA), the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, as well as public and private landowners to slow the spread of this invasive pest recently discovered in West Michigan.

This grant will provide for the survey of known HWA sites to gauge the extent of the infestation. It will also provide a survey of existing Hemlock stands to detect the presence or absence of HWA in new areas. Once the extent of the infestation is known, treatment can begin to slow the spread into neighboring areas. Outreach and education meetings are being scheduled in the counties where HWA is currently present to help the communities better identify, report, and treat HWA. The grant will also provide outreach and education to local high school students in learning to identify hemlock trees and the presence of HWA. This grant will run through April 2019 with the possibility of an extension if treatment measures are needed.



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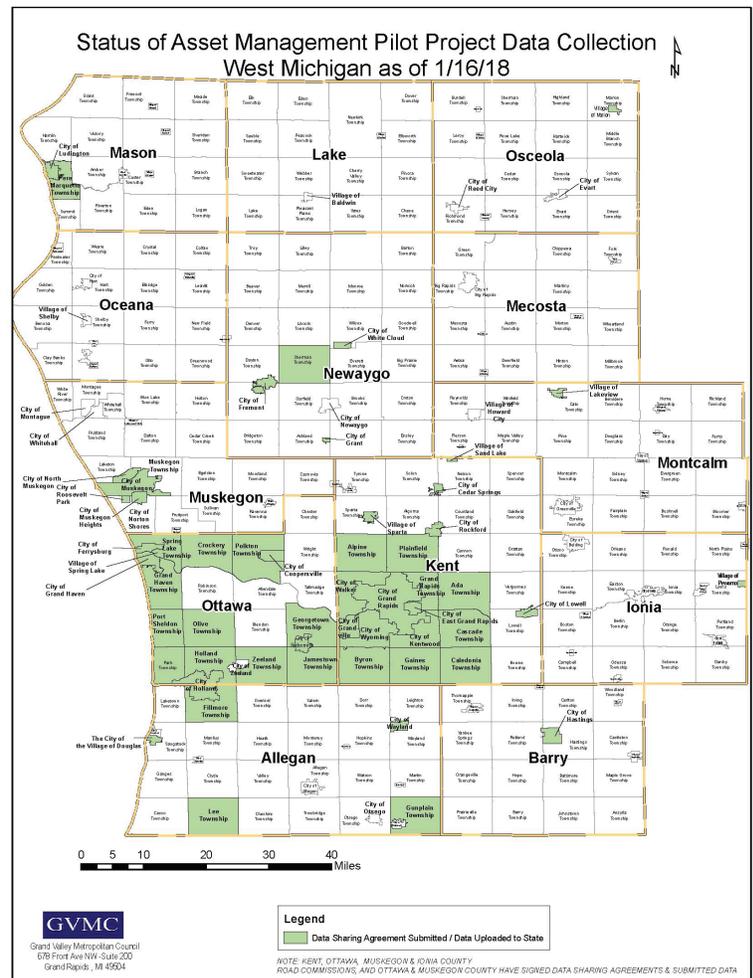
21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot Achieves Milestones

Over the past few months, the 21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot has successfully reached two major milestones: completion of the data gathering phase and holding two Communication and Coordination Summits.

The Data Collection phase of the pilot spanned from September through December 2017. The number of communities that volunteered to participate in the pilot was overwhelming. More than 60 communities from within the 13-county region choose to submit their drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and surface transportation data. See the adjacent map for the communities that have participated. In addition, each of the communities signed data sharing agreements that provides for the data to be securely housed and protected by the Michigan State Police. Both WMSRDC and the Grand Valley Metro Council assisted the communities in gathering the data which was submitted in a variety of formats ranging from GIS files to Excel spreadsheets.

Between the two pilot areas, more than one hundred communities participated in the data gathering phase of the pilot. The summary of the data collected includes 15,000 miles of drinking water lines servicing 3.7 million residents, 13,000 miles of wastewater lines servicing 3.6 million residents, 6,000 miles of stormwater pipes, and more than 22,000 culverts. This data is in addition to the surface transportation asset management data that has been collected across the state for more than 15 years.

The second milestone recently accomplished during the pilot project was two Communication and Coordination Summits. One summit was held in each pilot region. The purpose of the summits was to bring together both public and private utility providers to discuss best practices, share 2018 scheduled projects, and identify opportunities to better communicate and cooperate in the future. The West Michigan summit was held on February 13th and included 73 participants representing municipal government, road commissions, the Michigan Department of Transportation,



Consumers Energy, DTE, AT&T, Frontier, and others. This was the first summit of its kind held in West Michigan. Feedback from the summit has been extremely positive.

WMSRDC, Grand Valley Metro Council, and the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments are all working with the Governor's staff and their consultant to draft the 21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot project final document and recommendations. This document is due to the governor by the end of April 2018.

Lake Michigan Coastal Zone Reforestation

WMSRDC was awarded a \$200,000 U.S. Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant for coastal reforestation in the Lake Michigan coastal zone. The project will plant 3,515 trees in Muskegon, Oceana and Mason counties. Project partners include the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Division, the Mason Lake Conservation District, and the City of Muskegon. The project is expected to improve 468 acres of land impacted by Emerald Ash Borer and other non-native invasive species, and treat 104,885 gallons of water to prevent runoff and improve nearshore health. Trees provide communities with forested natural areas and benefits associated with wildlife, recreation, hunting, water quality, clean air, wild foods, and scenic views. In urban areas, tree canopies also provide cooler temperatures in residential neighborhoods and local parks.

Muskegon Lake Habitat Focus Area

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration selected Muskegon Lake as one of the nation's nine Habitat Focus Areas in 2016. In 2017, WMSRDC collaborated with GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute to submit a three-year, \$537,458 project proposal to NOAA. The project is integrating science, natural resource management, and landowner and watershed stakeholder input.

Targeted monitoring and scientific investigations will begin in 2018, leading to the development of shoreline restoration plans to sustain restored habitats and coastal resiliency. Muskegon River, Muskegon Lake, and Lake Michigan are part of a complex interconnected system. NOAA has provided \$50,000 to begin year one activities.

A project kick off meeting was held on February 13th to discuss project goals among public and private landowners, community leaders, scientists and natural resource managers. Twenty-two people participated, including representatives from Muskegon County, Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership, AWRI, WMSRDC, NOAA, and Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division, Office of the Great Lakes, and the Coastal Zone Program.

West Michigan Lakes and Rivers

The West Michigan Watershed Collaborative has moved into its next phase, with the completion of the Public Sector Consultant report on a sustainable funding strategy West Michigan surface water resources.

As a result of the two-year, watershed stakeholder engagement process, it was determined that a voluntary contribution method would be important to sustain and advance local efforts to improve the quality of rivers, lakes and streams. Voluntary contributions can be used to leverage state and federal grants by providing a source of matching funds. The purpose of the sustainable funding program is to improve the quality of lakes and streams by implementing existing watershed management plans and to meet needs that cannot be met under the current framework of competitive grants and loans or regulatory programs.

To learn more or to become involved, please contact Kathy Evans at kevans@wmsrdc.org or 231 722-7878 x 17.

CEDS Overhaul Complete

The five-year update of the WMSRDC Region's economic development plan, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), was recently completed and will be effective through the year 2022. The content of this completely overhauled document cascades directly from the regional SWOT Analysis conducted in fall 2016. The CEDS Action Plan is uniquely tailored to the region's economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and the document features a compact layout and is more visually attractive than previous editions.

The CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for regional economic development, and is the result of a regionally-owned planning process designed to build capacity and guide regional prosperity and resilience. The CEDS is required to maintain the region's designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). This designation enables communities within the district to remain eligible for EDA assistance.

CEDS Strategy Committee Update

The Winter CEDS Strategy Committee was held in the City of Newaygo on Friday, February 16th. It was a well-attended meeting featuring a presentation by Scott Faulkner, Newaygo Economic Development Organization Chairman, regarding walkability planning efforts in the City of Newaygo.

The CEDS Strategy Committee is the entity identified by WMSRDC as responsible for developing, revising, or replacing the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). It meets quarterly at locations throughout the region. The Spring CEDS Strategy meeting will tentatively take place in Muskegon in the month of May.

MCC Applied Technology Center Grand Opening

A grand opening ceremony was held on January 11, 2018 for Muskegon Community College's Carolyn I. and Peter Sturuss Technology Center in downtown Muskegon. The facility is expected to strengthen the local workforce through educational programs such as CAD, engineering, materials, welding, robotics, and machining. It also activates idle commercial properties in downtown Muskegon, which will support further revitalization of the area.

In 2015, WMSRDC helped connect the college with the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, which contributed a \$2.5 million grant towards development of the new facility.



Left to right: Dr. Dale Nesbary, Mary Judnich, Peter Dickow, Jeanette Tamayo, Geoff Hansen, Erin Kuhn, Holly Hughes

Safety Performance Measures

The WestPlan Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has supported the state Safety Performance Measure Targets that were established by the Michigan Department of Transportation for the federal performance measure requirements. The targets are a result of the Highway Safety Improvement Program final rule (23 CFR Part 490) that requires states to set targets for five safety performance measures.

By agreeing with the state targets, the MPO agrees to contribute to the accomplishment of the state targets rather than develop separate targets. The MPO will work with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and local road agencies to plan for projects that will contribute to the goals. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Long Range Plan will be amended to address the targets and the proposed process that will be used to work toward the targets. The targets are for FY2018 and will be revisited on a yearly basis. The following table shows the state defined target for each of the five categories.

Safety Performance Measure	Baseline Through Calendar Year 2016	Calendar Year 2018 State Safety Target
Fatalities	963.00	1003.20
Fatality Rate	1.00	1.02
Serious Injuries	5273.40	5136.40
Serious Injury Rate	5.47	5.23
Nonmotorized Fatalities & Serious Injuries	721.80	743.60

Unified Work Program

Several members of the WMSRDC staff met with others in Lansing for the annual Pre-Unified Work Program meeting. Work tasks and the budget for Fiscal Year 2019 were discussed, as well as current and future issues facing the MPO. Also attending the meeting in person and by phone were representatives from the Michigan Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, the Muskegon Area Transit System, and the Harbor Transit Multimodal Transportation System. WMSRDC staff will create the FY2019 Unified Work Program and seek approval of the MPO Policy Committee in FY2018.

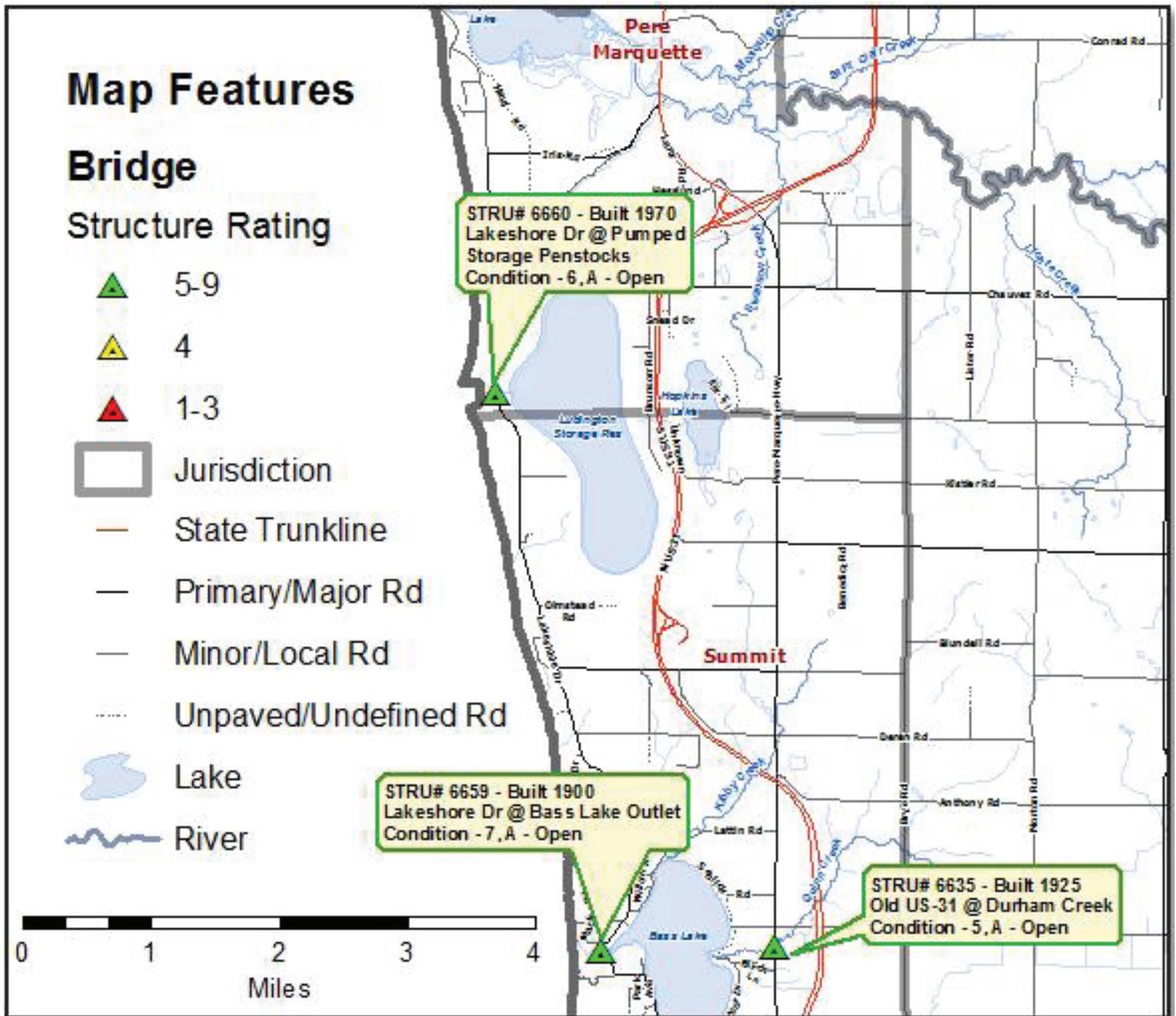
MPO Developing 2045 Long Range Plan

The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is in the process of developing the 2045 Long Range Plan for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area. Staff has been working with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) to begin updating the Travel Demand Forecast Model.

Staff will be updating key data elements such as hourly traffic counts and socio-economic data. The data will allow for the model to analyze and forecast vehicular traffic throughout the MPO's transportation network. This information will be used for planning future projects that will address any identified deficiencies or capacity constraints in the network.

The Bridges of Mason County

In 2016, WMSRDC's GIS technician created a map for the Mason County Road Commission featuring the bridges in their county. The road commission provided safety and condition information for each of their bridges and the locations and information were added to a large map to be used by the road commission as a visual inventory of the bridges and to help with future maintenance and rebuilds. The map is also used by local fire and rescue departments, road maintenance crews and truckers to plan deliveries and be aware of load limitations. In February, the map was updated to show completed bridge reconstructions and future planned projects.



Homeland Security Update

WMSRDC staff is working with the Region 6 Homeland Security Planning Board to wrap up the fiscal year 2015 planning grant which is scheduled to close in May 2018. In addition, staff completed the required Biannual Strategy Implementation Report (BSIR) due to the Michigan State Police (MSP) Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division in January.

WMSRDC staff also worked with the Region 6 Planning Board to prepare and submit the FY2018 Project Work Book which was due to the state in February 2018. The Region is currently working through the FY2016 grant program and will begin work on the FY2017 grant starting later this spring.

As the designated fiduciary, WMSRDC is responsible for the management and administration of the Homeland Security Grant Program for the counties of Clare, Ionia, Isabella, Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, and Ottawa.

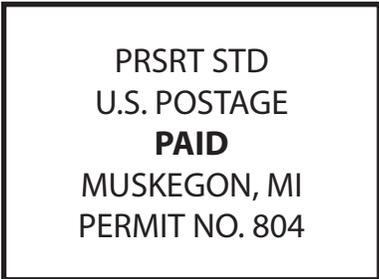
Clean Air Action Education and Outreach Campaign

Believe it or not, winter is nearing the end and the summer season will soon be upon us. And with summer in West Michigan comes the ozone monitoring season. To that end, the West Michigan Clean Air Coalition (WMCAC) will once again be collaborating as a partnership of business, education, government, and non-profit groups working to achieve cleaner air in the region through education and promotion of voluntary emission reduction activities. WMSRDC is a strong partner of the WMCAC.

Outreach and education activities are planned over the winter months and executed during the summer season. Some highlights are the production of a new television public service announcement campaign with local television stations, the annual Clean Air Action Season Kick-off Luncheon to keep meteorologists and other interested parties up to date on the latest happening with the program and federal guidelines, a variety of radio campaigns, social media outreach, and continual presence at community related activities and events.

Newaygo County Recreation Plan Complete

Beginning in May 2017, WMSRDC assisted the Newaygo County Parks & Recreation Commission with updating the Newaygo County Recreation Plan. This process included a series of public meetings held at parks throughout the county. The plan was adopted by the Newaygo County Board of Commissioners in January 2018. Once the plan is accepted by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Newaygo County will be eligible to apply for recreation improvements funding from the DNR through the year 2022. Recreation plans must be reviewed and updated every five years for a community to maintain DNR funding eligibility.



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On February 21, 2018 the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Task Force met at Hemlock Crossing Nature Education Center in West Olive, MI to update the group on the progress of the grant and other local efforts. Melanie Manion from Ottawa County Parks led the meeting attended by local conservation districts, Michigan DNR and public parks managers, instructors from Hope College and GVSU, arborists, two WMSRDC staff and local experts with experience in detecting and treating HWA in West Michigan. Upcoming informational public meetings were announced along with newly created door hangers and flyers to disseminate to the public. New ideas and strategies were brainstormed on how to keep moving forward in regards to the grant and other efforts in fighting the HWA. Newsletters and informational websites are continuing to be developed and updated to engage the public and spread awareness. Visit the HWA website (www.SaveMIHemlocks.org) to learn more about how to identify and report HWA in West Michigan.

If you suspect you have HWA on the hemlock trees on your property and would like to have them surveyed, please complete the following online form:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/surveyhwa>

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.

James Rynberg, Chairperson
Wally Taranko, Vice-Chairperson
Bonnie McGlothlin, Secretary

Erin Kuhn, Executive Director

Amy Haack, Editor

WMSRDC
316 Morris Ave. Suite 340 Muskegon, MI 49440
(231) 722-7878 Fax (231) 722-9362
wmsrdc.org