



## West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

February/March 2019

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WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

## West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Awarded FY19 Grant (Largest Grant to Date)

The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA) was successful in its application for FY19 Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) funds, receiving the largest grant since the program began in 2013. The state announced awards in late December 2018. The WMPA was awarded \$306,810 which includes \$70,000 for Integrated Asset Management.

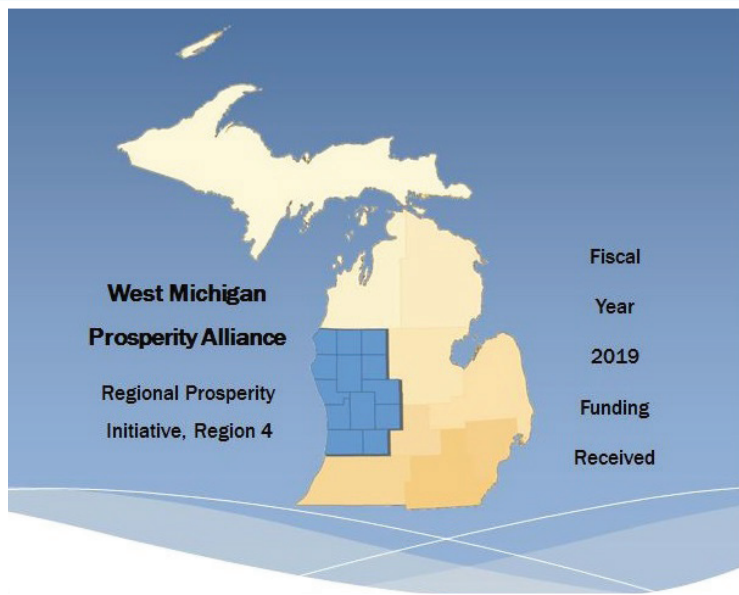
In October 2018, the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC) took over

leadership and fiduciary responsibilities for the WMPA. WMSRDC executive director, Erin Kuhn, currently serves as chair of the WMPA steering committee.

The 27-member steering committee consists of individuals representing a variety of sectors including: Transportation, Regional Planning, Economic Development,

Workforce Development, Higher Education, Adult Education, Community Development, Philanthropic, and Business. The WMPA encompasses 13 counties in the West Michigan area totaling 341 units of government, 130 miles of Lake Michigan coastline, a population of over 1.5 million residents, and is roughly the size of the state of New Jersey.

This year, the WMPA plans to utilize the RPI funds to support priority projects within the region, assist with regional collaboration and cooperation efforts, identify opportunities for region to region collaborations outside the WMPA boundaries, and assist with asset management activities.



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## SPOTLIGHT PROJECT:

### West Michigan Clean Air Coalition

WMSRDC continues to be an active partner of the West Michigan Clean Air Coalition (WMCAC). Formed over twenty years ago, the WMCAC remains a strong partnership of business, academic institutions, government agencies, industry, and non-profit organizations in Muskegon, Kent, and Ottawa counties. WMSRDC and these partners are continuing to work together to achieve cleaner air in the region through the education and promotion of voluntary emission reduction activities. Among additional outreach activities, an extensive television and social media public education campaign will continue in 2019, highlighting voluntary actions people can take on Clean Air Action Days.

#### IT ALL STARTED WHEN...

The WMCAC was formed in 1995 in order to present a unified voice for cleaner air, regardless of individual reasons for doing so. It was agreed, there were many good reasons to promote cleaner air in West Michigan. Some groups were concerned about the health effects of ozone pollution, while others were hoping that cleaner air would result in the lifting of federal reporting requirements or the avoidance of costly sanctions.

Due to the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, West Michigan was faced with a number of mandatory pollution control measures. The most ominous was a costly vehicle inspection/maintenance program that was delayed by Governor Engler just before it was to be implemented. Other measures included restrictions on industrial expansion and new construction. The hope was that voluntary emissions reduction activities could be used in place of the mandates, effectively entrusting the situation to the local communities.

While scientific studies at the time showed (and to this day, continue to show) that the residents of West Michigan were primarily affected by ozone transported from outside West Michigan, it was felt that a good faith effort to reduce any amounts of locally produced ozone would be beneficial and would show a common unity to help reduce emissions.

To this end, the goal of the West Michigan Clean Air Coalition through its former Ozone Action! Program, now known as the Clean Air Action Program, was designed to educate the public about ozone problems and help reduce West Michigan ground-level ozone through voluntary emission reduction activities. Since 1995, the Coalition has been bringing the public and business, education, government, and non-profit groups together to achieve the common goal of cleaner air.



**WEST MICHIGAN  
CLEAN AIR  
ACTION!**



## Great Lakes Action Plan II

Over the past 10 years, the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission has partnered with many local, state, regional and federal partners, public and private landowners, local governments, community stakeholders and watershed groups to implement projects that support the goals of the Great Lakes Action Plan. The projects were funded with grant support from the U.S. EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.S. Forest Service. This work has improved water quality, reduced the spread of non-native invasive plants, and restored fish and wildlife habitat in the five West Michigan counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana.

Project achievements have included:

- Restoration of 97 acres of aquatic habitats and wetlands with the establishment of native plantings and the removal of 626,507 tons of unnatural fill
- Planting of 1,338 trees to reduce non-point source pollution and filter 294,310,312 gallons of storm water, annually
- Removal and control of 158 acres of non-native, invasive plants; and the softening of 24,996 feet of formerly hardened shoreline
- Restoration of fish passage connectivity with restored wetlands and streams along 5 miles of shoreline

This work is continuing and greater results will be reported as projects are completed. Public involvement and education have been strong components of each project.



Before and after photos of Muskegon Lake shoreline restoration.

## Economic Development Update

The WMSRDC Economic Development program is guided by the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which provides a vision for the economic development of the region. Specific objectives of the CEDS are organized under six broad goals: Infrastructure, Workforce, Economic Diversity, Regional Integration, Natural Resources, and Quality of Life.

WMSRDC is currently implementing the CEDS 2018-2022, which is available to view and download at [wmsrdc.org](http://wmsrdc.org). So far in 2019, WMSRDC staff has stayed busy providing technical assistance to local communities and staying abreast of current economic development issues, such as Opportunity Zones, rural broadband infrastructure, and infrastructure asset management. WMSRDC has also been strategically adding members to the CEDS Strategy Committee, the body that represents the region's main economic interests and oversees development and implementation of the CEDS. The committee, which typically meets quarterly, had to reschedule its winter meeting from February to March due to severe winter weather.



## 2019 Safety Performance Measures

The WestPlan 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 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 set for FY2019 and will be revisited on a yearly basis. The table below shows the state defined target for each of the five categories.

| Safety Performance Measure                 | Baseline Condition<br>(2013-2017) | 2019 Targets<br>(2015-2019) |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Fatalities                                 | 981.4                             | 1,023.2                     |
| Fatality Rate                              | 1.00                              | 1.02                        |
| Serious Injuries                           | 5,355.0                           | 5,406.8                     |
| Serious Injury Rate                        | 5.47                              | 5.41                        |
| Nonmotorized Fatalities & Serious Injuries | 746.6                             | 759.8                       |



## Small Urban & Rural Task Force Update

WMSRDC staff continues to assist the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) in administering the Small Urban transportation programs for the Whitehall area and the Ludington area. WMSRDC has been administering these programs since 2013.

WMSRDC is responsible for scheduling meetings, administering the public involvement process, documenting meeting activities, and submitting information to MDOT. The Whitehall Small Urban Committee consists of representatives from the City of Whitehall, the City of Montague, the Village of Lakewood Club, the Muskegon Area Transit System (MATS), and the Muskegon County Road Commission. The area typically receives \$350,000 in funding every other year. The committee met on January 17, 2019 and selected a prioritized list of projects for FY2020-FY2023.

The Ludington Small Urban Area committee met on January 11, 2019 and they also

selected a prioritized list of projects for FY2020-FY2023. As with the Whitehall Small Urban Area, the Ludington area also receives \$350,000 in funding every other year. This committee's members are the Mason County Road Commission, the City of Ludington, and the Ludington Area Mass Transportation Authority. After both meetings staff compiled the minutes and submitted the information to MDOT.

WMSRDC also continues to administer the Rural Transportation Task Force program for the counties of Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, and Oceana. After choosing projects as individual counties, the committee met in December 2018 to approve transportation projects for the fiscal years 2020-2023. The purpose of this committee is to select road construction, maintenance, and transit projects within the five county region. As with the Small Urban program, WMSRDC is responsible for scheduling meetings, administering the public involvement process, documenting meeting activities, and submitting information to MDOT. Maps and details of the projects are available on the WMSRDC website.

## Transportation Improvement (TIP) Update

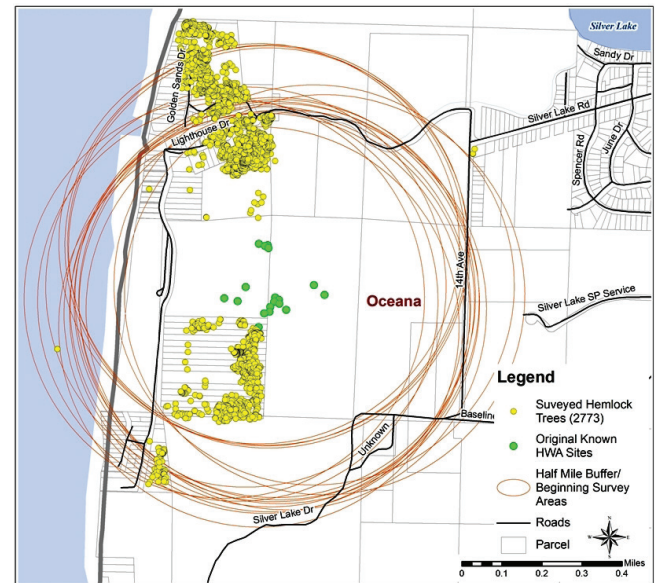
WMSRDC staff continues to work on the current FY2017-2020 TIP which primarily involves administrative modifications and amendments to existing programmed projects. WMSRDC staff has been working with MDOT and local road and transit agencies to ensure that the migration of projects from the old system (E-File) to the new system (JobNet) is complete and accurate. In addition to the existing TIP projects, staff has been programming all of the future TIP (FY2020-2023) projects into JobNet.

## Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Treatment through GIS Mapping

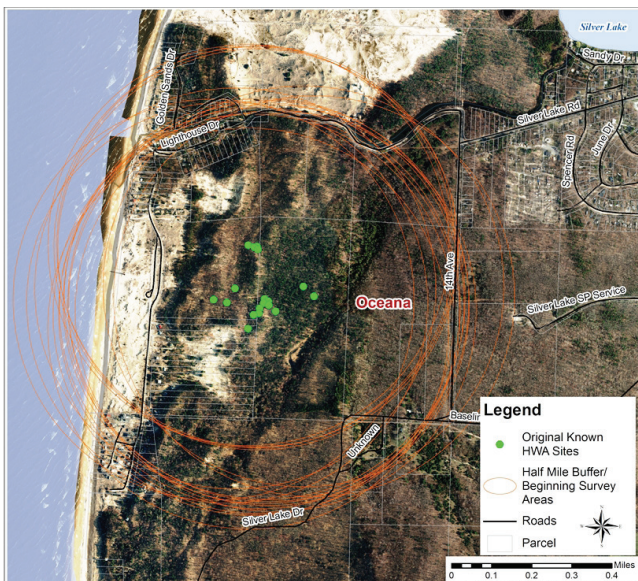
WMSRDC is the fiduciary of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) Grant. The purpose of the grant is to locate the farthest northern and eastern extents of the infestation in our area, treat infested hemlock trees, and prophylactically treat surrounding trees to slow the spread of this invasive pest.

Beginning with the farthest known positive locations of HWA (Map 1), a half mile buffer was created and the survey team used this as their beginning survey areas. The HWA task force gained permission from property owners and began identifying, tagging, and gathering GPS data on all the hemlock trees they could find. Once the data was collected, the GPS data was entered into the WMSRDC GIS mapping system and maps were provided to the treatment team (Map 2). The use the GPS data and parcel information provided by the counties allowed for a broader picture of which parcels contain hemlock trees, which trees are infested, and if permission was given for teams to treat the trees on the property (Map 3). Once all of that data is compiled and brought into GIS, WMSRDC will create detailed treatment maps which will then be shared on portable devices so crews on the ground can complete treatment.

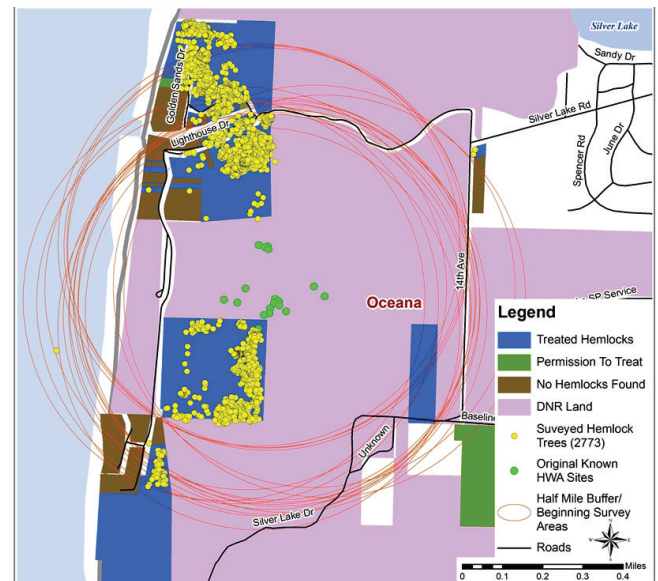
This grant is provided by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and is being assisted by the Ottawa County Parks, Ottawa Conservation District, and the West Michigan Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA). This grant is scheduled to be completed in Spring of 2019.



Map 1



Map 2



Map 3

## Golden Township Planning Update

WMSRDC, in cooperation with the Golden Township Planning Commission, has made great progress toward updating the Golden Township Master Plan.

Between June and September 2018, a successful public input campaign was completed, which consisted of public meetings, surveys, and even a booth at the Silver Lake Apple & BBQ Festival. The following January, the Planning Commission held a special work session to review the master plan Goals & Implementations Steps. Then in February, another work session was held to review and discuss possible revisions to the township's Future Land Use Map.

Every step of the way, WMSRDC has been there to observe, facilitate, and document this community planning process. A draft of the Golden Township Master Plan is expected to be available for public review and comment this coming spring.

WMSRDC staff is available, upon request, to meet in person or to attend local board and planning commission meetings to discuss how WMSRDC may be of service. Please contact the WMSRDC offices anytime for more information or to arrange a meeting.

## Oceana County to Benefit from USFS Tree Planting Grant

The Delta Institute in partnership with WMSRDC has been awarded funding through a U.S. Forest Service, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant, to plant trees along the Hart-Montague Trail and to assist five communities within five miles of the trail to build capacity in forest management for municipal staff and residents. WMSRDC will coordinate with Delta, local governments, trail management, residents, and stakeholders to provide training, collect data and information, assist in planting and maintenance activities, and work to develop 5 or 10 year management plans. The management plans will meet the core standards of the Tree City USA Program resulting in membership for the municipalities of Hart, Mears, Shelby, New Era, and Rothbury.

The project will allow for the planting of 700 trees along the Hart Montague Trail and within the participating communities. The trees will intercept up to 24,900 gallons of storm water runoff annually contributing to cleaner water, reduced erosion, healthier residents, and enhanced views. This \$99,994.49 grant project will begin in 2019 and run through December 2020. WMSRDC is eager to work with project partners to provide these services to local governments as well as meet the broader goals of the USFS and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

## Homeland Security Update

WMSRDC Staff is working with the Region 6 Homeland Security Planning Board to develop the FY19 project workbook required by the Michigan State Police Emergency Management Homeland Security Division (MSP-EMHSD). The project workbook identifies projects and priorities chosen by the individual county local planning teams for the upcoming planning grant. The document is due to MSP-EMHSD on March 15, 2019.

In January, WMSRDC completed and submitted the required Biannual Strategy Implementation Report (BSIR) to MSP-EMHSD. WMSRDC and the region are working to complete the FY16 planning grant, which closes at the end of May 2019. In addition, work on the FY17 planning grant is well underway.





## Prosperity continued from page 1

The one-time \$70,000 grant for Integrated Asset Management is related to the State of Michigan's Infrastructure Asset Management work over the past few years. This work includes the 21st Century Infrastructure Asset Management Commission in 2016, the Infrastructure Asset Management Pilot Project in 2017/18, the newly formed Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC) and Water Asset Management Council (WAMC), and the Transportation Asset Management Council (TAMC).

These dollars will be utilized to conduct an inventory of infrastructure assets, coordinate efforts with the state and regional partners, and for education and training. Regions across the state will be working with local asset owners as well as the state Asset Management Councils to initiate the development of a coordinated and consistent approach to asset management.

This project is in the very early stages of development, so stay tuned for more details as they become available.

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.

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