

## **Office of Executive Director**

**Erin Kuhn**, Executive Director  
(231) 722-7878 ext. 180

Erin is the Executive Director of WMSRDC. She has been with the agency for more than 20 years working in the economic development and local government services programs prior to becoming the executive director in 2014.

Erin is a governor appointee and voting member of the Michigan Infrastructure Council and serves on several of the Council's sub-committees including the Asset Management Self-Assessment Data Committee and chairs the Asset Management Champion Program Committee. She served as President of the Michigan Association of Regions from 2019 through 2022 and is former chair of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance. She currently serves as Chairperson on the United Way of the Lakeshore Board of Directors. Erin is a member of the Muskegon Rotary Club, former Lakeshore Athena Award nominee, and a Muskegon Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce Agent of Change.

Erin was born and raised in West Michigan. She earned degrees from Muskegon Community College and Grand Valley State University. She currently lives in the City of Norton Shores with her husband and three children.

**Syndi Copeland**, Office Manager  
(231) 722-7878 ext. 100

Under the supervision of the Executive Director, Syndi oversees the day-to-day operations of the Commission office; acts as Secretary to the Executive Board; and is responsible for providing administrative services to other professionals in the Commission. Syndi has been with the Commission since 2008.

Syndi attended college at the Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music and Moody Bible Institute. Throughout her career she has provided various office support to a K-12 school, psychologist, insurance agency, food service provider, aerospace industry, tobacco corporation, church, hospital, university and finally, WMSRDC.

Syndi resides in Grand Haven with her husband, Paul. She enjoys baking and quilting and the West Michigan beaches! Paul and Syndi enjoy hosting dinner events with a wide variety of people, but their favorites are with their three grown children, their spouses, and three WONDERFUL grandchildren!

## **Finance and Budget**

**Amanda Snyder**, Finance Manager  
(231) 722-7878 ext.120

Amanda is the Finance Manager of WMSRDC. She joined the Commission in 2019 after working nearly a decade as an industry accountant specializing in non-profit accounting.

Amanda is passionate about marrying accounting and operations with technology. Since her arrival at the Commission, she has strived to modernize operations utilizing cloud-based, paperless systems. In early 2021, she led an organization-wide technology migration to improve operational efficiency and flexibility. The best part of her job is when someone wants to talk about accounting and finance. Her continuous goal is financial transparency, and she enjoys engaging the staff and board members about the Commission's operations.

Additionally, Amanda serves as Treasurer for the Walden Green Montessori Board of Directors and is a member of the Association for Governmental Accountants. She earned a Bachelor of Arts from Western Michigan University and a Master of Professional Accounting from the University of Miami, Coral Gables. She resides in Whitehall with her husband and two children where she enjoys gardening and lazy beach days.

## **Economic Development, Community Development, and Local Government Services**

**Stephen Carlson**, Program Manager  
(231) 722-7878 ext. 110

Stephen (pronounced “Steffen”) oversees the economic development and local government services program areas. He has been with WMSRDC since 2003 and earned a degree in Geography from Grand Valley State University in 2004. He believes in supporting the work of local governments and promoting regional cooperation. Stephen has written or collaborated on more than two dozen documents spanning regional economic development, local master and recreation plans, hazard mitigation, wildfire protection, flood mitigation, brownfields, and shoreline resilience. He has training in infrastructure asset management, leadership, and GIS to go along with experience with grant writing, public engagement, and facilitation.

Stephen enjoys the outdoors, playing sports, gardening, and traveling. His personal achievements include receiving a Muskegon Community College golf scholarship; involvement with the Grand Valley State University men’s club volleyball team as co-founder, player, and coach; teaching a course in map design at Muskegon Community College; and many summers spent playing semi-professional beach volleyball on the Midwest Professional Volleyball Association tour. Stephen lives in Norton Shores with his wife and two children.

## **Transportation Planning and Air Quality**

**Joel Fitzpatrick**, Planning Director  
(231) 722-7878 ext. 160

Joel Fitzpatrick works for WMSRDC as the Transportation Planning Director, overseeing all transportation programs for the Commission. He has been with the agency since 2007. Joel coordinates the agency’s small urban and rural transportation programs, overseeing transportation project selection, and programming for the region’s five counties. He also administers the MPO’s traffic count program, which collects approximately 100 traffic counts per year, as well as the region’s asset management program, which collects data for hundreds of miles of federal aid eligible roads every year.

Joel serves on the Michigan Department of Transportation’s Rural Task Force Oversight Board as well as its education sub-committee. Joel is a member of the American Planning Association and is a Certified Planner through their American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). He has also completed the Michigan Infrastructure Council’s Asset Management Champion Program. Joel’s prior experience includes having served on the City of Roosevelt Park’s Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. Prior to joining WMSRDC, Joel worked in various planning positions focusing on economic development planning, historic district planning, grant writing, and recreation planning. Joel has an undergraduate degree in Economics as well as a master’s degree in public administration, both from Central Michigan University.

**Brian Mulnix**, Program Manager  
(231) 722-7878 ext. 200

Brian Mulnix has been with the agency since 1998 and works primarily in transportation planning but has experience in all areas of the agency including GIS, local government services, and environmental planning. His current role is the Program Manager for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) where he is responsible for the planning of over \$15 million in federal transportation funding annually to improve the multi-modal transportation system and network in West Michigan. Brian also develops short- and long-range transportation plans for the transit and road agencies within the MPO.

Brian earned his bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University and his Master of Public Administration from Grand Valley State University. Brian has served on his local planning commission for over 15 years and volunteers for various groups and events in the area. Brian grew up and continues to live in the White Lake area in northern Muskegon County with his two children.

**Lauryn Blake, Planner**  
(231) 722-7878 ext. 230

Lauryn joined WMSRDC in 2024 as a Planner under the supervision of the Transportation Planning Director, Joel Fitzpatrick. She is responsible for attending meetings for the MPO, TIP, Technical and Policy Committee meetings, as well as participating with the MITC-IAWG on air quality for the Clean Air Coalition (CAC). She also is engaged in public involvement for rural and small-urban areas as well as transportation decision making and annual PASER road ratings.

In 2023, Lauryn graduated from Grand Valley State University where she earned her Bachelor of Science in Geography, as well as certifications in Sustainable Urban and Regional Development, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and Environmental Remote Sensing (RS). Before becoming a Planner, Lauryn was a designer, working to customize dream spaces for all levels of skill – DIYers to contractors. She emulates this do-it-yourself attitude by teaching herself to paint, write, and scross-0stitch. Currently, she resides in Allendale where she roller skates by day and stargazes at night!

**Jack Grice, Planner/GIS Technician**  
(231) 722-7878 ext. 150

Jack joined the WMSRDC in 2025 as a Transportation Planner and GIS Technician, working under the supervision of Joel Fitzpatrick, Transportation Planning Director. In this role, Jack is actively involved in the annual PASER road ratings and contributes to the development of rural transportation planning initiatives. He attends MPO, TIP, Technical and Policy Committee meetings. Additionally, he performs GIS mapping and spatial analysis for the agency and its various programs.

Jack graduated from Grand Valley State University in 2024 with a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources Management, complemented by minors in Biology and Geospatial Technologies. He holds certifications in Geographic Information Systems, Applied GIS in Natural Resources, and RX-310 Prescribed Burns. In his free time, Jack enjoys hiking along the lakeshore and in surrounding parks, disc golfing, exercising, and watching sports.

## **Environmental Planning**

**Fallon Chabala, Program Manager**  
(231) 722-7878 ext. 130

Fallon joined WMSRDC in 2021 as the agency's Environmental Program Manager. Prior to joining WMSRDC, Fallon was the coordinator of a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) first in the Saginaw Bay region and then for the Barry, Calhoun, Kalamazoo region. Throughout this time, she managed multiple field crews, as well as state and federal grants. This oversight included ensuring proper permits, licenses, and permission from landowners, while meeting project deliverable deadlines. To support collaborative management, she gathered and disseminated information from professional organizations and provided education and outreach to the general public. Fallon also spent multiple years working as a student intern at Grand Valley State University Annis Water Resources Institute.

Fallon was born and raised in Norton Shores. She earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Grand Valley State University. She currently lives in Norton Shores with her family.