

10. Plan Sustainability



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Introduction

Plan sustainability refers to an essential component of watershed management planning that involves finding ways to continue efforts to implement this watershed management plan (WMP). Implementation involves taking the appropriate actions to achieve the goals and objectives, evaluate the effectiveness of the plan, and update / improve the plan when necessary.

A key component of sustainability is obtaining and keeping a wide variety of local support. This support and public involvement will help maintain momentum for implementing this WMP. Local support will also help obtain funding through all available means and open doors for partnerships in areas where other groups have similar missions.

This section of the plan discusses past implementation and future sustainability efforts.



History of Greater Lansing Regional Committee¹

On November 15, 1999, Delta Township and the City of Lansing hosted a meeting for several local communities. The meeting notice stated that this was to be “an informal meeting to discuss the Storm Water Phase II program and how, or if, there may be a way to pool resources on a regional basis”.

Representatives from various communities, counties, and the MDEQ discussed the Federal Regulations for Storm Water Phase II and the MDEQ’s program allowing a “Voluntary Permit Program.” Originally, eleven communities and three counties were listed as designated Phase II communities by the MDEQ.

Subsequent meetings were held to continue exploring the feasibility and cost of a cooperative effort. On June 8, 2000, a draft Resolution was prepared for the establishment of the “Greater Lansing Area Regional NPDES Phase II Storm Water Regulations Committee” for each of the communities to adopt. Each community was also asked to name a representative to serve on the committee.

Throughout the remainder of 2000, the committee obtained Resolutions from each community, elected offices, received proposals, and interviewed four consulting firms. Tetra Tech was selected to assist the Committee in determining how to best comply with the Phase II Storm Water Rules. Tri-County Regional Planning Commission (TCRPC) also assisted the Committee in providing contractual, fiduciary, and administrative support.



In May 2001, Tetra Tech completed the “Step 1 - Permit Strategy Development” study, which incorporated the Committee’s decision (April 20, 2001) to proceed as a group using the State’s Voluntary General Permit approach. The Committee then agreed to retain Tetra Tech to prepare the

Original Phase II Jurisdictions

Bath, Charter Township of
Delhi, Charter Township of
Delta, Charter Township of
DeWitt, Charter Township of
East Lansing, City of
Lansing, Charter Township of
Lansing, City of
Meridian, Charter Township of
Williamstown, Township of
Clinton, County of
Eaton, County of
Ingham, County of
Capital Region Airport Authority
Michigan State University

¹ The text from this section is taken from the GLRC “Memorandum of Agreement” with minor edits.

Voluntary General Permit Application for each of the nine communities. The cost for each community was based on a formula that included weighted factors for population and land area. Each of the nine communities then passed a second resolution agreeing to continue as a group to pursue a Voluntary General Permit using the previous distribution of costs.

The committee defined appropriate watershed boundaries for the Grand River Watershed, the Red Cedar River Watershed, and the Looking Glass River Watershed. On January 25, 2002, the Committee agreed to retain Tetra Tech to prepare WMPs for these watersheds. Again, the allocation of cost was based on the previously agreed upon formula. Each community adopted a third resolution committing their appropriate funds for the watershed management plans.

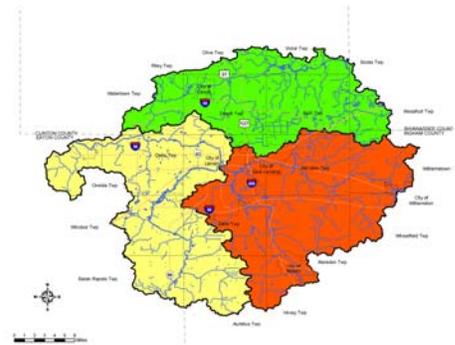
A Public Education Advisory Committee was organized to assist in the educational portion of the Voluntary General Permit Applications, including in this an inventory of current community practices.

Throughout 2002 and 2003, fourteen additional communities within the three watersheds were invited to join the committee. Ten of these communities were required to meet the Stormwater Phase II requirements based on the 2000 census. Eight communities joined and participated in the regional approach and completed the Voluntary General Permit Application in 2000.

In March 2003, all seventeen communities; (the original nine plus the additional eight communities); and the three counties submitted their Voluntary General Permit Applications to MDEQ. In November 2003, certificates of coverage were issued to each of the seventeen communities and to each of the three counties.

In early 2004, Alaeidon Township joined the committee and submitted its permit application in November.

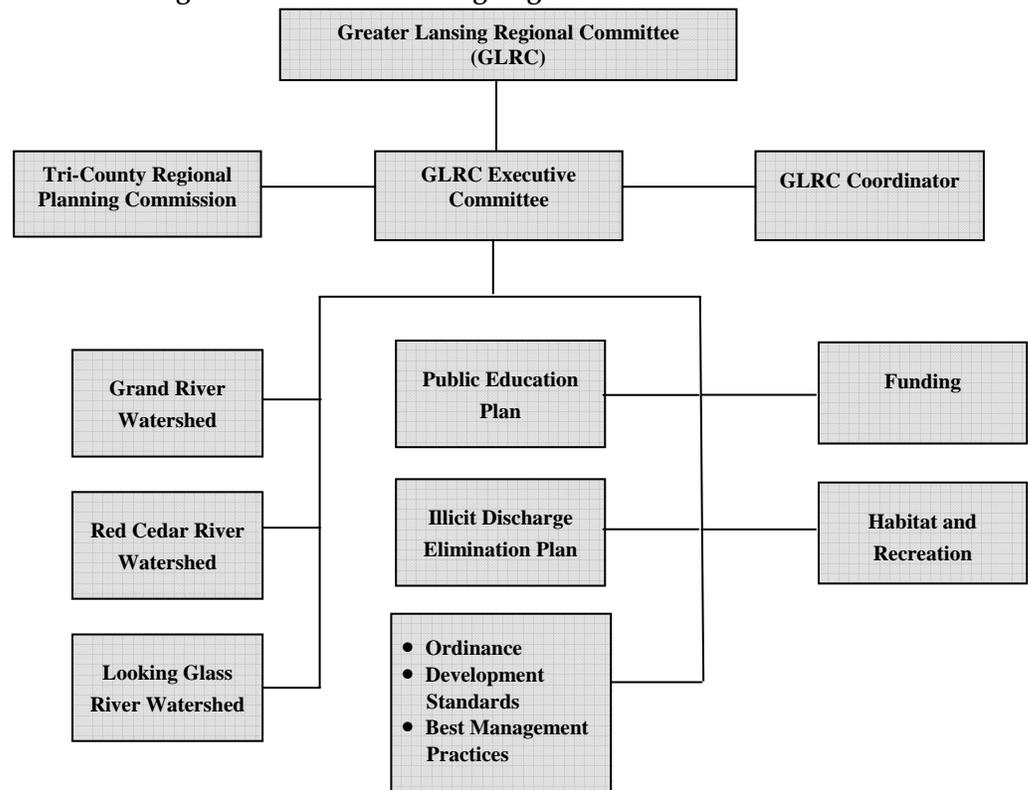
Throughout 2004, the communities involved in the voluntary committee adopted a 'Memorandum of Agreement' (GLRC, 2004) to establish the "Greater Lansing Regional Committee on Phase II Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention" (GLRC). The committee was formally convened on May 21, 2004. This committee structure is outlined in the flowchart on the right (Figure 10-1) and is discussed under the "Phase II Legal Relationship" heading below.



Additional Committee Members (as of 2004)

- Alaeidon, Township of
- DeWitt, City of
- Dimondale, Village of
- Grand Ledge, City of
- Mason, City of
- Oneida, Township of
- Vevay, Township of
- Watertown, Township of
- Windsor, Township of

Figure 10-1 Greater Lansing Regional Committee Structure



Other Communities in the Watersheds

Aurelius, Township of
Benton, Township of
Eaton Rapids, Township of
Locke, Township of
Olive, Township of
Riley, Township of
Sciota, Township of
Victor, Township of
Wheatfield, Township of
Williamston, City of
Woodhull, Township of

Watershed Committees

Although each individual community is ultimately responsible for fulfilling permit requirements, actual implementation of the WMP will be predominately by committee, particularly during the initial stages of the WMP. For many of the proposed objectives in the action plan, the first action in support of the objective is to create a committee. Committees will be assigned a chairperson who will then solicit members from the watershed committee, municipal staff, stakeholders, the general public, or any other individual pertinent to the decision-making process. Depending on the nature of the task they are appointed to oversee, committees may have a short or long lifespan. It is anticipated that each committee will make decisions and represent the wishes to the full watershed committee.

Existing committees that were created as part of the WMP development process will also be utilized during WMP implementation. The individual make-up of these committees will be reevaluated for applicability to the new assignments. Volunteers who identified interest during a Stakeholder Workshop are also included in these committees. Existing committees include the following:

Illicit Discharge Elimination Plan (IDEP) Committee

- *Illicit connection and septic system ordinances and enforcement.*

Committee Members

Village of Dimondale
City of Lansing
Ingham County Health Dept.
City of Mason
Delhi Township
City of DeWitt
Meridian Township
City of Lansing
Meridian Township

Public Education Plan (PEP) Committee

- *Public education materials and outreach strategies.*

Committee Members

Ingham County Health Department
Woldumar Nature Center
Capitol Area Trans. Authority
Lansing Township
Michigan State University
Michigan State University
DeWitt Township
Area Assoc. Groesbeck Neighborhood
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
Lansing Community College
Bath High School

Ordinance, Development, Storm Water Best Management Practice (BMP) Committee

- *Ordinances related to IDEP, development standards, and operation and maintenance .*
- *Water quality friendly site development standards planning practices.*
- *Structural storm water BMPs, ditch/drain BMPs, and stream recreation.*

Committee Members

City of Lansing
Meridian Township
Meridian Township
Ingham County Health Dept.
Ingham County
Capitol Area Trans. Authority
Delhi Charter Township
Friends of the Carrier Crank
Michigan State University
SME (Grand Ledge Public Schools)
Area Assoc. Groesbeck Neighborhood
City of DeWitt
Watertown Township
MSU Grounds Maintenance
Ingham County Road Commission
Board of Water & Light
Village of Dimondale
Consumers Energy
Realtors
General Motors

The following committees will be created as part of WMP implementation. The members indicated have volunteered to participate.

Funding Committee

- *Funding strategy for WMP implementation.*

Committee Members

Ingham County Health Department
Capitol Area Transportation Authority
Delhi Charter Township
Lansing Township
Meridian Township
City of East Lansing
General Motors

Habitat and Recreation Committee

- *Studies and research explicit to the health of local streams and habitat.*
- *Wetland inventory, protection, and restoration.*

Committee Members

Michigan State University
Meridian Township
Meridian Township
Ingham County Health Department
Woldumar Nature Center
Ingham County
Delhi Charter Township
Area Assoc. Groesbeck Neighborhood
Watertown Township
Village of Dimondale
Oneida Township
Lansing Community College

Phase II Legal Relationship

As previously mentioned, the communities formed the GLRC in 2004 by adopting a 'Memorandum of Agreement'. The stated purpose of this agreement is as follows (GLRC, 2004):

"It is the purpose of this Memorandum of Agreement (hereinafter the Agreement) to set forth the composition, duties, and responsibilities of the Greater Lansing Regional Committee Phase II Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention (hereinafter the "GLRC") to be formed as more particularly described below. Local public agencies and communities believe there are substantial benefits that can be derived under this Agreement through cooperative management of the Grand River, Red Cedar [River] and Looking Glass River watersheds and in providing mutual assistance in meeting the storm water permit requirements under the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) watershed-based, general storm water discharge permit, or similar storm water discharge permits issued to public entities within the Grand River, Red Cedar [River], and Looking Glass River watersheds.

The Agreement will also provide a framework for consideration of new, permanent watershed organizations with potentially broader responsibilities that could provide a more cost effective and efficient means to meet state and federal requirements, and public expectations for restoration and maintenance of the beneficial uses of the watersheds."

This agreement included fund allocation and authorization mechanisms and other by-laws of the committee including the term, composition, public participation, voting, election, meetings, duties, fiduciary services, and insurance/legal requirements of the committee.

By passing a resolution committing to the agreement, each community formalized its participation in the committee. The powers of the committee are derived from the 'Inter-Municipal Committee Act' (PA 200, 1957) and include studying problems and preparing plans to address problems.

Under the Act, the committee can employ staff or hire public or private agencies or businesses to perform surveys and studies. In-kind services by municipal personnel, the use of equipment and office space, and other services can be accepted as financial support by any of the members.

The primary limitation of the committee is that the Act provides it with no powers to perform construction or to operate and maintain facilities. Under the current structure, these activities will have to be pursued by the individual communities. However, the purpose statement indicates that other organizational frameworks will be considered in the future that allow for broader powers to implement the WMP.

Funding

As introduced in Section 6, Goal 2 of the WMP is to "Provide a Sustainable and Equitable Funding Source". The funding strategy to be developed includes procuring start-up and continual funding for implementing WMP recommendations. The actions associated with this goal (Section 8) involve developing budget needs, comparing funding mechanisms, selecting a funding mechanism, and implementing the mechanism.

The GLRC currently uses a funding allocation formula, based on population and land area within the watershed. Land area and populations were carefully reviewed as input into the funding allocation formula. Corrections were made for communities holding utility service and tax sharing agreements to assure they are accurately reflected in the calculations. Land area that was owned by Michigan State University, MSU, in the City of Lansing, City of East Lansing, and Lansing Township was also subtracted from the total land area since MSU is participating as an ad-hoc member of the GLRC and is implementing storm water management activities through an internally-funded watershed management initiative known as MSU-WATER.

In the short-term, and as a means to supplement the above funding strategy, several additional tactics should be undertaken. Specifically, grant seeking, voluntary initiatives, and piggy backing on existing programs can yield significant resources for achieving the WMP goals and objectives. Grants targeted for environmental action, land use issues and community development can help fund specific initiatives.

Voluntary initiatives can have significant impact in a community and act as a catalyst for others to be good stewards. For example, if planning departments make information available on alternative development options that are watershed friendly then developers may more readily undertake these options. Giving companies public recognition and publicity for these initiative often encourages business to try new ideas.

Currently, the Conservation Districts run both the Adopt-A-River and the landowner conservation programs. Both of these programs present opportunities to add watershed protection components to their programs. This is only one example of an existing program which could provide a

Example Funding Idea

One objective identified in Chapter 8 is to undertake watershed friendly development practices. A possible source of grant funding for implementing this objective is People and Land (PAL), a project funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, whose mission is to enable people in Michigan to live in diverse, healthy communities that are environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially equitable. Please see <http://www.peopleandland.org/index.html> for more information.

vehicle for helping to meet the objectives outlined in the WMP. Other possible organizations that currently conduct complementary programs include 4-H through their Junior Citizen Planner program and MSU Extension with its watershed short courses.

GLRC Future

The GLRC will to continue to operate under their current organizational structure. This structure has successfully accomplished many tasks including:

- Hiring a part time executive director,
- Developing a public and project team website,
- Designing and purchasing curb markers,
- Installing watershed boundary signs,
- Developing brochures and posters, and
- Guiding the development of this WMP and all the effort contained therein.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without the support of local community groups, local government agencies, and the dedication of committee members participating in this process.

The committee will continue to encourage local support and partnerships through public involvement activities and watershed implantation. A concerted effort will be made to foster a network of local subwatershed stewardship organizations. The network will bring together volunteer stewards throughout the watershed to share their experiences and learn from each other about how to protect and restore natural areas in and around their neighborhoods. Drawing from the lessons learned in the Huron River Watershed, (<http://www.hrwc.org>) it is anticipated that the network will work together to protect natural areas, learn about the functioning and identification of many parts of a watershed (plants, animals, natural systems, etc), and help one another become effective advocates for the natural world.

While this organizational structure is working well at this time, it may need adjusting in the future. This watershed plan is intended to be a fluid adaptive document that can be changed as needs arise. If it becomes apparent, in the future, that implementation is insufficient; the committee will consider additional or alternate legal organizational structures that provide greater opportunities to implement the actions in this plan.

References

Greater Lansing Regional Committee on Phase II Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention. "Memorandum of Agreement". 2004.

stock.xchnng. "stock.xchnng" website. Via: <http://www.sxc.hu/>. Last accessed: May 20, 2005.

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