

# PIPELINE

**MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONERS**

MANAGING MICHIGAN'S WATER RESOURCES SINCE 1899

**2024 INNOVATION & EXCELLENCE  
AWARDS**

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**THE BENEFITS OF COACHING  
YOUNGER EMPLOYEES**

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**LITTLE BLACK LAKE INTERCOUNTY  
DRAIN PROJECT**

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Cover Photo: Little Black Lake Intercounty Drain, Eng., Inc.

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**EVAN PRATT, PE**

**Washtenaw County**

**Water Resources Commissioner**



## WHAT WILL YOU LEAVE BEHIND?

It was great seeing many of you at this year's Winter Conference in Kalamazoo!! I have mentioned the value, enjoyment, and benefit of talking to both members and associate members in every column so far. Today we'll touch on that again from yet another angle.

While everyone is not able to attend MACDC events, we are all able to engage locally or in our districts with our neighbors and associate members with their specific expertise in equipment, techniques, program and project successes, staffing/management challenges – all the things we do.

What is unique about our group is that no matter what size your office or company is, there are folks who have sorted out the same type of issues you're dealing with either now or in the future. Thank you for taking advantage of these opportunities.

I also appreciate that no matter what challenges we face, everyone I talk to is focused on trying to figure out how to overcome obstacles. Whether your biggest challenge affects 10 people or 100,000, it's your biggest challenge. MACDC is filled with members and associate members who want to deliver for their constituents and clients. Kudos to everyone for having that focus!

Each challenge is important, and we usually have (a lot) more than one problem in front of us. Our jobs – public or private – have this one enduring thread. The reward for successfully solving a problem is moving on to the next problem and knowing that next week, next month, or next year will bring new problems to solve.

In fact, you don't need 40 years of experience to realize that no matter how many problems you solve in your career there will be more problems. Don't worry, I'm coming to the uplifting part – and your biggest challenge, whether you have realized it or not.

We are blessed with an incredibly energetic, thoughtful, and creative Young Professionals Committee (YPC). Some of our most engaging – and certainly most raucous and entertaining

– programming the past several years has been through the efforts of this group. I'm pretty sure the YPs know it is hard to make us old people seem cool, but jeez they keep trying!! And as I mentioned when presenting the McLeod Service Award to two retiring associate members at conference, I am certain that many future award recipients will come from our YPC.

As someone who has been attending MACDC conferences since 1994, I know there have always been energetic, motivated people doing whatever it takes to keep our organization successful and moving forward. We may not have had a formal YPC, but there was comradeship and a group effort to make sure MACDC was offering quality programming – with a good dose of fun!!

Years ago, a wise person told me “The only constant is change.” All of us can think back five or 10 years (or more) and list dozens of changes in our knowledge, skills, processes, tools, communications, programming, etc. You can probably think of changes you pushed for and helped implement in your own life. Even changes that don't go as expected, contribute to our knowledge and ability to execute.

Again, there will always be problems to solve, in all aspects of life. Whether you are doing public service or something completely different, this is true for every role you will be in prior to retirement and beyond.

Your organization will be better able to roll with the changing world if you leave each position a little better than it was when you started. Your customers benefit from this whether they are public or private. This thinking is what I admire about the current YPC, as well as the folks who were working to deliver good programming 30 years ago.

When you are a leader, whether you are the boss of a huge group or managing one person for the first time, your most important job is to help people grow and learn so they can become the do-ers and leaders of the future and improve on what we left them.

*~Evan*

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# 2024 MACDC

# INNOVATION & EXCELLENCE AWARDS

## CHURCHILL DOWNS PARK NATURAL FLOODPLAIN ENHANCEMENT AREA

### Washtenaw County

In the wake of a catastrophic storm on March 15th, 2012, the Lansdowne/Churchill Downs area in the southwest portion of Ann Arbor, Michigan between I-94 and Scio Church Road found itself grappling with floating cars and other devastating consequences of extreme flooding and overland flow. Approximately 100 homes in the neighborhood of around 600 homes experienced flooding or standing water on their property. In the aftermath of this extreme event, the City of Ann Arbor recognized the pressing need for effective stormwater management measures to mitigate the impacts of future storms. The city petitioned the Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner to develop preventative measures and take corrective actions.

The Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner hired Spicer Group in 2013 to conduct a comprehensive study of the surrounding area to evaluate potential opportunities for improvements. The study focused on the Upper Malletts Creek Drain drainage area where many residents had experienced flooding and damage to their homes and property. Ultimately, a phased approach was selected, which involved the creation of flood storage in three key locations, the largest of which was in Churchill Downs Park on the east side of I-94.

Spicer Group officially began the project design in 2017, and construction kicked off in the spring of 2022. The final design of the new floodplain area boasts a total storage volume of 10.8 acre-feet with a maximum depth of 11 feet. This project is an embodiment of forwardthinking urban planning and engineering excellence, setting a precedent for sustainable stormwater management, and safeguarding the Lansdowne and Churchill Downs neighborhood for generations to come.



### PROJECT TEAM:

Evan Pratt, Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner

**Engineer:** Spicer Group, Inc.

**Contractor:** E.T. Mackenzie Company

**Other Firms:** Streamside Ecological Services



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## LAKE BLUFFS DRAIN

### Leelanau County

The Lake Bluffs subdivision in Leelanau County, Michigan, faced a significant challenge: its aging drainage system, originally constructed in the 1970s, had become completely inadequate. Filled-in ditches, overgrown vegetation, and unmaintained gravel roads resulted in severe erosion, damaging both the roads and nearby properties. Additionally, uncontrolled stormwater runoff threatened septic fields and posed safety hazards.

In response to a petition from over 15 landowners, the Leelanau County Drain Commissioner's office embarked on a groundbreaking project – the first drain project ever undertaken in the county's history. This unique endeavor involved a two-pronged approach: firstly, addressing the immediate problems by paving the gravel roads, and secondly, constructing a brand new drainage system.

The new drainage system incorporated several innovative features to effectively manage stormwater runoff. Bio-infiltration basins, rain gardens, and constructed bioswales were strategically placed throughout the subdivision to capture and filter the water, preventing excessive flow and minimizing downstream impact. Additionally, features like asphalt valley gutter curbs, high-flow catch basins, and even a "smart ditch" system were employed to collect and move the water efficiently.

However, the project wasn't without its challenges. Since the subdivision's roads were private, securing agreements from all 27 property owners for paving and drainage easements was crucial. Additionally, navigating the uncharted territory of being the first drain project in the county presented its own set of administrative hurdles. Establishing a revolving fund, purchasing assessing software, and educating county



officials on drain assessment procedures were just a few of the additional obstacles overcome.

Despite the challenges, the Lake Bluffs Drain project emerged as a resounding success. It not only addressed the immediate drainage issues plaguing the subdivision but also set a valuable precedent for future projects in Leelanau County. This pioneering effort serves as a testament to the power of collaboration, innovation, and perseverance in tackling complex infrastructure challenges.

#### PROJECT TEAM:

Steve Christensen, Leelanau County Drain Commissioner

**Engineer:** GEI Consultants

**Contractor:** Popp Excavating

**Other Firms:** Clark Hill, PLLC

## **HONORABLE MENTION**

### **RED RUN DRAIN STABILIZATION AT FREEDOM HILL**

#### **Macomb and Oakland counties**

The Red Run Intercounty Drain is the stormwater conveyance for 142 square miles located in Oakland and Macomb counties. This drain improvement project focused on preventing contamination of the waterway by halting erosion of the banks into a closed landfill. In addition, the project created new habitat corridors and a 1.35-mile scenic trail.

Inspections had identified failing outfalls, severe bank erosion, sedimentation, and invasive species vegetation causing environmental harm. Project components included constructing three J-Hooks, removing shoaling, and adding approximately 1,400 feet of stone toe revetment. The J-Hooks, some of the largest in Michigan, direct water flow away from the banks and toward the center of the Drain. Removal and treatment of invasive species along the banks presented a challenge, but innovative use of site-specific plantings resulted in greater biodiversity that now offers a beneficial habitat for native pollinators.

This complex, collaborative project preserved water quality, restored habitats, and halted the negative environmental effects of erosion. The project's success speaks for itself as a new design phase is underway to create a "mirror image" on the south side of the Drain, to further mitigate erosion and prevent environmental problems from another closed landfill.

This project enhanced the environment and facilitated the creation of a new recreational amenity. It represented a cooperative effort between entities including the Red Run Intercounty Drain Board members, Macomb County Planning Department, Macomb County Department of Roads, and the City of Sterling Heights, each with a different interest that was carefully considered and successfully balanced.



#### **PROJECT TEAM:**

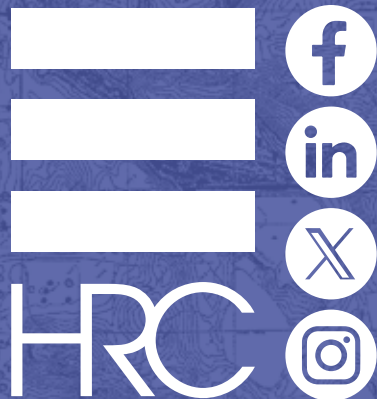
Mike Gregg, MDARD Intercounty Drain Program Manager

Candice Miller, Macomb County Public Works Commissioner

Jim Nash, Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner

**Engineer:** Hubbell, Roth & Clark, Inc.

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# ALAN BOYER, JOHN WASHABAUGH RECEIVE MCLEOD AWARD

## DOUBLE DISTINCTION: HONORING THE 2024 DARWIN MCLEOD LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

A round of applause for Alan D. Boyer, PE and John Washabaugh, the well-deserved recipients of the prestigious Darwin McLeod Leadership Award presented by MACDC during the 2024 Winter Conference!

This esteemed award recognizes individuals who have gone above and beyond in their service to the MACDC, demonstrating exceptional leadership, dedication, and contributions that significantly advance the organization's goals.

Alan is a senior project manager at PEA Group where he has been since 2021. Previously he served as a principal at LSG Engineers & Surveyors, a principal and general manager at Ledy Design Group, and a senior engineer at BMJ Engineers & Surveyors, Inc.

Alan has been involved with MACDC for nearly 40 years, serving on committees, and particularly assisting with Professional Engineer continuing education review.

John is a third-generation owner of Northern Concrete Pipe, Inc. and has been involved with MACDC since 1986. He has served on numerous committees, lending his expertise in training, drainage related issues and working with associate members in the organization.

Although John intends to retire later this year, he intends to stay active with the MACDC group and aspires to continue attending future conferences.

Congratulations once again to Alan and John, and a special thanks for all they have given to MACDC over the years!



*Alan Boyer, with his wife Carol, accepting the McLeod Award.*



*John Washabaugh, with his wife Sherri, accepting the McLeod Award.*



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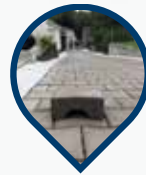
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# CONVERSATION SKILLS:

## The Hidden Benefit of Coaching Younger Employees

By: John M. Collins MA, SHRM-SCP, Critical Victories

Developing talent is about harnessing the untapped potential that exists in everyone, but especially in our youngest, newest employees. They are the future of our teams and organizations and therefore a wise investment of time and resources. And while training and continuing education are often the standard approaches to infusing employees with knowledge they need to be successful, a growing priority is professional coaching, and for good reason. When it's done right, it has a positive impact that exceeds what mere training could ever accomplish. But why?

The reason is because coaching builds conversation skills, and effective conversational skills lie at the heart of professional success.

makes a person more capable and influential in a variety of contexts and scenarios.

A coaching session, when skillfully managed, functions as a sort of intellectual and emotional crucible that enables a profound and multifaceted conversation that's unlikely to occur elsewhere. In doing so, it challenges individuals to articulate coherent thoughts and express them constructively. This benefit of the coaching experience is rarely discussed, even among coaches, possibly because it takes time for its value to be revealed. This is unfortunate because as coaching amplifies the conversational prowess of clients, it raises their self-confidence and empowers them to confront and resolve a variety of challenges with greater degrees of finesse.

*“A critical element of coaching is the provision of a non-judgmental and supportive space.”*

In today's workplace, collaboration, decision-making, and relationship-building are fundamental, and all depend heavily on the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively. Being able to express ideas and actively listen to others fosters an environment conducive to innovation and problem-solving within teams. Those who excel in conversation are better equipped to resolve disputes, reach mutually beneficial agreements, and maintain positive professional relationships. Deeper conversations require deeper thinking, and deeper thinking

A critical element of coaching is the provision of a non-judgmental and supportive space. In this sanctuary, clients are free to explore their ruminations, apprehensions, and aspirations without fear of embarrassment or censure. This sense of security emboldens self-expression, empowering younger employees to articulate their viewpoints, concerns, and ambitions with a level of conviction that might trigger anxiety or shyness in normal situations.



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## CONVERSATION SKILLS CONT.

As self-confidence grows, so does one's willingness to engage and experiment. Younger employees are frequently confronted with unique hurdles such as maneuvering through office politics, resolving conflicts, or presenting ideas to senior colleagues. Through coaching, they are more likely to find that the conversational dexterity they've honed now equips them to navigate these complexities with greater ease and effectiveness.

Of course, the development of conversational skills within the coaching environment transcends the confines of the workplace. Younger employees who have undergone coaching will attest to the broader applicability of their enhanced self-expression abilities, which prove invaluable in their personal lives as well. They become adept at facilitating difficult conversations, resolving conflicts amicably, and cultivating meaningful relationships, both within and outside their professional domains.

The enhanced self-assurance that arises through the refinement of conversational skills constitutes an invaluable asset for any younger employees wrestling to establish their professional roles and identities. When faced with opportunities to lead, innovate, or collaborate, they will find themselves better equipped to show up strong, articulating their ideas persuasively, exerting positive influence on others, and contributing effectively to their teams and organizations.

Our understanding of the potential for coaching to accelerate growth is not new. But there is a hidden gem within this process that is the accelerated growth of conversational skills. And we should not be too quick to presume that coaching must always come from a professionally trained coach, although this has some distinct advantages. In reality, any leader or supervisor in your organization has the power to utilize coaching methods as a way to inspire and empower employees. But this might require the letting go of traditional or counterproductive managerial tendencies that tend to shut employees down rather than build them up.

As a leader or supervisor, one can leverage the power of good conversation as a way to connect with people and develop their untapped potential. Perhaps this is because there is an inherent sort of accountability that exists within a good conversation that does not exist within a monologue.

Giving instructions or directions does not require much depth of interaction, but engaging someone in a meaningful conversation certainly does.

*John M. Collins is an Authoritative Leadership and Expertise Coach at Critical Victories in Brighton, Michigan. He specializes in supporting clients in authoritative, high-responsibility occupations requiring high levels of expertise to earn and retain the trust of the public or other consequential stakeholders. John shares some of his unique philosophies and insights on high-stakes leadership in his 2022 book, *The New Superior - A Better Way to Be the One in Charge* ([www.thenewsuperior.com](http://www.thenewsuperior.com)), available in hardcover and audio. Also, please check out John's online workshop, "Show Up Strong - Build Your Authoritative Presence Through Assertive Thinking and Conflict Readiness," available at [www.criticalvictories.com/showupstrong](http://www.criticalvictories.com/showupstrong).*



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# JIM JOHNSON RETIRES AFTER 35 YEARS OF SERVICE TO MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE

The Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development (MCARD) honored Jim Johnson upon his retirement on January 4, 2024, after over three decades of dedicated service to the department and the state.

Johnson, a native of Escanaba, Michigan, graduated from Michigan Technological University in 1984 with a Bachelor's degree in Biology. He began his career with MDARD in 1987, working on various programs within the Environmental Stewardship Division. Throughout his career, he held positions including Program Manager for Gypsy Moth programs, and Director of the Environmental Stewardship Division, overseeing crucial programs like the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program and the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program.

Known for his leadership skills, positive attitude, and humor, Johnson was praised by his colleagues and superiors for his dedication and contributions to the department. He will be remembered for his mentorship and overall positive impact on the department's culture.



Johnson

Beyond his career, Johnson enjoys spending time with his wife, Tricia, their four children, and ten grandchildren. In his retirement, he plans to focus on family, expand his wine collection, and hit the golf courses across the country.

The Commission expressed their sincere gratitude to Johnson for his 35 years of service and wished him well in his retirement and future endeavors. They join his family and friends in celebrating his well-deserved retirement.

*The information in this article was compiled from the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development's resolution of commendation.*



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# LITTLE BLACK LAKE INTERCOUNTY DRAIN

A photograph of a stream flowing through a dense forest. The water is brownish and reflects the surrounding green trees. The banks are covered in fallen leaves and branches.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Little Black Lake Intercounty Drain (LBLID) discharges directly to Lake Michigan, making it a significant coastal resource. The LBLID watershed consists of approximately 9,150 acres in Muskegon and Ottawa counties, including the City of Norton Shores and Hoffmaster State Park. The goals of the LBLID project were stream and culvert improvements to restore the natural stream channel, improve water quality, and provide habitat restoration and safe public access to view the beauty of this natural resource. In conjunction, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) was able to improve public access to both the LBLID and Lake Michigan with a paved trail and signage.

## PROJECT TEAM

The LBLID Board included the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development Intercounty Drain Program Manager Michael R. Gregg, Muskegon County Water Resources Commissioner Brenda M. Moore, and Ottawa County Water Resources Commissioner Joe Bush. The LBLID Board originally met to authorize a lake level dam inspection, update the Drainage District boundary in accordance with Section 197 of the Drain Code, and perform

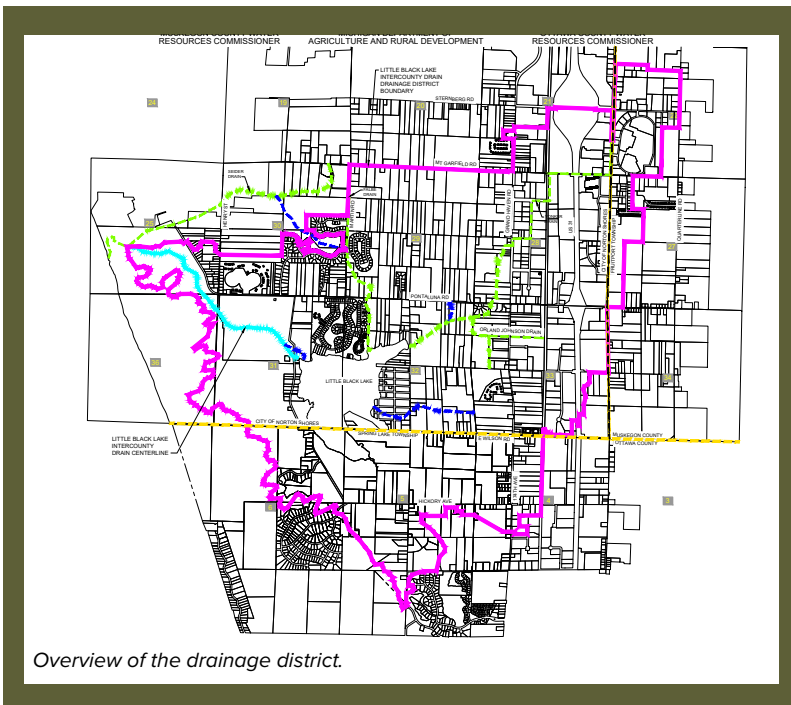
an analysis of the existing drain function and condition. At that time, the LBLID was anticipating a multi-faceted project that would utilize a natural channel design approach to restore approximately 9,800 lineal feet of stream channel with identified areas of deficiency.

In 2017, the Drainage Board selected Eng., Inc. to conduct the Section 197 review and evaluate the condition of the drain. The LBLID Board and Eng., Inc. inspected the stream system and identified several areas of deficiency including stream bank erosion, sedimentation, improperly sized and located culverts, loss of tree canopy, and deteriorating infrastructure.

In 2018, the LBLID Board applied for a Coastal Zone Management grant for funding available by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which aligned with the goals of the LBLID project. Though not selected for the grant, the project team continued to evaluate potential opportunities for improvements outside the realm of a petition drain project. The next opportunity came in late 2022, when Hoffmaster State Park stated their intentions to construct significant improvements to the roadways and utilities within the park, allowing for coordination among the projects.

## STATE PARK IMPROVEMENTS AND PARTNERSHIP

P.J. Hoffmaster State Park was among the first of Michigan's state parks to receive federal relief funds as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The first phase of Hoffmaster State Park's project provided for newly paved roads and parking lots within the Day Use Area, including an improved beach road shoulder for pedestrian and bike traffic and a bike path near the park entrance. Following completion of the first phase in June 2023, the park's adjacent modern campground was closed after July 4th through the end of the 2023 camping season, allowing



## LITTLE BLACK LAKE CONT.

for completion of phase two: upgraded water and sewer lines, reconstructed campground roads, and completion of the bike path. \$6.4 million in ARPA funding was utilized for these projects.

The paved pedestrian trail adjacent to the LBLID connects its natural resources and the state park and campground while providing educational and interpretive efforts. The opportunity for a partnership immediately became the focus of the LBLID Board. Anticipating all of the upcoming investment in the park, the drain board coordinated with the DNR and their consultants to ensure the culverts within the drain were sized and placed properly.

Originally, the DNR project had no plans to replace the two culverts in the campground as part of their project. However, the culverts were undersized and near the end of their life cycle. Eng., Inc. offered three different options to replace the culverts: replace at current sizing, replace with cement box culverts, and replace with Type II CSP arched culverts. Ultimately, all agreed that the CSP arch culverts were the best option, estimated at \$235,000 including the culverts and installation.

With the opportunity and desire to work cooperatively with the DNR to accomplish both the channel maintenance on the park property and the crossing replacements, several meetings took place to work out specific details and phasing. The LBLID Board and DNR local staff coordinated a discussion at the state level for a funding agreement between the state and the drainage board to accomplish the work without the need for additional closures to the park.



*The existing 54-inch by 72-inch CSP arch culverts at the park roadways were severely deteriorated and undersized, causing fish passage issues, erosion, and increased velocities in the stream.*



*Representative photo of the severe bank erosion that existed due to the flashy nature of the stream and highly erodible sandy soil types*

The DNR team consisted of Unit Manager Melissa VanderVelde and Pat Whalen at the local level, Regional Field Planner Justin Gerould, and Regulatory Field Managers Nicole Hunt and Kristen Bennett at the state level. All were instrumental in drafting and executing a DNR agreement to purchase the culverts (\$53,265) at both crossing locations. Included was a supplemental assessment for the maintenance costs equivalent to the DNR land area in the drainage district (\$20,313), paid through annual special assessment payments and payment in lieu of taxes.



*Repairs to the long crumbling roadways within the park were the focus of the DNR's multi-phased ARPA-funded project that took place concurrently with the drain project.*

## DRAINAGE PROJECT

Three of the main goals of the project were to:

- ➔ Identify the locations of significant land loss and erosion occurring from fallen trees and logjams.
- ➔ Design a solution that would work in harmony with the natural landscape of the drain.
- ➔ Provide culvert improvements that would result in improved fish passage, and stabilization and sustainability for the long-term health of the drain and its ecosystem.

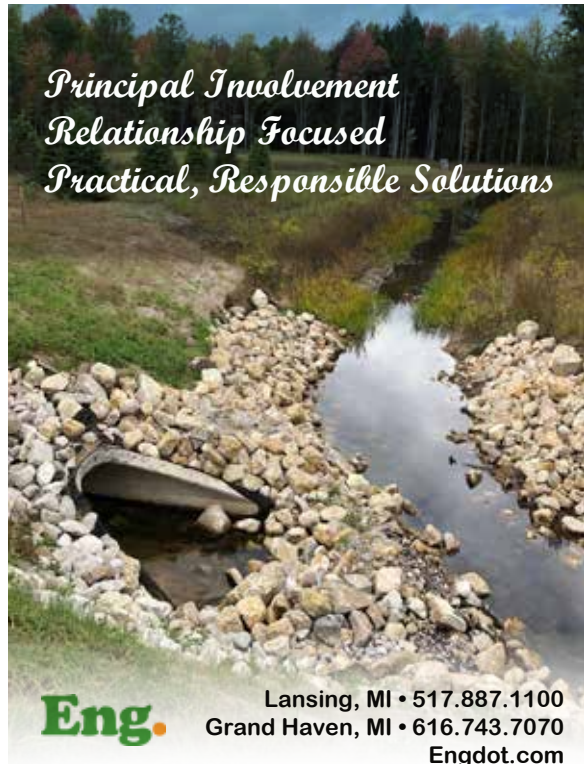
Additionally, the Muskegon County Water Resources Commissioner approached the City of Norton Shores to seek the city's authorization to exceed its drain maintenance cost cap of \$5,000/mile per year. As the drain is almost two miles long, approximately \$10,000 in maintenance costs would be added in one year toward an estimated total LBLID project cost of \$289,930. The City Council ultimately approved the request and passed a resolution of support to exceed the maintenance spending limit for 2023.

Permitting through EGLE was very time sensitive and was critical for replacement of the culverts. To expedite the permit process, LBLID board members contacted the state to convey its urgency, given the current construction schedule. Ultimately, the permit was issued shortly after a public notice period.

Based on field verification of current site conditions, various in-stream structures, such as toe wood and other woody debris, were utilized to support aquatic habitat. Timber and woody debris from the site was also utilized for toe protection and log revetment to keep materials on-site and to alleviate the impacts of further sedimentation and stream degradation.

The total cost of the project to improve the Drain was \$315,000. The project was divided into two separate construction contracts:

**Contract 1** consisted of woody debris management. The contract was awarded to Kanouse Outdoor Restoration. Kanouse's proposed cost was much lower than the other bidders due to their unique approach of utilizing an excavator (powered and lubricated by vegetable-based product) in the drain channel and removing a significant number of downed



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## LITTLE BLACK LAKE CONT.



*Project team at new culvert installation*

trees with heavy equipment, rather than using hand tools as is often the case in woody debris management. Additionally, they utilized brush bundles and log revetment to stabilize the eroding banks with on-site materials.

**Contract 2** consisted of the replacement of two roadway crossings, each with a 117-inch by 79-inch corrugated steel arch culvert (one at the day use entrance and the other at the campground in the park respectively). The contract was awarded to Wadel Stabilization, Inc., also the primary contractor on the DNR project, avoiding mobilization costs from an additional contractor. Wadel Stabilization was on the pre-approved list of contractors with Muskegon County, which aided in expediting the bidding and construction of the project as well.

### TIMING SEQUENCE

DNR State Park Work Begins: April 2023  
LBLID Design Completed: May 2023  
EGLE Permit Submitted: May 2023  
Woody Debris Work Completed: June 2023  
EGLE Permit Public Notice: June 2023  
EGLE Permit Issued: July 2023  
Culvert Work Begins: August 2023  
Culvert Work Completed: September 2023  
DNR State Park Work Completed: December 2023

“LBLID is an exciting project because so many different facets fell into place in a short time frame. It consisted of many design elements, partnerships, and permitting agencies collaborating to produce a final product that will make a considerable difference to the environment and long-term health of the watershed. The board, park staff, Eng., Inc., and state partners MDARD and DNR kept pressing ahead, discussing options, strategies and funding, and coordinated at high levels to make this project work. Together we reached the monumental goals of stream health, Lake Michigan water quality, and long-term stability.”

– *Brenda M. Moore, Muskegon County Water Resources Commissioner*

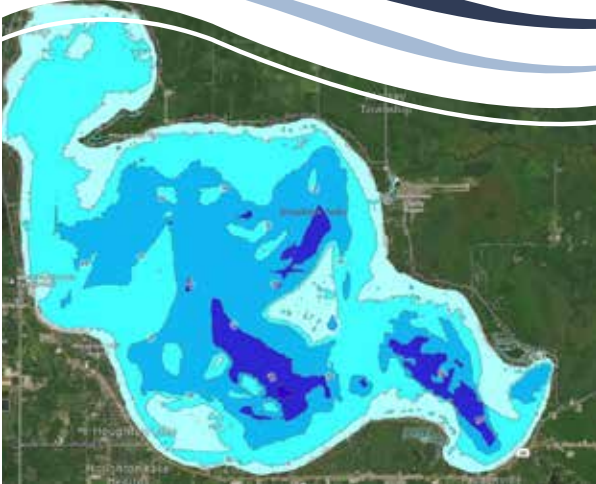
“We want to acknowledge the teamwork that successfully led to achieving these improvements to LBLID and PJ Hoffmaster State Park. The Board worked with DNR at multiple levels, the City of Norton Shores, and EGLE (facilitated by Eng.’s project management experience) to accomplish infrastructure improvements for future generations to enjoy. Special thanks go to FSBR for their legal counsel in navigating our drain code responsibilities, and Dickinson Wright for structuring the financing, allowing... replacement of these major structures in 6 months instead of the typical few years. From an unprecedented agreement for cost participation with DNR, to authorization to exceed maintenance limitations by the city, to expedited permitting by EGLE, to Eng.’s construction management, the \$320,000 project was completed in time for the October reopening of the park.”

– *Michael Gregg, Joseph Brezvai, Dallas Goldberg & Shaun McLarty*

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# GET INVOLVED WITH THE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS COMMITTEE

The MACDC Young Professionals Committee (YPC) is a group of people young in their professions or new to MACDC consisting of drain office staff, contractors, suppliers, engineers, and lawyers. Our group is always looking for new members, including drain office staff, to join the group. The YPC assists with planning the numerous events at the winter and summer drain conferences. All are welcome!



*The members of the YPC following their presentation at the 2024 Winter Conference in Kalamazoo, MI.*

We are also planning a spring social in May 2024 (location TBD). If you are interested in attending the social and/or joining the group, please contact Tanner Kragebrink at [tkragebrink@wadetrim.com](mailto:tkragebrink@wadetrim.com).



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# MACDC SECURES MDARD GRANT FOR INTERCOUNTY DRAIN MANUAL UPDATES

The Michigan Association of County Drain Commissioners (MACDC) is excited to announce that it received a grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) to provide updates to the Intercounty Drain Manual. Work is in progress under the grant and will include new chapters on emergency management and development. This effort will also provide for general updates to the current chapters.

The revised Intercounty Drain manual will switch to an electronic format for ease of retrieval and access and will be completed this May. MDARD and MACDC legal counsel will present and explain the significant changes/additions at four of the upcoming May district meetings.

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# ASSOCIATE MEMBER NEWS

## SPALDING DEDECKER WELCOMES SENIOR PROJECT MANAGERS SCOTT DEVRIES, PE AND STEVEN NEUMANN, PS TO THE TEAM

Spalding DeDecker (SD), a leading civil engineering, planning, and surveying firm, has hired Scott DeVries, PE and Steven Neumann, PS as Senior Project Managers.

DeVries comes to SD with more than 33 years of experience in both the public and private sectors. Scott is highly experienced in local, state, and federally funded programs, public engagement, permitting, and all aspects of a project, from design to delivery.



*DeVries*

Scott successfully led and completed a multitude of infrastructure projects including water distribution studies, hydrologic studies, numerous water systems evaluations, and wastewater and sanitary sewer systems, among others.

Scott's diverse experience at the City of Williamston brings valuable perspective to our team including a deep understanding of municipal intricacies and regulatory frameworks.

Scott received his Bachelor and Master of Science in Civil Engineering from Michigan State University. A registered PE in the State of Michigan, Scott has been recognized with multiple awards from industry associations including Michigan Society of Professional Engineers (MSPE) Capital Area Chapter Engineer of the Year and Michigan Water Environmental Association's (MWEA) Young Professional of the Year.

"As a highly skilled engineer with diverse experience, Scott is well respected throughout the industry, and is a welcome addition to Spalding DeDecker's Public Engineering group at our Lansing office," said Steve Benedettini,

president of Spalding DeDecker. "We intend to tap his insights and perspectives on projects throughout the state."

Neumann joins SD with more than 35 years of surveying and mapping experience, with a significant background in right-of-way surveying, boundary surveying, mapping, construction layout, permitting, title research, project management, and land acquisition.



*Neumann*

Steve is highly experienced in directing projects and staff in a fast-paced, results-oriented environment. Steve successfully led and completed a multitude of infrastructure projects including multiple MDOT State and Federal Highway Right-of-Way, Design, and Construction Projects. In his past role as MDOT's Superior Region Survey Manager, Scott worked closely with region real estate and design engineers, and managed survey staff in various types of surveying including geodetic control surveying, preliminary engineering surveys, ROW determinations, ROW surveys, and construction surveys. Additionally, Steve has experience working with Bureau of Indian Affairs including permit activities through tribal lands of Ojibwa and Potawatomi Tribal Lands at Keweenaw Bay Reservation, Lac Vieux Desert Reservation, and Hannahville Reservation.

"Steve is a great addition to our strong survey team. We are fortunate to add a survey senior project manager with Steve's experience, and he will be a mentor to our staff and allow us to better serve our clients," said Steve Benedettini, president of Spalding DeDecker.

**AM NEWS CONT.**

**COLE HEDRICK RECOGNIZED IN INGHAM COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION TOP 5 UNDER 35 AWARD**

The firm is pleased to announce that Cole has been recognized as a recipient of the Top 5 Under 35 Award from the Ingham County Bar Association. This prestigious award recognizes young lawyers who have distinguished themselves in their relatively short career by manifesting: exemplary character, integrity, judgment and legal scholarship; service to the profession and the bar; service to the community; and a reputation for or the advancement of the highest legal standards and professional responsibility.



*Hedrick*

**NALA – THE PARALEGAL ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS SELECTS PRESIDENT-ELECT CHERYL J. NODARSE, ACP, IS SELECTED AS NALA’S PRESIDENT-ELECT**

During the March 2024 meeting of the NALA Board of Directors, Cheryl J. Nodarse, ACP, was elected as the next President of the Board. Her term will begin following the Annual Membership Meeting at the 2024 NALA Conference & Expo in Louisville, Kentucky, on July 11, 2024.



*Nodarse*

Cheryl is a paralegal with Vlahakis Cole Law Firm in East Lansing, Michigan, specializing in drain and real estate law. She graduated from Central Michigan University and from Lansing Community College’s paralegal program.

“It is an honor of a lifetime to have been elected to serve as NALA President.” Cheryl said. “I look forward to advancing NALA’s mission of educating and promoting paralegals across the country.”

A NALA Certified Paralegal for 36 years, Cheryl previously served on the State Bar of Michigan Paralegal/Legal Assistant Section. She is a licensed realtor with Vlahakis Homes and a member of Lansing Community College’s Legal Studies Program Advisory Committee.

NALA – The Paralegal Association is the nation’s leading professional association for paralegals. Founded in 1975, it represents over 17,000 paralegals through its individual membership and NALA Affiliated Associations. As a nonprofit organization, NALA provides continuing education, professional certification, and professional development programs for paralegals.

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## SPALDING DEDECKER EXPANDS EXPERTISE BY ACQUIRING LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS, INC.

Spalding DeDecker (SD), a leading civil engineering, planning, and surveying firm has acquired Landscape Architects & Planners, Inc. (LAP, Inc.) This strategic move exemplifies SD's commitment to expanding its service offerings, enhancing its capabilities, and fortifying its presence in civil engineering and innovative green infrastructure industry.

LAP, Inc. was formed in 1994 from the merger of Robert Ford and Associates and Mark Hornung Landscape Architects and Planners. Based in Lansing, Michigan, the team of professionals provides a full range of landscape architectural and planning services. The staff includes landscape architects, land planners, park planners, nationally certified playground safety inspectors/designers, surface mine reclamation specialists, and stormwater designers/inspectors.

"This acquisition marks a significant addition for us, as we continue to evolve and grow. We are adding landscape architectural and planning to our services and we will be working closely with Bob Ford and his staff to serve more clients in the Lansing area and throughout Michigan," said Steve Benedettini, president of Spalding DeDecker.

Spalding DeDecker is committed to maintaining the high standards of quality and innovation that both firms are known for individually. Our shared values and commitment to excellence make this acquisition a natural fit, setting the stage for a synergistic partnership that will drive growth and success for years to come.



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Northeast District Meeting

**MAY 14, 2024**

Southeast District Meeting

**MAY 16, 2024**

Northwest District Meeting


**MAY 31, 2024**

Southwest District Meeting

**FEBRUARY 12-14, 2025**

MACDC Annual Winter Conference  
Kalamazoo, MI

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*To place your event on this calendar, contact us at [admin@macdc.us](mailto:admin@macdc.us) or 517.484.9761. For the most up to date details visit, [macdc.us/calendar/](http://macdc.us/calendar/).*



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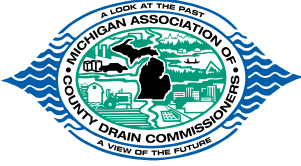
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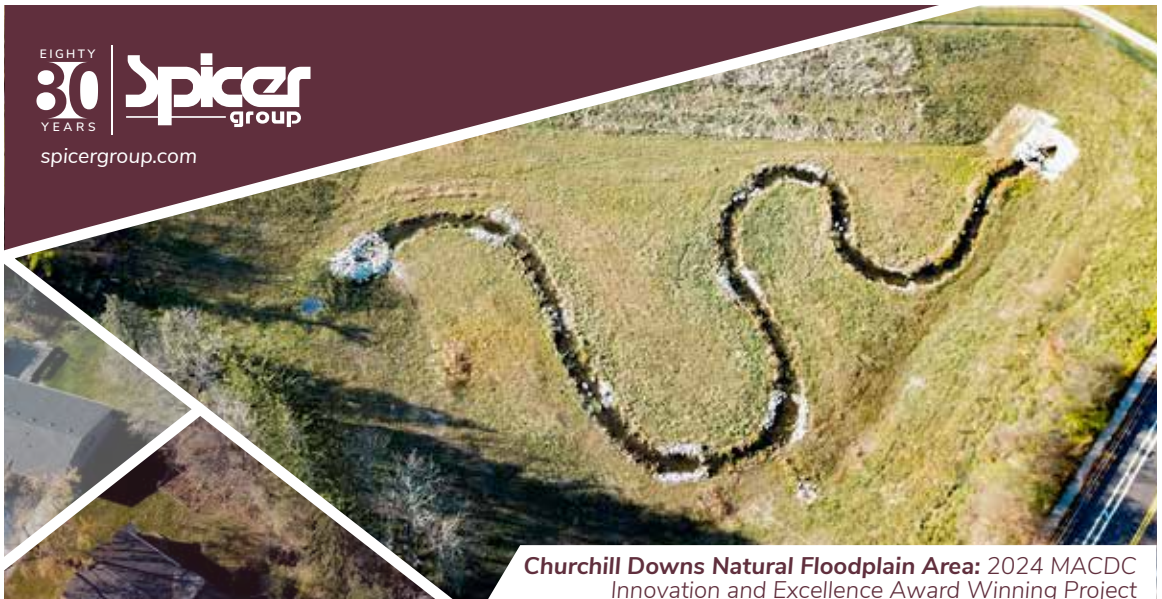
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