

# PIPELINE

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONERS  
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**2025 WINTER CONFERENCE PREVIEW**

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**LAKE BLUFFS DRAIN**

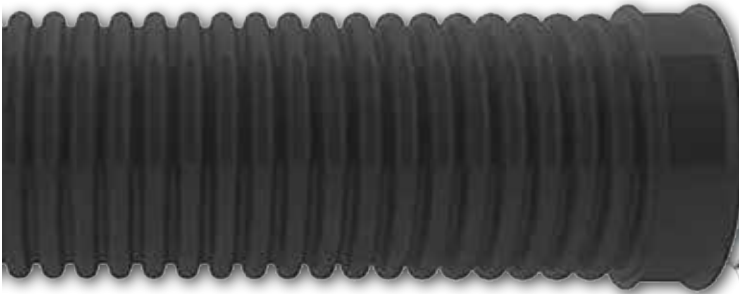
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**MILK RIVER INTERCOUNTY DRAIN  
IMPROVEMENTS**

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**EVAN PRATT, PE**

**Washtenaw County**

**Water Resources Commissioner**



First, I'd like to thank everyone for their contributions to MACDC during my term as President. Even if your role at this point in your career has simply been to participate in district meetings, conferences, or other events, every contribution is appreciated and welcomed.

Secondly, I'd like to give another specific shout out to our AWESOME Young Professionals Committee. This team hit the ground running a few years ago and has added wonderful energy, participation, and entertainment to MACDC. And as I said during our awards banquet at Conference, I am certain that future winners of the Lifetime Membership or Darwin McLeod awards are part of our YP team.

With November elections (and all the TV ads and texts that came with) thankfully behind us, we will be seeing a fair amount of change in our Board of Directors, as much due to retirements as to any election results. MACDC elections are traditionally held at the end of winter conference, so this year that will be the morning of Friday, February 14th. To bridge that gap, there was a special Board meeting in mid-December to appoint interim officers for President, Secretary, and three District Chairs so we will have clarity on who is seated in which role from the end of the year until the 2025 elections.

There is a lot to look forward to – the New Drain Commissioner School in January is open to all drain office staff and is a great opportunity to learn about an area you're unfamiliar with or a chance to trade notes with your peers. The 2025 Winter Conference is shaping up to be another great opportunity for more networking and education, including some overlap with the Michigan Stormwater-Floodplain Association, whose conference immediately precedes ours.

We welcome your interest and participation in MACDC – committees will be appointed in the spring after a call for volunteers, and the events above are a great way to learn more about how to be involved. We are a volunteer organization, so if you're thinking something needs to change or improve, we'll need your help as a leader or helper!

One final update after initially drafting this – we are continuing to seek dialogue with EGLE on a number of issues. In mid-November I arranged a meeting to discuss what this might look like with Oakland County WRC Jim Nash, some of our partners (MWEA, APWA, SEMCOG) and the EGLE Director, Chief Deputy, Chief of Staff, Legislative Director, and the Deputy responsible for finance (and other areas). There was recognition all around that our mutual missions are best served by working more closely together on more issues, and I will continue to work with other stakeholders to see a productive process put in place to ensure MACDC has opportunity for collaborative input on more regulatory issues—as we have seen many times (but maybe not all the time) in the past.

It has been a great pleasure to be a part of the MACDC family culture since the 1990s, and an honor to be asked to serve as President. I wish you all well and ask that you do what you can to be a part of keeping the friendly family culture going into the future!

*~Evan*

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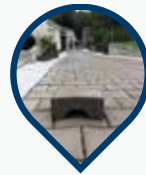
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# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

## Tuesday, February 11

1:30–3:00 PM Legislative Meeting  
Gillmore Boardroom

3:00–5:00 PM Board of Directors  
Meeting  
Gillmore Boardroom

12:00–6:00 PM Exhibitor Set-up  
Kalamazoo Room

## Wednesday, February 12

8:00 AM–2:00 PM Exhibitor Set-up  
Kalamazoo Room

10:00 AM Registration Opens  
Pre KAC

12:00 PM Lunch on your own

1:10 PM Call to Order and  
Welcome  
Arcadia Ballroom

1:15–3:00 PM Educational Sessions  
Arcadia Ballroom

3:00–3:30 PM Break/View Exhibits  
Kalamazoo Room

3:30–5:00 PM Educational Sessions  
Arcadia Ballroom

6:00–7:00 PM Reception/View  
Exhibits  
Kalamazoo Room

7:00–8:30 PM Strolling Dinner/View  
Exhibits  
Kalamazoo Room

8:30 PM After Dinner Activities

## Thursday, February 13

7:30–9:00 AM Breakfast  
Morning Dish

8:30 AM Exhibit Area Open  
Kalamazoo Room

9:15–10:30 AM Educational Sessions  
Arcadia Ballroom

10:30–11:00 AM Break/View Exhibits  
Kalamazoo Room

11:00–12:15 PM Educational Sessions  
Arcadia Ballroom

12:15–1:30 PM Lunch/2025 Awards  
Program  
Arcadia Ballroom

1:30–3:15 PM Educational Sessions  
Arcadia Ballroom

3:15–3:45 PM Break/View Exhibits  
Kalamazoo Room

3:40 PM Silent Auction Ends  
Kalamazoo Room

3:45 PM Exhibitor Tear-down  
Kalamazoo Room

# 125<sup>TH</sup> WINTER CONFERENCE

February 12-14, 2025

Radisson Plaza Hotel | Kalamazoo, MI

## Thursday, February 13 cont.

3:45–4:45 PM	Educational Sessions Arcadia Ballroom
4:45 PM	Associate Member Meeting Arcadia Ballroom
6:00–7:00 PM	Reception Arcadia Prefunction
7:00–8:30 PM	Dinner Arcadia Ballroom
8:30 PM	After Dinner Activities Euchre Tournament Old Burdick's

## Friday, February 14

7:30–9:30 AM	Breakfast Morning Dish
9:30 AM	MACDC District Meetings Arcadia Ballroom
10:00 AM	Business Meeting/ Committee Reports Arcadia Ballroom
11:00 AM	Adjourn



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# CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Wednesday, February 14

**1:15–2:00 PM**

## **Employee Energy and Enthusiasm - Creating the Conditions for Full Engagement**

*John M. Collins—Professional Coach, Critical Victories*

This session will discuss the key psychological and emotional factors that predict the energetic and enthusiastic performance of public-sector, government employees, including those working in the offices of elected officials. Attendees will learn how to adopt specific strategies for raising the engagement of public-sector employees and how to identify and eliminate conditions that tend to have a demoralizing effect on individual contributions. Also discussed will be recruitment, hiring, and cultural strategies that help to attract and retain the most committed and productive employees in public service.

**2:00–2:30 PM**

## **EGLE Violations and Compliance: Tips to Avoid and Navigate the Process**

*Stacy Hissong—Fahey Schutlz Burzych Rhodes*

Receiving a violation letter from EGLE can be a big headache! This presentation will provide you with an overview of the process and methods to avoid getting that letter in the first place.

**2:30–3:00 PM**

## **Legislative Update**

*Deena Bosworth—Michigan Association of Counties*

MACDC lobbyist Deena Bosworth will give an update on the newly elected lawmakers, new legislative session, and discuss the bills that affect the work of county drain offices.

**3:30–4:15 PM**

## **Renewable Committee Update**

*MACDC Renewable Committee*

Committee members will provide an update on working with renewable energy companies, including updated proposed procedures, and engineering and legal checklists for drain/water resources commissioners' consideration. The session will also provide an update on recent meetings with MPSC staff regarding working with drain/water resources commissioners, staff, and consultants.

**4:15–5:00 PM**

## **The YPC Presentation**

*Young Professionals Committee*

Join our Young Professionals Committee for the next interactive presentation to test the audience about their knowledge of drains, lakes, MACDC, Michigan, and other various topics.



# 125<sup>TH</sup> WINTER CONFERENCE

February 12-14, 2025

Radisson Plaza Hotel | Kalamazoo, MI

## Thursday, February 16

9:15–9:45 AM

### Conservation Districts: Your Upland Partner

*Steve Law—Vice President, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts*


Protecting the long-term efficiency and effectiveness of county drains depends on excellent upland treatment to keep sediment, nutrients and other potential pollutants on the land. Michigan's 75 locally led Conservation Districts are the delivery system for private lands conservation assistance, programs and financial resources from many public and private sources.

9:45–10:30 AM

### FEMA Hazard Mitigation Funding Opportunities

*Matt Schnepf—Michigan State Police, Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division*

This session will provide an overview of funding opportunities through the MSP and FEMA for implementing projects to reduce future disaster damages. It will include an overview of several different funding programs and eligibility requirements.



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11:00–11:30 AM

### Contractor 411: How to Better Market County Projects

*Ross Jackson and Andy Thomas—Jackson Dirt Works Inc*

This session will conduct an informal discussion with regard to what makes county work attractive to qualified contractors. There will be a brief introduction with time left for open Q & A with industry professionals and contractors.




## WATER RESOURCES

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# CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Thursday, February 15 cont.

**11:30 AM–12:15 PM**

## **Situational Awareness for the Socially Awkward: Tips for Working with Non-Cooperative People**

*Joel Morgan, P.E.—Senior Engineer, Kent County Drain Office*

*Ryan McEnhill, P.E.—President, Eng., Inc.*

The speakers will present from experience tips and advice for dealing with uncooperative landowners on drain projects. Issues like acquiring easements, working outside the right of way, negotiating encroachments and other difficult situations will be discussed.

**1:30–2:00 PM**

## **Revolutionizing Drain Maintenance with GIS**

*Todd Sattler—Drain Commissioner, Montcalm County*

*Sam Bialorucki, GISP—Spicer Group*

This presentation introduces a comprehensive GIS web mapping application designed as a one-stop resource for the overall management of county drains. Attendees will see how this application streamlines workflows, enhances data accessibility, and improves decision-making across numerous county drain functions.

**2:00–2:30 PM**

## **Drain Maintenance: Pros & Cons for In-House vs Hired Out**

*Marya Colpaert—Deputy Commissioner/Engineer, Saginaw County Public Works*

There are pros and cons of herbicide application for drain maintenance using in-house maintenance crews vs hiring outside licensed spray applicators to complete the work. This will be an interactive presentation/discussion.

**2:30–3:15 PM**

## **Unlocking History: Best Practices for Documenting and Recording Easements**

*Erik Tamlyn, P.E.—Deputy Drain Engineer, Huron County*

*Luke O'Brien, P.E.—Spicer Group, Inc.*

*Ross Bower—Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes*

No, you can't build there! Oftentimes, developers and landowners do not know about historical drain easements that are physically located in drain offices. This causes many issues, including proposed (or actual) construction within existing drain easements. This session will focus on best practices for documenting and recording easements to help mitigate those issues.

**3:45–4:15 PM**

## **Overview of Sources of Borrowing for Drainage Districts and Review of Continuing Disclosure Rules**

*Roger A. Swets—Dickinson Wright PLLC*

This session will include an overview of the various sources of borrowing available to drainage districts and current opportunities and challenges facing drainage districts. The session will also review federal securities law requirements for disclosure and continuing disclosure of financial information regarding public corporations or private landowners that have outstanding assessments of 10% or more of the amount of a bond sold in a public offering.

**4:15–4:45 PM**

## **Legal Q&A**

*Stacy Hissong—Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes*

*Douglas R. Kelly—Clark Hill PLC*

Buckle in for a discussion on a wide variety of legal issues that drain offices experience.

# MDARD REALIGNMENT

In January 2024, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) underwent a strategic realignment. MDARD Director Tim Boring, who was appointed department director by Governor Gretchen Whitmer in 2023, had a vision to streamline operations, promote interdepartmental collaboration, and improve program delivery. The realignment created four new bureaus out of the department's previous six divisions and moved some programs to better align with goals and priorities: the Agriculture Development Bureau (AgD), the Bureau of Environment and Sustainability, the Bureau of Food Safety and Animal Health, and the Laboratory and Consumer Protection Bureau.

This new structure enhances MDARD's ability to address the increasingly complex challenges faced by Michigan's agricultural industries, particularly around sustainability, food safety, economic development, and environmental stewardship.



*Dr. Boring*

With the realignment, the Intercounty Drain Program has been moved to the Food and Agriculture Business Development Division housed within the Agriculture Development Bureau. The AgD Bureau invests and engages in the success of Michigan's diverse agricultural industries by collaborating with and supporting our farmers, workers, and businesses by promoting, developing, and implementing unique solutions that help Michigan agriculture thrive.

Other programs that are included in the Food and Agriculture Business Development Division are the Bureau's Grant Program, the International Marketing Program, the Michigan Craft Beverage Council, and the Economic Development Program. The AgD Bureau is committed to maintaining the cooperation with the Intercounty Drain Program and the Michigan Association of County Drain Commissioners to accomplish the mutual responsibilities for the protection of public health, maintenance of viable agricultural productions, mitigation of the impacts of commercial and economic development, and the safeguarding of roads and residential properties from flooding.

This realignment has led to a more engaged and responsive department that is better able to address the evolving needs of Michigan's agricultural sector. Additionally, the department's increased engagement with Michiganders opens new channels of communication, allowing for more direct feedback and input on how best to serve the needs of the state's agricultural community. By fostering stronger relationships with farmers, rural communities, and industry leaders, MDARD is laying the groundwork for future success. The department's leadership and staff are excited to continue building on this momentum, forming new ideas, and implementing innovative strategies contributing to agricultural prosperity.

For further information and to contact the Intercounty Drain Program, contact Michael Gregg at [GreggM@michigan.gov](mailto:GreggM@michigan.gov) or 517-331-3661.



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# MILK RIVER FACILITY UPGRADES:

## A Cleaner Future for Lake St. Clair

**By: Penelope Filyo, Communications Specialist,  
Wayne County Department of Public Services**

Significant upgrades have taken place at the Milk River Intercounty Drain Drainage District (MRIDDD) facilities in Grosse Pointe Woods to enhance stormwater management and protect Lake St. Clair. During a recent tour hosted by the Milk River Intercounty Drain Drainage Board, the facility's new equipment and modern technology were on full display. These improvements are not only vital for effective flood management but also crucial for ensuring cleaner water for the communities that rely on the lake.

The MRIDDD is an intercounty drain between Wayne and Macomb counties. The MRIDDD serves communities including Harper Woods and parts of St. Clair Shores and Grosse Pointe Woods, protecting around 30,000 residents from flooding during extreme weather. The MRIDDD Drainage Board has a unique composition under the Michigan Drain Code that includes the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Wayne County Drain Commissioner, the Macomb County Public Works Commissioner and a city official from Macomb County and Wayne County, respectively, subject to assessment for the project. For Macomb County, the city official seat is held by the City of St. Clair Shores and for Wayne County the city official seat rotates every two years between Harper Woods and Grosse Pointe Woods. The composition of this Drainage Board allows for greater collaboration and welcomed input from the communities.

Recently, the MRIDDD completed a \$45 million investment in facility improvements aimed at reducing combined sewer overflows (CSOs). Tetra Tech served as both the design and construction administration engineer for the project. This

upgrade comes at a critical time, as the frequency of heavy rain events increases, emphasizing the need for effective flood management systems.

Chairman of the Drainage Board, Mike Gregg (MDARD), noted the accomplishment's significance. "The Board members should take great pride in functioning as a model of intergovernmental teamwork, employing the right team of professionals and dedicated operators to accomplish the completion of improvements to this highly complex and essential infrastructure that prevents the flooding of thousands of basements and portions of I-94. As chair of this board for over 40 years I have witnessed many challenges to achieving compliance with our NPDES permit and with the completion of the recently completed 6-year construction of \$45 million in upgrades, all accomplished while maintaining full capacity and compliance is truly an achievement that deserves recognition," Mike Gregg said.

### MRIDDD DRAINAGE BOARD MEMBERS

**Michael Gregg, Chair, Michigan Department  
of Agriculture and Rural Development**

**Elmeka Steele, Wayne County Drain  
Commissioner**

**Candice Miller, Macomb County Public Works  
Commissioner**

**Heather Toutant, City of Harper Woods**

**Bryan Babcock, City of St. Clair Shores**

## MILK RIVER CONT.

As Chairman Gregg highlighted, the improvements required dedication and collaboration from many teams, which was especially important when faced with unexpected challenges during the construction phase. Russ Strassburg of Tetra Tech noted the specific hurdles faced during the construction phase. “This project presented many technical challenges associated with the major overhaul of this critical infrastructure facility. Keeping it operational during construction and dealing with the supply chain issues caused by the pandemic were two major challenges. Fortunately, the District had a great team of operations and governance personnel to help bring this project to fruition and help keep the District residents safe from stormwater flooding for decades to come.”

On site, tour participants saw firsthand the refurbished pumping systems, improved aeration processes, and modernized disinfection technologies. Each component is crucial for managing combined systems efficiently and preventing contamination of local waterways. The operation was impressively clean and organized, reflecting a strong dedication to environmental protection.

One of the most notable aspects of these improvements is their expected impact on water quality. Officials project that the facility will reduce CSO volume and frequency, with the goal of lowering the concentration of discharges by 50%. The upgrades are also designed to eliminate over 99% of bacteria and pathogens, supporting aquatic life in the Milk River and enhancing the overall health of Lake St. Clair. These upgrades are not just about managing water; they are about ensuring a cleaner environment and safeguarding Lake St. Clair for those who enjoy boating, fishing, and other recreational opportunities the lake has to offer.

With far fewer discharge events recorded in the past year—all of which were treated and met the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy’s (EGLE) requirements for water quality—this achievement emphasizes the effectiveness of the upgrades and the commitment of the facilities’ operator, Southeast Macomb Sanitary District (SEMSD), to maintaining high standards.

The enhancements at the Milk River facilities represent a significant step forward in environmental stewardship. With reliable infrastructure now in place, the facilities are well-equipped to handle future challenges posed by climate change, ensuring a cleaner, safer Lake St. Clair for generations to come.



*State and local officials get a close-up view of refurbished storm pumps at the Milk River Intercounty Drain CSO RTB.*



*Officials receive an explanation of electrical system upgrades to improve reliability and efficiency of Milk River facilities.*



*Milk River Intercounty Drain Board Members and other officials at the Milk River Recirculation Station.*

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# A Watershed Moment Lake Bluffs

**L**eelanau County Drain Commissioner Steve Christensen concluded his 24-year career with a landmark achievement: the Lake Bluffs Drain. This project marked the county's first-ever petitioned drain and addressed critical erosion and stormwater management issues in the Lake Bluffs Subdivision while setting a precedent for future projects in the county.

## **PROJECT OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Lake Bluffs Drain, the first petitioned drain project in Leelanau County, was established in 2020 to address severe erosion and stormwater runoff issues in the Lake Bluffs Subdivision. After multiple rounds of bidding and value engineering, the project was completed at a cost of approximately \$860,000, a feasible amount for the small district of only 34 properties.

The Lake Bluffs Subdivision, originally platted in the early 1970s, was designed with private gravel roads with ditches and driveway culverts. The roadway and drainage system had deteriorated significantly due to lack of maintenance. The gravel roads, with steep slopes and inadequate drainage, were subject to severe erosion and flooding, impacting both the roads and adjacent properties. The project addressed these issues by paving the





# Bluffs Drain

## *2024 Innovation & Excellence Winning Project*

By: Brian Cenci, P.E., GEI Consultants

roads, installing a comprehensive drainage system, and implementing various water quality measures.

Given the location of the subdivision near Lake Leelanau, the project aimed to reduce the volume and rate of stormwater runoff to minimize impacts on downstream properties. To achieve this, the engineer designed a system that incorporated bio-infiltration basins, rain gardens, and bioswales to capture and infiltrate stormwater. Many of these features were located on private property, requiring the acquisition of easements.

Another challenge was that the roadways through the Lake Bluffs subdivision were private, and because of the way they were originally platted, all 27 property owners in the subdivision had to sign an agreement allowing for the drain project's paving and continued maintenance and usage of the roadways as part of the drain system infrastructure.

Along with several unique engineering challenges and easement concerns, there were also challenges due to this being the first petitioned drain project to ever take place in Leelanau County. Getting this project from the petition phase all the way to completed construction involved overcoming several administrative and political challenges within Leelanau County.

## LAKE BLUFFS CONT.

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND EDUCATION

Throughout the project, the project team engaged with residents through various channels to ensure transparency and gather input. These included mailings during the preliminary design phase to gather input, public meetings, and a project website and emails to quickly relate updates. Consistent, regular communication with property owners made usually difficult parts of a drain project, like the Day of Review, easy and stress free. Amazingly, no property owners showed up to the Day of Review because all their questions had already been answered and they were comfortable with their assessments..

### ENVIRONMENTAL & WATER QUALITY BENEFITS

- ▶ **Infiltration & groundwater recharge**  
To achieve a runoff reduction goal of 80%, bio-infiltration areas and rain gardens were constructed using existing soil materials. This design allows for significant reductions in both runoff volume and rate during extreme storm events. Additionally, these features enhance water quality by promoting groundwater recharge and filtering of pollutants.
- ▶ **TSS (total suspended solids), nitrogen and phosphorus reduction**  
The 80% reduction in stormwater runoff equates to an estimated 95%+ reduction in TSS, nitrogen and phosphorus from the discharge of the district entering Lake Leelanau.



Before conditions of roadway and ditches



Lake Bluffs location in Leelanau County

### NEW MATERIALS & TECHNOLOGIES

- ▶ **High-flow capacity catch basin intakes**  
To help resolve the issue of runoff collection in very steep roadway slopes (10% to 15%), high-flow catch basins were installed with a 40” opening length along the valley gutter curb that provide increased intake capacity versus normal curb inlet catch basins.
- ▶ **Trench drain**  
The severe slopes of the roads also precipitated the installation of three separate 12” wide trench drains along the entire width of the roadway to collect additional stormwater during rainfall events. These innovations ensure that runoff actually enters the collection systems on a steep roadbed.
- ▶ **Smart Ditch**  
The project site’s sandy soil and heavy forestation made traditional grass-lined ditches impractical. To address this, engineers implemented “Smart Ditch” technology, a durable, liner-based system secured two feet deep into the ground.
- ▶ **Source control of stormwater**  
To reduce costs and achieve the 80% runoff reduction goal, the project incorporated source control measures. This involved designing smaller retention/detention areas and larger bio-infiltration and rain garden areas, often located along roadways or on private property acquired through easements.



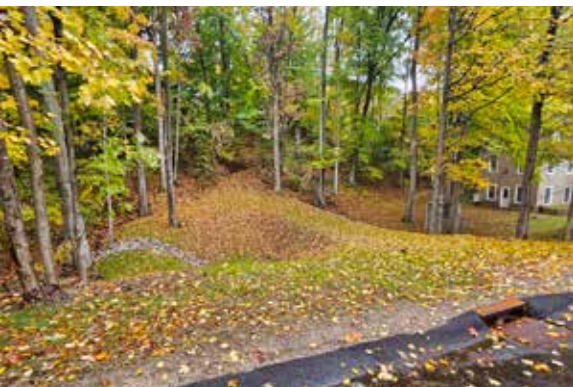
*A high-flow capacity catch basin*



*One of the trench drains across the roadway*



*One of the "Smart Ditch" products used during the project*



*A bio-infiltration area constructed on a vacant wooded lot with soil from the construction used to create the new driveway.*



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## LAKE BLUFFS CONT.

- ▶ **Legally based design engineering**  
Initially, concerns arose from Lake Leelanau residents about increased flooding from the proposed drain project. To address these concerns and avoid legal complications, engineers utilized Michigan Common Drainage Law principles. By establishing the pre-development runoff rate and volume as a baseline, the project was designed to significantly reduce future runoff, mitigating potential legal issues with downstream property owners.

## INNOVATION

- ▶ **Paving and integrating a private gravel road into the public drainage system**

A significant feature of the project design involved paving the gravel roadway and installing curb and gutter. Since the subdivision was publicly platted through the county, but the roadways were private, there were issues regarding ownership and use of the roads. The Drain Commissioner worked with the subdivision to develop an agreement where the new paved roadways with their curb and gutters would all be part of the new county drain system. This also included an ongoing maintenance agreement.



*The drainage district with storm drainage pipes shown in red and infiltration and rain garden areas in green*

- ▶ **Bio-infiltration & rain garden construction**

Engineers reviewed existing areas where stormwater collected, and through observation during and after rain events, looked at which areas had natural infiltration occurring. These areas had bio-infiltration areas constructed in situ and areas with poor infiltration had imported material and an underdrain installed below the rain garden. Ultimately, rain gardens were constructed with a perforated underdrain pipe below imported materials of aggregate and sand, plus topsoil/compost mix on top. Bio-infiltration areas had the native topsoil layer stripped and then had an imported original layer of topsoil/compost and some MDOT 2NS sand on top of the existing soil strata.

## COMPLEXITY

- ▶ **Dual drainage collection systems**

The existing 30'+ wide gravel road, drained by ditches, made it difficult to integrate a 22' paved road without addressing drainage on either side. Engineers designed a dual collection system with an integrated ditch system along the backside of the curb wherever it was appropriate. This allowed the engineers to integrate a combined curbed road collection system and a ditch collection system to discharge to the various infiltration areas. This also allowed engineers to design permanent BMP measures into the system by putting check dams in throughout the ditched system for sediment control.

- ▶ **Integrating new storm drain system into undeveloped lots in subdivision**

To save on costs and to work with owners of vacant lots in the subdivision, engineers designed several bio-infiltration areas and then used spoils from the construction to fill in areas of these undeveloped sites. Engineers worked with these landowners in acquiring easements for the drainage items that were necessary for the project without compensating the landowners for the easements, while also benefiting the landowners of these properties by doing necessary excavation and clearing work to prepare for future home construction on the sites.

► **Assessing for public health benefits**

Leelanau County's non-charter townships, like Solon Township, faced limitations in raising taxes for drain assessments. This requires a public vote, which can be challenging, especially for townships with low operating budgets. A standard 15% public health assessment would have significantly burdened Solon Township's financial resources.

To resolve this issue, in November 2022, the Drain Commissioner presented the county board with a formal resolution that the county incur up to 30% of the overall costs on all newly established county drains in the future, defraying the majority of the 'public health, convenience and welfare' at-large assessments that would normally be assessed to a township.

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## LAKE BLUFFS CONT.

### COST EFFECTIVENESS

- ▶ **Value engineering after 1st bid & during 2nd bid hold period**  
After the initial bid in summer 2022, GEI engineers collaborated with the low bidder to identify cost-saving modifications without compromising design integrity. By sourcing more affordable materials locally, they reduced construction costs by approximately \$135,000 between the first and second bids.
- ▶ **No site excavation material hauled off-site**  
Excess material was reused to construct driveways and provide site fill on undeveloped lots from the easement negotiation process.
- ▶ **Increase in property values after drain construction**  
A successful drain project not only addresses the underlying issues but also remains affordable for residents. In this small district with 34 properties, paving roads and resolving erosion issues posed a significant challenge. However, GEI engineers devised an affordable solution for the community. This project was financed out over a 20-year period and the average assessment for a

property within the Lake Bluffs Subdivision was around \$20,000 total, which was acceptable to the residents.

The impact of the drain project has already significantly increased the property values within the drainage district, particularly in the Lake Bluffs Subdivision where the average State Equalized Value (S.E.V.) increased 25% to 30% from 2023 to 2024. In all cases, the increase in S.E.V. was two to three times that of their assessment. This substantial increase in property values for all the Lake Bluffs subdivision properties is directly due to the drain project and is a function of how much having a passable, safe, paved roadway and a new public drainage system can help improve property values.



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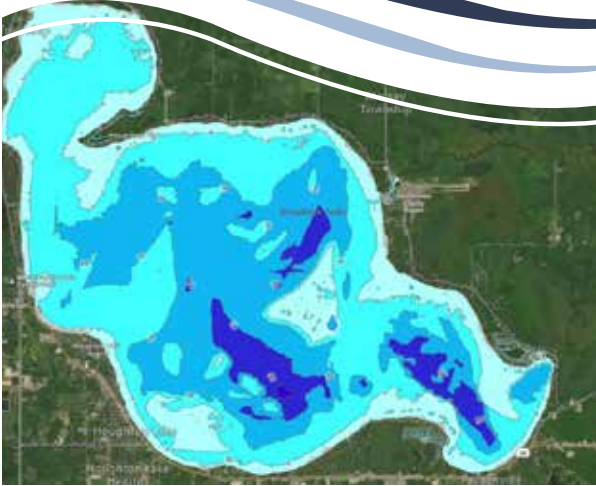
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# MSU EXTENSION'S INTRODUCTION TO LAKES ONLINE

Registration for the award-winning Michigan State University Extension Introduction to Lakes Online course is now open! This introductory six-week online class is designed for anyone interested in gaining a greater appreciation for inland lakes including concerned residents, decision makers, local leaders, and lakefront property owners. Course instructors include faculty from MSU Extension and state agency personnel.

The course covers a variety of topics including lake ecology, watershed management, shoreline protection, aquatic plants, Michigan water law, and community engagement. These topics are explored online through video lectures, interactive activities, and discussion forums. Additional resources are also provided for those looking to dive deeper. Participants communicate with each other and instructors through lively discussion forums and biweekly Ask-an-Expert webinars which include guests from organizations such as the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

Registration is open now through January 28, 2025. The cost of the course is \$115 per person. Register by January 6 for an

early bird price of \$95 per person. A limited number of scholarships are available. Current individual members of the Michigan Lakes and Streams Association are eligible to receive a \$95 reimbursement upon successful completion of the course.

A certificate of completion is awarded to those who complete the class. Participants also can receive continuing education credits including 16 Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Pesticide Applicator Re-Certification credits (8 commercial core and 8 aquatic) and educational hours in the MSU Extension Master Gardener, Master Citizen Planner, and Michigan Naturalist programs.

Learn more and register at [www.canr.msu.edu/lakesonline](http://www.canr.msu.edu/lakesonline).



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# New PFAS standards will offer better protection for all Americans; Michigan continues to lead the nation

This past April, the Biden-Harris Administration issued the first-ever national, legally enforceable drinking water standard to protect communities from exposure to harmful per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as "forever chemicals."

"The new U.S. EPA standards for PFAS in drinking water will better protect all Americans from this class of toxic chemicals," said Aaron Keatley, Chief Deputy of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. "All Michiganders, and residents across the country, deserve to know that we are prioritizing their health and are working every day with partners at every level of government to protect the water coming out of Americans' taps. Michigan has,

and will continue to, lead the nation in protecting people from PFAS chemicals."

Michigan is already well ahead of many states regarding PFAS and has established its own drinking water standards -- known as Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLS) -- for seven PFAS compounds. This is testament to Gov. Whitmer's commitment to ensuring all Michiganders have access to clean, healthy drinking water.

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

- Michigan's head-start on the rest of the nation includes the statewide public water supply sampling that started in 2018 and ran through 2020.



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- Since 2020, Michigan public water supplies have been regulated under Michigan’s Safe Drinking Water Act and are sampled on a regular basis.
- US EPA’s proposed MCLs are different than Michigan’s drinking water standards and will result in the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team (MPART) needing to integrate the federal standards into our existing programs and agencies.
- These MCLs do not go immediately into effect. States have three years to sample public water supplies (which Michigan has already done) and five years to get public water supplies into compliance.
- Implementation of the MCLs also requires rule making, which will begin in Michigan as soon as feasible. When promulgated, the final rules will also have implication on other programs—such as the groundwater cleanup, surface water monitoring, and NPDES permits.
- Managers of each of the programs are undergoing review of the implications in close coordination with MPART.
- Until new drinking water rules are promulgated, the current state drinking water standards remain in effect. The corresponding groundwater cleanup criteria and surface water values for these substances will remain in effect until they are revised, as appropriate, in consideration of changes to the state drinking water standards as well as recent scientific literature on PFAS.
- MPART will continue to coordinate with the State Attorney General’s office on the current challenge to our state standards that is before the Michigan Supreme Court.
- Public water supplies are currently sampling under Michigan’s PFAS rules, and the proposed EPA rules will take some time to work their way through the state primacy process.
- Michigan will continue to regulate under the state’s rules, while working with drinking water systems throughout the state to prepare for these welcomed new federal standards.

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# YOUNG PROFESSIONALS COMMITTEE

The MACDC Young Professionals Committee (YPC) hosted the latest Drain Games at the 2024 Summer Drain Conference at Shanty Creek Resort. This year's competition included a 100m sprint of drain and Olympic trivia for all the MACDC Districts. It was the Northeast district that was the quickest to answer and crossed the finish line first for the gold medal. If you are interested in joining the YPC, please see our page on the MACDC website.



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# ASSOCIATE MEMBER NEWS

## CURRY & ASSOCIATES JOIN F&V TO EXPAND ENGINEERING SERVICES IN INDIANA

Curry & Associates, Inc. (Curry) is now a part of Fleis & VandenBrink Engineering, Inc. (F&V).

The move allows F&V to expand its engineering and construction management services across the state of Indiana.

Established in 1993, Fleis & VandenBrink is a multi-disciplined civil engineering firm with offices in Fort Wayne and Indianapolis, as well as seven offices in Michigan including its headquarters in Grand Rapids.

F&V made its presence known in Indiana in 2006 when Gove Engineering, who had been in Indiana since 1986, joined F&V. Curry's Danville location will become the third Indiana office and tenth office overall for the combined company.

Founded in 1978, Curry employs 16 staff at its Danville office. Curry provides engineering services on projects such as drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater for communities throughout Indiana.

"We couldn't have found a better partner in Curry & Associates," said John DeVol, president of Fleis & VandenBrink. "Our companies complement each other extremely well in terms of the clients and locations we serve, the services we offer, the relationships we build, and our corporate philosophies."

Lori Young, president of Curry, said she was also excited about "the partnership and greater resources and support it will bring our clients and team. The alignment of our cultures and client focused service makes F&V the perfect partner. We are thrilled to be joining the F&V team and serving our clients better together."

F&V has grown from a team of two, to more than 300 multi-disciplined professionals providing engineering, contract operations and construction management services. In addition to the engineering company, F&V has expanded to the creation of sister companies F&V Operations and Resource Management (FVOP) and F&V Construction (FVC).

"We have built our business by focusing on providing high quality service to our clients and building trusting relationships. Curry shares the same values," DeVol said. "Now we will be able to provide a wider array of services to communities throughout Indiana without diluting our core philosophy of personal service."

DeVol said F&V has particular strengths in civil and environmental, transportation, landscape architecture, land surveying, traffic, and water and wastewater engineering services.

Robert Curry, principal of Curry, said the two firm's philosophies will unite well.

"We are very comfortable that the direction the leadership team has set for their firm will continue the commitment to quality services we have provided our clients since 1978," Curry noted.

# MACDC EVENT CALENDAR

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New Drain Commissioners School  
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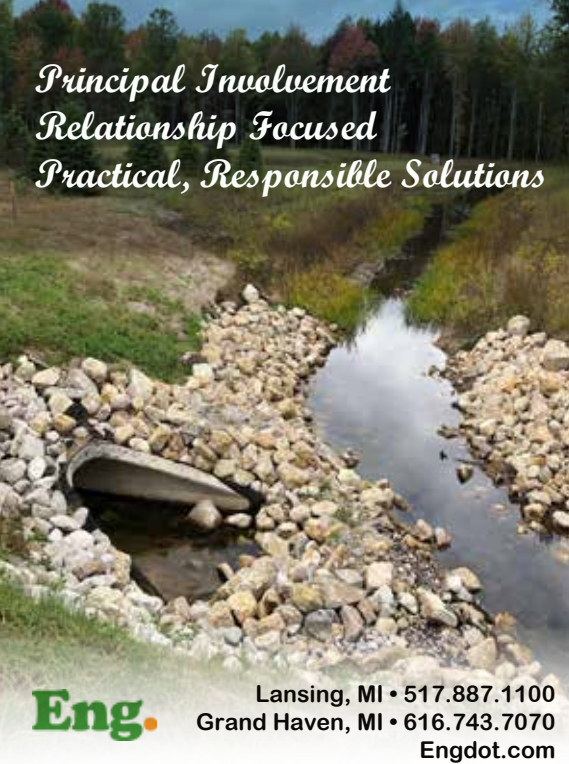
## FEBRUARY 12-14, 2025

MACDC Annual Winter Conference  
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## JULY 16-18, 2025

MACDC Annual Summer Conference  
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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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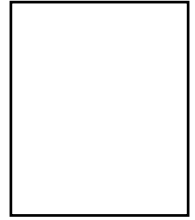
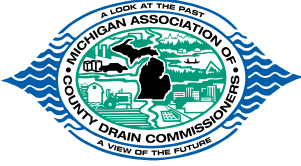


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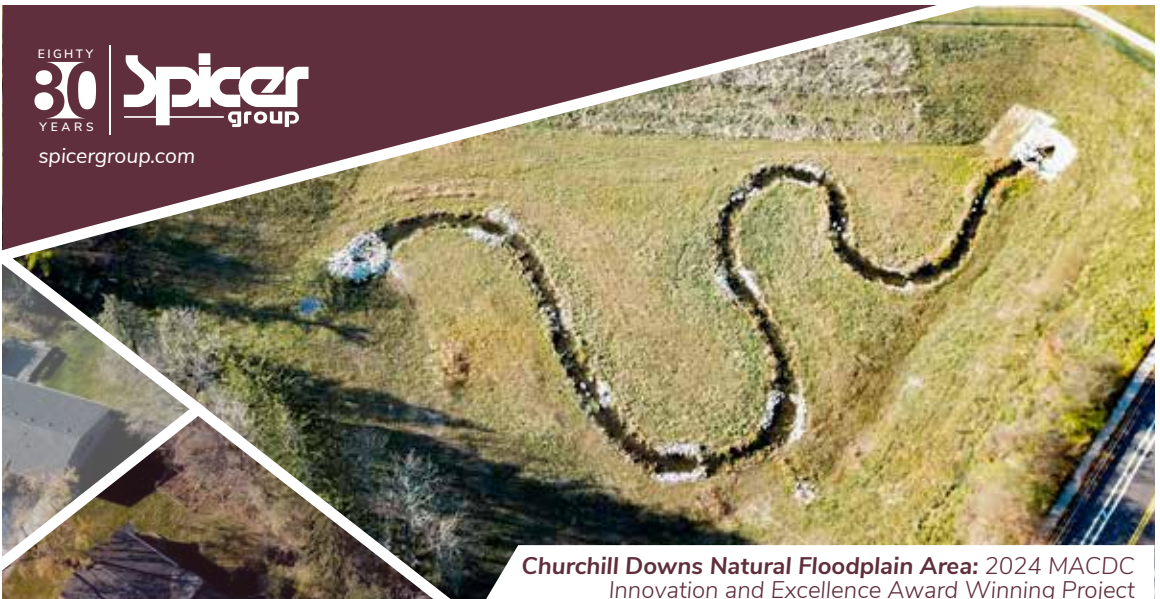
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