

### 2013 ST. JOSEPH RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

MEETING:  
DECEMBER 3\*

### 2014 ST. JOSEPH RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

MEETING (PROPOSED):

MARCH 4

JUNE 3

SEPTEMBER 9

DECEMBER 2

May 16, 2014--Annual Indiana-Michigan St. Joseph River Basin Symposium

All meetings are open to the public and begin at 10:00 a.m.

\*Elkhart County Public Services Building  
4230 Elkhart Road (US 33), Goshen, Indiana



\*\*Elkhart County Administration Building  
117 No. Second Street, Goshen, Indiana

Consult website for agendas and possible meeting changes—  
Meeting presentations are also linked at this site when available

watershed, finalizing goals and solutions, implementing the plan and measuring progress and making adjustments. The US Environmental Protection Agency has identified 9 essential elements that must be in an approved watershed management plan.

While the essential elements are a little more complex, answering the questions below helps begin the process and mold the direction a watershed management plan may go. A good plan is built on collecting accurate data—

- What and where are the water resources (rivers, streams, ponds, lakes, wetlands)
- Which resources are impacted by pollution and at what level
- What pollutants are being evaluated and where are they detected
- What are the landuses
- What are the sources of pollution
- Who are the stakeholders.

The preliminary data collected aids in developing a plan of action that will ultimately improve and protect the watershed. It is during this phase of the plan development that new questions might be asked—

- Can sources of pollution be eliminated or reduced
- What are the goals and objectives to improve water quality
- What is the best plan of action to meet those goals
- How should resource improvements and activities be prioritized
- Who will be responsible to conduct or manage those activities
- Is everyone aware of the Plan and the role they can or should play for success
- What are the resources to fund and achieve change and improvements or foster protection of high quality resources
- What tools will be used to determine if planned milestones are met, and goals and objectives are achieved
- What are the next steps.

A successful plan results from a commitment of key partners and stakeholders working together to answer all the questions, manage the data, and take appropriate actions for the sake of improved and protected water resources. Success occurs when all the pieces are in place.



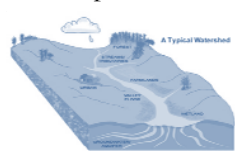
### Pollutants in Our Watershed

Watershed impairments in the region can range from poor habitat for fish and other aquatic wildlife, to legacy chemical contaminants such as PCBs. It can be nutrients, bacteria or soil. Many of the watershed plans in the River Basin focus on reducing *E. coli*, nutrients such as nitrates and phosphorus, and sediment. A driving force of any watershed plan should be maintaining or improving

## Watershed Management Planning 101

### What's a "Watershed"?

We all live in a "watershed". No matter where you are, the land under your feet drains to a ditch, stream, river or pond whenever there is a rain storm or snow melt.



A watershed is all of the land that drains into a common body of water. Picture a funnel—anything that you put into it, will eventually flow through it and out the bottom. That is what happens everytime we do something on the land.

Our watersheds are impacted by two general types of pollution. "Point source" pollution occurs when the pollutant flows directly from a source through a pipe, outfall or conveyance channel, usually from a treatment facility of some type. Since the 1970s much of this pollution has come under regulation.

"Nonpoint source" pollution is broader in scope and results from rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the land. It can include runoff from a parking lot or barnyard, fertilizers improperly applied, or disturbed soil from a construction site or a farm field. We, the "stakeholders" all contribute to nonpoint source pollution through our everyday activities

Improving our waterways is the responsibility of everyone. It is estimated that at least 40 percent of our streams and rivers are still polluted despite years of environmental regulations. That's where "watershed management planning" comes in.

### What Makes Up a Watershed Management Plan

A watershed management plan sets in place six major steps needed to improve a specific watershed including building partnerships, characterizing the

the water resources to their designated use, whether recreation, aquatic life or both.



Over time, we have identified that activities we once considered common place, can be a major contributor to rising pollution. Watershed sleuthing usually uncovers a variety of sources of pollutants, including:

- ◆ Direct discharge of sewage or manure from septic systems, floor drains, livestock pens or field tiles;
- ◆ Livestock having full access to neighboring waterbodies;
- ◆ Disposal of grass clippings, leaves and other debris or litter into neighboring waterways;
- ◆ Disposal of oils, paints, greases, or other liquids into drains designed for stormwater only;
- ◆ Runoff from streets, parking lots, and other hard surfaces;
- ◆ Inappropriate application of lawn fertilizers, manure or other nutrients;
- ◆ Narrow or no filter strips or vegetated buffers along waterways;
- ◆ Lack of conservation crop management techniques to keep soil on the ground;
- ◆ Draining or filling of historic wetlands;
- ◆ Stakeholders failing to recognize the connection between their activities and watershed impairments.

### **Watershed Management Planning in the St. Joseph River Basin**

The watershed management planning process in the St. Joseph River Basin has resulted in water quality improvements through implementation of a number of best management practices.

*“Beyond federal, state and local laws protecting water quality, the greatest opportunity to protect and preserve water quality and natural resources rests with landowners and how they manage their lands”*—Paw Paw Watershed Management Plan

***St. Joseph River Basin Commission  
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South Bend, IN 46601-1830***

Activities achieved through these plans complement the overall St. Joseph River Basin Plan developed in 2005. The plans focus on potential sources of contamination upstream of the St. Joseph River—in tributaries and subwatersheds that eventually discharge to the River and Lake Michigan. Improvements in a subwatershed equate to fewer contaminants reaching the St. Joe and beyond.

### **Achieving Plan Goals—What Now?**

Installation of best management practices, and taking individual or community actions to meet the Plan goals may improve water quality. However an evolution of landuses or achievement of initial goals may necessitate focusing on new concerns or issues. Hence the need to re-evaluate water quality, and adjust the watershed management plan on a periodic basis.

Citizen-led groups, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, and other local agencies have all played key roles in developing and managing watershed plans.

Are you ready to be a part of the solution? Whether you represent a jurisdiction or agency, or you are an individual property owner, there are opportunities for everyone to improve water quality. Learn the details of watershed management

plans in your area. Your involvement will help achieve the plan goals and improve the watershed.

Our streams, rivers, wetlands and lakes are important to our communities. Being a part of the overall watershed management process, insures that the future of these resources is secure. For further details about the watershed management plans listed, contact either the St. Joseph River Basin Commission in Indiana or the Friends of the St. Joe River Association in Michigan.

### **Watershed Plans in the St. Joseph River Basin**

**INDIANA**

- Baugo Creek Watershed—Wisler Ditch
- Elkhart River Watershed
- Fawn River Watershed
- Juday Creek Watershed
- Little Elkhart River Watershed
- Pigeon Creek Watershed
- Pigeon River Watershed

**MICHIGAN**

- Dowagiac River Watershed
- Hodunk-Messenger Chain of Lakes
- Hog Creek Watershed
- Nottawa Creek Watershed
- Paw Paw River Watershed
- Rocky River Watershed
- Swan Creek

In addition, updated plans, implementation projects or feasibility studies have been developed for portions of some watersheds including:

- Baugo Creek Watershed Stabilization Implementation
- Little Elkhart River Watershed—Plan Update *Proposed*
- North Branch of the Elkhart River Watershed—Planning Activities *Proposed*
- Turkey Creek Subwatershed of the Elkhart River—Implementation