



Watershed Funding in Michigan

Kelly Goward, Watershed Manager
ODC Network

Outline

About me and the ODC

Michigan watershed organizations and funding

Origins of the Sustainable Watershed Funding Initiative






Public opinion survey results

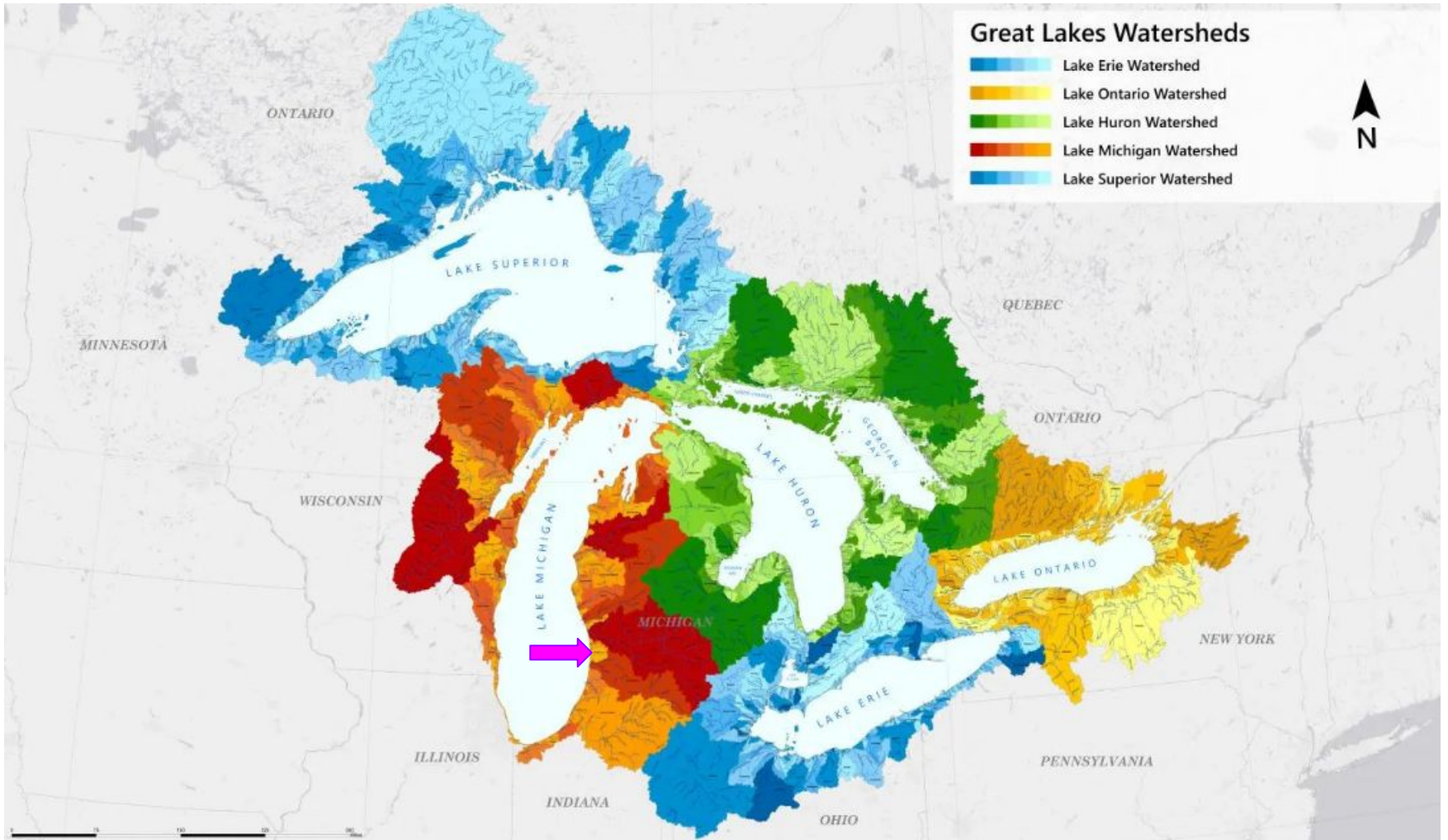
Current status of SWFI

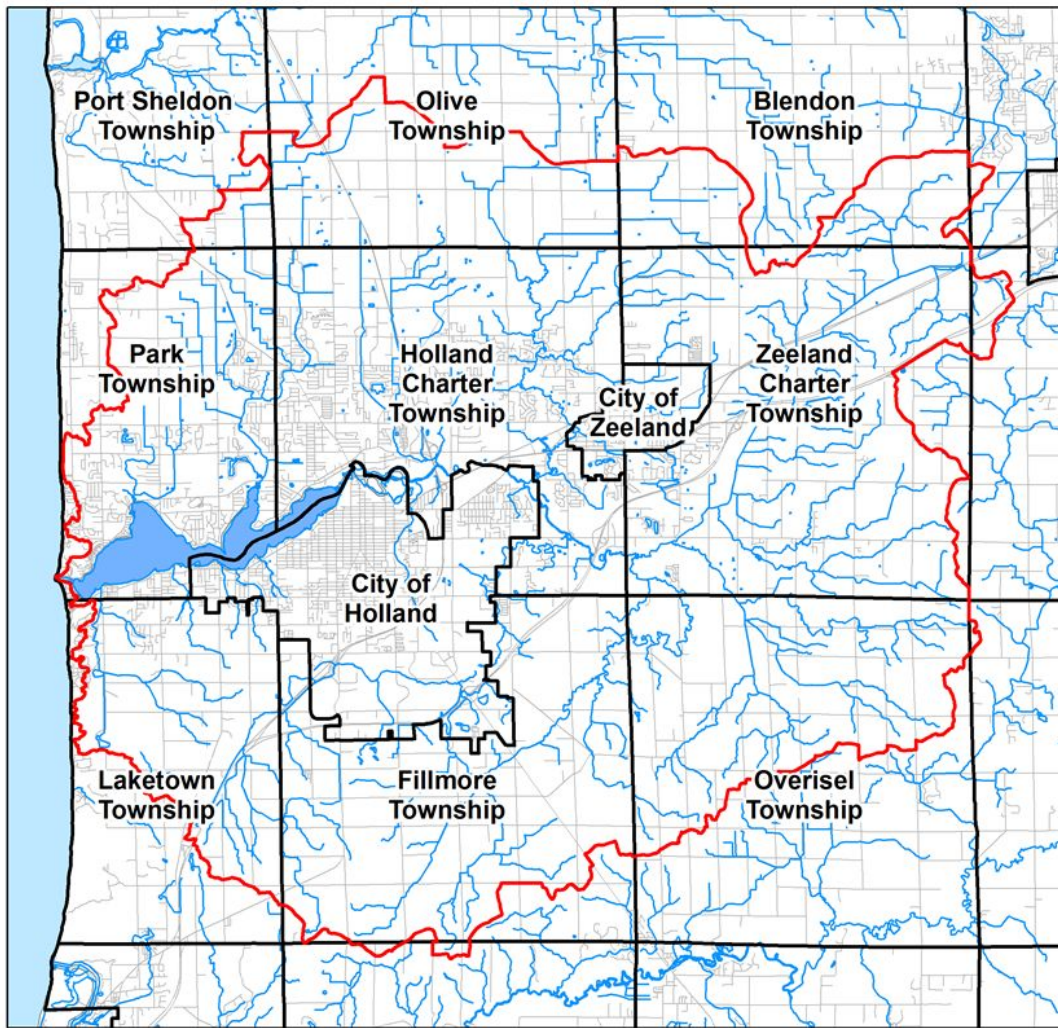
Other watershed funding initiatives



Great Lakes Watersheds

-  Lake Erie Watershed
-  Lake Ontario Watershed
-  Lake Huron Watershed
-  Lake Michigan Watershed
-  Lake Superior Watershed







ODC Education
Network



Michigan Watershed Organizations

Watershed Councils - Clinton, Coldwater, Les Cheneaux, Kalamazoo, Mona Lake, Huron, River Raisin, Tipp of the Mitt, Pere Marquette, Thornapple

Friends of groups - Looking Glass, St. Clair, Rouge, Maple, St. Joe, Buck Creek

Watershed Partnerships - Muskegon Lake, Superior Watershed

Watershed Assembly - Muskegon River

Watershed Coalitions - Flint River Watershed Coalition, Two Rivers

Watershed Alliance - Alliance of Rouge Communities, Upper Grand River

Lake Associations - Michigan Lakes & Streams Association, Crystal Lake, Lake Charlevoix, Manistee Lake (lots more)

Nonprofits - Huron Pines, The Watershed Center, MGROW, ODC Network, land and nature conservancies

Conservation Districts

Other - MPOs, RPOs, Cities, Townships, Tribes

Michigan Watershed Funding

Membership fees/dues

Donations and fundraising

Millages (Conservation Districts)

Grants

Stormwater Utilities

Watershed Alliance Act - assess costs to member organizations

- Alliance of Rouge Communities (35 municipalities)
- Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance

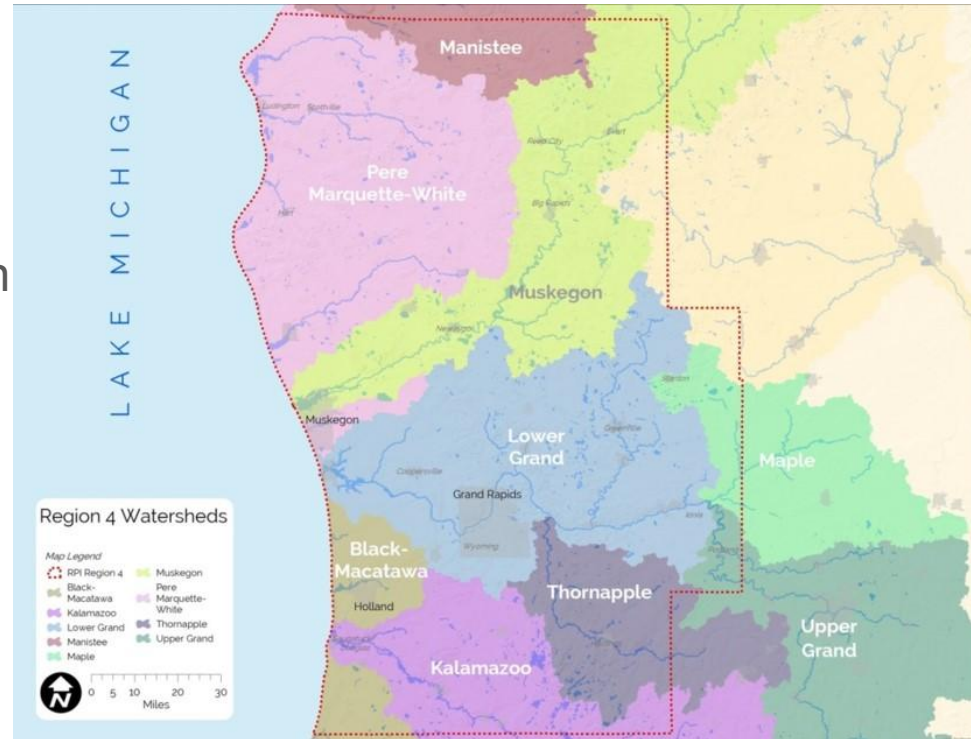


Sustainable Watershed Funding Initiative

Regional Prosperity Initiative

West Michigan Prosperity Alliance solicited regional project ideas

Macatawa Area Coordinating Council in partnership with the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council and the West Michigan Regional Shoreline Development Commission



Project Goals

Establish a mechanism to sustainably fund watershed management plan implementation

Implement existing, federally improved watershed management plans

Solution should be scalable to other regions/whole state



Phase I (2015-2017)

West Michigan Watershed Collaborative (50+)

West Michigan Watershed Summary

Evaluated four approaches to develop sustainable funding for watershed management

- Millages
- Flat Fees
- Watershed Management Districts
- Pay for Success Bonds

Interviews with 16 opinion leaders

**A New Approach to
Fund Watershed Management:
An Evaluation of Funding Mechanisms**

October 19, 2016

Prepared for
Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission

Prepared by
Public Sector Consultants, Inc.
Lansing, Michigan
www.pscinc.com

Funding for this project was provided by the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance

Phase II (2017-2018)

Received additional RPI funding

Retained the services of Public Sector Consultants

Held a series of facilitated discussions

Built consensus on an approach to pursue

Developed a strategy to implement sustainable funding approach

West Michigan Sustainable Watershed Funding Strategy

11.06.17

PSC

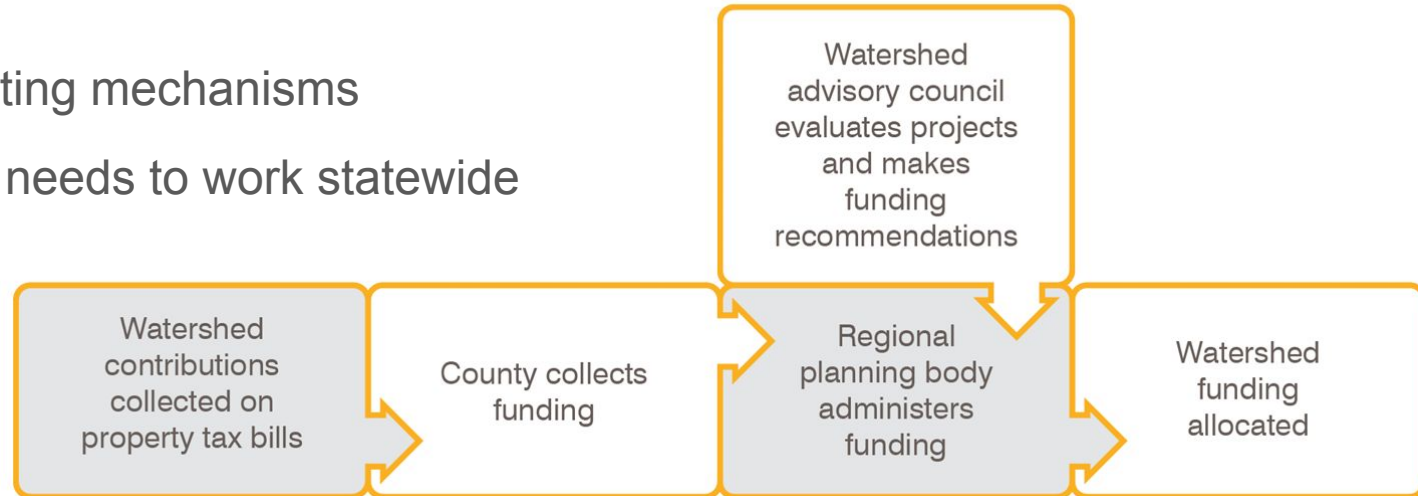
Framework for Sustainable Watershed Funding

A voluntary watershed contribution with watershed-based decision making structure

Seek new legislation enabling counties to collect the contribution and provide a framework to allocate funding through regional planning organizations

Draw upon existing mechanisms

New legislation needs to work statewide



Phase III (2018-2021)

Received additional RPI funding

Work toward implementing recommendations in the Phase II report

Formed a Communication Team

Public opinion survey – estimate participation rates, support for voluntary contribution

- Completed in 2019
- Phone survey
- Statewide representation (800 responses, at least 1 from every county)
- Asked a series of questions about views and perception of water quality and willingness to donate to a local water quality fund

Stakeholder Engagement

Key Survey Findings

Michiganders care about water quality

- 84.5 percent strongly agree/agree

Michiganders think we should invest in our waters

- 81.3 percent strongly agree/agree

One-third of property owners are willing to donate through the proposed program

- \$50 median donation amount
- \$25 - \$75 range with 90 percent certainty

People are supportive even if they would not donate personally

People support developing local water quality funds

Strong support exists for a program that gives people the option of donating, even if they personally wouldn't contribute

- 60 percent supportive/very supportive

- 25 percent opposed/strongly opposed

- 15 percent undecided/don't know

Support extends across the political spectrum

- 68 percent of democrats

- 66 percent of independents

- 55 percent of republicans

Greater support exists for keeping funding local

People are more supportive of keeping the funding local than having it administered by the state

- 37 percent were less likely to donate if funding went to the state

- 32 percent were unchanged

- 26 percent were more likely

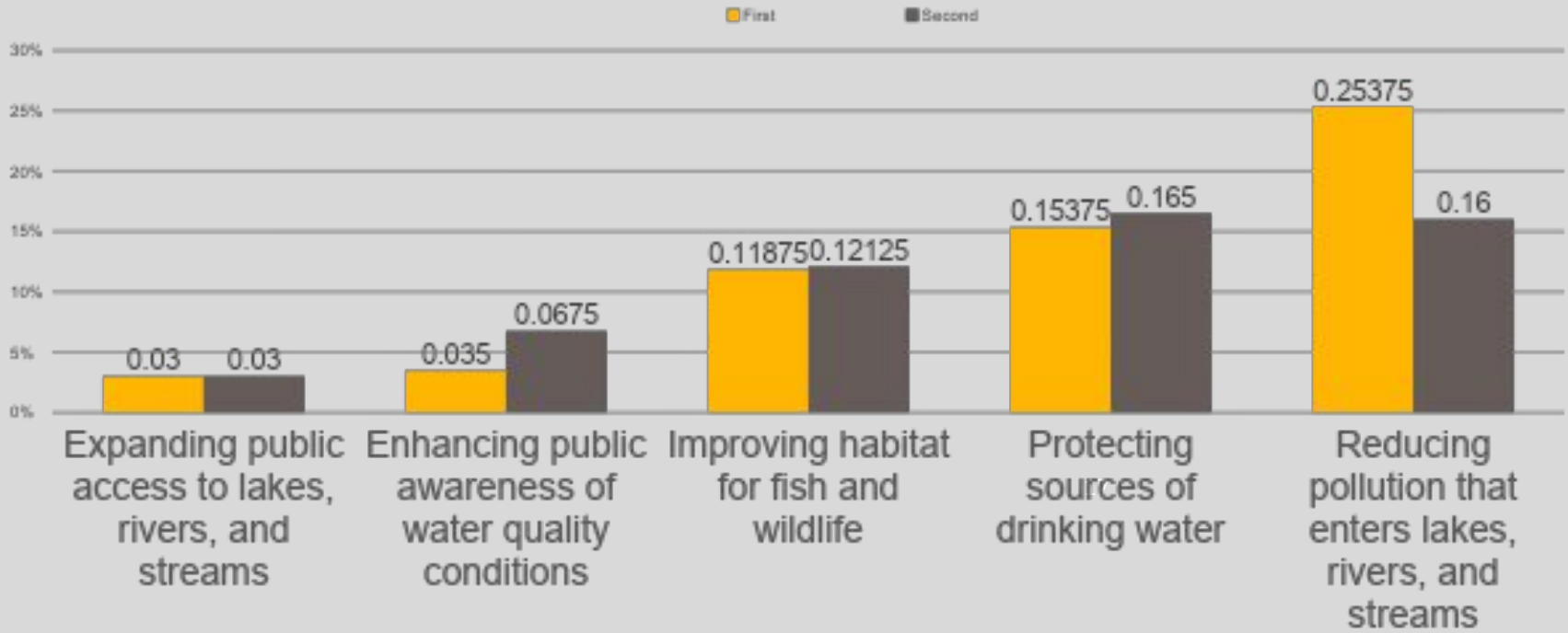
- 5 percent didn't know

Party affiliation does play some role

- Democrats are split relatively evenly between collecting funding at the state and local level

- Republicans are more supportive of collecting funding locally

How should funding be allocated?



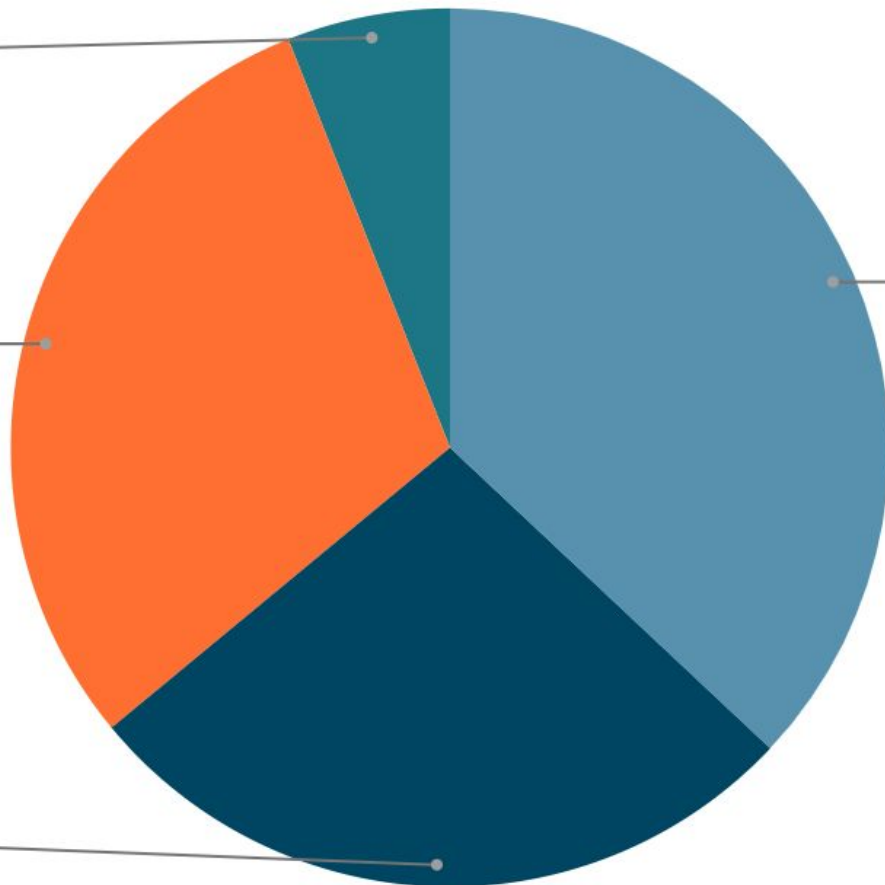
Other community needs are a higher priority

Do not know
6.0%

Disagree
30.0%

Neither agree or disa...
27.0%

Agree
37.0%



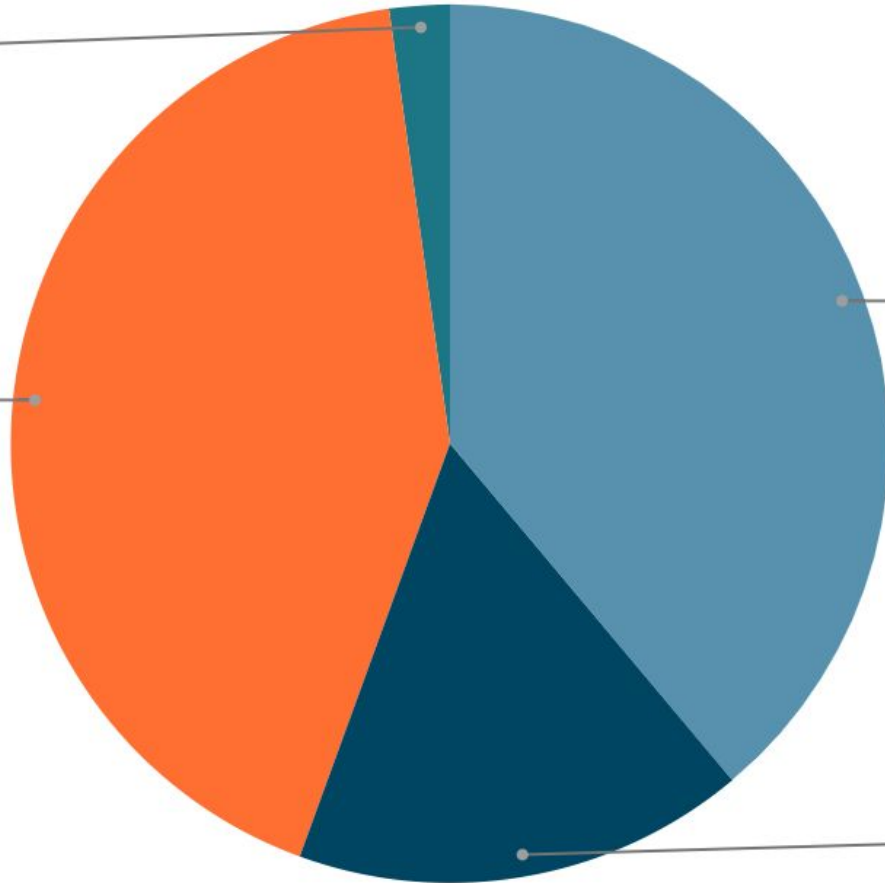
I have the financial means to donate

Do not know
2.2%

Disagree
42.2%

Agree
38.9%

Neither agree or disa...
16.7%



I need more information to decide

Do not know

2.0%

Disagree

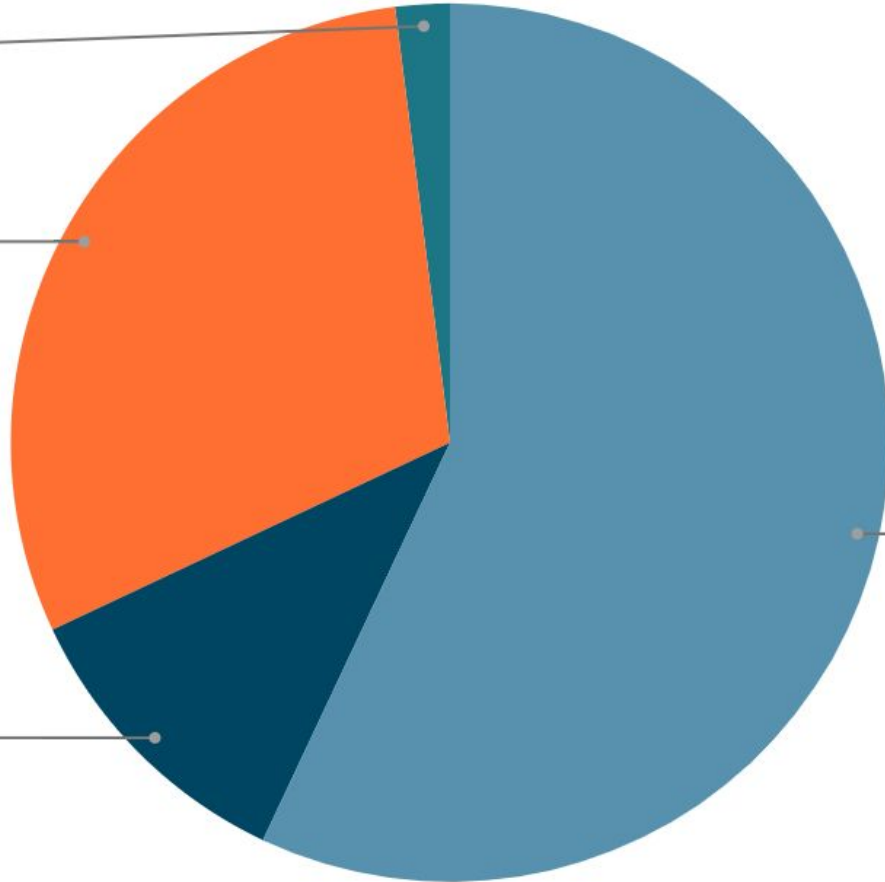
30.0%

Neither agree or disa...

11.0%

Agree

57.0%



What can we learn about people who need more information?

Analyzed people who said they:

- Would support the new law

- Were unsure of whether they would donate

- Need more information to decide

Party affiliation, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment are unimportant

Age was a bigger driver

- People who are 50 years or older were more likely to indicate they needed more information to decide

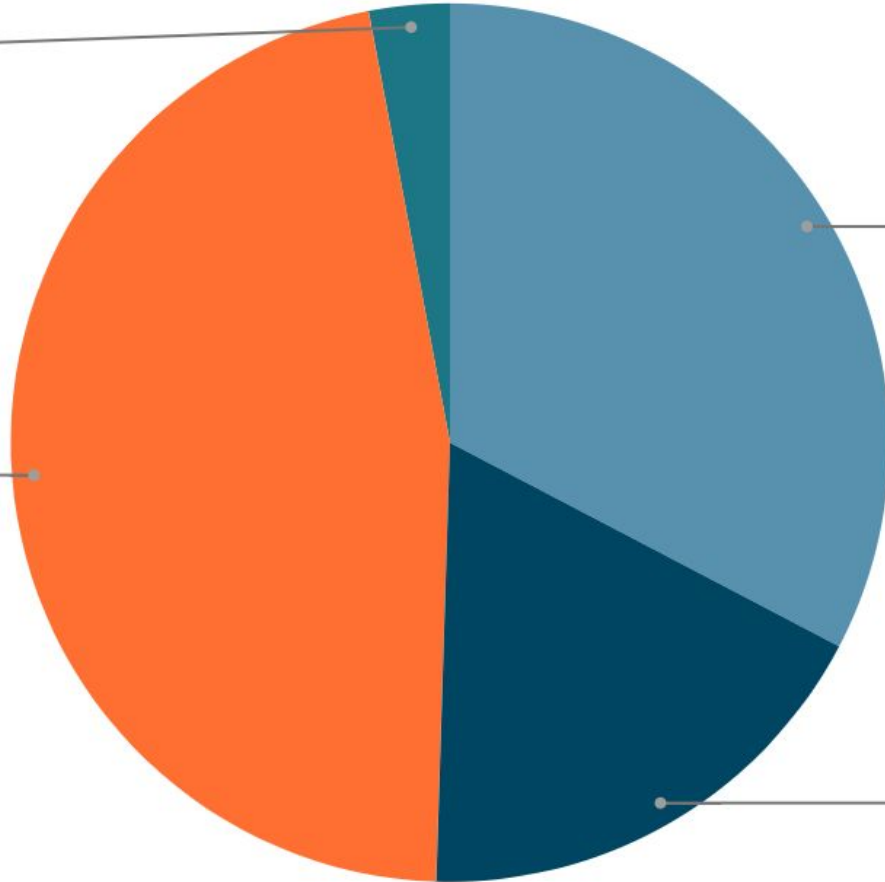
I trust the county will manage the donations wisely

Do not know
3.0%

Disagree
46.5%

Agree
32.7%

Neither agree or disa...
17.8%



We need to invest in the quality of Michigan's lakes, rivers, and streams

Do not know

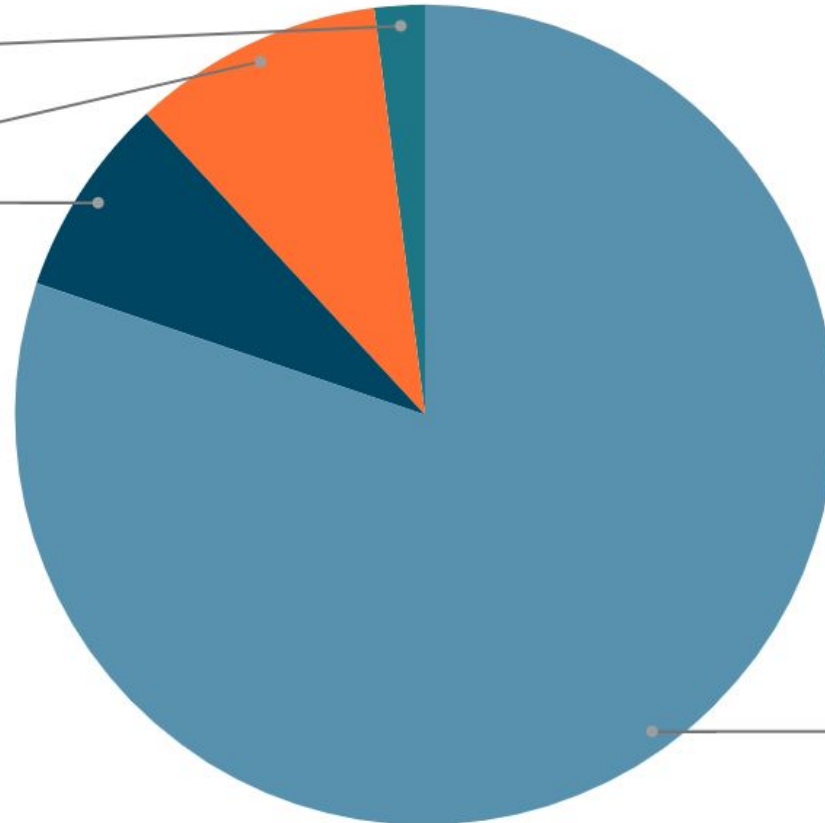
2.0%

Disagree

9.9%

Neither agree or disag...

7.9%



Agree

80.2%

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Stakeholder Engagement - Watershed Leaders

Funding framework recognizes differences among Michigan's regions

Need to understand these differences

Present framework and seek feedback and concerns

Hosted 7 regional roundtables (6 virtual)

50 participants: Regional Planning Agencies, Watershed Organizations, not-for-profits, MSU-IWR, Conservation Districts, Foundations, Municipalities, Tribes, Land Conservancies

Michigan Watershed Partners

Upper Peninsula

Bay Mills Indian Community
Iron County Watershed Coalition
Keweenaw Bay Indian Community
Superior Watershed Partnership
Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve

Northwest Lower

Conservation Resource Alliance
Manistee Community Foundation
The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
Rotary Charities

West Michigan

Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds
Macatawa Area Coordinating Council
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission
White River Watershed Partnership

Southwest Lower

Friends of the St. Joe River Association
Kalamazoo River Watershed Council
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
St. Joseph Conservation District
St. Joseph River Basin Commission
Two Rivers Coalition, Inc.
Van Buren Conservation District

Mid-Michigan

Clinton Conservation District
Eaton Conservation District
Greater Lansing Regional Committee for Stormwater Management
Middle Grand River Organization of Watersheds
MSU IWR
Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance

Northeast Lower

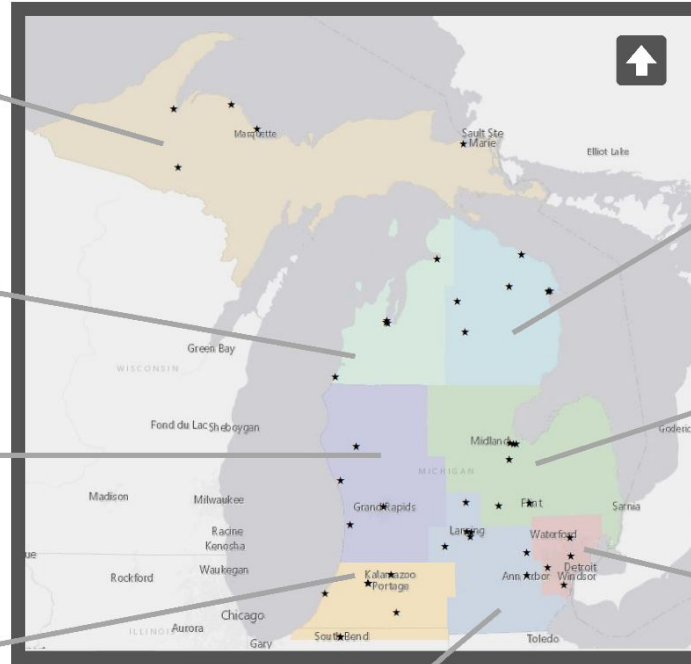
Anglers of the Au Sable
Community Foundation for NE Michigan
Huron Pines
Michigan Sea Grant
Rogers City
Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Upper Black River Council

Saginaw Bay

East Michigan Council for Governments
Flint River Watershed Coalition
Partnership for Saginaw Bay Watershed
Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy
Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network
Shiawassee River Water Trail Coalition

Southeast Michigan

Clinton River Watershed Council
Erb Family Foundation
Friends of the Detroit River
Friends of the Rouge
Huron River Watershed Council





Consensus that there is a need for increased funding

Overall very supportive of the initiative

Offered to remain engaged in the process



Regional approach is appropriate

Voluntary approach is appropriate

Operational funding is a priority

Potential to leverage other funding

Administratively efficient

Topics for Additional Consideration

Statewide vs regional program elements - what are the regional boundaries?

Governance model - create guidelines to ensure successful implementation and assist regions in establishing the program

Eligible funding activities - use of other types of plans, not just approved WMP; concern about supplanting other funding (MS4)

Eligible recipients - municipalities/MS4



Topics for Additional Consideration, Con't

Transparency/Accountability

Taxable status of contributions

Competition for donors - not-for-profits
that rely on donations

Administrative mechanisms - not all
RPOs are created equally





Grow the leadership table ✓

Revise the funding framework

Continue stakeholder engagement

Continue implementation activities

Fundraise to support the initiative

Current Activities

Received final allocation of Regional Prosperity Initiative funding fall 2021

Retained PSC to facilitate framework refinement

Series of 5 facilitated meetings May - July 2022 with Statewide Leadership Team

Grant application pending with the Erb Family Foundation

- Continued stakeholder engagement
- Final framework and implementation guidance documents
- Communication plan - watershed partners, stakeholders, public

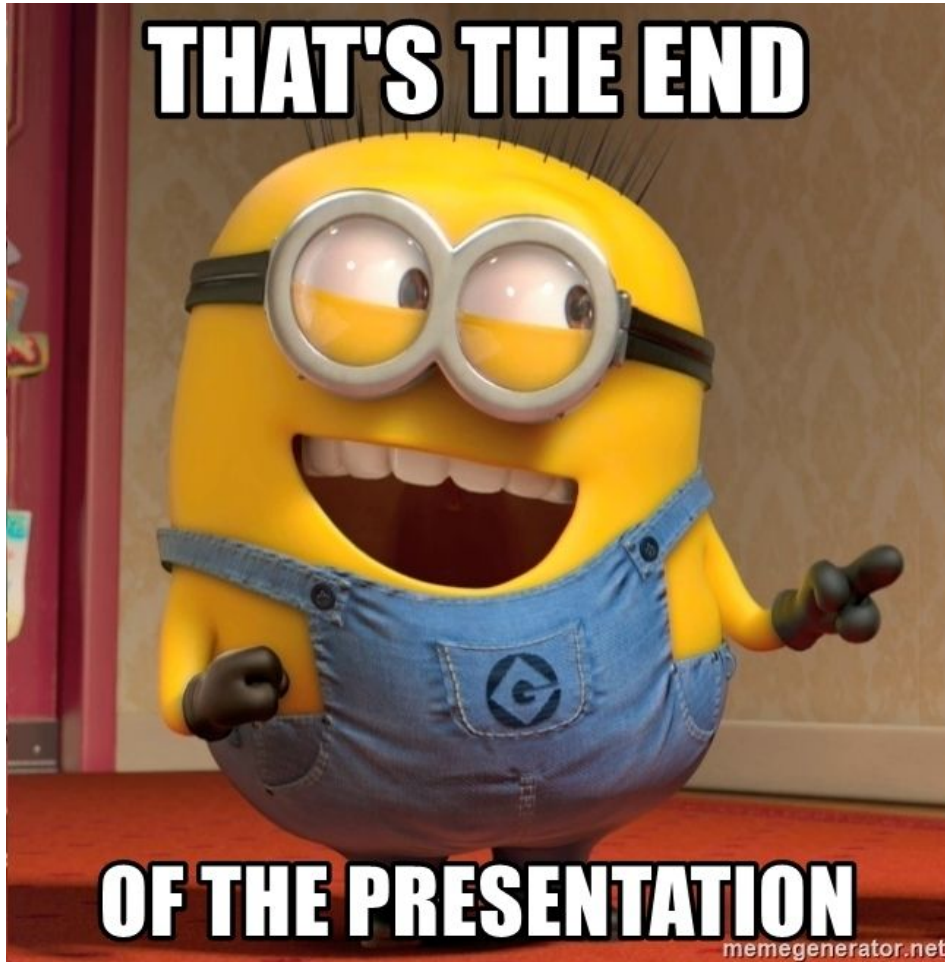
Other Watershed Funding Initiatives

Michigan Drain Code of 1956

- Establish, construct, maintenance and improve drains
- Emphasis on water quantity, safe conveyance of stormwater
- Can assess for projects and maintenance within the drain and it's easement
- Proposed changes to Chapter 22: Water Management Districts

Stormwater utilities (SB 593)





Questions?

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