



Muskegon County  
Environmental Coordinating Council

[www.mcecc.org](http://www.mcecc.org)

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Terms in body text that are underlined and printed in green are defined in the terminology section on page 5 of this issue.

### Good Web Sites Good Information

Open Burning Information  
[www.burnbarrel.org](http://www.burnbarrel.org)

MDEQ Assistance & Support Services  
[www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq)

Mona Lake Watershed Project  
[www.gvsu.edu/wri/director/mona](http://www.gvsu.edu/wri/director/mona)

Ruddiman Creek Health Issues  
[www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/PHA/ruddimancreek](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/PHA/ruddimancreek)

Muskegon River Watershed Assembly  
[www.mrwa.org](http://www.mrwa.org)



# Your Environment

A collaborative information resource for the Muskegon County Community  
Brought to you by the Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council

FALL 2003

## Attainment and Nonattainment Michigan Boundaries for the 8-Hour Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard

Amy Haack, WMSRDC Source: MDEQ



In July 1997, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a new National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone, referred to as the 8-hour ozone standard. The change in the standard is due to an EPA determination that the current standard for ozone did not adequately protect public health. Apparently, many new studies involving ozone show that ill health effects occur at exposure levels below the old 1-hour standard.

Areas that do not meet the revised EPA standards for ozone pollution will be classified as "in nonattainment" of those standards. The new standards do not allow areas to exceed .08 parts per million of ozone over an eight - hour period. Compliance is based on the fourth highest reading per year averaged over three years.

Nonattainment status requires communities to develop mandatory emission reduction plans, which often mean loss of highway funding, restrictions on emission-producing businesses, emission testing for vehicles and other costly measures.

As part of Clean Air Act regulations, the EPA is required to seek recommendations for all areas within states when a new or revised standard is announced. The states are also asked to provide recommendations for appropriate area boundaries that are considered in nonattainment. Generally, these boundaries are drawn according to the census metropolitan statistical areas or MSAs.

Currently, monitors in the Lake Michigan coastal counties of Berrien, Allegan, Ottawa, Muskegon, Mason, and Benzie are measuring levels of ozone that violate the 8-hour ozone standard. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is recommending that the Muskegon - Norton Shores MSA, Holland - Grand Haven MSA, Allegan "Micropolitan" Statistical Area, and the counties of Cass, Berrien, Mason, and Benzie be designated as independent nonattainment areas.

The EPA will review and either affirm each states' recommendations or make modifications as determined necessary. Final announcement of designations by the EPA is to occur by April 15, 2004, in accordance with a consent agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and several environmental advocacy groups.

Michigan's recommendations to the EPA is available on the MDEQ website at [www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq). For information on air quality attainment in Muskegon County, please contact Amy Haack of the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission at (231) 722-7878 ext. 19 or [ahaack@wmsrdc.org](mailto:ahaack@wmsrdc.org).

## Upcoming Events

### **Lake Michigan: State of the Lake Conference '03 October 21-22 at the Holiday Inn Muskegon Harbor**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Lake Michigan Forum and the Annis Water Resources Institute of Grand Valley State University are holding the basin-wide *Lake Michigan: State of the Lake 2003 Conference*. The theme of the conference will be "Connecting Watersheds to Lake Michigan." There will be a plenary session and breakout sessions on topics such as Lake Michigan research, invasive species, and watershed case studies. The audience will include researchers, government agencies and the public.

For more information, contact the conference coordinator, Dr. Janet Vail at (616) 331-3048 or visit [www.gvsu.edu/wri](http://www.gvsu.edu/wri) for more information.

### **National Pollution Prevention Week Sept 15 - 21**

Join the nation in preventing pollution by incorporating activities that reduce, reuse, and recycle our resources. For more information contact the MDEQ at (517) 335-6250.

### **Adopt-a-Beach Program**

Join the Adopt-a-Beach program to create positive change for your local beach through litter monitoring and water quality testing along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Contact the Lake Michigan Federation at (866) 850-0745 or visit [www.lakemichigan.org/adopt](http://www.lakemichigan.org/adopt) for more information.

### **Coastal Cleanup 2003 Saturday, September 20 9am to Noon**

Coastal Cleanup is the largest cleanup event in the world. Thousands of volunteers come out to area beaches to lend a hand to improve lake health and enjoy Lake Michigan. For information on cleaning up a Lake Michigan beach in your area contact the Lake Michigan Federation at (866) 850-0745.

### **MAP Project Forums**

The Muskegon Area-wide Plan (MAP) is a unique partnership of local governments, citizens, business leaders, and policy-makers working together to create a vision and strategy to guide future growth and development in the area.

The public is invited to participate in the next set of community forums on September 22, 23, and 24. Contact the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission at (231) 722-7878 for more information.

## The Impact of Open Burning in Your Environment Source: Michigan Open Burning Guide MDEQ, 2003

Open burning is the burning of materials such as yard waste and trash where the smoke is released directly into the air without passing through a chimney or stack. It also includes the use of incineration devices that do not maintain an adequate temperature, not allowing for complete combustion of materials.

Open burning pollutes the air and poses a fire hazard. The air created irritates eyes and lungs, obscures visibility, soils nearby surfaces, creates annoying odors and is a threat to those with respiratory conditions.

In Michigan, open burning is regulated at both the state and local level. Many municipalities do not allow for open burning of any kind and should be contacted for guidance on ordinances. If burning is allowed, a burning permit is always required. Depending on the area where you live, permits can be made available through a local township, fire department, or a district DNR office.

In Muskegon County, open burning is not allowed in the cities of Muskegon, Muskegon Heights, Norton Shores, Roosevelt Park, North Muskegon, Whitehall, or Montague nor is burning allowed in the villages of Casnovia, Fruitport, Lakewood Club, and Ravenna. In addition, burning is not permitted within 1400 feet of the boundaries of listed villages and cities. If you would like to request a burning permit and live within Fruitland or Whitehall Twp contact the White Lake Fire Authority at (231) 893-6503, otherwise call the Muskegon County Health Department burning permit line at (231) 724-6237 for further instructions.

Alternatives to open burning include, recycling, composting, and deposition in a licensed municipal solid waste landfill. In fact, many types of waste can easily be recycled into usable materials. Many communities provide curbside recycling services for wastes such as newspaper, corrugated cardboard, metal, plastics, and glass. Other wastes such as grass clippings, leaves, weeds, vegetable peelings, small brush, twigs, sawdust, egg shells, and coffee grounds can be disposed of through composting which is actually an inexpensive way to enhance your garden soil. To find out what kind of services are available in your area, contact the Muskegon County Department of Public Works at (231) 724-6411.



**Burning barrels do not provide good combustion and smoke emitted commonly contains dioxins, benzene, styrene, formaldehyde, furans, PCBs, lead, mercury and arsenic.**

Information on how to dispose of waste material and open burning alternatives can be obtained at [www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq). Click on "waste" or "pollution prevention."

## The Mona Lake Watershed Is Organized!

Arn Boezaart, Community Foundation for Muskegon County

With funding from the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Community Foundation for Muskegon County has been leading a number of important activities in the Mona Lake watershed. One of most significant happenings is the formation of the Mona Lake Watershed Council.

On August 13 the organization committee met to complete work on the incorporation and Board formation process. By-laws were approved and board officers were appointed. Sue Wierengo, Chairperson, Don Trygstad, Vice-Chairperson, and John Day, Secretary/Treasurer are providing initial leadership for the Mona Lake Watershed Council.

A high priority of the newly formed Council is to expand the present roster of interested watershed participants. The Council recognizes that all communities and regions that make up the watershed will need representation and must participate if the new watershed effort is to succeed over the long term.

During the summer, the Lake Michigan Forum and the Delta Institute, working in partnership with the Chicago U.S. EPA office, completed a watershed stewardship assessment in the Mona Lake watershed. This is a pilot effort designed to measure and evaluate the current level of citizen, business and government awareness of challenges and issues related to effective management of watershed resources.

On July 30, more than 25 representatives from municipalities located in the watershed gathered at the



Mona Lake near Black Creek  
Photo Courtesy of Annis Water Resources Institute

Eggleston Township Hall for a half-day focus group meeting. The purpose of the gathering was to give the representatives conducting the Mona Lake Watershed Stewardship Assessment a more complete understanding of related environmental and land-use issues.

During September the final report of the Mona Lake Watershed Stewardship Assessment Project will be released and shared with local communities. The federal government's intent is to replicate this pilot effort through the EPA in other communities along the Great Lakes.

The Community Foundation and the leadership of the Mona Lake Watershed Council recently completed an initial fund raising campaign to establish a permanent endowment for the Council. With over \$15,000 in local gifts and a \$5,000 match gift through the Mott project, the Council will be able to increase the endowment over time to sustain its efforts.



Antoinette Cobb Student Research Assistant and Lori Nemeth, Research Assistant measure water quality parameters in Mona Lake ear the Henry St. bridge  
Photo Courtesy of the Mott Foundation

## Ever wondered what to do with your old outdated cellular phone, PDA, or pager?

Mobile phones and other portable electronic devices can contain Mercury, Cadmium, Lead, Gallium Arsenide, and other toxic materials and should not be thrown into a landfill. Staples stores is providing a service that will take your used cell phone, PDA, pagers, and rechargeable batteries and recycle them for you. Through the Staples effort, a program called CollectiveGood will recycle your mobile phone into reuse, usually in the developing world, providing affordable, first-time modern communications for many people. If for some reason your phone can not be recycled back for reuse, it will be recycled for its metals and plastics in accordance with federal environmental standards. Proceeds from this project are donated to the Sierra Club to fund environmental education and conservation programs. For more information on this project visit [www.collectivegood.com](http://www.collectivegood.com).



## 2003 Environmental Excellence Award Winners

The 2003 Muskegon Area Environmental Excellence Awards were held April 24, 2003 at Muskegon Community College. During the evening, six organizations and/or individuals were recognized for outstanding environmental achievement in the Muskegon community. Winning categories include the areas of natural resources, government, education, individual achievement, and lifetime achievement.

Guest speaker for the evening was Dr. David Mielke of Grand Valley State University's Seidman School of Business. Dr. Mielke spoke about the new Alternative and Renewable Energy Center research facility and its relationship to the Muskegon SmartZone area.

Evening sponsors included Superior Environmental, Shoreline Recycling/Padnos, and Muskegon Community College.

Congratulations to this year's winners.



Environmental Excellence Award Winners Sarah Corrello and Alex Morton pictured with Principal Mark Platt and Teacher Deb Cabot

- Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MRWA) Wild Rice Project** - Receiving a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MRWA initiated a Muskegon Lake and Estuary Emergent Vegetation Restoration Demonstration project to reestablish wild rice, bulrush, arrowhead, sedges, and other aquatic plants at key sites. This project will help restore the watershed's historic and ecological balance.
- City of Muskegon Heights Water Filtration Plant** - During filtration plant expansion, the City of Muskegon Heights became committed to finding alternatives to the use of liquid chlorine in the filtration process, which in storage, can be extremely hazardous to workers. After demonstrating that sodium hypochlorite was a safer and effective alternative, the plant switched to sodium hypochlorite instead of chlorine in February of 2003. As a result of this achievement, the treatment plant was removed from a list of facilities using extremely hazardous chemicals in Muskegon County.
- Jeremy Wagenmaker** - A science teacher at Bunker Middle School, Jeremy Wagenmaker received an award for teaching his six graders about the life cycle of salmon. The Science of Salmon project allowed for student observation of salmon eggs hatching and the eventual release into the Muskegon River.
- Sarah Corrello and Alex Morton** - Fifth graders at Churchill School, Sarah and Alex completed an environmental report card assessment of Churchill school during their fourth and fifth grade years. Their assessment resulted in the acquisition of two air hand driers, a policy of double-sided printing in all classes, and a commitment by the school to reduce weekly newsletter distribution to the oldest sibling only. Their work not only reduced waste, but saved the school money as well.
- David Craymer** - Through a partnership with Muskegon Conservation District and P.J. Hoffmaster State Park, David Craymer, a teacher and chair of the Science Department at Muskegon High School, was able to offer his students the opportunity to monitor water quality, restore stream banks, assess habitat, and clean up shoreline areas throughout Muskegon County.
- Tom Hamilton** - Winning the Lifetime Achievement Award, Tom Hamilton is a longtime member of groups such as the White Lake Area Sport Fishing Association and the White Lake Public Advisory Council. In addition, he has been involved in a number of projects that have won Environmental Excellence Awards in the past. Tom was awarded for his uncompromising commitment to ecological principles, his generosity, and enthusiasm.

## GREATER MUSKEGON AREA IMPROVES STORM WATER MANAGEMENT

Jason Buck

The focus on storm water pollution has greatly increased over the last three decades since the Clean Water Act was introduced in 1972. Originally, the Clean Water Act controlled water pollution by regulating pollutant discharges from point sources, or known sources.

No one can deny that Michigan's waters are much cleaner today than in 1972, but many rivers, lakes, and streams are still unsafe for swimming; and fish consumption advisories remain on all of the Great Lakes.

Unfortunately, current water pollution problems may be caused from sources not easy to detect. Otherwise known as nonpoint source pollution, a considerable amount of contaminate entering surface water today comes from pollutants in storm water runoff. In urbanized areas, storm water can quickly carry contaminates into lakes and streams due to the large number of impervious surfaces such as roads and parking lots. In 1990, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began regulating nonpoint source pollution through the creation of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Storm Water Program.

The NPDES program is made up of two phases. Phase I of the storm water program is directed at medium to large municipalities and Phase II addresses smaller metropolitan areas. Under Phase I, cities with populations over 100,000 are required to develop storm water management programs as a means to control polluted discharges from storm sewer systems. Phase II storm water regulations require other designated urban areas to prepare a storm water management program that addresses public education, illegal discharges and dumping, construction site runoff, and good housekeeping practices for municipal operations. Through Phase II of the NPDES Storm Water program, a number of communities in Muskegon County were identified as urbanized areas and will need to comply with regulations for Phase II of the program.

Fortunately for Michigan, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) has made it possible for communities to work together to develop storm water management programs using a watershed based approach.

In the Muskegon area, a group known as the Muskegon Area Storm Water Committee (MASWC) is developing the area's storm water management program. This group includes members from County government and ten other communities in the Muskegon Lake, Mona Lake, and Grand River watersheds. The watershed approach has resulted in a regional storm water management program that is more effective and saves time and money.

Progress made by the MASWC includes submission of Muskegon area storm water permit applications in March of 2003, and implementation of an Illicit Discharge Elimination Plan.

Illicit discharges are any discharge of water to a water body from a storm sewer system that contains substances other than storm water runoff. For example, commercial car wash floor drains connected to an illegal sanitary sewer connections would be considered an illicit discharge.

The Muskegon County Road Commission has hired an intern to survey waters of Muskegon County's urbanized areas to find evidence of illicit discharges. Currently, water samples are being collected and are being analyzed. Follow-up screening will be completed during the summer 2004.

Over the next few months, MASWC will begin work on the Storm Water Public Education Plan. This plan will focus on a number of storm water related issues including riparian buffers, stewardship, household hazardous waste, and pesticide and fertilizer application and disposal. The MASWC will collaborate with local organizations to assist in the implementation of this plan.

The cooperation during the planning phase of this program is testimony to the dedication of greater Muskegon local governments to improve water resources in their communities. More information on the Michigan storm water management program can be found at [www.michigan.gov/deq](http://www.michigan.gov/deq) under "storm water."




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### Terminology

Gallium Arsenide (GaAs) is a chemical compound composed of gallium and arsenic. It is an important semiconductor and is used to make devices such as microwave frequency integrated circuits, infrared light emitting and laser diodes.

Cadmium A relatively rare, soft, bluish white, toxic transition metal primarily used in batteries.

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## Clean Up of Ruddiman Creek Effort Continues to Gain Support Theresa Bernhardt, RCTF

The Ruddiman Creek Task Force (RCTF) continues to involve the public in a variety of new ways. Keeping the citizenry interested while handling enormous contamination problems has not always been easy and it has never been boring.

During the summer of 2003, the RCTF reviewed the Focused Feasibility Study, presented by Earth Tech, Inc. and the State of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). The study pointed out that removal of contaminated sediments from the main branch of Ruddiman Creek was a high priority need. Overall, the study and recommendations were approved, but RCTF believes that a greater amount of contamination must be eliminated to protect the public. With this in mind, RCTF and Glenside Neighborhood Association are once again forming a team to assist the State of Michigan Restoration and Remediation Division in yet another study to determine the extent of ground water contamination in the watershed.

During this study, local residents with existing irrigation wells will be contacted for the purpose of sampling their water supply. This will save the State of Michigan thousands of dollars in well drilling and give the public a better understanding of where contaminants are present.

Dr. Richard Rediske, Senior Research Scientist at GVSU's Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI), is planning to speak at the next RCTF meeting on November 18. His presentation will combine all studies completed on the watershed in the last five years including data collected by the MDEQ Surface Water Quality and Environmental Response Divisions, the United States Army Corp of Engineers, and AWRI researchers. Dr. Rediske has interpreted these complex, lengthy studies and transposed them into one document of a more suitable length. His ability to communicate, making scientific information more understandable, is a tremendous asset to RCTF, AWRI, and the community.

After reviewing all of the studies, the MDEQ will be pursuing Clean Michigan Initiative Funds and Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes Legacy Act funding to begin removal of contaminated sediments as early as Winter of 2004. The United States Senate and State Senate Representative Gerald Van Woerkom have highlighted the need for action by recently passing a mandate calling for immediate removal of contaminated sediments from the Ruddiman Creek Watershed as soon as funding becomes available. The remediation project is expected to cost approximately 2.7 million dollars.

After seven years of work, the RCTF will continue to work hard to insure that Ruddiman Creek watershed receives the most thorough clean-up of its kind, dollar for dollar. RCTF will finalize restoration plans beginning in October of 2003. The RCTF and other partners are working hard to pursue state and federal funding for restoration and pollution prevention mechanisms to insure a healthy and safe watershed for the community to enjoy. You may assist the RCTF in its endeavors by attending their meetings or calling (231) 780-3121.

If you would like to submit information on an issue, an environmental organization, or have questions pertaining to an article, please contact:

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