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Terms in body text that are underlined in green are defined in the terminology section on page 4 of this issue.

Your Environment

A collaborative information resource for the Muskegon County Community

SPRING/SUMMER 2002

A New Look For Environmental News

The Muskegon County Health Department and the Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council (MCECC) have combined forces to bring you a wider variety of information on the health of your environment. Now called *Your Environment*, this newsletter will incorporate information provided by a broad scope of environmental organizations

throughout the County, giving you a chance to explore different perspectives and see the similarities of concerns among environmental groups.

Excited about the potential for growth and a broadened perspective, the newsletter will now be published on the MCECC web site and will double its circulation to include industry and more businesses throughout the County.

Environmental Resource Just A "Click" Away

Muskegon area citizens who are interested in environmental protection and information have another resource at their fingertips!

Anyone who has access to the World Wide Web, can find more information about air and water quality, land use trends, and environmental protection efforts by visiting the new MCECC Web site at www.mcecc.org.

The Site includes links to an

Environmental Directory; information about MCECC and its members; a calendar of environmentally related events, cleanups, meetings, and workshops in the Muskegon area; and on-line forms for Environmental Excellence Award nominations.

In addition, a feature called *What's New* has been installed to provide links and information on progressive environmental activities throughout Muskegon County.

2002 Environmental Excellence Award Winners

Making a significant contribution, demonstrating a long-standing commitment, and encouraging progress on environmental issues in Muskegon County, the following organizations and individuals were presented with the 2002 Muskegon Area Environmental Excellence Award at a banquet, held in their honor, at Muskegon Community College in April. For more information on these awards visit www.mcecc.org.

- **Muskegon Environmental Research & Education Society** for their work on a wetland education and preservation project.
- **Howmet Castings** for supporting the White River Watershed Project and implementing waste reduction/recycling programs.
- The **Dean and Nancy Kantola Farm** for 25 years of conservation practice.
- The **City of Muskegon** for creating the Lakeshore Pathway.
- The **Ruddiman Creek Task Force** for clean up of Ruddiman Creek.
- **Mercy General Health Partners** for reducing mercury use and encouraging safe environmental practices in other medical facilities.
- **Lake Michigan Federation** for ten years of environmental achievement in the Muskegon Area.
- **Kathy Evans**, of the Muskegon Conservation District, for outstanding individual achievement.
- **Florence Bright and Colette Klukos** for the pictograph *A Gathering of Swans*, illustrating the history of Muskegon community and environment.
- **Mayor Norm Ullman** for his part in improving the Whitehall environment.

Community Meetings & Events

Regulations 101: Navigating Through the Environmental, Safety, and Health Regulatory Maze Workshops

Is your manufacturing facility in compliance with all required state and federal environmental, safety, and health regulations? By attending this workshop you will meet representatives from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and Consumer and Industry Services who will show you how to navigate through the regulatory maze and identify which agencies and regulatory programs apply to your business. Registration fee: \$75.00 (Includes personal copy of *Michigan Manufacturers' Guide to Environmental, Safety, and Health Regulations - Second Edition*)

Kalamazoo - June 18, 2002
Muskegon - June 27, 2002

Contact the Environmental Assistance Center at 1-800-662-9278 for more information or register on line at www.michigan.gov/deq

Great Lakes Regional Pollution Prevention Roundtable Summer Conference

Summer 2002 Conference - August 26 - 28, 2002 at the Marriott Eton Centre in Toronto, Canada: The Steering Committee meeting, any training (potential) and tours (potential) will be held on August 26th and the main conference will be held August 27th and 28th.

Visit www.glrppr.org for more information.

Did You Know...

The State of Michigan contains an estimated 49,136 miles of river and stream.

E. Coli and Swimming Beach Water Quality

Source: Environmental Protection Agency and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, 2002

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends that *E. coli* (*Escherichia coli*) levels be used to monitor the water quality of recreational beaches of the Great Lakes in order to protect the health of swimmers. EPA chose *E. coli* because it is naturally found in the intestines of warm blooded animals, has historically been used as an indicator of the presence of animal or human waste products, and can detect the possible presence of disease causing organisms.

In 1996, an epidemiological study in Santa Monica Bay, California showed that swimmers experienced fever, nausea, and gastroenteritis, as well as cold and flu-like symptoms after swimming in waters found to contain high levels of bacteria.

There are a variety of sources that contribute bacteria and other pathogens to surface water. These sources include illicit waste connections to storm sewers or roadside ditches, septic systems, combined storm and sanitary sewer overflows, surface (rain) runoff, wild and domestic animal waste, and agricultural runoff.

The good news is that *E. coli* bacteria does not survive long in water. Factors such as wind and wave action, as well as ultraviolet light from the sun help to reduce the level of bacteria. Therefore, it is possible that two beaches, on the same lake, having different on-shore conditions, may not have the same bacteria levels.

In Michigan, public swimming beaches that are monitored may be closed or posted when the local health department determines that levels of bacteria exceed the limits established by the Public Health Code and Rule 323.1062(1) of the Part 4 Water Quality Standards. To learn more about these standards visit the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Web site at <http://www.michigan.gov/deq>.

If a monitored public beach is closed due to bacterial contamination, the local health department will continue to monitor the water quality at the beach and will lift restrictions for the beach when bacteria levels fall back within acceptable levels.

For information on Muskegon County's Public Beach Monitoring Program visit the Health Department website at www.muskegonhealth.net.



Improve Water Quality in the Bear Creek/Bear Lake Watershed!

The Muskegon Conservation District, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality will provide a training for volunteers to help inventory road stream crossings for water quality problems on June 19, 2002 from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Field dates to continue with the road/stream crossing inventory will be on June 27 and 28. You must be trained to participate!

To sign up for the training, please call Muskegon Conservation District at (231) 773-0008 or 773-0129.
Email Contact: rebecca-parker@mi.nacdnet.org.

Plant Native Plants at Heritage Landing on Muskegon Lake!

You'll learn how Michigan native plants filter water pollutants from parking lot runoff and increase wildlife habitat while providing a beautiful array of grasses and colorful flowers throughout the seasons.

Please call the Muskegon Conservation District at 773-0008 or 773-0129 for times and dates of this project. To get more information by e-mail, contact Kathy Evans at kevanismcd@aol.com.



Pollution Prevention (P2) in Wellhead Protection Zones

Laura Rauwerda, Environmental Quality Analyst, MDEQ Pollution Prevention

The Environmental Assistance Division (EAD) is working with the Wellhead Protection Unit of the Drinking Water and Radiological Protection Division to promote and enhance opportunities to implement pollution prevention (P2) in [Wellhead Protection Areas](#) in Michigan. The Michigan Wellhead Protection Program (WHPP) assists local communities using groundwater for their municipal drinking water supply systems in protecting their water source. A WHPP minimizes the potential for groundwater contamination by identifying and protecting the area that contributes water to municipal water supply wells and avoids costly groundwater clean-ups. According to the Department of Environmental Quality, Ravenna and Whitehall are planning, or have begun, wellhead protection programs for their community water supplies.

In 1996, amendments to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act created the Drinking Water Revolving Fund. This fund is administered by the DEQ and provides financial assistance to communities for local wellhead protection programs.

Currently, many WHPPs in Michigan are moving into a voluntary, proactive phase to actually identify and implement a higher level of management to include businesses, land use planning, local ordinances, [Brownfield](#) re-development, and pollution prevention. This phase is designed to identify and implement mechanisms to manage and minimize threats to public water supply systems and provide opportunity for public participation.

WHPP coordination is a function of local municipal wellhead protection teams consisting of representatives from local units of government, county health departments, and regional and state agencies. Through collaborative efforts, the following P2 activities are being developed within wellhead protection areas in Michigan to provide local communities with an even greater opportunity to work together toward the common goal of protecting groundwater and municipal drinking water supply systems :

- Conducting waste reduction assessments for local units of government and businesses within the wellhead protection zone using the Retired Engineer Technical Assistance Program (RETAP);
- Promoting voluntary waste reduction for businesses in wellhead protection zones through partnerships such as the Michigan Business Pollution Prevention Partnership and industrial sector partnerships (printers, chemical manufacturers, metal finishers, pulp and paper, agriculture);
- Enhancing opportunity for small businesses to implement P2 technology in wellhead protection zones through the Small Business P2 Loan Program; and
- Technology demonstration sites to promote P2 and technology transfer in wellhead protection zones.

For more information on WHPP, contact the DEQ's Pollution Prevention Division at (616) 356-0034.

Environmental Coordinating Council Welcomes New Project Director



Liz Vos, Project Director

On April 17, Liz Vos officially began working with the Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council (MCECC) as Project Director. Ms. Vos' position was made available by a generous grant from the L.C. and Margaret Walker Foundation and the Community Foundation for Muskegon County.

Vos has an extensive history working with environmental issues in Muskegon. For eight years she worked for the Lake Michigan Federation assisting in habitat protection projects; White Lake contaminated sediments public participation projects; promoting the US Environmental Protection Agency's monitoring and reporting on the status of Lake Michigan water quality, tributary loading, air deposition, and the health of aquatic species; and a project to educate physicians on diagnosing and treating environmentally related illness. She co-authored *Promoting a Healthy Environment: A Practical Guide to Avoiding Common Environmental Hazards*. She also has experience in Web design and desktop publication.

Her future plans with the Coordinating Council include:

- Surveying group, organization, and agency environmental activities and needs throughout the County.
- Acting as a liaison for the Council with other County environmental groups.
- Maintaining the Council Web site.
- Assisting with general MCECC administrative functions.

You can contact Liz at liz@mcecc.org

Terminology

Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA) - A defined area around a drinking water well where contaminants could enter and pollute the well. A WHPA minimizes the potential for contamination by identifying and protecting the area that contributes water to water supply wells and avoids costly groundwater clean-ups.

Brownfield - The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines brownfield as an "abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facility where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination."

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

Jill Montgomery
 Muskegon County Health Department
 at montgomeryji@co.muskegon.mi.us (231) 724-1293
 or
 Liz Vos
 Project Director, MCECC
 at liz@mcecc.org (231) 557-2915

Good Websites

- **Great Lake Contaminates & Human Health**
<http://www.epa.gov/glnpo/health/atsdr.htm>
- **Right To Know Initiative Pollution Prevention & Toxics**
<http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/chemrtk/index.htm>

Good Information

- **Muskegon County Bathing Beach Water Quality**
<http://www.muskegonhealth.net/beachmontioring.htm>
- **Window to My Environment EPA**
<http://www.epa.gov/enviro/wme/>

Muskegon County
 Environmental Coordinating Council

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