



# Your Environment

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

WINTER 2004

## Watersheds 101 Sources: EPA, 2003; Muskegon Conservation District

A watershed is an area of land that catches rain or snow and drains to a specific marsh, stream, river, lake or groundwater supply. Muskegon County can be subdivided into a number of smaller watersheds or sub-basins. These sub-basins catch rain or snow, feed into small rivers, lakes, and streams, emptying into one of the major watershed systems that drains into Lake Michigan.

Increases in population, land development, and economic activity increase demand for water, waste disposal, and natural resources. These activities increase the amount of pollution entering our waters and alter natural habitats. Without appropriate management, human impact on watershed can seriously harm the health of a watershed and the water it supplies for drinking and recreational



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### What you can do to protect your watershed

- Use commercial car washes to clean automobiles.
- When landscaping, buy plants that use less water and require less fertilizer.
- Use only as much pesticide and fertilizer as your plants need.
- Plant native plant buffers along streams, rivers, lakes and ponds.
- Maintain your vehicle to prevent drips and leaks.
- Dispose of all chemical and biological wastes properly.
- Reuse your lawn waste by mulching or composting.
- Encourage the planting of shade trees along rivers and streams to reduce thermal pollution, improving habitat for fish and wildlife.
- Get involved by contacting your area watershed stewardship group listed on page two of this issue.

Terms in body text that are underlined and printed in green are defined in the terminology section on page 2 of this issue.

### Good Web Sites Good Information

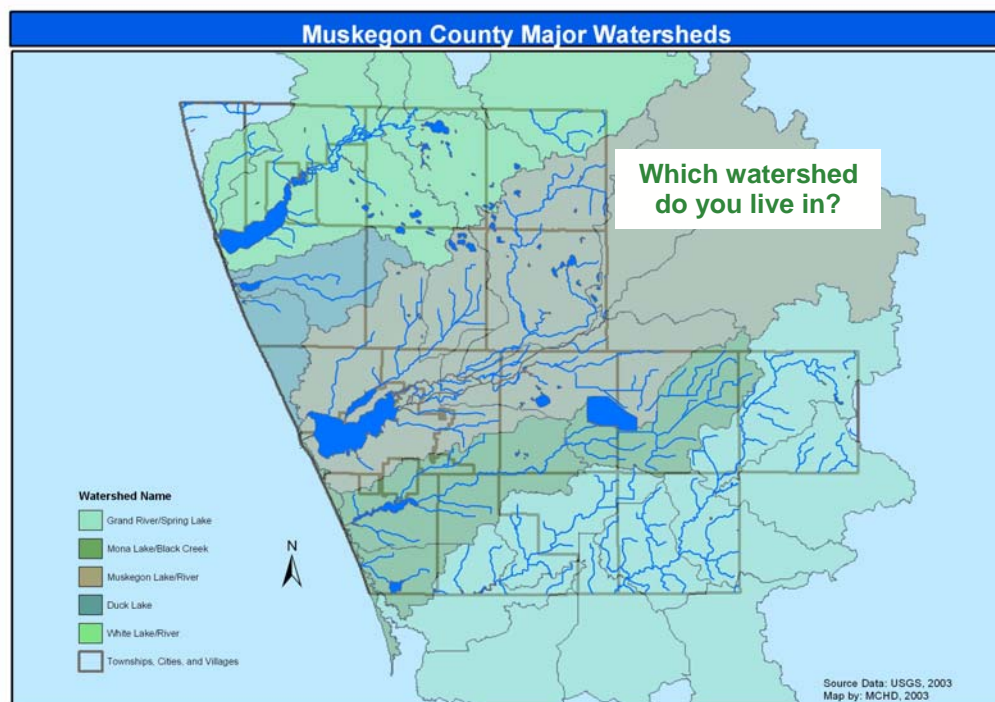
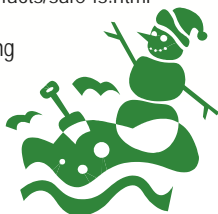
Watersheds - EPA  
[epa.gov/owow/watershed/](http://epa.gov/owow/watershed/)

Center for Watershed Protection  
[cwp.org/](http://cwp.org/)

Waterborne Diseases - CDC  
[cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/list\\_waterborne](http://cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/list_waterborne)

Safe Substitutes at Home - EPA  
[es.epa.gov/techinfo/facts/safe-fs.html](http://es.epa.gov/techinfo/facts/safe-fs.html)

Plastic Bag Recycling  
[envirobag.com](http://envirobag.com)



## Muskegon Area Watershed Stewardship Information

**Muskegon River Watershed Assembly**  
www.mrwa.org - (231)591-2324

**Bear Creek and Bear Lake Watershed**  
www.muskegoncd.org - (231)773-0008

**White Lake Public Advisory Council**  
www.whitelakeonline.org/wl/whitelake.htm

**Great Lakes National Program Office**  
www.epa.gov/grtlakes/lakemich

**GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute**  
http://gvsu.edu/wri

**Mona Lake Watershed Council**  
annoeljka.steinman@earthlink.net

**Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council**  
www.muskegoncd.org - (231)773-0008

**Ruddiman Creek Task Force**  
tmbernhardt@comcast.net

**Lake Michigan Federation**  
www.lakemichigan.org - (616)850-0745

**White Lake Association**  
www.mlswa.org/White-Lake-829

## RECYCLE MUSKEGON!



A Guide to Recycling Opportunities in Muskegon County

A project of the Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council

AVAILABLE IN JANUARY 2004!

Get your copy by calling 231.557.2915

or contacting by email at liz@mcecc.org or skyprice@iserv.net

### Crypto what?

Sources: Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003; Muskegon Water Filtration Annual Report; MCHD, 2003

*Cryptosporidiosis* (krip-toe-spo-rid-e-o-sis), is a diarrheal disease caused by a microscopic parasite, *Cryptosporidium parvum*. It can live in the intestine of humans and animals and is passed in the stool of an infected person or animal. Crypto can be found in soil, food, water, or surfaces that have been contaminated with the feces from infected humans or animals. Both the disease and the parasite are known as "Crypto."

The parasite is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive outside the body for long periods of time and makes it very resistant to chlorine disinfection. During the past two decades, Crypto has become recognized as one of the most common causes of waterborne disease (drinking and recreational) in humans in the United States. The parasite is found in every region of the United States and throughout the world.

Symptoms include diarrhea, loose or watery stool, stomach cramps, upset stomach, and a slight fever; however, some people do not have any symptoms at all.

The Muskegon Water Filtration Plant has tested for *Cryptosporidium* in both Lake Michigan and in treated public water supplies. *Cryptosporidium* has never been detected in Muskegon treated water; however, the organism is present in Lake Michigan, coming from suspected animal wastes in the watershed.

"Crypto" is eliminated at the water filtration plant by an effective treatment combination including filtration, sedimentation and disinfection. Between 1999 and 2001, four cases of *cryptosporidium* have been diagnosed in Muskegon County. None in 2002.

### Crypto can be spread:

- By swallowing water from swimming pools, hot tubs, jacuzzis, fountains, lakes, rivers, springs, ponds, or streams that is contaminated with *Cryptosporidium*.
- By putting something in your mouth or accidentally swallowing something that has come in contact with the stool of an infected person or animal.
- By swallowing Crypto picked up from surfaces (such as lounge chairs, picnic tables, bathroom fixtures, changing tables) contaminated with stool from an infected person or animal.

### Terminology

thermal pollution The excessive raising or lowering of water temperature above or below normal seasonal ranges in a waterbody as a result of hot or cold water entering the system.

parasite An organism that grows, feeds and is sheltered on or in a different organism while contributing nothing to the host.

biodegradable A "biodegradable" product has the ability to break down safely and relatively quickly into the raw materials of nature and disappear into the environment.

**Are you interested in receiving this newsletter at your home or business?**

Send an email to [montgomeryji@co.muskegon.mi.us](mailto:montgomeryji@co.muskegon.mi.us) or [liz@mcecc.org](mailto:liz@mcecc.org) for more information.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARD COMMITTEE SEEKS NOMINATIONS

The Muskegon Area Environmental Excellence Awards (MAEEA) are given for true excellence in environmental pursuits. The MAEEA committee is seeking nominations for individuals, organizations, governmental units, businesses or industries which have gone the extra mile in remediating, protecting or enhancing our local environment. The committee cannot do this without you! You are encouraged to submit nominations by February 11, 2004. This year's nomination form is located on page 4 of this newsletter. Winners will be announced at a banquet in April 2004.

Over the past ten years, awards have gone to a diverse roster of deserving people and groups, including: City of Muskegon Heights Water Filtration Plant, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, U.S. Post Office, White River Township, elementary students Sarah Corrello and Alex Morton, Dr. Rick Rediske of the Annis Water Resources Institute,

Future Farmers of Montague, Sealed Power Hy-Lift Division, Muskegon Chronicle's Jeff Alexander, Ross Park Elementary, Burdick & Jackson Laboratories, Ruddiman Creek Task Force, and Michigan Nature Association. Lifetime Achievement Awards have gone to dedicated environmentalists as Tom Hamilton, Wint Dahlstrom and Kasey (Mary K.) Hartz.

Donations are accepted to cover costs of the banquet and award plaques. They may be sent to MAEEA, c/o Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council, P.O. Box 567, Muskegon, MI 49443-0567.

Nomination forms, which include a list of basic criteria, can also be obtained at the Muskegon Conservation District, City of Muskegon Planning Office and on-line at [www.mcecc.org](http://www.mcecc.org). Questions or requests for duplicate forms can be forwarded to 231-755-3478, [skyprice@iserv.net](mailto:skyprice@iserv.net), or MAEEA at the above address.

## Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council (MCECC) Subcommittees

Along with attending executive and general committee meetings, a number of MCECC members belong to subcommittees. These subcommittees meet regularly and focus on targeted issues of environmental concern in the County. Participation in subcommittee activities is also open to any area resident who has expertise or interest. For more information please contact Liz Vos at 231-557-2915 or [liz@mcecc.org](mailto:liz@mcecc.org).

The **water quality** committee reports on the status of projects within area waterways. The committee members have initiated public involvement and programs in areas of stormwater management, priority water quality concerns, and created public education materials about current watershed issues. Watershed groups that provide regular updates include the Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council, White Lake Public Advisory Council, Ruddiman Creek Task Force, Mona Lake, Black Creek, & Little Black Creek Watershed Council, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, Save Our Shoreline, and the newly formed Ryerson Creek and Bear Creek/Bear Lake watershed.

The **ground water** committee develops strategies to increase awareness and protection of groundwater resources. Focus areas include educating new homeowners on nutrient management and septic tank maintenance, as well as working to create recommendations for county-wide groundwater protection.

The **recycling** committee goals are to increase knowledge and use of recycling options among area residents. Committee members participate in the West Michigan Electronic Waste Recycling Coalition and the Muskegon County Solid Waste Planning Committee. The recycling committee is presently offering a guide to recycling for County residents that will be available in print and on-line at [www.recyclemuskegon.org](http://www.recyclemuskegon.org).

The **environmental education** committee concentrates on increasing education opportunities for students and teachers at local schools. This subcommittee is made up of resource professionals, business owners, industrial leaders, educators, and other interested community members.

The **air quality** committee is made up of local professionals that actively participate or maintain contact with air quality monitoring projects throughout Muskegon and Michigan.

The **Earth Day** committee plans and implements Earth Day activities celebrating and promoting environmental sustainability and stewardship.

**Wildlife/forestry** is a new committee that will begin to meet in January of 2004. This group will work to coordinate efforts to restore, protect and enhance wildlife habitat such as grasslands, wetlands and forest areas, protecting wildlife in these areas. Preventing turtle road-kill by installing low profile fences along the Muskegon River flats/US 31 is one potential project.

The **Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)** was created in March 2003 by Director Steven Chester to advise the DEQ on its major programs and policies. The EAC consists of 25 members representing a wide range of interests affected by DEQ activities including citizen organizations, the regulated community, local government, academia, and others. Janet Vail, an MCECC member from Grand Valley State University Water Resources Institute is a local representative.

## MUSKEGON AREA ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

### Nomination Form

The purpose of the Muskegon Area Environmental Excellence Awards is to recognize individuals, organizations, businesses, and groups for significant contributions to a better environment in Muskegon County.

**GENERAL CRITERIA FOR AWARD NOMINATIONS:**

1. The overall environmental contribution of a recipient should be significant.
2. The results of the recipient's efforts should be clear and demonstrable.
3. Individual nominees within an organization will be judged on the merit of their projects rather than on their organization's record.
4. Awards may be given for evident progress in cases where a long-term progress is underway.
5. Award recipients must reside or work in Muskegon County or be nominated for a project that benefits Muskegon County.

Name of Person/  
Organization being nominated \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

What did the nominee do to improve the environment or environmental awareness in Muskegon County?

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Approximate starting and completion dates of project \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Individual  
Making this nomination \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anyone else we should  
Contact about this nomination? YES NO If so, name and phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach any related materials (newspaper articles, documents, brochures, etc.) to complete your nomination.  
For further eligibility information, call 231-755-3478. Please mail your nomination form by February 11, 2004 to MAEEA  
Committee, c/o Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council, P.O. Box 567, Muskegon, MI 49443-0567.

## Plastic or Paper? The never ending debate

Sources: John Roach, National Geographic News, 2003; Film and Bag Federation, 2003; Envirobag, 2003



Plastic grocery bag litter and waste has become a worldwide problem. The countries of Taiwan, South Africa, Australia, and Bangladesh have already begun to heavily tax or ban plastic bag use altogether and several other regions, including England and some U.S. cities, are considering similar actions.

### What's the Problem?

Plastic bags are so cheap to produce, sturdy, plentiful, easy to carry and store that they have captured at least 80 percent of the grocery and convenience store market since they were introduced a quarter century ago, according to the Arlington, Virginia-based American Plastics Council.

As a result, the totes are everywhere. They sit balled up and stuffed into the one that hangs from the pantry door. They line bathroom trash bins. They carry clothes to the gym. They clutter landfills. They flap from trees. They float in the breeze. They clog roadside drains. They drift on the high seas.

"The numbers are absolutely staggering," said Vincent Cobb, an entrepreneur in Chicago, Illinois, who recently launched the Web site Reusablebags.com to educate the public about what he terms the "true costs" associated with the spread of "free" bags. He sells reusable bags as a viable solution. According to Cobb's EPA based calculations, somewhere between 500 billion and a trillion plastic bags are consumed worldwide each year. Of those, millions (1 to 3% of total) end up in the litter stream outside of landfills.

### So, Paper or Plastic?

Plastic bags are often made from virgin gas and crude oil, which we know is not a renewable resource. In addition, escaping plastic bags can pose a serious threat to wildlife. Seabirds and marine mammals are especially vulnerable because they often mistake the bags for food or become entangled in them. Because plastic bags do not break down, each one released into the environment becomes a continual problem.

Paper bags have their cons too. While they are highly [biodegradable](#) and are made from a renewable natural resource, they take up more space in landfills, cost more to transport due to weight, and the manufacturing process releases sulfur dioxide into the air.

In spite of the pollution problem, the Film and Bag Federation, a trade group within the Society of the Plastics Industry based in Washington, D.C., said the right choice between paper and plastic bags is clearly plastic. "Compared to paper grocery bags, plastic grocery bags consume 40 percent less energy, generate 80 percent less solid waste, produce 70 percent fewer atmospheric emissions, and release up to 94 percent fewer waterborne wastes."

### What can I do?

First and foremost, you could take your own reusable cloth totes when shopping; and, if you insist on using plastic or paper, recycle or reuse the bags. If you plan on recycling, a number of resources exist throughout Muskegon County, but unless you are able to sew, cloth bags are not easy to find.

#### Local Schools with Active Envirobag Recycling Programs

Muskegon Christian  
Oakridge Public  
Muskegon Seventh Day Adventist  
Shettler School  
Phillips Elementary  
Edgewood Elementary – Fruitport  
Holton Elementary  
St. Michael Elementary  
Nims Elementary  
Twin Lake Elementary

While most curbside recycling programs do not accept plastic bags, Wal-Mart has a recycling bin located at each entrance door. These bins accept plastic bags from any store. In addition, through an organization called Envirobag.com, a number of local schools have recycling programs in place. The schools are paid up to \$1 per pound of collected plastic bags, making the project a great fund raiser. Envirobag accepts plastic bags from any store, but will only pay the school for bags collected from Farmer Jack, Food Town, or Meijer in our area. For more on the Envirobag program, call 1-800-866-3954.

If you are looking for cloth bags, a good resource is [clothbag.com](#). This company manufactures cloth bags made from recycled materials beginning at \$3.75 each. Ordering can be done on the internet or by phone at (770) 393-0058.

## Congratulations to ADAC Plastics!

On July 28, 2003, Governor Granholm announced the designation of two ADAC Plastics facilities as Clean Corporate Citizens (C3) in Muskegon County. To qualify, ADAC completed their International Organization for Standardization environmental certification (ISO 14001) and have committed themselves to reducing cardboard and scrap from landfills; reduce energy consumption; implement solvent recovery systems; reduce paint line emissions; and work toward reductions in chemical use. With these two designations, ADAC Plastics now joins General Motors and the Ford Motor Company with the most Clean Corporate Citizen facilities in the State of Michigan

ADAC Plastics is a full-service automotive supplier, making door handles and components, cowl vent grilles, exterior trim and marker lighting for worldwide auto makers. Founded in Grand Rapids, Mich. in 1975, ADAC has locations in the United States and England, totaling over 750,000 square feet of manufacturing space and employing more than 1,100 people.

To qualify for a Clean Corporate Citizen (C3) designation, candidates must adopt a facility-specific environmental management system and active pollution prevention initiatives, and have a consistent record of compliance with applicable environmental requirements. Clean Corporate Citizens are eligible for certain regulatory benefits under the State of Michigan’s environmental programs including expedited permit approval and reduced monitoring and reporting oversight. In the current C3 program there are benefits available in air permitting, ground/surface water discharging, and underground storage tanks. The program is open to establishments regulated under any of Michigan’s environmental statutes. A voluntary program, designations are valid for one year and must be renewed annually.

To apply for the C3 program, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) recommends a pre-application meeting with a member of the MDEQ staff to answer questions about the program, review application requirements, and provide an overview of operations at their establishment.

For more information on the Clean Corporate Citizen program and benefits, visit the MDEQ at [www.michigan.gov/mdeq](http://www.michigan.gov/mdeq) clicking on “Assistance and Support Services” then “Environmental Incentives” or call the Environmental Science and Service Division of the MDEQ at (800) 662-9278.

**At ADAC, we believe that when it comes to the environment, regulatory compliance represents a minimum...Responsible environmental practices are in the company’s and community’s best interest. We have done our best to become a sustainable enterprise - - to be a successful automotive supplier, while at the same time protecting and preserving our natural environment.**

*Jim Teets, President and CEO  
ADAC Plastics*

**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](mailto:montgomeryji@co.muskegon.mi.us)  
 (231) 724-1293  
 or  
**Liz Vos Project Director, MCECC**  
 at [liz@mcecc.org](mailto:liz@mcecc.org) (231) 557-2915



**Muskegon County  
Environmental Coordinating Council**

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Muskegon, Michigan 49440**

