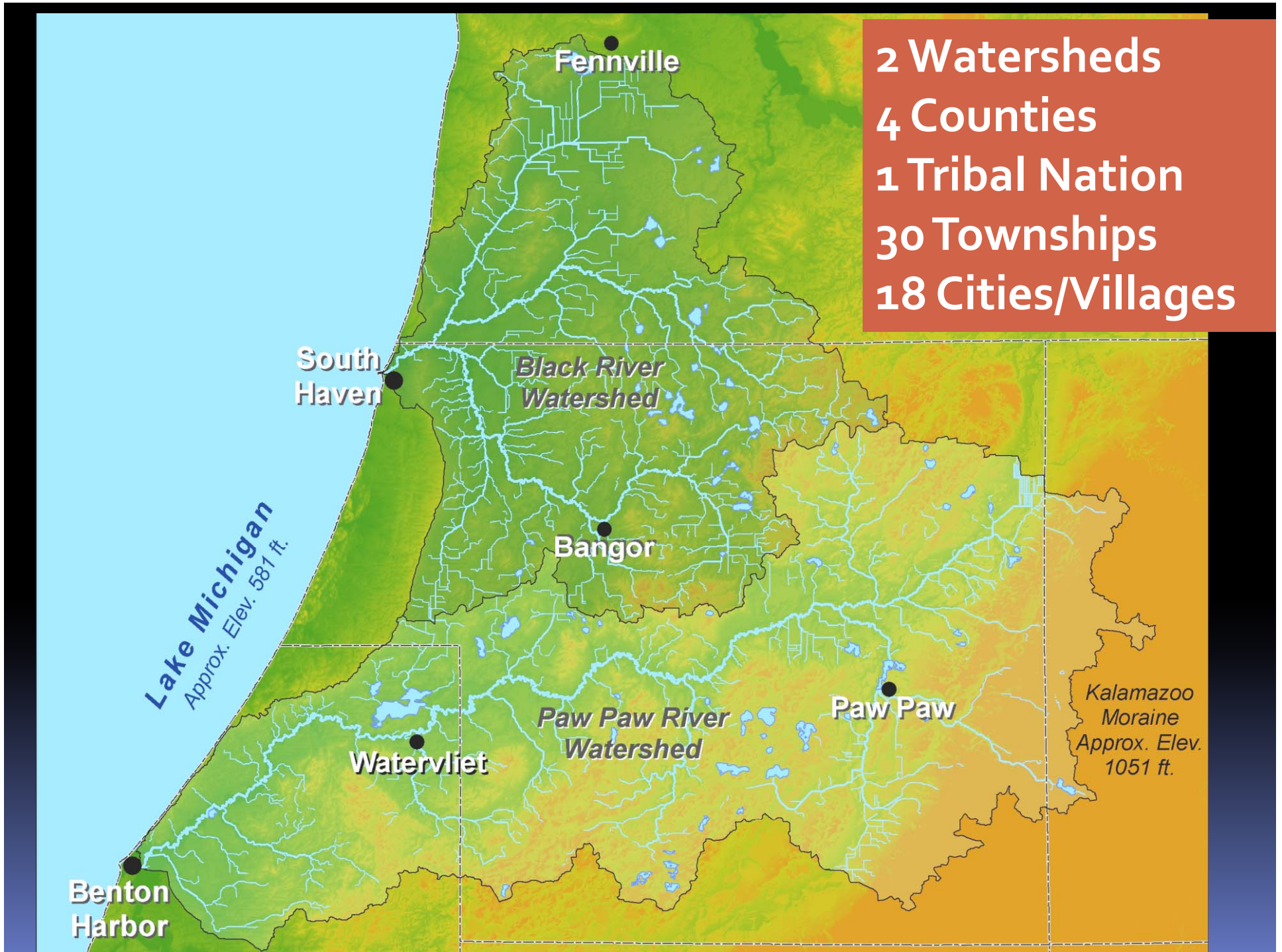




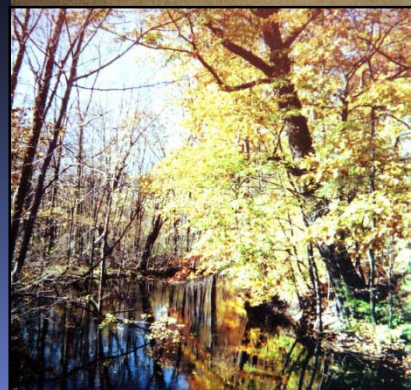
# **2011 Overview**

**2 Watersheds**  
**4 Counties**  
**1 Tribal Nation**  
**30 Townships**  
**18 Cities/Villages**



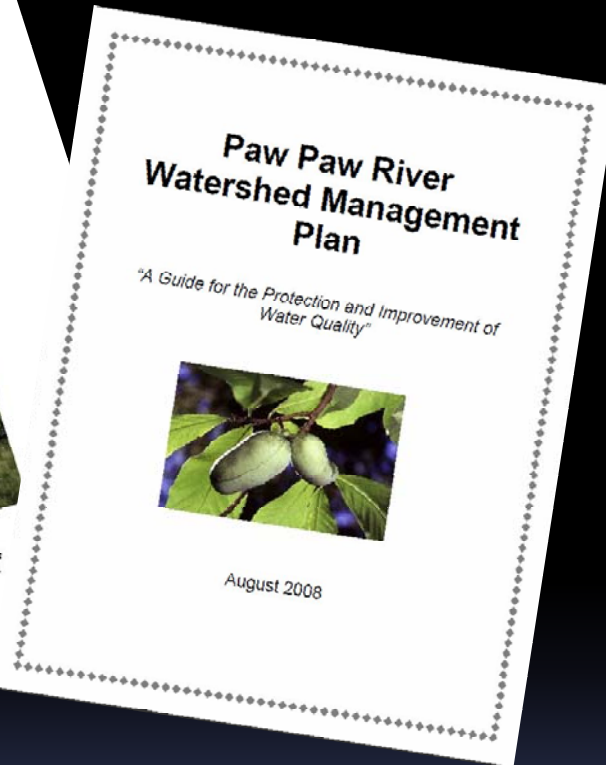
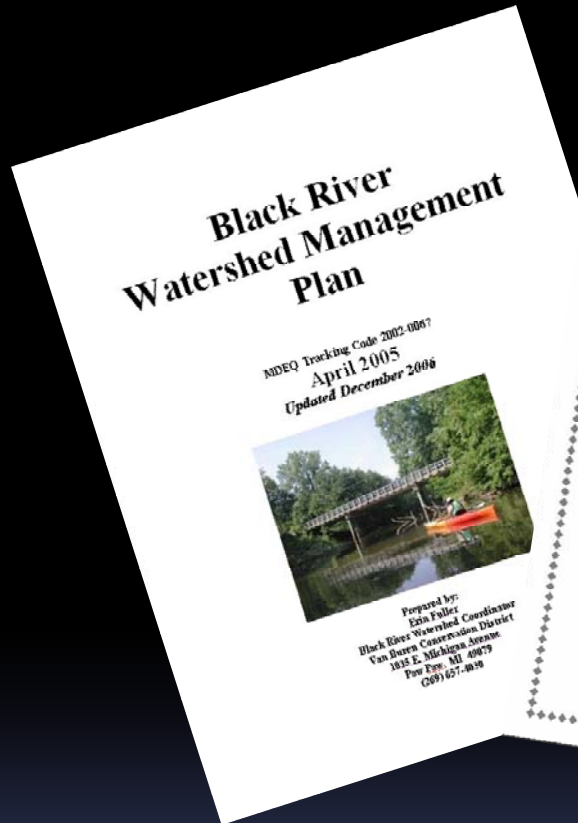
# Two Rivers Coalition

- 501(c)3 formed in 2009
- A membership organization
- **Our Mission** - working to protect the health of the Black River and Paw Paw River Watersheds through conservation, education, and advocacy.
- **Our Vision** - Clean rivers and lakes





# Watershed Management Plans



- Maps
- Photos
- Fascinating facts and figures
- Action plans



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

# WHAT DO WE DO?

Promote healthy lakes,  
streams and rivers by:

- Encouraging Conservation
- Increasing Awareness
- Promoting Good Practices
- Forming Partnerships



# Major Partners - 2011

- Van Buren Conservation District
- Van Buren County Drain Commissioner
- Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
- Freshwater Future/River Network
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- Michigan Association of Environmental Professionals
- Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
- Bangor South Haven Heritage Water Trail Association
- Paddling Groups
- City of South Haven
- Village of Paw Paw (Maple Lake)
- The Depot
- Foundry Hall
- Michigan Maritime Museum





# Conservation, Education & Advocacy

- Website/E-News
- Campaigns
- Workshops/Events
- Supporting Partner Projects
- Increasing Membership & Support
- Next Year...





ABOUT US THE WATERSHEDS PROGRAMS NEWS AND RESOURCES MEMBERSHIP/DONATIONS

December, 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Large view calendar: [Here](#)

Join Us

Donate

**24-Hour Pollution Hotlines**

Play a part in keeping our lakes, streams and rivers clean.  
Report Activities That Are

**Two Rivers**

Welcome!

Explore and discover resources in the Black River and Paw Paw River and advocacy.

Our goal is to be your source of information about the Black and Paw Paw River Watersheds here in Southwest Michigan. We hope our web site will provide you with accurate and thought provoking information about these watersheds and the community we live in. We believe that an informed and engaged community is the key to making this one of the best places to live and play. Please look around and let us know if there is information that you would like for us to include on our web site.

**Looking for a specific topic? Try Search at the top of the page.**

The Black and Paw Paw Rivers drain lands in Allegan, Berrien, Kalamazoo and Van Buren Counties. The Black River flows into Lake Michigan at South Haven. In Benton Harbor, the Paw Paw River flows into the St. Joseph River which then flows to Lake Michigan.

**PROGRAMS**

- 24-Hour Pollution Hotlines
- Phosphorus Reduction
- Septic System Best Practices
- Aquatic Buffers
- Wetland Protection and Restoration
- Garlic Mustard
- Waterfront Wisdom

Watersheds with us. the wonderful health of the Black River and Paw Paw River, conservation, education,

**TRC 3rd Annual Meeting**

**Presentations:**

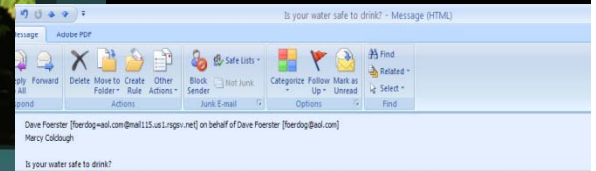
- Protecting public health and water quality with well and septic systems inspection at time of sale. Eric Pessel
- A light and lively look at the geological history of SW Michigan for the last 9,752 years! Chuck Nelson

Full details [here](#)

**It's official!**

SWMLC closed on the purchase of the 120 acre Garvey property. This purchase protects one mile of frontage on the Black River and the vital wildlife habitat that exists there.

Click [here](#) for story and photos.



**TRC 3rd Annual Meeting Wednesday, 14-Dec-11**

Lawrence Conference Center - 6:30pm

**Do you know if your water is safe to drink?**



Leaky septic systems can pollute our inland lakes, streams and Lake Michigan. Leaky septic systems may also pollute your drinking water!

Friend on Facebook  
Follow on Twitter  
Connect to a Friend



In a recent exchange with Eric Pessel, Director Barry-Eaton District Health Department, he had this to say about well and septic systems: "In the first three years of our program, we evaluated 5013 well and/or septic systems. The overall failure rate was 24%. Twenty-six percent of sites had a sewage failure condition and 22% a well failure condition. The facts are we have all types of soil conditions in our two county district not much unlike many other counties in southwest Michigan. Something else to think about...while age of a system is

"We want this website to be a one-stop-shop for people wanting information on water quality issues in our community. We believe that being informed and engaged is the key to making this community one of the best places to live and play. We all want clean water, and this website will help get the message out on how to protect and improve our precious waterbodies." -



# Campaign - Waterfront Wisdom



**As a Waterfront Homeowner, You Have a Unique Opportunity to Contribute to the Health of Your Local Waterway**

**In Van Buren County –  
opportunity for assessment  
reduction!**

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



# Campaign - Zero-in-the-Middle



You are not just applying  
fertilizer to your lawn!

*Allegan County*

Effective January 1, 2009

*Van Buren County*

Effective January 1, 2010

**State of Michigan**

Effective January 1, 2012



**LAWNS ARE STILL GREEN  
OUR WATER STAYS CLEAN**

**Be Kind to  
Our Waters  
Buy  
Phosphorous Free  
Fertilizers**

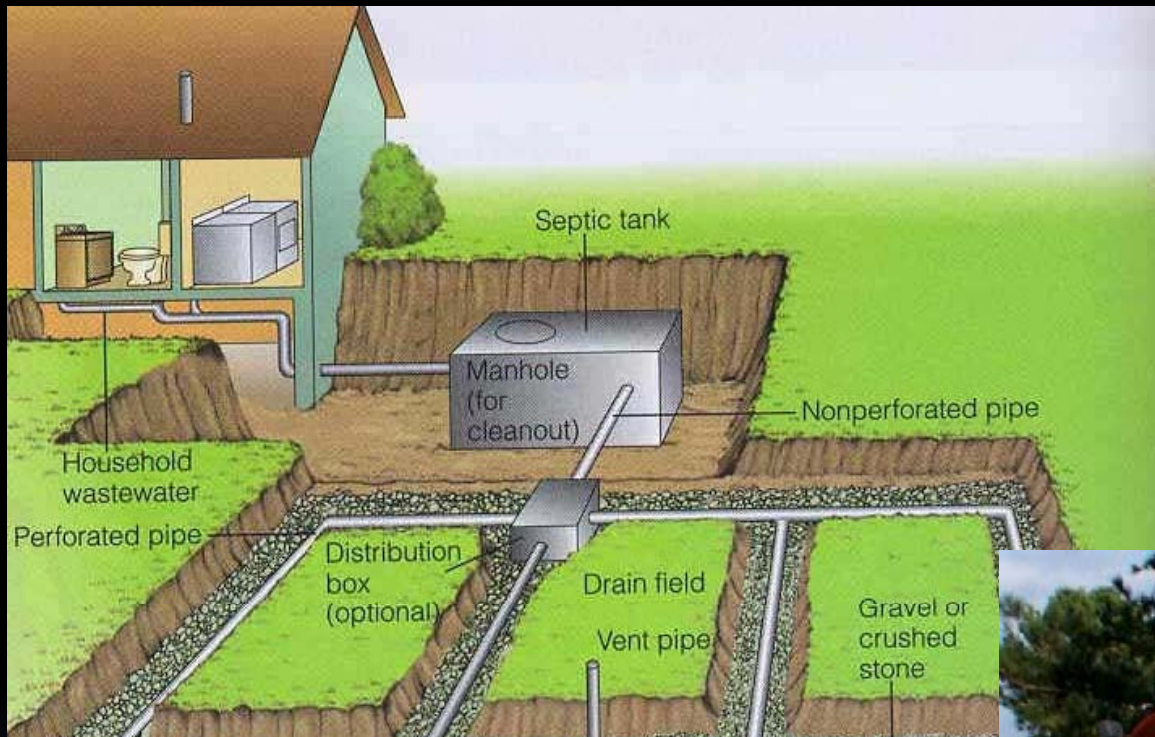
**Look for 0  
in the  
middle!**



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



# Campaign – Septic Systems



**Pump It Every  
Three Years!**





# 2010 - Paw Paw River Odyssey

## Paddling with a purpose

*Hartford man travels length of Paw Paw River to draw attention to unique waterway*

**By Scott Aiken – H-P Staff**

Published: Sunday, November 7, 2010 1:07 PM EST

The Paw Paw River isn't known as a destination for canoeing and kayaking.

Kevin Haight is working to change that.

To raise awareness of water quality issues in the important river ecosystem, the Hartford resident paddled a kayak the stream's entire 66-mile length.

Haight divided his kayaking odyssey into 11 sections. Starting at the Maple Lake Dam in Paw Paw on Aug. 22, he completed one part each weekend, sometimes accompanied by other kayakers. He was to finish the last leg Saturday, paddling from the Coloma Road bridge in Riverside to Benton Harbor.

Because vast



Photo courtesy Kevin Haight Kevin Haight paddles the Paw Paw River earlier this year. To draw attention to this unique water system and get locals thinking about water quality, he kayaked, in sections, all 66 miles of the stream.

**Raised - \$1,368.50**

**Presentations –**

**Sarett Nature Center**

**Paw Paw Chamber of Commerce**



# Paw Paw Paddle Events



Dignitaries Larry Nielsen, Paw Paw Village Manager, Nadine Jarvis, Maple Lake Association President, and Roman Plaszczak, Paw Paw Village President join together to launch the Paw Paw River Paddle







# Black River Tour Garvey Property





# Transportation & Environment Workshop

*Focus on Water Quality and Flooding*

Tuesday, March 22, 2011

1:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Free and Open to the Public

Berrien Springs, Michigan

Andrews University, Campus Center, Lincoln Room







# Maritime Museum Display



# 11

## Keeping Our Water Clean...

**Quality of Life:** The natural beauty and recreational opportunities in the Black River watershed attract many visitors to this area. There is little wonder why so many choose to live here. Clean water is an essential element of that quality.



Water is essential to life. Our streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands provide drinking water, recreational opportunities and wildlife habitat. We use water for farming, industry, showering, washing clothes, flushing toilets and watering lawns. The force and beauty of rivers and the peace and splendor of lakes attract people. Our water resources are of major environmental, social and economic value, but they face enormous conservation challenges. Pollution threatens our health and the health of the watershed now and for future generations. Pollution comes from many sources, but it's not too late to do your part to help.

**Black River Watershed:** A watershed is all of the land area that catches rain and snow that then drains to a lake or river – in this case, the Black River. You are standing in the Black River watershed right now! Almost every human activity and land use puts some pressure on the watershed and has the potential to impact our water quality. Our decisions today about where and how we build our homes and what activities we pursue on the land and water will determine the legacy we will leave our children.



### The next time it rains

watch the water as it runs off your roof and driveway. Where does it go? Usually, you will see it flowing to a storm drain or a ditch. Some soaks into the ground and replenishes our groundwater, but some washes off lawns and streets and into our streams.

The Black River starts a long way from where you're standing now – its watershed encompasses 287 square miles! Imagine all of the pollutants that can enter the river between there and here, near its outlet into Lake Michigan: soils washing off unplanted fields, pet waste washing off your lawn, or motor oil dripping onto the street from your neighbor's clutter.

In a healthy watershed, vegetation and wetlands slow the flow of water, filter pollutants and infiltrate water into the soil. We can help keep our rivers clean by doing our part to reduce pollution around our homes.



**Bottled water:** All of the water in commercial bottles is treated at a water treatment plant. While bottled water is convenient, it is not always the best choice. Drinking water from the tap is usually safe and often tastes better.



**Wetlands:** The Black River watershed is home to a variety of wetlands. These areas are important for filtering pollutants and sediments from the water before it reaches the river. Wetlands also provide habitat for many species of plants and animals.



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# River Rescue





# Watervliet Dam Removal



**Restoration In Progress**



**Watervliet Dams Removal**  
Soon the Paw Paw River will run free from Maple Lake. (Inflow of Paw Paw to Lake Michigan.)

**Funding provided by**



These dams once provided significant economic benefit to the community. Now the dams are in disrepair. Their removal will eliminate maintenance costs and improve:

- water quality
- aquatic habitat
- fish passage and safety for all river users.

**Restoration work will include:**

- Prepare the site and create construction access
- Remove the spillway and diversion dams
- Restore the river channel and allow water flow in the historic channel and mill race
- Repair the streambanks and plant native trees and shrubs

For more information visit: [www.swmpc.org/watervlietdam.asp](http://www.swmpc.org/watervlietdam.asp)





# Wetland Protection/ Restoration

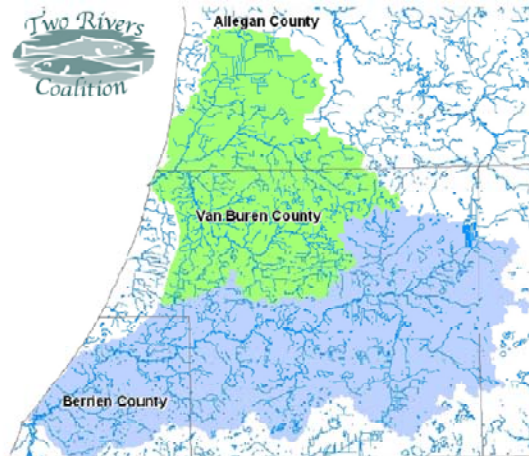
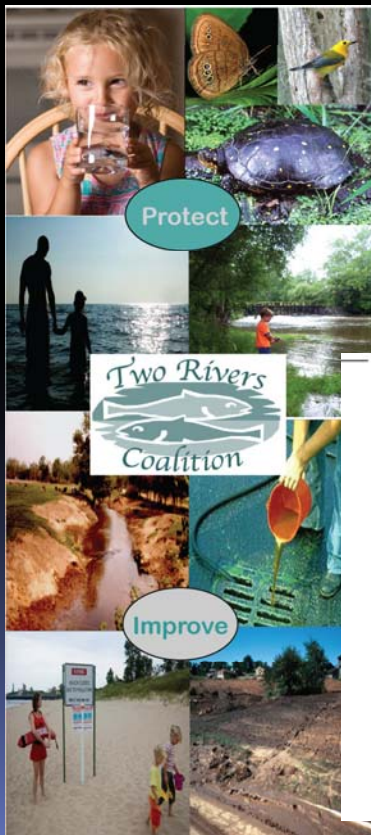
**Protecting 662 acres of wetland in the  
Black and Paw Paw River Watersheds!**





# Increasing Membership & Support

	2009	2010	2011
Contacts	400	506	513 (+86)
Members	75	86	157
Annual Meeting Attendance	65	73	????



TRC is a citizen protect the heal River Watershe advocacy. All a extent allowed by

TRC's efforts include:

- ♦ Informing ai
- ♦ Sponsoring stream bani
- ♦ Protecting v partners
- ♦ Educating the general public about water friendly lawn care, riparian buffers, wetland protection, septic systems and other watershed issues

Join Two Rivers Coalition at [www.tworiverscoalition.org](http://www.tworiverscoalition.org)



November 30, 2010

Name  
Org  
Address lines  
City, State Zip

Dear ,

You were most likely shocked and saddened like I was to hear about the oil spill on the Kalamazoo River. How could something like this happen to our precious waters? What a wake up call—a loud alarm—reminding me that the threats to the Black and Paw Paw Rivers are real.

The Black River and Paw Paw River watersheds are some of the most pristine and healthy river systems left in southwest Michigan. I believe that protecting our resources and keeping them safe from harm is much easier (and cheaper) than trying to fix them once they have been compromised. It is imperative that we do everything we can to protect them from harm for our benefit and for the benefit of future generations.

Having lived near the Paw Paw and Black Rivers for most of my 70 years, by the increase in beach closings and increased pressure on the watersheds of contamination such as E. coli. I recall when the lakes were always clean—perfect for swimming and fishing. Now our lakes are being choked with weeds, algae and sediment.

There are other threats facing the health of the rivers and lakes in our community— inadequately treated wastewater, runoff from construction, toxic pollution, and the spread of invasive species. These threats not only harm fish and wildlife, they have an impact on our local economy.

Fortunately, Two Rivers Coalition is taking action today to reduce a threatens our watersheds.

I am writing to invite you to become a member of Two Rivers Coalition efforts that will keep our beaches open and ensure healthy rivers and lakes. We allow Two Rivers Coalition to fulfill its mission by doing such things as educate about fertilizer use and lawn care practices that are less harmful to water communities reduce stormwater pollution, and increasing awareness about the healthy watershed.

Two Rivers Coalition is a citizen-based group working to protect the health of the Black Paw Paw River Watersheds through conservation, education, and advocacy.  
250 Paw Paw Street, Suite 101, Paw Paw, MI 49079  
[www.TwoRiversCoalition.org](http://www.TwoRiversCoalition.org)

## Our Water, Our Responsibility

As you know, southwest Michigan is a unique and wonderful place to live, work and raise families, and we owe a great deal of this to the beauty of our watersheds. Without the Black and Paw Paw Rivers and the more than 100 inland lakes in their watersheds, our community would be very different than it is today. Because of their appeal, many come to the area each summer to escape the city and give their families a taste of the "good life". Water resources provide important environmental, social and economic values to life in southwest Michigan.

The Two Rivers Coalition is working to protect and preserve our precious rivers and lakes— keeping the foundation of what makes life great in southwest Michigan for your family and neighbors.

Unfortunately, our waters are at risk. Just this past summer, South Haven had to close their beaches due to E. coli bacteria. Mill and Pine Creeks also have problems with E. coli making the water unsafe for contact. Many lakes are not meeting water quality standards for phosphorus which causes weeds and algae to grow.

The largest source of pollution to the rivers and lakes in our communities is stormwater runoff. When it rains the runoff picks up pollutants from the land—fertilizers, animal waste, chemicals, road salt, sediment—and carries it quite directly to our rivers and lakes. Fertilizers thus washed into our lakes and streams encourage weed and plant growth which lake associations end up spending thousands of dollars to treat and remove. Excessive growth can also lead to algae blooms that choke the life of a lake.

You may be shocked to know that there is no one group or agency responsible for keeping our waters clean and healthy. The responsibility comes back to us. I believe that you, like me, care about the health of the water in your community. By becoming a member of Two Rivers Coalition you'll help to make sure we have the resources to protect and improve our Watersheds by:

- Taking action to reduce pollution
- Partnering in wetland preservation and restoration
- Initiating legislative reforms at the local and regional level
- Producing educational materials for distribution in the watersheds
- Sponsoring activities such as creek clean-ups and stream bank improvements
- Educating those living in the Black and Paw Paw River Watersheds on how they affect and are affected by their watershed
- Informing and collaborating with local and county officials to improve and protect water quality
- Partnering with others to improve water quality and protect important wildlife habitat





**All beer/wine sales and tips benefit  
Two Rivers Coalition (TRC)!**

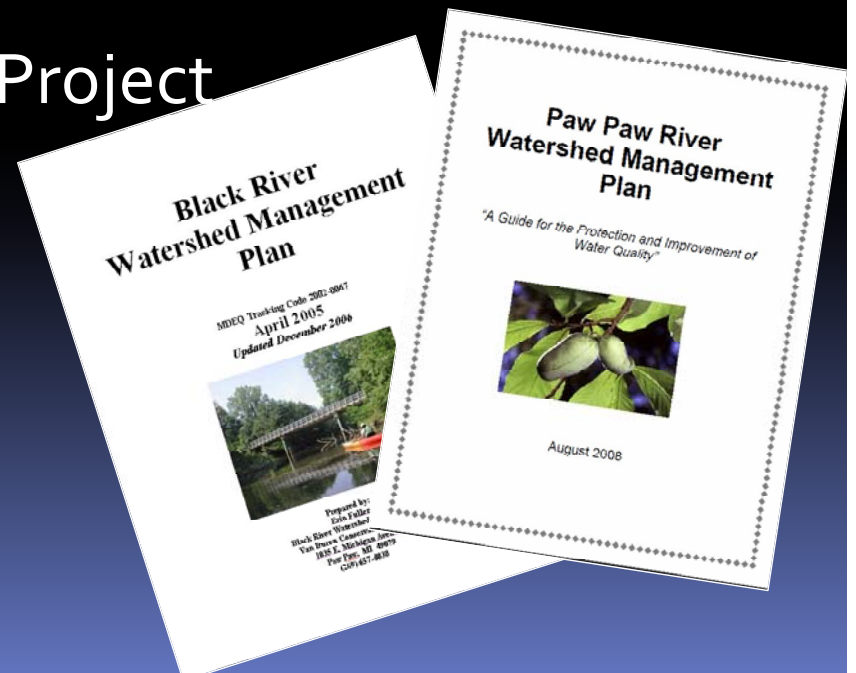
*Please Drink Responsibly and  
Have A Designated Driver!*



*A special thanks to:*  
**Foundry Hall for including TRC in this event.**  
**The Depot for supplying TRC the beer and wine.**

# The Future

- Black & Paw Paw River Bacteria Monitoring Project (awarded)
- Better Farming Practices to Protect Water Quality
  - SWMPC - GLC – GLRI grant – Pine/Mill Creeks (awarded)
  - Village of Paw Paw – 319 grant application for Maple Lake/South Branch (pending)
- LID - Bloomingdale Trail Head Project
- Septic Systems (MAEP grant awarded)
- Continue partnerships!



# Do you want to keep...?



Fishing



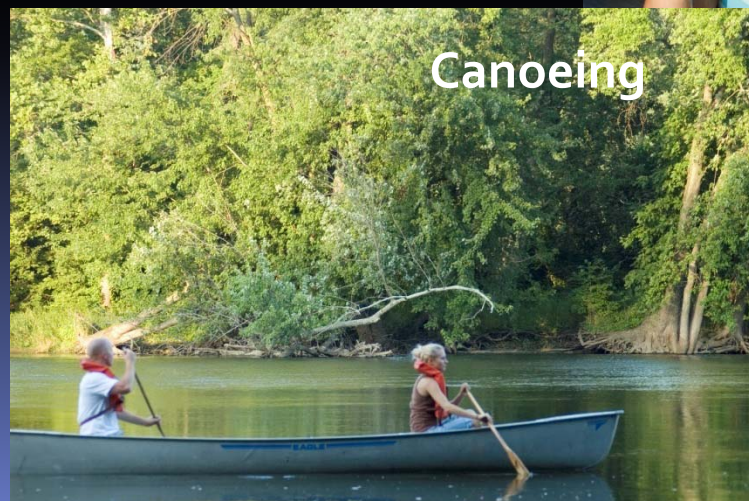
Drinking water



Playing in the water



Swimming

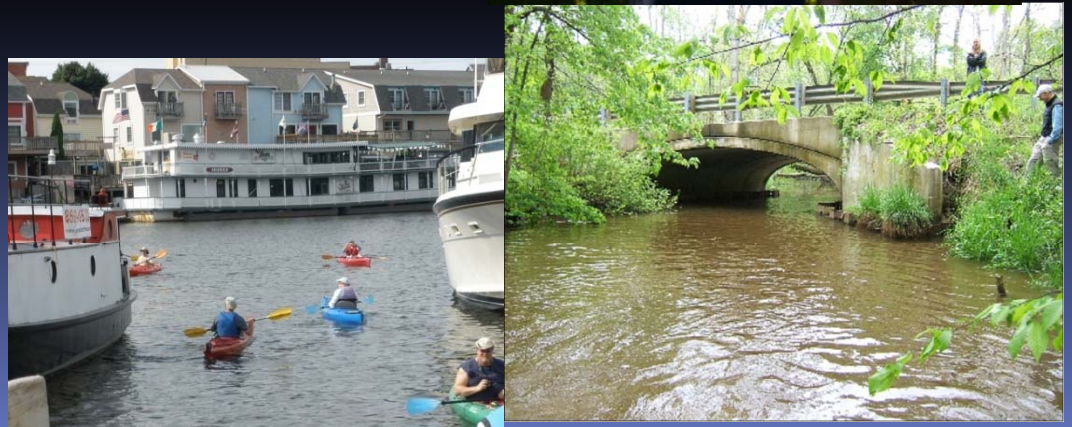


Canoeing



# What Can You Do?

- Make a Donation to TRC
- Take an active role
- Talk about issues & about TRC
- Talk to your local officials
- Talk to your kids



# TRC Board of Directors

**Dave Foerster, President**

**Sam Ewbank, Vice-President**

**Matt Meersman, Treasurer**

**Joe Parman, Secretary**

**Nancy Edwards**

**Kevin Haight**

**Tom Howe**

**Frank Jurenka**

**Jean Ketchum**

**Kenneth Nesbitt**

**Joe Von Wahlde**