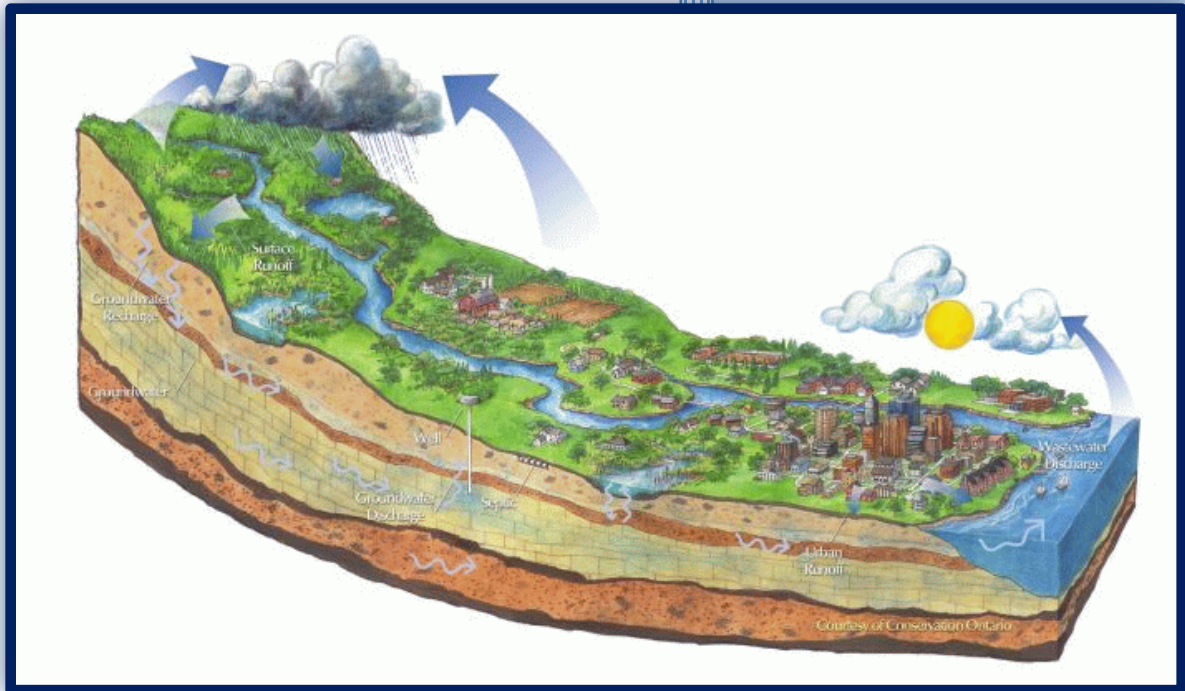


Chapter 1 - Introduction



- 1.1 Watershed Management Plan Purpose
- 1.2 Designated Uses
- 1.3 Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds and Subcommittees
- 1.4 Public Participation Process
- 1.5 Public Commenting

1.0 INTRODUCTION

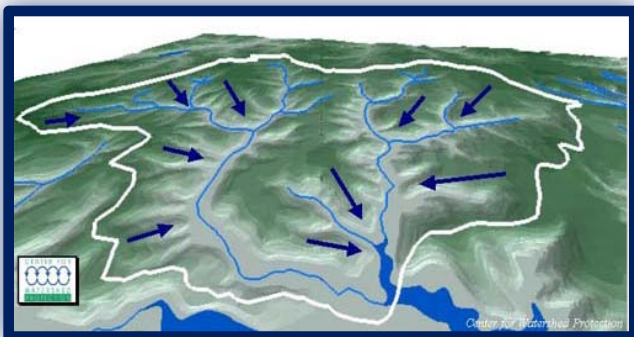
OBJECTIVES

- Why is a Watershed management plan needed?
- What is the ultimate goal of the Watershed management plan?
- Who is involved in creating the management plan?
- How was the Public involved in the process?

1.1 WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN PURPOSE

A Watershed is an area of land, defined by hills and ridges that drain to a common body of water (Exhibit 1). The purpose of a Watershed Management Plan (WMP or Plan) is to document the sources and causes of water pollution and outline a strategy to address activities which impair water quality within a Watershed. The WMP gives an action-oriented approach to address the needs and proposed solutions for effectively managing and restoring all of the designated uses in the Watershed. Input from community members and stakeholders in the Watershed is considered during the development of a WMP, to provide a reflection of the community's desires and goals for their Watershed.

Exhibit 1 – Watershed Illustration



Key Elements of a Watershed Management Plan:

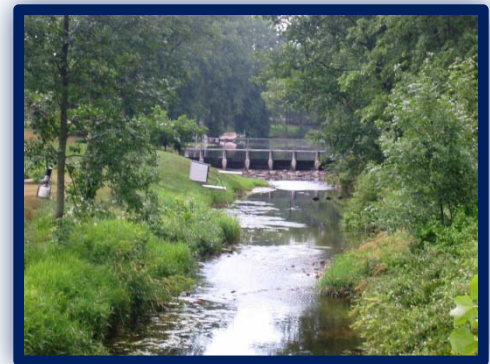
1. Understanding Watershed characteristics
2. Identifying and involving local agencies and citizens in the Watershed planning process
3. Identifying designated and desired uses
4. Defining critical areas which are contributing a majority of the pollutants
5. Identifying and prioritizing pollutants, sources, and causes
6. Determining objectives and tasks for meeting Watershed goals
7. Identifying and analyzing existing local projects, programs, and ordinances that impact water quality within the Watershed
8. Informing and involving the public
9. Developing an evaluation process

The WMP continues in the spirit of the 2004 CMI approved plan and 2007 Phase II WMP. Participants in the previous plans' development were determined to maintain the enthusiasm generated in the communities during the earlier planning efforts for improving the water quality in the Watershed. In response to that concern, and the strong desire to protect the overall health of the Lower Grand River Watershed (LGRW or Watershed), the Lower Grand River WMP was prepared in accordance with the nine key elements identified above. The purpose of this plan is to provide a description of the Watershed conditions, impairments, and offer recommendations to correct impairments. In addition, the Plan provides a detailed implementation plan and assigns responsibility to stakeholders to ensure corrective actions are put into practice.

1.2 DESIGNATED USES

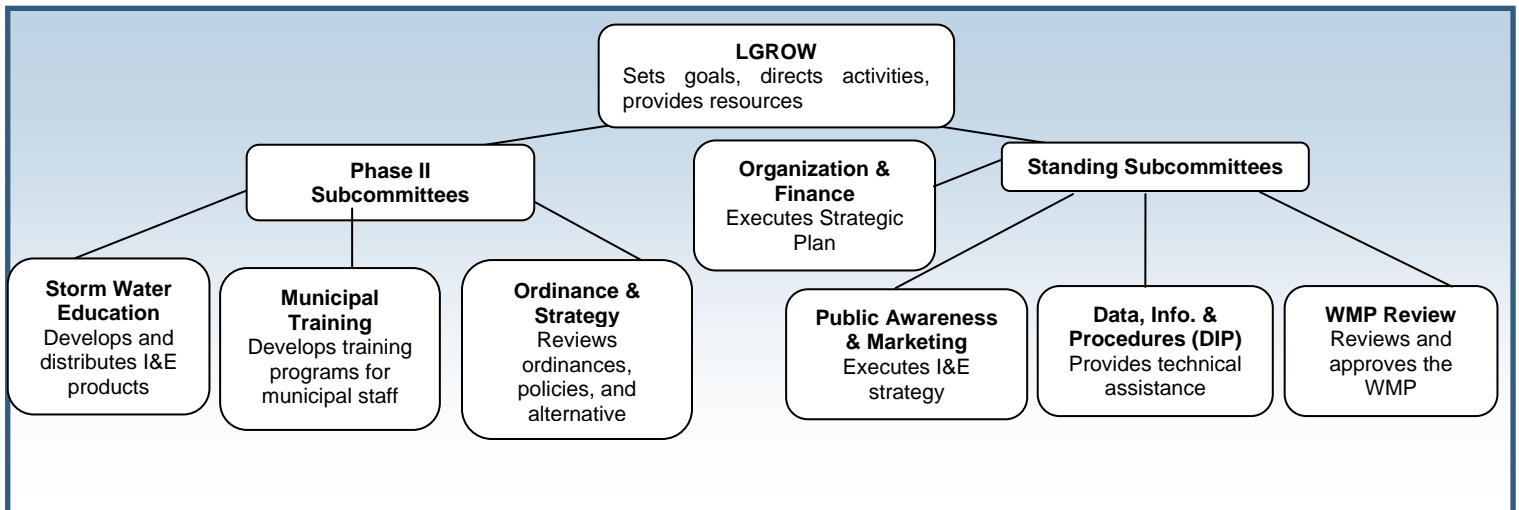
All surface waters of the state of Michigan are protected for the following designated uses:

- Agriculture
- Industrial water supply at the point of intake
- Public water supply at the point of intake
- Navigation
- Warmwater and/or coldwater fishery
- Other indigenous aquatic life and wildlife
- Partial body contact recreation
- Total body contact recreation between May 1 and October 31



This WMP outlines a strategy to identify and restore the designated uses impacted by nonpoint source (NPS) pollution.

1.3 LOWER GRAND RIVER ORGANIZATION OF WATERSHEDS AND SUBCOMMITTEES



Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds

The Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds (LGROW) was officially formed in 2009 to provide basin-wide oversight, implement Watershed-wide initiatives, and prioritize water quality concerns. The role of the LGROW in this project was to direct project activities, set goals and objectives, and ensure the project remained on schedule. Additional information about LGROW is included in Chapter 9.

Mission of LGROW: *Discover and restore all water resources and celebrate our shared water legacy throughout our entire Grand River Watershed community.*

Our **Vision** for the Watershed: *Swimming, drinking, fishing, and enjoying our Grand River Watershed: Connecting water with life.*

Core Values of the LGROW:

- Watershed activities are diverse, inclusive, and collaborative
- Watershed efforts are sustainable and of high quality
- Watershed images and messages create a widely shared sense of legacy and heritage
- Watershed methods and products are holistic and employ a systems approach
- Watershed organization and program evaluate progress and reward success

Members of the LGROW participated in various Subcommittees. Subcommittees were formed to allow additional participation in completing the details of the projects and specific tasks of the work plan. These six Subcommittees included are described below.

Organization and Finance Committee

The goal of the Organization and Finance (OAF) Subcommittee is to oversee the implementation of LGROW's Strategic Plan and to assist in recruiting membership in LGROW. The OAF is also responsible for LGROW's financial records and fee structure.

Public Awareness and Marketing Subcommittee

The goal of the Public Awareness and Marketing (PAM) Subcommittee is to involve interested stakeholders in the Watershed to assist in the implementation of the Information & Education (I&E) strategy. The PAM Subcommittee focused on the development of I&E products and their dissemination throughout the Watershed. Activities completed during this project included the development of display boards, a social survey, and newspaper inserts.

Data, Information, and Procedures Subcommittee

The goal of the Data, Information, and Procedures (DIP) Subcommittee is to pool data about the Watershed and to be a clearinghouse for information about the LGRW. The Subcommittee is to create a framework for coordination to provide a credible and usable source of information in a data repository for the Watershed. The Subcommittee has reviewed data collected and evaluated results of field assessments.

WMP Review Subcommittee

The WMP Review Subcommittee was responsible for reviewing the draft and final components of the WMP. The members ensured recommendations were in accordance with goals and objectives of the Watershed.

Storm Water Education Subcommittee

The goal of the Storm Water Education Subcommittee is to implement the Public Education Plan (PEP) as part of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Storm Water Program. Subcommittee members direct and guide the outreach campaign, develop and review products, and coordinate regional education efforts. Activities completed during the project include the development of lamppost banners, roadway signage, display boards, and bus advertisements. News articles as well as radio and television advertisements were also developed and distributed.

Municipal Training Subcommittee

The goal of the Municipal Training Subcommittee is to integrate storm water pollution reduction strategies into municipal operations. The Subcommittee develops and offers training opportunities for municipal staff to meet the requirements of the NPDES Phase II Storm Water Program.

Ordinance and Strategy Subcommittee

The goal of the Ordinance and Strategy Subcommittee is to review existing ordinances and policies for within the Watershed, to assess their effectiveness for protecting Watershed health. As part of this process, recommendations for improving the current storm water ordinance in Kent County were developed.

A complete listing of the Subcommittee members can be found in Appendix 1.1.

1.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The Public Participation Process (PPP) for soliciting involvement in the development of the Lower Grand River WMP as part of the LGRW Initiatives Project is described below.

Meetings

Meetings of the Grand River Forum were held to generate interest in the project and invite stakeholders to participate on one or more Subcommittees. All Grand River Forum and Subcommittee meetings were open to the public. The WMP Review Subcommittee offered Watershed stakeholders an opportunity to participate in the development of the WMP. Grand River Forum and Subcommittee meetings were advertised using e-mail distribution lists and/or postcard invitations. Subcommittee participation was tracked using attendance sheets.

Television

The Grand River Forum meeting held on November 6, 2009, was covered by the local news. The intent was to raise awareness about the LGROW and their activities. Fox 17 and WZZM 13 were in attendance, and coverage on the meeting aired that evening.

Website

The Watershed website, www.lowergrandriver.org, is the current online resource for information about the Watershed. All of the draft WMP chapter narratives, tables, figures, and appendices were posted on the website for public review and comment.

E-mail Distribution Lists

E-mail distribution lists were created and maintained by both Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc. (FTC&H) and Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC). Lists were used to invite Watershed stakeholders to Grand River Forum and Subcommittee meetings to solicit public input on the project and the WMP.

A PPP for the NPDES Phase II Storm Water Program was developed as a requirement for the NPDES Phase II Storm Water Regulations for communities with municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4) in the urbanized areas of the LGRW. This effort was targeted to those communities, but the methods are transferrable to all entities in the Watershed.

MS4 Permit Requirement

The PPP developed for the MS4 communities was submitted to the MDNRE and approved on May 7, 2010. The PPP is currently being implemented and is located in Appendix 1.2.

1.5 PUBLIC COMMENTING

Public comment was solicited using a variety of communication methods. Members of the public were invited to participate in meetings of the Grand River Forum and Subcommittees to provide comment on the WMP. The first draft of the WMP was presented at a public meeting on June 17, 2010, at the Walker City Commission Chambers. The WMP was posted to the LGRW website to be available for review by the stakeholders. Comments were solicited from the public and any comments were incorporated into the final WMP. The final draft of the WMP was submitted to MDNRE in August 2010 for review and approval.

In addition, the Subwatershed Management Unit Summary Sheets were reviewed by stakeholders in each Subwatershed Management Unit. Appendix 1.3 includes the list of reviewers for each summary sheet.

The draft of the WMP was presented at numerous meetings to gain additional input and increase awareness of how stakeholders can use the WMP to improve water quality in the Watershed.

- June 22, 2010, NPDES MS4 Full Watershed Meeting – LGROW representatives explained how MS4 communities will use the WMP to comply with the storm water permit requirements.
- June 28, 2010, Grand Rapids Downtown Development Authority (DDA) – LGROW representatives met with DDA staff to review the WMP, to ensure that the river and riverfront restoration within the City limits was included in the WMP as a recommended project, and that the correct information was provided.
- June 29, 2010, Plaster Creek Stewards Summer Workshop – Attendees of the workshop discussed how the Plaster Creek WMP fit into the larger Lower Grand River WMP. Members reviewed the action plan identified for Plaster Creek and made suggestions and additional recommendations.
- July 8, 2010, Fifth Third Ballpark – LGROW representatives met with the organizational and marketing staff to discuss how they fit into the WMP, and the possibility of practices to reduce storm water runoff be included in the WMP.
- July 21, 2010, Grand River Expedition 2010 – As the morning orientation for the paddlers, a presentation was made in the Village of Lyons Devore Park. An overview of the Watershed and its priority pollutants was presented and the WMP was explained. The paddlers requested that the copy of the WMP remain with them so they could review it and add comments. They were especially interested in reviewing the summary sheets.

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- July 30, 2010, Grand River Whitewater – LGROW representatives met with the organizers of the Grand River Whitewater to discuss the WMP and how their projects could be included in the WMP under habitat restoration.
 - August 4, 2010, Grand Valley State University (GVSU) – The Low Impact Development (LID) projects proposed by GVSU were reviewed with staff to ensure that all components were included as recommendations for reducing hydrologic impacts to the Grand River.
 - August 10, 2010, Gerald R. Ford International Airport – The facilities director of the airport met with LGROW representatives to learn more about LGROW and how the airport's efforts of reducing the impacts of glycol runoff could be enhanced by being included as a recommendation in the WMP.

In summary, approximately 175 people were directly contacted to review and provide input to the WMP. In addition, as of August 13, 2010, the Annis Water Resources Institute (AWRI) had recorded 300 hits on the website where the WMP is posted, with 200 downloads of the documents.