



Federal Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant

Tracking code: 2006-0127



Branch County Conservation District

Telephone: (517) 278-8008 ext. 5

Fax: (517) 278-5176

Email: Benjamin.wickerham@mi.nacdnet.net

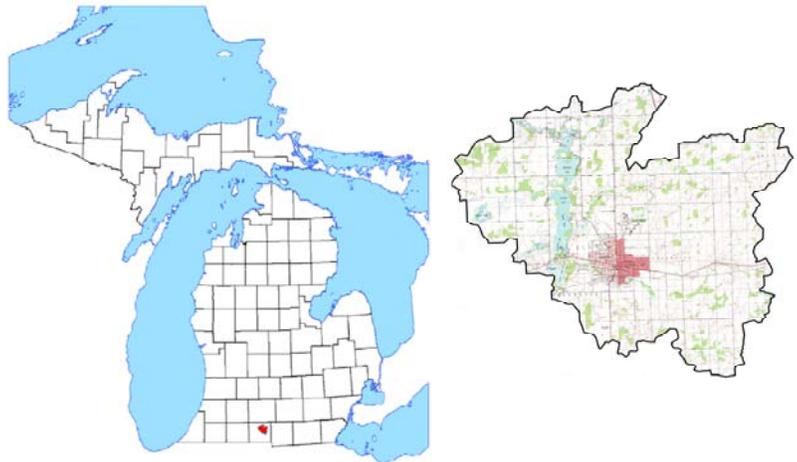
Hodunk-Messenger Chain of Lakes Watershed Planning Project

February 26, 2007 through July 31, 2009

In 2006, the Branch County Conservation District (BCCD) was awarded a Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant to address the concerns for the degrading level of water quality found in the Hodunk-Messenger Chain of Lakes and its associated tributaries. This grant was to develop a comprehensive watershed management plan for the purpose of uncovering the full extent of nonpoint source pollution, and to make recommendations for long-term water quality protection of the watershed. Results of the planning project revealed that the watershed currently experiences sediment loading at a rate of 5,203 tons per year, nitrogen loading at 296,964 pounds per year, phosphorus loading at 52,265 pounds per year and *E. coli* levels in areas that exceed 130 parts per 100ml. Critical sites, sources and causes of these pollutants were identified through several watershed assessments. The assessments revealed that there are over 4,000 feet of impaired streambanks, 368 acres of lost riparian buffer vegetation, 4,561 acres of lost pre-settlement wetlands, 463 acres of highly erodible crop land, and several road stream crossings that have all added increased sediment loads to the watershed. It was also discovered that significant sources of nutrients and pathogens are being contributed to the watershed by over abundant Canada goose populations and faulty individual septic systems along surface water bodies, as well as several uncontrolled livestock stream access sites. Specific recommendations to reduce these pollutant loads, as well as monitoring recommendations to track the progress, are included in the comprehensive watershed management plan.

Planning Project Products:

- A Natural Resource Inventory, Land Use Policy Analysis and Greenprint Plan of Coldwater Twp.
- A landscape level wetlands functional assessment.
- A demonstration conservation garden. 
- An inventory of all watershed road-stream crossings.
- A comprehensive watershed management plan.



Grant Amount: \$191,543.95

Match Funds: \$ 50,670.88

Total Amount: \$242,214.83

I&E Activities:

- Administered watershed-wide social survey.
- Conducted 2 volunteer storm drain marking events.
- Held 2 public informational meetings.
- Held "Managing Your Shoreline for Lake Ecology" Workshop and Bus Tour.
- Delivered watershed presentations to the North Chain Lake Association, several local civic organizations and approximately 50 different elementary school classes.
- Provided a 50% cost share for watershed residents interested in testing their soil.
- Sponsored enrollment of local elected officials in Citizen Planner "Land Use Planning for Water Quality" course.
- Delivered 4 biannual newsletters.
- Implementation of a demo garden. 

Partners involved:

- Hodunk-Messenger Chain of Lakes Board
- Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
- Branch County Drain Commission/Department of Public Works
- Wal-mart Distribution and Transportation Center
- Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc
- MDNR-Fisheries Division
- Coldwater Public Schools
- The Daily Reporter
- City of Coldwater
- ASTI Environmental
- Branch Area Careers Center
- MI Dept. of Agriculture
- North Chain Lake Association
- USDA-Farm Service Agency
- Potawatomi R, C & D Council
- Branch Co. Road Commission
- Branch County, GIS Dept.

