

Water Conservation Workgroup Meeting  
August 12, 2020 via Zoom

Attendees: Jeremiah Asher, Tom Frazier, Emily Finnel, Kelly Turner, Abigail Eaton

Absent: Frank Ettawageshik, Jason Walther

Meeting was called to order at 1:01 pm

Recapped the short-term work goals of compiling the rankings of the last set of Water Use Advisory Council recommendations as cross tabulated to the Michigan Water Strategy by effort and impact into a matrix to determine priority recommendations.

There were two recommendations that achieved the highest scores and two that fell just below the highest (listed below).

The Water Conservation Workgroup recommends that previous recommendation WC 1.2 (Michigan Water Strategy Goal 5, Recommendation 2) continue to be implemented as started by the named agencies and that regular updates be provided on status and progress to the full WUAC.

The Water Conservation Workgroup recommends that previous recommendation WC 1.3 (Michigan Water Strategy Goal 5, Recommendation 4) be prioritized in the coming year.

Additionally, the Water Conservation Workgroup recommends taking a fresh look at the previous recommendation WC 2.2 (Michigan Water Strategy Goal 5, Recommendation 6) and subsequent recommendations WC 2.2a-d, with emphasis on WC 2.2 b to determine how these recommendations could be accomplished while recognizing the workgroups concern about the financial impact to local governments that this recommendation carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelly Turner

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Water Use Advisory Council			MI Water Strategy	
Number	Recommendation	Link	Number	Recommendation
WC 1.2	Based on the water use trends, more focus needs to be placed on conservation and efficiency in the Irrigation Sector. MDARD has developed comprehensive guidance in the form of Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs), which includes guidance in preparing a water conservation and efficiency plan. MDARD and Michigan State University (MSU) Cooperative Extension should continue to provide and expand training and outreach to the Irrigation Sector to increase the use of these GAAMPs.	G5-2, G5-6	G5-2	Establish voluntary water efficiency targets for all major water sectors to reduce water use impacts and costs.
WC 1.3	The DEQ should incentivize water conservation and efficiency in the public sector by rewarding the implementation of water conservation and efficiency measures when applying for State funding for water infrastructure projects. This could be accomplished by providing significant points to project plans from water systems that already have a water conservation and efficiency plan, thereby increasing the likelihood that the project will be funded.	G5-2, G5-6	G5-3	Promote innovative technologies that reduce cost and water loss, or convert waste products to usable materials.
WC 2.2	Michigan should revise its water conservation program to: 1) further inform and encourage water conservation, and 2) assess and document the nature and extent of water conservation practiced by large water users. This program should consist of the following components:	G5-7	G5-6	Define measures of agriculture water conservation and establish voluntary targets for utilizing best management practices (BMPs) that reflect conformance with the Irrigation Water Use Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices in areas of existing or potential water stress.
WC 2.2a	Michigan should convene a multi-interest workgroup to identify existing and new opportunities to incentivize water conservation. This effort should target all water users and encourage conservation generally, the adoption of specific practices, and contribution to improved data collection.	G5-4 other recs	G5-7	Enhance voluntary water conservation measures through technology and outreach for agriculture to optimize water use while reducing impacts and costs.
WC 2.2b	Among the specific practices encouraged should be a water auditing program. For public supplies, the water audit should be in conformance with the American Water Works Association (AWWA), M36 Water Audits and Loss Control Programs. Water users should be encouraged to develop a water conservation program based on the results of the audit. While each water user is able to determine the nature and extent of its conservation program, incentives should specifically encourage a component on metrics for evaluating the performance of the program and reporting of results to the DEQ or MDARD. Providing information to employees or water customers on the water user's conservation programs and policies should also be encouraged.	G6-4, G6-6	G6-2	Utilize pricing and funding strategies to support infrastructure improvements while allowing for water conservation.
WC 2.2c	To facilitate the above set of activities, the DEQ and MDARD should develop, or arrange for the development of, templates for water audits and conservation plans. These instruments should be considered by the multi-interest group.	G6-6	G6-4	Incentivize and require outcome-based asset management planning for all public water utilities that includes more efficient use of resources.
WC 2.2d	The multi-interest workgroup should also be charged with developing a process for evaluating the results of the incentive-based system. This process should include metrics and data collection and evaluation methodologies. Ideally, metrics should be based on outcomes (e.g., volume of water conserved) rather than outputs (e.g., number of conservation practices adopted).		G6-5	Establish sustainable funding mechanisms to achieve the Water Strategy goals including water infrastructure management.