

Water Use Advisory Council (WUAC) Meeting

Hosted by the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

1:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Gun Lake Casino Resort, Conference Room
1123 129th Ave, Wayland, MI 49348

Remote Option Available Via Teams

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

+1 248-509-0316,,175376049# United States, Troy

Phone Conference ID: 175 376 049#

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome

Laura Campbell called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and confirmed Quorum.

2. Roll Call

Laura Campbell facilitated roll call.

WUAC Council Members/Alternatives Present at Gun Lake Casino Resort

Laura Campbell (Co-Chair)

Bryan Burroughs (Michigan Trout Unlimited)

Doug Needham (Aggregates Association)

Dave Hamilton (The Nature Conservancy)

Adam Wygant (EGLE GRMD)

Pat Staskiewicz (AWWA)

Richard Norton (Local units of government)

Dave Maturen (MLSA)

Frank Ettawageshik

An in-person quorum was present.

WUAC Members/Alternatives Present via Teams

Megan Tinsley (Environmental Council)

Non-members Present

EGLE Staff

Trisha Hagerman (virtual)

Hannah Arnett (in person)
Megan Cameron (in person)
James Milne (in person)
Adam Wygant (in person)
Lena Pappas (in person)
Andrew LeBaron (virtual)
Garrett Link (virtual)
Katie Mika (virtual)
James Milne (in person)
Emily Finnell (in person)
Michael Juggle (EGLE) (virtual)
Jill Van Dyke (virtual)

Guests and Other Participants

Amanda Christophe (AWE) (virtual)
Devin Smith (AWE) (virtual)
Asher Aaron (virtual)
Melissa Grasman (JetCo Solutions) (in person)
Connor Merchant (virtual)
Abigail Eaton (MDARD) (in person)
Joel Henry (virtual)
Joanne Wisely (virtual)
Johanna DeCotis Smith (virtual)
Austin York (virtual)
Todd Feenstra (virtual)
Khalid M Omar (virtual)
David Lusch (virtual)
Howard Reeves (USGS) (in person)
Megan Tinsley (MEC) (virtual)
Sara Pearson (MGS) (in person)
Rick Solle (AWWA) (in person)
Justin Palthe (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi) (in person)
Kelly Turner (Michigan Potato Industry Commission)(in person)

3. Approval of Minutes-Roll Call Vote Discussion

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved with no objections.

4. Approval of Agenda-Roll Call Vote Discussion

The proposed agenda was reviewed. No changes or additions were made, and the agenda was approved as presented.

5. Public Comment (Three Minute Limit)

Laura requested public comments. No public comments.

6. Alliance for Water Efficiency

Emily provided an overview of the co-funded project between the WUAC and the Office of Great Lakes with the Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE). A draft report was recently received, and comments are due by August 15. A final report will follow within 45 days. Presenters included Amanda Christophe, Devin Smith, and Ron Burke from AWE.

The presentation highlighted findings from their review of the 2008 Best Management Practices (BMPs) across water use sectors. Agriculture maintains annual BMP reviews through Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs), while the public supply and non-agricultural irrigation sectors have had limited formal updates. In the business and industrial sectors, water efficiency is often approached as a co-benefit of energy savings, cost reduction, or environmental, social, and governance (ESG) commitments, with awareness of the 2008 BMPs remaining low. Presenters identified resource constraints, perceptions of water abundance, and competing operational priorities as common barriers, while cost savings and corporate sustainability goals serve as primary motivators for implementing efficiency measures.

Several examples of innovation were shared, including International Paper's work on water reuse, Terra Firma Brewery's rainwater and process water reuse, Indiana-Michigan Power's cooling efficiency initiatives, and Microsoft's chip-level closed-loop cooling system in data centers. Benchmarking was emphasized as an important tool for transparency and sector-wide improvement.

Following the presentation, Laura asked about the limited resources available in non-business sectors. Amanda responded by underscoring the need for targeted outreach, voluntary water audits, and one-on-one engagement with farmers. Bryan inquired about progress since 2008, and presenters noted that while BMPs have been incorporated informally in operations, they have not been systematically updated or followed in a prescriptive way. Members also discussed the role of economic return on investment in driving efficiency measures, the value of incentives, and the possibility of regulation for certain high-demand sectors, such as data centers.

Concerns were raised about the growing water demands from new industries, including data centers and semiconductor facilities. Some members suggested that the focus should be on proactive efficiency measures rather than limiting access to water for specific sectors. Presenters also reviewed Ann Arbor and Detroit benchmarking ordinances, which require annual reporting for public, commercial, and multifamily buildings.

The Council emphasized the importance of developing a long-term water conservation strategy, conducting economic analyses to demonstrate return on investment, and considering policy options for industries with significant water demands. Next steps will include using AWE's findings to draft recommendations that highlight sector-specific resources, expand education and outreach, and evaluate where regulatory or incentive-based measures may be necessary.

7. Committee Chairs Report

a. Conservation and Efficiency Committee

The committee update began with Frank Ettawageshik joining mid-presentation. Frank reflected on his long involvement with water policy, noting examples where state and federal responsibilities overlapped with tribal authority and the challenges of ensuring proper consultation and coordination. He emphasized the importance of clear accountability when delegating permitting responsibilities between federal and state governments. Frank also recounted past experiences in which state action and federal oversight worked together to resolve significant environmental issues, underscoring the need for strong relationships among all levels of government.

Following Frank's remarks, the committee discussed ongoing implementation of recommendations from the 2022 WUAC report, including aggregation in energy efficiency. Jeannine Schweihofer from MSU Extension provided a brief update on irrigation education. Two extension educators, Angie Grata and Brendan Kelly, have been actively presenting at workshops and field days across the state, including events focused on potatoes, blueberries, and Christmas trees. They are also preparing winter sessions, planning for the Great Lakes Expo in December, and updating irrigation resources online to make them more user-friendly. A needs assessment is underway to better understand grower priorities for irrigation and large water withdrawals.

Dave Hamilton asked whether recent federal budget cuts to MSU Extension programs would affect water-related work. Jeannine explained that the cuts are specific to nutrition education under SNAP-Ed and do not impact irrigation programs at this time. Additional updates will be provided at the October 2 consultative committee meeting.

b. Data Collection Committee

Bryan Burroughs reported on the work of the Data Committee. The group recently met and conducted a comprehensive review of ongoing projects. Focus areas include advancing data planning efforts, coordinating with cumulative downstream stream flow depletion accounting projects, and addressing the long-term questions associated with classification of streams and reclassification protocols. Bryan noted that while the Department of Natural Resources has statutory authority to determine classifications, WUAC can provide recommendations on process improvements.

Committee members raised concerns about data preservation. Frank Ettawageshik and others stressed the need for reliable long-term storage, noting that important tribal and federal datasets have been lost in the past when agencies shifted systems. Members agreed that trust in data systems requires

transparency, clear protocols, and permanent repositories to ensure that critical information remains available for decision-making. The group also acknowledged the importance of tribal data sovereignty and ensuring tribal governments retain access to information that affects their communities.

c. Models Committee

Dave Hamilton provided the Models Committee report. He explained that the group had been examining issues raised by Todd Feenstra and chose to approach them as case studies rather than disputes. The committee is continuing its work on refining modeling approaches for site-specific reviews and exploring how existing tools can be adapted for Michigan's needs. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for September 8 at 3:00 p.m. to continue this discussion.

d. Implementation Committee

Doug Needham reported that the Implementation Committee has not met recently but plans to schedule a meeting before the next council session.

Discussion touched briefly on budget considerations, and Doug emphasized the need to align committee activities with available resources.

8. Legislative Report Shared Updates

Laura Campbell provided an overview of legislative engagement. The council continues to monitor the state budget process and remains in contact with sponsors supporting water-related funding priorities. While legislative progress has been slow, optimism remains that resources will be secured to advance council initiatives.

9. EGLE Update

a. WWAT Update

Jim Milne presented an update on the water use program metrics. He noted ongoing efforts to maintain efficiency in processing permits and registrations. Program metrics continue to be closely monitored, with the majority of site-specific review requests being completed within the expected 10-day timeframe.

Lena provided updates on research projects, joined by Sara and Jill Van Dyke, who participated virtually. They described work underway to refine modeling approaches and incorporate new data. Adam Wygant and Doug Needham contributed comments on how the research could inform policy and regulatory decisions. Hannah Arnett added that upcoming tool releases are planned for September 22, with additional updates expected by the end of the year. These releases will improve navigation, reporting, and overall usability of the WWAT system.

Discussion also focused on groundwater monitoring, with EGLE identifying new wells for inclusion in the state network. Members emphasized the importance of continued progress in this area to support long-term resource management.

10. Future

a. 2025 Meeting Dates (at Stabenow Hall, formerly known as Constitution Hall, unless others offer to host) (*Quorum critical meetings)

- October 14
- December 9

The Council confirmed upcoming meeting dates for the remainder of 2025. Sessions will be held on October 14 and December 9 at Stabenow Hall (formerly Constitution Hall), unless alternate hosts are arranged. Quorum will be critical for these meetings to ensure council business can proceed.

b. Formats

c. Quorum

11. Open Comments (Three Minute Limit)

No additional public comments were offered during this period.

12. Motion to Adjourn

With no further business, Pat Staskiewicz adjourned the meeting.