

Water Use Advisory Council (WUAC) Meeting

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

Tuesday, February 10, 2026,

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

Lee Walker Conference Room, Debroah A. Stabenow Building, (Formerly Constitution Hall)
525 West Allegan, Lansing, MI 48933

Remote Option Available Via Teams

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or call in (audio only)

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Phone Conference ID: 141 805 86#

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome – Laura

Co-Chair Laura Campbell opened the meeting, welcomed participants, and initiated sound checks for virtual attendees.

2. Roll Call

Laura Campbell facilitated roll call.

WUAC Members/Alternates Present at Stabenow Building

Laura Campbell (MI Farm Bureau, Co-Chair)

Bryan Burroughs (Trout Unlimited, Co-Chair)

Pat Staskiewicz (AWWA, Co-Chair)

Megan Napier (AKT Peerless)

Katy Lindstrom (Barr Engineering)

Rachel Proctor (Consumers Energy)

Sara Pearson (MGS)

Richard Norton (local Government)

Kelly Turner (Michigan Potato Industry Commission)

An in-person quorum was not present.

WUAC Members/Alternates Participating Virtually

Frank Ettawageshik (United Tribes of MI)

Michael Frederick (Michigan Water Well Association)

Dave Hamilton (TNC – Retired)

Dave Maturen (MLSA)

Non-Members Present

EGLE Staff

Jim Milne (EGLE) (in person)

Claire Rose (EGLE) (in person)

Hannah Arnett (EGLE) (in person)

Sydney Ruhala (EGLE) (in person)
Megan Cameron (EGLE) (in person)
Juneal Black (EGLE) (in person)
Lena Pappas (EGLE) (in person)
Simon Belisle (EGLE) (in person)
Katie Mika (EGLE) (in person)
Jill Van Dyke (EGLE) (virtual)
Andrew Gelderloos (EGLE) (virtual)
Mike Jugle (EGLE) (virtual)
Ann Larson (EGLE) (virtual)
Garrett Link (EGLE) (virtual)
Brandon Morrill (EGLE) (virtual)

Guests and Other Participants

Madison Katerberg (in person)
Jeff Thorlund (in person)
Jeannine Schwehofer (in person)
Sara Pearson (in person)
Jay Eccleton (in person)
Khalid Omar (in person)
Abby Eaton (in person)
Todd Feenstra (in person)
Brent Heerspink
Howard Reeves (in person)
Bryan Fiscle (in person)
Dennis Lott (in person)
Darwin Eisenga (in person)
Lyndon Kelley (in person)
Tyler Baird (virtual)
Laura Johnson (virtual)
Marcus Wasilievich (virtual)
Emily Smith (virtual)
Ralph Haefner (virtual)
Bill Pearson (virtual)
Blake Thorlund (virtual)
Chase Young (virtual)
Chris Lott (virtual)
Fred Leitz (virtual)
Helena Volzer (virtual)
Dan Marcusse (virtual)
John McGee (virtual)
David Dreves (virtual)
Duane Andersen (virtual)
Eric Roossinck (virtual)
Jason Walther (virtual)
Jeremy Shank (virtual)
Joanne Wisley (virtual)
Kevin Storm (virtual)
Ben LaCross (virtual)

Jennifer Lewis (virtual)
Maria Jose Iturbide-Chang (virtual)
Maxwell Oliver (virtual)
Shaun Willis (virtual)
Sheila Andring (virtual)
Skip Connolly (virtual)
Todd Fox (virtual)
Troy Jenkins (virtual)
Andrew Vermeesch (virtual)
Zeke Jennings (virtual)
Jay Wesley (virtual)
Jim Casler (virtual)
John Marker (virtual)
Jon Helmstadter (virtual)
Tyler Sackett (virtual)
Kathleen Blust (virtual)

3. Approval of Minutes-Roll Call Vote Discussion

- Members noted that December 2025 meeting minutes appeared overly summarized compared to past practice.
- Concerns raised that certain technical discussions (e.g., code mis-estimation of streamflow depletion) were not reflected.
- General agreement: Minutes should include more substantive details.
- WUAC staff will revisit December minutes and increase detail before they return for a formal approval vote.

4. Approval of Agenda-Roll Call Vote Discussion

The proposed agenda was reviewed; an in-person quorum was not present, and therefore, could not approve the agenda.

5. Public Comment (Three Minute Limit)

No public comments were offered on agenda-related items.

6. Committee Chairs Report

a. Conservation and Efficiency Committee

Kelly Turner provided the Conservation and Efficiency Committee report.

Recent Meetings:

- Committee met twice (Feb. 5 and earlier today in a 3-hour workshop)
- Identified nine potential recommendations for 2026.
- Some items require more data gathering or education before being ready for Council consideration.

Key Topics:

- Review of 2025 committee work, statewide conservation reports, MSU irrigator impact report.
- Update on Ag Water Conservation & Efficiency Educators.
- Concern: The mobile irrigation unit is out of sync with educator program funding.
 - Educator funding may expire before the mobile unit completes its pilot timeline.
 - The Committee anticipates proposing a recommendation to close this funding gap.

No questions from the Council.

b. Data Collection Committee

Bryan Burroughs provided the Data Collection Committee report.

Recent Meetings:

- Approximately two weeks prior

Key Topics:

- General updates on ongoing data projects.
- Will continue coordinating around long-term planning and 2020 recommendation implementation.
- The upcoming meeting will focus on cumulative impact topics and new agenda items submitted by committee members.

HEMI Project Update

Howard Reeves gave a major technical presentation on the Hydrologic Enhancement for Michigan (HEMI) initiative

- HEMI (Hydrogeologic Evaluation & Mapping Initiative) is a multi-component groundwater data and modeling effort led by EGLE and USGS.
- An Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) Survey will be conducted to map subsurface geology and aquifer structure across 15 southwest Michigan counties.

How AEM Works:

- Helicopter tows a ~100 ft diameter loop ~100 ft above ground.
- Uses electromagnetic induction to measure subsurface electrical resistivity.
- Produces 3D images of aquifers, confining layers, and bedrock.

Data Outputs:

- Provides continuous 3D mapping of:
 - Aquifers
 - Aquitards
 - Bedrock depth
 - Potential saline groundwater zones
- Data length: ~8,000 miles of flight lines.
- Data will be publicly available.

Safety & Flight Plans:

- Contract underway.
 - Safe technology; EM exposure like standing near a household appliance.
 - FAA requires staying 500 ft away from structures.
 - Avoidance of people and livestock when possible.
 - 1-mile line spacing; denser spacing in tribal and select county areas.
 - River corridor flights included to support WWAT considerations.
 - Expected flights: March–April 2026.
 - Extensive public outreach is ongoing.
- Ground-Based EM Surveys were conducted December 2025 to assist instrument calibration.
 - Resolved top-of-bedrock features consistent with well logs.

Monitoring Network Efforts

- EGLE is working to rehabilitate former USGS monitoring wells.
- Goal: Build a sustainable long-term groundwater monitoring network with continuous loggers where possible.

Regional Groundwater Flow Model

- A new regional model will be built for the 15-county area.
- Will merge AEM results, monitor data, and existing USGS modeling.
- Intended as a baseline framework, not as a site-specific regulatory tool.

Council Discussion

- Questions Covered:
 - Model applicability
 - Refinement options
 - Benefits of denser flight lines
 - Implications for site-specific review
 - Long-term model calibration/validation
- General support expressed, with interest, in future updates.

c. Models Committee

Katy Lindstrom provided the Models Committee Report.

Michigan Hydrologic Framework (MHF)

- Testing versions of MHF tools to be provided to EGLE for early feedback on search, visualization, and download functions.
- Next phase: testing inset modeling workflows.

Transition Probability Modeling

- Henningson, Durham and Richardson, Inc. (HDR) completed 3D glacial mapping for Cass & Calhoun counties.
- Committee concluded:
 - Methodology did not perform well in these geological settings.
 - Will not recommend further transition-probability modeling for this region.

- The Committee will continue to evaluate whether the method may be appropriate in other depositional environments.

Other Workstreams

- Updated transmissivity/storativity datasets are nearly complete.
- Downstream accounting project ongoing (next meeting: Mar. 13).
- Aquifer performance test guidance is under review; significant engagement received.

d. Implementation Committee

Laura Campbell provided the Implementation Committee update.

Primary Concerns

- Need a consolidated understanding of the total budget for projects implementing WUAC recommendations, including project budgets and all funding sources, not just legislative appropriations.
- The Committee will schedule a budget review session with EGLE.

Reminder

- 2026 is a report year, so committees must begin developing draft recommendations.

7. EGLE Update

a. WWAT Update

Megan Cameron and Hannah Arnett discussed progress on the WWAT modernization. Release 1 launched on September 23; Release 2 is planned for February 12.

New Features

- Users can upload site-specific hydrogeologic data.
- Support for:
 - Hunt 1999 (unconfined)
 - Hunt 2003 (semi-confined)
 - Dudley Ward & Lough 2011 (two-layer system)
- Improved accessibility & website synchronization.
- Drag-and-drop uploads for supporting documentation (PDF, Word, Excel).
- Automated confirmation emails include all attachments.
- More flexibility, but custom runs will trigger site-specific review, and EGLE may request more data.

Training & Communication

- EGLE will likely host additional webinars on:
 - How to prepare SSR submissions
 - What hydrogeologic data is most useful
 - How local data can supplement WWAT runs

b. Water Use Assessment Unit Update

Jim Milne presented the Water Use Assessment Unit update.

January 2026 Snapshot:

- 18 automatic WWAT registrations
- 18 SSR requests
- 12 pending SSRs
- 2 SSRs withdrawn by applicants

Timeliness:

- Average SSR processing time: 12.25 business days
- Only 3 SSRs exceeded the 10-day statutory target.

Compliance Activities:

- 17 compliance communications issued:
 - 4 revised registrations
 - 8 installation verification letters
 - 2 water-use reporting corrections
 - 3 “after-the-fact” registrations

c. Great Lakes Compact Council Updates

Emily Presented the Great Lakes Compact Council update.

Key themes from recent Compact Council Science Team Meeting:

- Regional agricultural water-use dashboard development
- University of Michigan Climate Water Modeling Work
- Cross-jurisdictional data sharing
- Water reuse innovation across states
- Updates on bottled water research
 - Many materials may be sharable once approved by Compact Secretariat.

The council expressed interest in bringing some presentations to future WUAC meetings.

8. Water District Proposal

Todd Feenstra presented a conceptual framework for voluntary regional water districts aimed at:

- Improving data collection
- Increasing local engagement
- Enhancing groundwater modeling
- Establishing a clearer appeals pathway
- Strengthening trust between regulators and regulated communities

Core Elements:

- Six proposed districts statewide, based on geology & number of Large Quantity Withdrawals (LQW).
- Voluntary participation must own an LQW & conduct monitoring.

- Districts hire regional hydrogeologists and maintain monitoring networks.
- Models validated by 8-person peer review panel, including 2 EGLE staff.
- Districts may provide recommendations to EGLE, but EGLE retains final decision.
- Optional appeals panel for process review.

Discussion Themes and Questions:

- Funding model: fees for well monitoring are intended to cover additional technical work; scalability emphasized to avoid over/under-charging as needs vary by district.
- Membership scope: The concept allows other LQW users (e.g., municipal, industrial, data centers) to participate if monitoring and data sharing requirements are met.
- Overlap with existing regional entities: suggestions to explore alignment with regional planning commissions to leverage existing structures.
- Public transparency/FOIA: questions raised regarding applicability and data use policies as organizations evolve.
- Model standards: desire for objective model acceptance criteria (e.g., USGS guidance) while acknowledging inevitable subjective elements; proposal's multi-party peer review intended to mitigate this.
- Status: early concept seeking feedback; statutory changes not currently pursued but not off the table.

9. Future

a. 2026 Meeting Dates (at Deborah A. Stabenow Building, formerly known as Constitution Hall) (*Quorum critical meetings)

- April 14
- June 9
- *August 11
- *September 8
- *October 13
- *November 10
- December 8 (tentative)

b. Formats

No Discussion

c. Quorum

In-person quorum not present for this meeting; approvals deferred.

10. Open Comments (Three Minute Limit)

- Several commenters expressed concern about the perception that Michigan is “running out of water,” urging focus on measured data and longer-term records to inform decisions and messaging.
- Support voiced for local engagement and data-driven stewardship questions raised about homeowner/non-LQW participation pathways.
- Clarification offered that WWAT “available balance” reflects registration capacity, not necessarily actual use observed in reporting data.
- Questions about stakeholder involvement for non-LQW neighbors.

- Process note applicants can re-apply or pursue a Part 327 permit; discussion acknowledges the value of early technical engagement to reduce contention.
- Emphasis on stewardship and transparent data.
- Appreciation for open discussion of complex issues.

11. Motion to Adjourn

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Pat Staskiewicz at approximately 4:00 p.m.