



Michigan's
Nonpoint Source
Program

Section 319 Funding
Nonpoint Source Grant

Tracking code 2007-0114



Sanilac Conservation District

Telephone: (810) 648-2116

Fax: (810) 648-4670

Email: joe.kautz@mi.nacdnet.net

Black River (Sanilac Co.) Watershed Planning Project

May 1, 2008 - September 30, 2010

The Black River Watershed (BRW) (HUC 0409001) encompasses 459,542 acres in Lapeer, Sanilac, and St. Clair Counties. The river system begins in northern Sanilac County and eastern Lapeer County (Mill Creek), draining large areas of agricultural land and outlets into the St. Clair River. The BRW is a tributary to the St. Clair River, which is a Great Lakes Area of Concern (AOC). The BRW contributes ecosystem problems identified in the St. Clair River AOC Stage 2 Remedial Action Plan, including sediment accumulation toxic bio-accumulative chemicals of concern, and elevated nutrient levels. Sources of these contaminants are from various sources including illicit discharges, soil erosion, agricultural runoff, and large scale channelization. The goal of this planning project is to develop a coordinated watershed management plan that would allow for implementation funding in the 3 sub-watersheds this plan covers (Upper Black, Lower Black, Mill Creek).

Grant Amount: \$ 235,538

Match Funds: \$ 29,001

Total Amount: \$ 264,539

Tasks Completed (as outlined in the Watershed Management Plan)



- Inventoried selected stream/Drains with TMDLs
- Inventoried livestock in the watershed
- Performed a Watershed Assessment of River Stability and Sediment Supply
- Public participated with meetings, mailings, newsletters, phone, Internet
- Identified partners for implementation
- Developed an information & education strategy
- Recommended systems of best management practices
- Developed a sustainability strategy for the continuance of implementation in all three sub-watersheds
- Developed a MDNRE approved watershed management plan

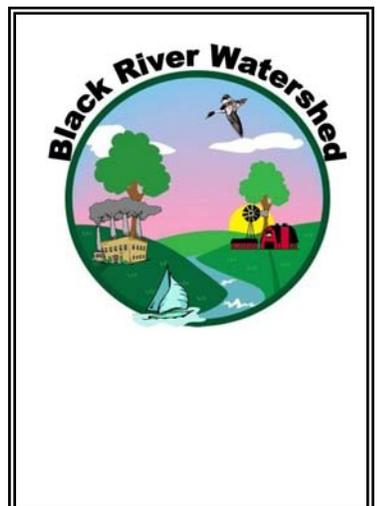
I&E Activities:

- 4 Newsletters
- Visits with local landowners
- Articles in print media



Partners involved:

- St. Clair Conservation District
- Lapeer Conservation District
- St. Clair Health Department
- Sanilac Health Department
- Local farmers
- Local Citizens
- Conservation groups
- Drain Comm. (Sanilac & St Clair)
- Custer Twp
- Greenwood Township
- Sanilac Twp





Common to the watershed are many banks along the river and its tributaries that are scoured bare by the water and flashy flows. Causes of the flashy flows come from different sources, such as storm water runoff from impervious surfaces and developed areas, tile drained farm land, loss of wetlands in the watershed and channelization of the drainage system.



Erosion and sedimentation is very common to the watershed due to the lack of environmental stewardship. This picture shows how a ditch was improperly dug out and not stabilized (reseeded), causing the banks to slump and erode away. Also, you will notice this field is worked up to the edge of this ditch, with no buffer protect it.



Outside silage storage is very common in the Black River Watershed. Livestock operations are found in all three sub watersheds. Livestock operations are commonly known to contribute pollutants such as leachate, manure, and milkhouse waste if not properly managed. The 2009 fish kill that occurred in a 12-mile stretch of the Black River was believed to come from a livestock operation.



The picture above; shows the point where the Black River merges with the St. Clair River. You can see the contrast in the two river systems. The brown color illustrates the amount of sediment that is picked up and carried by the Black River out to the Great Lakes.