



Michigan's
Nonpoint Source
Program

**Federal Clean Water Act
Section 319**

Tracking code: 2010-0002



Branch Conservation District
387 N. Willowbrook Ave.
Coldwater, MI 49036
(517)278-2725 ext. 5
Kathy.Worst@mi.nacdnet.net
www.branchcd.org

Prairie River Watershed Planning Project

May 31, 2011 to June 30 2014

The Prairie River Watershed (PRW) encompasses a watershed area of 116,668.5 acres in Branch and St. Joseph Counties in Michigan, and Steuben County Indiana. Land use in the watershed is primarily agricultural (67%), with areas of wetlands (14%) and forest (12%). Urbanized areas account for the remaining 7%. In spite of the large portion of developed land, water quality in general is good. This project identified and prioritized nonpoint source pollutants, assessed land use planning and made recommendations to enhance water quality. The project resulted in a watershed management plan for the Prairie River Watershed approved by the DEQ and EPA.

Grant Amount: \$238,650
Match Funds: \$60,250

Total Amount: \$298,900



Project Accomplishments:

- Watershed inventories including road stream crossings, fish passage and stream banks.
- Mapped agricultural & urban critical areas and priority areas for protection.
- Reviewed & made recommendations on planning and zoning for 2 townships and 1 county.
- Recommended best management practices.
- Developed an I&E strategy for implementation.
- Natural Resource Inventory for 1 township.
- Provided recommended language related to wetlands protection and other water quality to townships with high natural resource protection potential.
- A Landscape Level Wetland Functional Assessment was completed for the watershed and used to prioritize actions.

I&E Activities:

- 4 direct mail newsletters.
- Promotional Items.
- Hosted workshops and meetings for stakeholders
- Maintained website with PRW information for homeowners/landowners.
- Completed on social survey.
- Targeted mailing for wetland protection/restoration.



Partners involved:

- Burr Oak Township
- Branch County
- Branch County Drain Commissioner
- Branch County Road & Parks Commission
- Friends of the St. Joe River Association
- Lake Templene Property Owners Association
- Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan State University
- Nottawa Township
- Ovid Township
- Potawatomi Resource Council & Development
- Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy
- St. Joseph County Conservation District
- St. Joseph County Drain Commissioner
- Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District
- USDA-NRCS



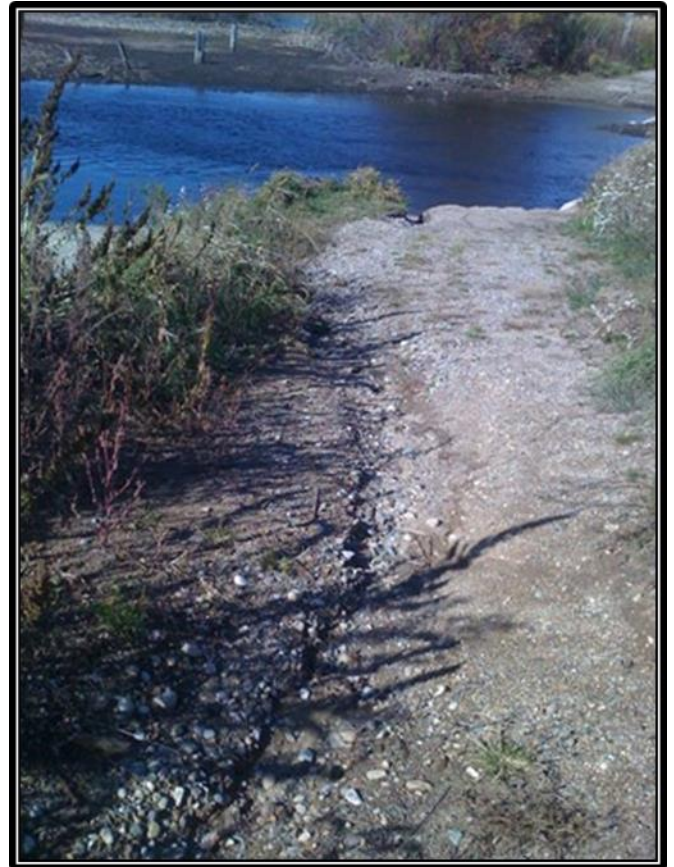
Above: Cattle in the stream. Uncontrolled livestock access sites were found at several locations during the inventory.



Above: Sand Lake Beach. Monitoring indicated pathogen concerns at this site in 2004.



The lack of riparian buffers was common in both agricultural (above) and residential settings (below).



Above: Recreational access site erosion. Erosion from foot traffic and boat launching activities was found at several locations during the inventory.

