



# SET IT AND FORGET IT!

## Using automated email courses in your work

2023 Fall Extension Conference

Tyler Augst

(269) 436-0520

[augstt tyl@msu.edu](mailto:augstt tyl@msu.edu)

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**mail:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

**fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442;

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Esta institución ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.

# What are we doing?

- Explain the process for developing an asynchronous email course using Qualtrics tools, including automated evaluation.
- Identify topics or content areas that may be appropriate for email course development.
- Create an outline for a new email course offering.



# Great Lakes Planning & Zoning Email Course

- Five free lessons
  - Introduction & Coastal Processes of the Great Lakes
  - Legal Framework for Shoreline Planning and Zoning
  - Planning for Shorelines
  - Zoning Tools for Coastal Communities
  - Continuing Your Learning
- Delivered directly to your inbox once a week
- 1 week and 6 month follow ups with evaluations



The Michigan Sea Grant Great Lakes Coastal Planning & Zoning Email Course is a learning opportunity for coastal land use decision makers and interested residents. Through a series of five lessons, delivered to your email inbox, you will learn about Michigan's Great Lakes shorelines and how communities can plan and zone for those shorelines. This course is meant as an introduction to coastal planning and zoning topics of interest. Each lesson provides some general information with plenty of links to more content to explore.

Once you have registered the first email lesson will be sent to the email address you supplied. You will receive one lesson a week for five weeks. The lessons consist of a key topic overview with plenty of links to additional content and resources.

The course lessons include:

- Lesson 1: Introduction & Coastal Processes of the Great Lakes
- Lesson 2: Legal Framework for Shoreline Planning and Zoning
- Lesson 3: Planning for Shorelines
- Lesson 4: Zoning Tools for Coastal Communities
- Lesson 5: Continuing Your Learning

We hope you will enjoy this email course and learn about Michigan's Great Lakes shorelines and their use.

If you have any questions during or after the course please contact Tyler Augst ([augsttyl@msu.edu](mailto:augsttyl@msu.edu)) or a Michigan Sea Grant Staff member near you.

Register for this free course: [bit.ly/3w3CasK](https://bit.ly/3w3CasK)



Michigan Sea Grant helps to foster economic growth and protect Michigan's coastal, Great Lakes resources through education, research and outreach. A collaborative effort of the University of Michigan and Michigan State University and its MSU Extension, Michigan Sea Grant is part of the NOAA-National Sea Grant network of 34 university-based programs. This email series was prepared in part by Michigan Sea Grant under award NA180A84170102 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce through the Regents of the University of Michigan. The statement, findings, conclusions, and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Commerce, or the Regents of the University of Michigan. MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.



# Course inspirations

- Pew Research Center Email Courses
  - [Polling](#)
  - [Immigration](#)
  - [Muslims](#)
  - [U.S. Census](#)
- [Frugalwoods – Uber Frugal Month Challenge](#)
  - 31 days of emails to reduce spending



[Photo by Taryn Elliott](#)



# The need

- Needs assessment
  - 2021 survey of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Municipal Governments
  - 300 jurisdictions across 8 states and 2 provinces
  - Demonstrated interest in the content (coastal resiliency), just a lack of time for traditional trainings →
  - Research on barriers to coastal planning (Norton et al., 2018)
- How to deliver existing content in a method the audience wants

“A majority of respondents expressed a preference for receiving information on coastal issues through websites or newsletters. This was followed by a lesser, but still notable, interest in receiving information through workshops and conferences, reports and studies, and virtual training.” (Great

Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, 2021)



# Registration

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

First Name

Last Name

What email address would you like you Coastal Planning and Zoning lessons sent to?

Michigan County where you live:

Survey Powered By [Qualtrics](#)



# What participants see

## *How to use this course*

This email is the first of seven that will be delivered. The first five emails will contain a link to that week's lesson. These links for each lesson will look like this.

### [Lesson 1: Coastal Processes of the Great Lakes](#)

Clicking on that link will take you to a page with the lesson's content. We recommend setting aside about 15 minutes to read each lesson. Each lesson contains links to additional resources and content such as additional readings and videos.

We recommend reading the entire lesson first, then go back to explore the links that interest you in more depth. You may also want to bookmark or save these lessons to refer to later.

Two additional emails will also be sent to you. They will be opportunities to provide feedback on the course and share how you have used the content. One will be delivered after the final lesson, and another will come about 6 months later to find out if you implemented any of the information you learned through taking this class. These surveys are very helpful to us and we hope that you will take the time to complete them.

## **Lesson 1: Coastal Process of the Great Lakes**

Your course begins today with an introduction to the Great Lakes and the coastal process that shapes our shorelines. In this lesson you will learn about the fluctuating water levels of the Great Lakes and impacts from a changing climate.

### [Lesson 1: Coastal Processes of the Great Lakes](#)

If you have any questions during or after the course please contact Tyler Augst ([augsttyl@msu.edu](mailto:augsttyl@msu.edu)) or a [Michigan Sea Grant Staff member near you](#).

Enjoy!

Tyler Augst

[augsttyl@msu.edu](mailto:augsttyl@msu.edu)

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# The lessons

## COASTAL PLANNING AND ZONING

## LESSON 1

### Coastal Processes of the Great Lakes



Good planning and zoning should be based on both community input and analysis of current information and science. Michigan Sea Grant, alongside the rest of the Sea Grant Networks, helps to make this a reality by connecting communities to the science of the Great Lakes as well as tools and resources to engage with residents and communities. This first lesson in your email short course focuses on Great Lakes science to build a foundation for the planning and zoning lessons to come.

#### Great Lakes water level fluctuations

Many people are familiar with ocean tidal cycles, but might be surprised to learn that the Great Lakes have their own water level fluctuations, although on a much longer scale than the twice a day ocean tides. The Great Lakes have seasonal and multi-decadal water level cycles. From the lower water levels in winter to the generally high water levels in early summer, Great Lakes water levels see an

Corps of Engineers assembles the data and creates seasonal water

es of fluctuation. Levels also vary these changes of precipitation, and river flows. precipitation or low to periods of high precipitation or lead to periods Michigan, Huron ence of over six ord high and e Superior has a er four feet.

the Great Lakes ured through a ne U.S. National heric Association 's Department ns. In Michigan, f the U.S. Army



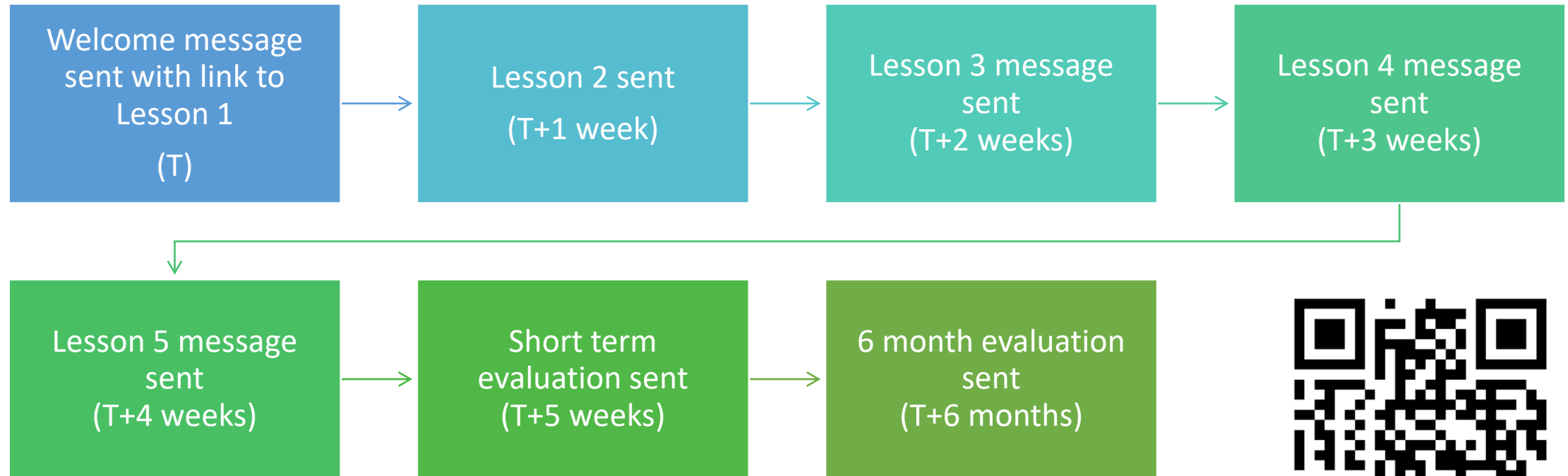
level forecasts. NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL) offers more details on this [network of monitoring stations](#), and the [Great Lakes Water Level Dashboard from NOAA](#) displays the measurements. [GLERL's Water Levels Story Map](#) is another great resource for more reading.

With these varying water levels, it is important for individuals and

communities to be prepared, for both low water levels like Michigan experienced in [2013](#) or the high water experienced in [2020](#). A key part of that preparation is understanding the processes of the Great Lakes and how those processes impact your coastal community. Michigan Sea Grant is a great resource for learning more about [resilient coastal communities](#) and many other [topics](#).

# How does it work?

Participant registers for Course at Time (T).....



Seriously, try it yourself!

# Qualtrics – Surveys

- Create the surveys that will function as your registration and any evaluations
- Registration survey should have:
  - Name for personalization
  - Email address to send lessons to
  - County of Residence
  - Demographics
- Evaluations
  - Automation makes it very easy to set up short term and longer evaluations, use it!
  - Great for demonstrating impact and informing future programs
  - Keep them short and simple and expect low response rates

# Qualtrics - Workflows

- Workflows are a feature in Qualtrics to automate tasks like:
  - Master Citizen Planner Application – Notifies the appropriate Extension staff when there is a new applicant in their service area
- Email course runs on automated workflows all triggered when a registration is received
  - Lesson workflow: Sends series of six emails with links to lessons
  - Evaluation workflow: Sends the short term and six-month evaluations at appropriate time
- Great documentation from Qualtrics on workflows here:  
<https://www.qualtrics.com/support/survey-platform/actions-module/setting-up-actions/>



# Process for creating the course

## Planning

- Needs assessment
- Setting goals
- Learning objectives
- Gather content

## Writing

- Lesson content
- Participant messages
- Peer review
- Final draft uploaded as Publications

## Qualtrics

- Registration form
- Evaluations (post & 6-month)
- Creating work flows for it all

## Marketing

- Flyers, graphics, press release
- DotCMS Course Page
- Get the word out!

# Planning – Establish YOUR goals



- What is the goal of the course?
  - For Great Lakes Coastal Planning and Zoning it was to get already existing content to a specific audience in a way they preferred while marketing other programs
- What is YOUR goal?
  - What is the need?
  - Who is the audience?
  - What are the key topics/units to cover?
  - What level of detail?

# Tyler's email course brainstorming



- Learn the Open Meetings Act, One Section at a Time!
- Guided tour of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act/Michigan Zoning Enabling Act
- Planning A\*Syst
- Zoning Reform for Housing Email Course
- New Appointed Official Survival Guide
- Repurposing an article series
  
- **What are yours?**



# Planning - Learning objectives

- Next step is to focus those goals into specific learning objectives
  - Helps to break it out into units/topics/lessons
- What will be different about participants on the other side?
  - Lean on Bloom's Taxonomy for writing
  - Use MSU Extension Learning Objective Outline Worksheet
- Lesson 2: Legal Framework for Shoreline Planning and Zoning
- Participants will be able to...
  - Identify where the authority to plan and zone in MI comes from
  - Paraphrase the state's role in shoreline protection
  - Explain the public trust doctrine along shorelines



# Planning – Write YOUR learning Objectives



- Based on the goals you identified, what are the learning objectives for your course? (May help to start with broad units)
- Fill these out on the Learning Objective Outline Worksheet

Unit 1: _____			
Learning Objective #1	Supporting Content	Activities	Assessments
Learning Objective #2	Supporting Content	Activities	Assessments
Learning Objective #3	Supporting Content	Activities	Assessments



## Planning – Gather Content

- On the MSU Extension website there are at least:
    - 10,000 articles
    - 1,400 publications
    - 500 videos
    - 100 courses
    - 100 podcasts
  - What can be reused or repurposed?
- What content does your team have?
  - Think about:
    - Things you frequently refer folks to
    - Articles you have written
    - Recorded presentations
    - Content from partners
    - Classes
    - Fee for service activities to advertise

# Planning – Gather YOUR content



- What content do you have that can support your learning objectives?
- Fill these out on the Learning Objective Outline Worksheet

Unit 1: _____			
Learning Objective #1	Supporting Content	Activities	Assessments
Learning Objective #2	Supporting Content	Activities	Assessments
Learning Objective #3	Supporting Content	Activities	Assessments

# Writing – Create the Content!

- Two main types of writing to do
- Lesson content
  - Guided by goals and learning objectives
  - Keep the content manageable and appropriate for the audience
  - Get others to peer review the content
  - Format into a professional package and upload as Publications to DotCMS
- Qualtrics content
  - Registration forms
  - Evaluation tools – Measure impact in the short and medium term
  - Workflow email messages – The text and links that will automatically get sent t

# Marketing – Get the word out

- Once everything is created the challenge is to drive traffic to the course...
- Lean on the Extension marketing resources:  
[https://www.canr.msu.edu/od/communications\\_marketing/](https://www.canr.msu.edu/od/communications_marketing/)
- Potential options:

Things to make	Things to do
Website article	Promote during programs
Flier	Feature in newsletters
Social media graphics/language	Advertise through county office networks
DotCMS Course page	Include in email signature/out of office
Press release	Share in professional networks

# Impact so far – 2022 short term evaluation

- 163 individuals registered across 50 (of 83) counties in Michigan
  - 92% strongly agreed or agree that they had increased their knowledge about Great Lakes coastal planning and zoning.
  - 100% agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of the course they are aware of resources available on the topic to assist in planning and zoning.
  - 77% responded that the course exceeds or far exceeds their expectations.
  - 62% plan to share the information provided with others
- *“Appreciate you providing educational content in this unique format.”*
- *“This course is a one stop resource for everything related to planning any activity around the Great Lakes. Thank You!”*

# Impact so far – 2022 six-month evaluation

- 86% reported that since they completed the course they had shared the information provided with others
- 86% reported that since they completed the course they had learned more on the topic
- 43% said they had accessed additional resources available on this topic to assist in planning and zoning
- One respondent reported that since taking the course they “*volunteered to serve on [their] Township Planning Commission and we are now updating our Master Plan to include a Chapter on our Lake Michigan Shoreline.*”

# Impact so far 2023 – Short term evaluation

- 78% strongly agreed that they had increased their knowledge about Great Lakes coastal planning and zoning.
- 89% agreed or strongly agreed that as a result of the course they are aware of resources available on the topic to assist in planning and zoning.
- 66% responded that the course exceeds or far exceeds their expectations.
- *“Well done, informative course. Topics included are ones I would not have been exposed to otherwise. Additional reading resources are aa useful tool I will share with other planning commissioners.”*



# How hands off is it really?

- In 2023 to maintain this offering I have:
  - January - Compiled evaluation responses for the 2022 year and reported in PEARS
  - January - Encouraging marketing in coastal counties with no participants to date
  - Q2 – 1-2 Requests for lessons to be resent
  - July - Mid-year summary for evaluation for PEARS
- Has created some additional ~~work~~ opportunities...
  - Used the course as an outline for a F2F presentation as part of a lunch and learn
  - Sharing at presentations
  - Direct Contacts with clients that have additional questions



# Questions?

**Tyler Augst**

**(269) 436-0520**

**[Augsttyl@msu.edu](mailto:Augsttyl@msu.edu)**

# References

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative. (2021). *Preliminary Findings from the Coastal Resilience Needs Assessment Survey of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Municipal Governments*. May.

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