

Water Quality Questions

Thank you to Erick Elgin for his answers.

Question: The development images showing wetland loss is striking and upsetting. Can you speak to how we can ensure this does not continue to happen? Do we need better regulation at the state level or is this a local government issue?

Answer: The rate of loss of wetlands in Michigan has declined considerably since federal and state laws that were passed in the 1970's. Here is a resource that discuss Michigan's wetlands:

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/wrd-wetlands-status-trends_556006_7.pdf

Question: When you showed the graph from the 2012 nation lake assessment that indicated we are seeing habitat loss in/around our inland lakes- is that the same across the state or are we seeing more or less issues in certain areas of the state?

Answer: There are regional differences. For example, a higher percentage of lakes in Southern Michigan are intensely developed compared to lakes in the UP. Here are some resources to help you learn the differences across the state and in your local area:

- Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership [Conservation Planner Tool](#)
- [United State Geological Survey: Michigan Lake Study](#)
- [EPA/ EGLE NLA Report](#)

Question: How does MSUE support ecologically forward resilient community planning efforts?

Answer: We have a variety of programs that touch on many different aspects of community planning and natural resources. You can find them here:

- https://www.canr.msu.edu/natural_resources/index
- <https://www.canr.msu.edu/community/index>
- <https://www.michiganseagrant.org/>

Question: Can you discuss some practical recommended planning and zoning options that communities can consider when trying protecting inland lakes from increased development? Are there resources you would suggest for further information on this?

Answer: Here are two resources that are great for recommending practical planning and zoning options around lakes:

- [Protecting Michigan's Inland Lakes](#)
- [Protecting Michigan's Inland Lakes: A Toolkit for Local Governments](#)

Question: Could you discuss effective pathways to adopt local ordinances to protect waterways (buffer zones, setbacks, etc.)?

Answer: Here are two resources that could help:

- [Protecting Michigan's Inland Lakes](#)
- [Protecting Michigan's Inland Lakes: A Toolkit for Local Governments](#)

Question: What is the state's approach for monitoring nonpoint discharges in regards to agricultural run-off entering waterways?

Answer: The state (Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, EGLE) doesn't have any specific targets to ag runoff unless there is a complaint of manure running off. District staff follow up and depending on the situation can do some monitoring. The state does have a monitoring approach where certain watershed basins are monitored on a rotating basis. When those watersheds are monitored, the land use is kept in mind for what might be going on. Also, through EGLE's watershed planning approach EGLE district staff work with local partners to identify targeted areas for monitoring based on what they know is happening in the watershed. Every year a request for targeted monitoring goes out to the public. The public can submit a request. It doesn't always get done because of what else is on the docket. However, many times it gets included in future monitoring when biologists get to that basin. In addition, through the state's watershed planning process they do do some monitoring where best management practices have been put in place.