

# West Michigan Conservation Network-2016

## MISSION STATEMENT

The West Michigan Conservation Network is an effective, diverse, and sustainable partnership of environmental groups, educational institutions, governmental organizations, and private citizens working to conserve and enhance our natural communities through ecosystem restoration and public education.

*The West Michigan Conservation Network (WMCN) was formalized in 2016 after countless hours of meetings and planning. Under this new organization, there are three subcommittees; Habitat Restoration and Management, Learning and Engagement, and Structure and Function. Together, these three committees help address conservation issues in West Michigan. With this new organization comes a new strategic plan to help guide the work on the WMCN. Oversight is provided by a seven person elected steering committee who is always open to feedback and comments.*

## HABITAT AND RESTORATION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Habitat and Restoration Subcommittee had a very productive year in 2016 and made significant progress on the intermediate outcomes listed in the strategic plan. Priority sites and species were identified both in accordance to grantors desires and the needs of the region. Management activities included hand pulling and chemical treatment of these invasives, using many different treatment techniques. All treatments will be monitored in 2017 and management goals and techniques will be adjusted as needed based on monitoring results. One priority for 2017 is formalizing a response plan to respond to new infestations and species in the region. Two new high priority species were identified in West Michigan in 2016; European frog-bit and yellow floating heart. Both of these species are on the State of Michigan Watch List.



WMCN Partners at the 2016 Annual Meeting

## WMCN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

9,216-ACRES SURVEYED  
610-SURVEYS COMPLETED  
1,176-DETECTIONS MAPPED  
45-MI WATCH LIST DETECTIONS  
459-CHEMICAL TREATMENTS  
5-WATCH LIST SPECIES TREATMENTS  
78.05-ACRES TREATED  
16-MECHANICAL TREATMENTS  
21-ACRES MECHANICALLY TREATED  
7,398.5-POUNDS REMOVED  
53-OUTREACH ACTIVITIES  
2,380-EVENT PARTICIPANTS  
750-BOOTH IMPRESSIONS



## Subcommittee Contacts

We encourage everyone to join subcommittees. Please contact the committee leads with questions.

### Habitat Restoration and Management

Drew Rayner: [drew.rayner@macd.org](mailto:drew.rayner@macd.org)

### Learning and Engagement

Meggan Johnson: [meggdaniels@hotmail.com](mailto:meggdaniels@hotmail.com)

### Structure and Function

Ginny Wanty: [vwanty@aol.com](mailto:vwanty@aol.com)



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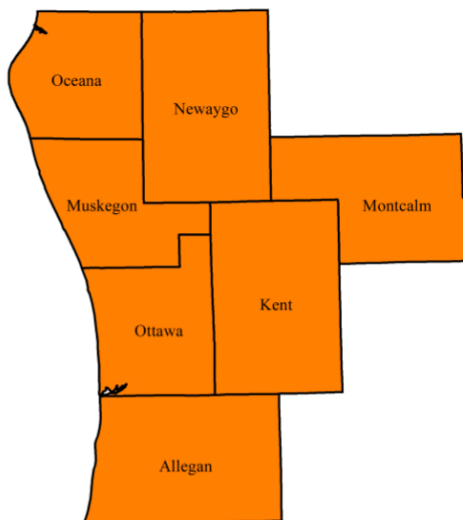
## LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

The Learning and Engagement Subcommittee held many trainings and workshops in 2016 on topics such as aquatic invasive species, forest health threats identification and management, winter tree and shrub identification, and rain garden installation and maintenance. These topics help to engage landowners and partners in a wide variety of conservation topics and many of these topics have been identified as high priority. The WMCN has put effort into focusing on these new and upcoming issues. By having this kind of flexibility, we are able to help close information gaps and get current information out to partners and landowners. By hosting and putting on numerous trainings, we are able to increase our visibility to the public. With a new organization and name, this will continue to be a priority to make sure landowners and partners are aware of our work and able to attend events and workshops. In 2016, events were held at eight different locations in four different counties in an effort to make sure information was getting out to as many people as possible as well as it giving the WMCN a chance to show off all of the great parks and facilities that our partners have to offer. A huge thank you goes out to all of the partners and guest speakers that spoke at these events and made them possible.

## STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Structure and Function Subcommittee is a new subcommittee to the WMCN. This subcommittee is tasked with many different functions that essentially keep the group moving forward. This includes planning and scheduling meetings, tracking finances, and other things of that nature. Though this subcommittee was not formed until later in 2016, many things were still accomplished for the current intermediate outcomes. As part of the new strategic plan, an organizational chart was developed and put into place. Many things like creating lists of responsibilities for each subcommittee and surveying for partners' interests and needs are still in the process and will continue to be worked on in 2017. A new treasurer has been identified but a finance subcommittee still needs to be developed to support that position. In 2016, the first annual partners meeting took place with great success and will continue to be refined and improved as we make this an annual event for partners and landowners. These meetings are not only a time to review progress and celebrate success, but also a time to recognize the amazing partners and volunteers of the WMCN and thank them for all of the great work they are doing.

## *West Michigan Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area*



## THE FUTURE

As 2016 came to an end, our attention quickly shifted to a lot of great work planned for 2017. In addition to funds previously secured, the Habitat Restoration and Management Subcommittee has been awarded a Michigan Invasive Species Grant worth \$333,963. This money will be used to continue our outreach activities, surveys, and treatment efforts of high priority invasive species.

The theme for the Learning and Engagement Subcommittee for 2017 is Water. There are many great workshops and trainings scheduled for this year. These events will be advertised on our Facebook page and sent out through email. If you have any questions or if you would like information on these events, please email us at the WMCN email below.

WMConservationNetwork@gmail.com

We look forward to working with you in 2017!!