Michigan's State of the Western Lake Erie Basin Conference

Advancements in the Watershed

June 26, 2025 | Adrian, Michigan

AGENDA

TIMES	SESSION DESCRIPTION	
9:00 am	**Registration and Continental Breakfast**	**Adrian Tobias Room**
10:00 am	**Welcome** – **Alison Bressle**r, University of Michigan Water Center (UMWC) **Opening Remarks** ◆ **Phil Roos,** Director, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) ◆ **Steve Chadwick,** Senior Great Lakes Wetlands Advisor, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) ◆ **Tim Boring,** Director, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) ◆ **Michelle Selzer,** WLEB Strategist, MDARD **Water Quality – Point Source Updates** ◆ **Phil Argiroff** & **Tom Asmus**, EGLE **EPA Regional Remarks**	**MORNING PLENARY – Adrian Tobias Room**
11:15 am	**Networking Break** – move to breakout session 1 (3 options)	
11:30 am	**Track 1 – Water Monitoring & Management** *Location: Peelle 207* **Wetlands at Work: Designing for Wildlife and Water** Discover how partnerships drive innovative solutions for complex wetland restoration in Michigan's Western Lake Erie Basin. Learn from the collaboration among the Michigan DNR, Ducks Unlimited, and LimnoTech as they design a multifunctional wetland to improve water quality, reduce flooding, and enhance wildlife habitat. Dive into expert insights on balancing diverse project goals for lasting success. ◆ **Alex Wieten, Kali Rush** & **Timm Appleton,** Ducks Unlimited ◆ **Hunter Kunzelmann,** University of Georgia ◆ **Chelsie Boles,** LimnoTech **Moderator:** ***Randy Knapik,*** *DNR*	**Track 2 – Understanding Nutrients** *Location: Adrian Tobias Room* **Performance-based Conservation Adoption Program: Accelerating Nutrient Reduction in the WLEB** Learn about the new performance-based conservation practice adoption program being developed at Michigan State University (MSU) and funded by MDARD. Learn the importance of performance as a driver for conservation practice adoption, how the program works, how it is connected to the other WLEB projects such as the Nutrient Tracking Dashboard, and the proposed timeline for development and implementation of the program. ◆ **Tim Boring,** MDARD ◆ **Jeremiah Asher,** MSU Institute of Water Research (IWR) **Moderator:** ***Michelle Selzer,*** *MDARD*	**Track 3 – Social Interventions** *Location: Jones 110* **Implementation Science in Agricultural Systems: Potentials for, and Assessments of, Innovative Behavior Change Interventions** Typical approaches for promoting conservation in agriculture have yet to enable behavior change significant enough to meet environmental goals in many areas across the U.S. At the same time, innovative interventions are not always evaluated in a way that assesses true impact. We will discuss potential points for innovation, as well as best practices for evaluating these approaches. Attendees will help identify other evidence-based approaches to conservation. ◆ **Matthew Houser,** University of Maryland ◆ **Robyn Wilson,** The Ohio State University **Moderator:** ***Adam Reimer,*** *National Wildlife Federation*
12:20 pm	**Networking Lunch & Keynote Address** **What Lake Erie's past can tell us about its future**, **Dr. Laura Johnson**, Chief Science Officer, MDARD	**Adrian Tobias Room**

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TIMES	SESSION DESCRIPTION		
1:20 pm	**Water Quality Monitoring Update** ◆ **Gary Kohlhepp,** EGLE **Agency Updates on Best Management Practices Outreach and Implementation** ◆ **Thad Cleary** & **Brittany Santure,** EGLE ◆ **Michael Alexander,** MDARD ◆ **Randy Knapik,** DNR		**AFTERNOON PLENARY – Adrian Tobias Room**
2:00 pm	**Networking Break** – move to breakout session 2 (3 options)		
2:15 pm	**Track 1 – Water Monitoring & Management** Location: Jones 110	**Track 2 – Understanding Nutrients** Location: Peelle 207	**Track 3 – Social Interventions** Location: Adrian Tobias Room
	Updates on High Density Water Quality Monitoring in the WLEB Learn more about WLEB's new high density water quality monitoring project being funded by MDARD and the Erb Family Foundation. The session will provide an overview of select water quality data – including total and soluble phosphorus – from Spring 2025 precipitation events along with a real-time continuous data viewer. ◆ **Angela Blatt,** Alliance for the Great Lakes ◆ **Ed Verhamme,** LimnoTech ◆ **Jeremiah Asher,** MSU IWR **Moderator:** ***Jen Read,*** *UMWC*	**Healthy Soils, Healthy Waters: Understanding links between soil health and water quality on farms in the WLEB** Learn about on-farm research linking agricultural management to soil health indicators and water quality outcomes in Michigan's portion of the WLEB. Provide feedback on preliminary results and the design of the next phases of the collaborative Healthy Soils, Healthy Waters project. ◆ **Jennifer Blesh** & **Brendan O'Neill,** University of Michigan **Moderator:** ***Alison Bressler,*** *UMWC*	**Social science perspectives on transforming agricultural landscapes into wetlands** Explore the crucial role of landowner engagement in wetland restoration efforts in the Western Lake Erie Basin. Speakers will delve into research on landowner attitudes and share insights from a collaborative study with Michigan DNR, Michigan State University, and Ducks Unlimited. Participate in a dynamic discussion on overcoming barriers and seizing opportunities for successful wetland restoration. ◆ **Meg Vona** & **Emily Pomeranz,** MSU ◆ **Barbara Avers,** DNR **Moderator:** ***Steve Chadwick,*** *DNR*
3:05 pm	**Break** – move to breakout session 3 (3 options)		
3:15 pm	**Track 1 – Water Monitoring & Management** Location: Jones 110	**Track 2 – Understanding Nutrients** Location: Peelle 207	**Track 3 – Social Interventions** Location: Adrian Tobias Room
	Water Management for Water Quality and Crop Yield Learn about innovative strategies for managing water to enhance water quality and crop yield. This session explores ways to improve the performance of controlled drainage systems in minimizing nutrient loss, discusses the benefits of drainage water recycling for nutrient reduction based on research conducted in Iowa, and examines the effects of this technique on crop yield and nutrient loss in Missouri. ◆ **Ehsan Ghane,** MSU Extension ◆ **Chris Hay,** Hay Water Solutions, LLC ◆ **Kelly Nelson,** University of Missouri (in absentia) **Moderator:** ***Alison Bressler,*** *UMWC*	**Understanding Legacy Phosphorus in the Western Lake Erie Basin** Learn about what science can tell us about legacy phosphorus in agricultural watersheds, including factors that influence P loss, how collaboration with the agricultural community can help identify high-risk fields, which BMPs are most effective and how their implementation can be achieved voluntarily. Attendees will be able to ask WLEB phosphorus experts any legacy phosphorus questions in fields and waterways. ◆ **Mike Brooker,** The Ohio State University **Moderators:** ***Laura Johnson,*** *MDARD &* ***Santina Wortman,*** *U.S. EPA*	**Designing Successful Farmer-led Conservation Efforts** Much of the research on farm conservation agrees that farmer-led efforts can be more impactful and durable than other approaches. However, even these initiatives are often unsuccessful at driving broad uptake of conservation practices among agricultural producers. We will discuss select cases of famer-led conservation successes and failures and offer questions to attendees regarding their experiences and suggestions for improvement. ◆ **Douglas Jackson-Smith,** The Ohio State University ◆ **Lauren Asprooth,** University of Wisconsin-Madison ◆ **Stephanie Singer** & **Matt Burkholder**, TNC ◆ **Brice Armentrout,** Kahler Family Farms ◆ **Melissa Harris,** MACD & **Blaine Baker,** Bakerlads **Moderator:** ***Ruxandra Popovici,*** *Ind. Researcher*
4:05 pm	**Adjourn**		