

Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds

Guiding Principles

October 2020
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

LOWER GRAND RIVER
ORGANIZATION *of* WATERSHEDS





The Organization and Guiding Documents

The Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds (LGROW) is an agency of the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC), formed in 2008 to address regional water issues facing the Lower Grand River Watershed. LGROW operates under the direction of, and is governed by, the policies and procedures of GVMC.

LGROW is guided by the following documents:

1. GVMC's Articles of Incorporation and By-laws
2. LGROW's Strategic Plan 2019-2022
3. Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan
4. NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permits

Our Vision

Connect water with life.

Our Mission (purpose)

Understand, protect and improve the natural resources of the Lower Grand River Watershed for all to enjoy.

Our Values and Commitments that Guide our Work, Decisions and Behavior

- We will have an organization that is financially sound and structurally prepared.
- We will collaborate with and support MS4 communities, sub-watershed groups, community organizations, and local watershed stakeholders.
- We will build awareness and capacities that foster equitable outcomes.
- We will welcome participation and leadership from all people from all communities, including those that have been traditionally underserved or under-resourced.
- We will coordinate communication and education programs by and for all people.
- We will employ a sustainable, resilient approach to watershed opportunities.
- We will be adaptive, responsive, creative, and ethical.
- We will evaluate our progress and share our successes.
- We will develop and support watershed research and educational efforts.

Articles of Incorporation

Article XVI. Creation of Agencies. The Council may establish such agencies as the Council shall deem appropriate to carry out its functions. The method of establishing an agency and delegating powers and responsibilities to an agency shall be set forth in the Bylaws.

Article XVII. Bylaws. The Council shall have the right to adopt and amend bylaws governing its procedure and functions, provided that the bylaws are not in conflict with the terms of these Articles, the Act, or any other applicable statute. Bylaws shall be adopted and amended only upon a majority vote of: 1) the total number of weighted votes of the Members of the Council, and 2) the Members of the Council; except for Section II of the Bylaws, which may be amended only by: 1) a majority vote of the weighted vote and a majority vote of the Members as stated above, and 2) the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the legislative bodies of the Units who belong to the Council.

Article XVIII. Amendment of Articles of Incorporation. These Articles may be amended upon approval of a majority vote of: 1) the total number of weighted votes of the Members of the Council, 2) the Members of the Council, and 3) the members serving on the Legislative Bodies of the participating local governmental Units, if a vote by such local Legislative Body members is required by law.

GVMC By-Laws

SECTION VII

CREATION OF AGENCIES

7.1 Establishment. The Council may establish such agencies as the Council shall deem appropriate to carry out its functions. If the Council believes it will be beneficial to bring into the Council an agency which was established outside of the Council's auspices, it may do so by resolution, contract or such other lawful action as may be appropriate in the circumstances. At the time of establishing each agency, the Council shall state the agency's purpose and the extent of its responsibility.

7.2 Services. Each agency shall undertake those duties and responsibilities directed by the Council. The agency may undertake those actions and provide those services in any portion of the Council Area and in such additional areas as are permitted by the Council. If permitted by the Council, the agency shall be allowed to enter into contracts with private individuals or other governmental units or authorities to either provide services to others for a fee or to have services provided for the agency.

7.3 Delegation of Powers. Each agency established by the Council under this section shall have only those powers directly granted by the Council. Each agency shall be subject to all restrictions promulgated by the Council. In each event the Council shall retain, at a minimum, the following control over each agency:

- A. Approval of the annual capital and operating budget of the agency. The agency shall not have authorization to make any expenditures in excess of those which are approved in the annual budget. To the extent that any expenditures in excess of those approved in the annual budget are desired, they shall first receive approval by the Council as an amendment to the agency's budget.
- B. Unless specifically exempted by these Bylaws, the Council shall retain the right to overrule or modify any action (resolution, policy decision, rule or regulation, or other action) by an agency within thirty (30) days of receipt by the Council of written notice of the action taken by the agency. Receipt by the Secretary of the Council of a copy of the agency's minutes delineating the action taken shall constitute receipt of notice of that fact by the Council. If the Council desires to overrule or modify an action of the agency, it shall do so by passage of a resolution of the Council, a copy of which shall promptly be sent to the agency.
- C. Each agency shall be subject to compliance with all policies, rules and regulations approved by the Council unless they are specifically exempted by resolution or bylaw of the Council.
- D. All funds received by each agency shall be received in the name of and be the property of the Council.

7.4 Representation. The size of each agency and the number of members shall be determined by the Council. The Council shall be solely responsible for appointing members to each agency. To the extent that terms on any agency exceed one (1) year, the Council shall structure the agency so that its members' terms expire in alternate years. The Council shall seek to ensure that each Unit which receives services from the agency has a member to represent it on the agency unless the Council believes that this will create an agency too large in size. The Council may agree to include representation on the agency from non-Units who have contracted for services from the agency and are within the agency's service area. If such an agreement exists, any member who is nominated to the agency by a non-Unit shall be approved by the Council prior to becoming a member of the agency.

Logic Model for the LGROW 2018–2022 Strategic Plan

Inputs	Outputs				Responsibility	Indicators of Success
	<i>Long-Term Goals</i>	<i>Strategic Focus</i>	<i>Management Actions</i>	<i>Education/Engagement Actions</i>	<i>Committees & Work Groups</i>	<i>Measurable Results</i>
LGROW Staff LGROW Board of Directors LGROW Partners NPDES Stormwater Permits Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan	Goal #1: Healthy Watersheds	Restore and Protect Impaired and Threatened Waterways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote installation of BMPs to reduce pollutants in impaired waterways Support removal of fish passage barriers and restoration of altered hydrology Coordinate research into solutions to impairments and methods of protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training to municipal planners, developers, and engineers on best practices Expose watershed groups to local watershed issues 	Technical Committee Subwatershed Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BMP performance Utilization of researched solutions Restoration projects and results Improved hydrology Number of people trained Increased understanding of watershed issues
		Advance Natural Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update Natural Connections Map with site specific and regional green infrastructure layers Complete and begin implementing LGR Watershed Resilience Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elevate the public’s and municipal staff and employees’ understanding of purpose and function of green infrastructure 	Sustainability Committee SWOrd Committee Subwatershed Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural Connections maps for subwatersheds Green infrastructure practices installed to increase resilience
		Promote Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist NRCS with identification of potential installation sites for agricultural BMPs Promote and apply smart development concepts that help rural communities make land use decisions that will be sustainable for people, profits, and the planet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote watershed friendly farms Coordinate with local officials in rural areas in smart growth principles 	Sustainability Committee Subwatershed Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of RCPP contracts Number of communities engaged
Community Support Scientific Research LGROW Committees Student Experiences	Goal #2: Engaged Community	Involve the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement updated PEP plan Increase social media presence Offer volunteer opportunities Connect and grow “Friends of” watershed groups Conduct workshops, events, and learning opportunities for the public and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspire and recruit young professionals and youth groups to participate in workshops and events Promote Annual Forum to larger audience Expand Citizen Science activities 	Public Engagement Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of objectives of PEP met Increase in number of likes and followers Number of volunteers Number of events Number of Friends groups Diversity of Citizen Science activities
		Incorporate Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise Strategic Plan to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion Incorporate DEI principles into workshop and event planning Grow internship opportunities for diverse applicants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to provide equitable access to environmental education Coordinate Environmental Justice activities with Transportation Department 	Board of Directors & Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DEI values incorporated and followed Increase in diverse audiences reached Hiring of interns with diverse backgrounds Increase in EJ efforts
Other Watershed Groups and Councils Lower Grand River Watershed Resilience Plan	Goal #3: Robust Organization	Recruit New Members & Develop Watershed Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify benefits of membership Provide leadership volunteer opportunities Recruit committee members and event coordinators Develop menu of assistance available to municipalities with environmental issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite public/members/volunteers to write blogs and articles for newsletters Invite public/ members to present at lunch & learns Grow LGROW membership 	Network Work Group Subwatershed Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased engagement of membership Opportunities for leadership development Additional contact with Municipalities
		Secure Sustainable Revenue & Strengthen Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage funding from earned revenue to hire staff Confirm Board’s role in Strategy Encourage full Board participation Review Budget & Revise Strategic Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage Board in Strategic Plan implementation Define Board role in community education and engagement Conduct Board training sessions 	Executive Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative action for sustainable watershed funding Succession plan of leaders Board’s roles identified

Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan



August 2011
MDEQ Tracking Code 2007-0137

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Michigan's
Nonpoint Source
Program

Summary of the Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan

The Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan (WMP) was approved in August 2011 by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the US Environmental Protection Agency as meeting the Nine Elements, recommended best management practices (BMPs) to reduce nonpoint source pollution. The WMP delineated 31 Subwatershed Management Units (SMU) within its boundary. Since then, several subwatersheds have initiated projects and installed numerous BMPs to improve water quality. Concerted efforts in the Rogue River, Plaster Creek, Bass River, Deer Creek and Coldwater River have been most successful and coincide with MDEQ's targeted watersheds for the Lower Grand River Watershed (LGRW). Plaster Creek has installed large vegetated swales to capture and slow down runoff. The Rogue River Watershed has created a Stormwater Guidebook for local officials to use in approving new developments. The communities in the urbanized area with stormwater permits are reducing the rate and volume of stormwater runoff and associated total suspended solids. Projects in the direct drainage areas of the Grand River have not been as active as those in the subwatersheds due to its large area and a multi-jurisdictional boundary. The Grand River does, however, have several of the same water quality concerns as its tributaries, namely sediment, nutrients and pathogens.

The recommendations of the Watershed Management Plan are options that can be voluntarily implemented to achieve water quality goals. It will be important to sustain the voluntary implementation of the Plan's recommendations to ensure that the conditions in the Lower Grand River Watershed (Watershed) improve, thereby reducing the need for state regulations and mandates. Success of the WMP depends on consistent support from local governments, citizens, and businesses. Each of these communities has distinct needs that will require different strategies. However, to remain committed to a common water quality goal will require ongoing coordination of the intentions and actions of all these groups.

The ongoing success of LGROW is vital not only to improving water quality in the Grand River, but also improving the quality of all lives throughout the Great Lakes Basin. Through their continued use of this WMP in the Lower Grand River, LGROW can play a significant part in improving the quality and availability of waters throughout the entire state and region. By joining with other watersheds, including those in upper reaches of the Grand River, and with efforts to improve water resources below ground, in the atmosphere, and in our surrounding Great Lakes, LGROW can broaden its reach, share its knowledge, and learn from others as we tackle the most significant issues facing us today. Among these are: finding effective ways to moderate the negative effects of human activities, restoring balance to large-scale disturbances in global ecosystems including climate and energy, to improve the quality of life for all social classes, and to more efficiently invest in a future built upon sustained natural ecosystem services.

A WMP and its supporting organization can only go so far in accomplishing such wide-scaled change. While LGROW's mission is related specifically and directly to improving the waters in their charge, real change will only be through involvement with collaborations and partners dedicated to making long-term successful lives from our homes, local towns, and subwatersheds, all the way up to our cities, regions, states, and nation. It is in this spirit, that of connecting the improvements in each of the hundreds of local rivers throughout our Watershed with the larger needs of our entire community and citizenry at large, that we have created this WMP. LGROW's mission is to empower areas of the watershed to solve water resource issues locally, so the information will assist those areas where a watershed group does not exist.

The full document is available at <https://www.lgrow.org/lgrwmp>.

Goals of LGROW Subcommittees

Technical Committee Goals

- Be the technical resource for LGROW
- Work collaboratively with and provide technical guidance for the LGROW committees
- Measure progress and achievements in the watershed

Public Engagement Committee Goals

- To support programs, events, materials, and activities that help communities meet the educational requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater permits (MS4s)
- To document successful implementation the Information and Education Plan of the federally approved Lower Grand River Watershed Management Plan.
- To cooperate and collaborate with LGROW's network to foster public education and outreach regarding shared environmental priorities.

Sustainability Committee Goals

- Assist partners in promoting sustainable agricultural best management practices and preserving high quality farmland
- Provide information and technical assistance on green stormwater infrastructure and low impact development practices through education and demonstration projects
- Update information and implement preservation and conservation practices illustrated in the Natural Connections Map
- Develop a nationally recognized Water Trail for the Grand River

Subwatershed Committee

- To support and coordinate with all existing subwatershed groups in the Lower Grand River Watershed by sharing ideas and resources.
- To improve public awareness, increase membership and activity and provide support for leadership in subwatershed groups.
- To improve water quality in all tributaries of the Lower Grand River by implementing best management practices identified in the LGR Watershed Management Plan and influence real long-term changes in land use and agricultural practices.

Stormwater Ordinance (SWOrd) Committee Goals

- Lead the watershed in technical stormwater management guidance
- Collaborate on stormwater management strategies in the watershed
- Ensure consistency in stormwater standards implementation across the watershed
- Provide technical education for stormwater managers in the watershed

Network Work Group

- Build network and offer opportunities for public involvement
- Seek out and foster new partnerships
- Expand LGROW's profile in the community

Lower Grand River

NPDES Stormwater Program

The Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC) is continuing to coordinate a regional effort to comply with the NPDES Stormwater Regulations. Communities in the LGRW with Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s) are collaborating and working on a regional scale to meet permit requirements. LGROW committees work to address different subject areas to make program implementation as efficient as possible. Committee meetings have also been used to update everyone on the progress of the other committees and the program in general.

