



City of South Haven

PRESS RELEASE

City of South Haven

539 Phoenix Street, South Haven, MI 49090

Fax: 269-637-5319

Web: www.south-haven.com

Local Media

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GRANT AWARDED FOR BLACK RIVER AND PAW PAW RIVER PROJECT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – (South Haven, Michigan) The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has awarded a grant for the Black River and Paw Paw River Watersheds Pathogen Monitoring Project. The monitoring will focus on the Black River and tributaries near South Haven and the Pine and Mill Creeks in the Paw Paw River Watershed. The amount of the grant is \$48,680 with the required 25% local match in the amount of \$16,274. The project total is \$64,954. Along with the City of South Haven, several partners are sharing in the grant match including the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission; Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indian Tribe; Two Rivers Coalition; Van Buren County Drain Commission; MSU Water Quality, Environmental, and Molecular Microbiology Lab; and Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber Inc.

As the regional planning agency for Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties, the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission (SWMPC) has taken the lead role in preparing the grant application. The SWMPC is interested in assisting local watershed groups in developing a long-term volunteer monitoring program for the Black River and Paw Paw River Watersheds. Marcy Colclough, Senior Planner at SWMPC, has been working on water quality issues for over 10 years in southwest Michigan. She has been instrumental in pursuing the grant.

The Black River is a suspected source of *E. coli* which has impaired beaches in the City of South Haven in the past. South Beach was closed in the summer of 2010 due to elevated levels of *E. coli*. South Haven is valued for its Lake Michigan beaches and

recreational opportunities. This prompted the City of South Haven to initiate projects to identify and eliminate sources of *E. coli* and reduce the chances of future beach closings. Currently, monthly water samples are being collected in dry and wet weather from the Peterson and Phoenix Drains, tributaries of the Black River, to analyze the magnitude and sources of *E. coli* contamination.

The project will monitor water quality in the Black River and Paw Paw River Watersheds to identify sources of pollutants that are impacting valued water resources. Several tasks will be completed throughout the process, including: create Water Quality Committee; develop Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for sampling; conduct sampling; perform Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) on data and interpret results; identify sources; develop and conduct outreach and education program; prepare implementation plan; and evaluate project.

Over the past year, the City of South Haven has been actively involved in studying an ongoing *E. Coli* issue that has resulted in several beach closures during the peak tourist season. Offering a safe and healthy environment for the citizens and visitors in the South Haven area is a high priority. "The grant funds from the Clean Michigan Initiative-Clean Water Fund will allow us to ensure a safe and healthy environment for everyone," states City Manager Brian Dissette. "We are excited about the opportunity to participate in this project.

For more information, please contact Larry Halberstadt, City of South Haven Engineer, lhalberstadt@south-haven.com or 269-637-0770.

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