



LGROW's 13th Annual Grand River Spring Forum Focuses on Water Infrastructure

On Friday, May 6, 2016, the Wisner Center at Cascade Charter Township's library was the site for LGROW's 13th Annual Grand River Spring Forum. Close to 100 people gathered from 8:30 -11:30 am to hear about our region's infrastructure needs and updates from around the watershed.

The morning began with John Weiss, GVMC's Executive Director, thanking Cascade Charter Township for providing the venue for the Forum and introducing John Koches from GVSU-AWRI, the current LGROW Board Chair. Weiss, along with Brian Donovan, City Manager of East Grand Rapids and the immediate past Chair of the LGROW Board, presented Koches with a service award—a clock featuring Lake Michigan—in appreciation of his leadership of the Board.

The morning's keynote speaker, Mark Coscarelli of Public Sector Consultants, took the podium next and discussed Michigan Infrastructure and



John Weiss and Brian Donovan presenting John Koches with his service award.

Transportation Association's identification of funding gaps and needs for sewer and water infrastructure statewide.

Coscarelli's presentation was followed by a panel discussion on infrastructure issues and collaborative efforts in the Lower Grand River Watershed. Panel participants included Eric DeLong, Deputy City Manager, City of Grand Rapids; Joellen Thompson, P.E., Water System Manager, City of Grand Rapids; and Myron Erickson, P.E., Deputy Director of Public Works, City of Wyoming.

After a short break, Wendy Ogilvie, Director of Environmental Programs for GVMC, introduced LGROW's new website (www.lgrow.org) and it's featured video (click [here](#) to view). Marc Miller, Regional Initiatives Deputy for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, took the stage immediately afterward and spoke on the proposed Grand River Water Trail, a 252 mile trail of waterways in West and Southern Michigan. He was followed by Erik Nordman, Ph.D., Associate Professor in the Department of Biology at GVSU, and Nichol De Mol, Manager of Rogue River Home Rivers Project for Trout Unlimited, who informed the audience about the Rogue River Economic Impact Study.

Marty Holtgren, Ph.D., Fisheries Biologist for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources; Stephanie Ogren, Ph.D., Science Education Manager for Grand Rapids Public Museum; and Matt Chapman of Grand Rapids Whitewater gave the final presentation



Kristine Bersche, GVMC, kayaks down the Grand River with other Forum attendees.

on lake sturgeon populations and habitat improvements. Afterwards, Ogilvie shared a new video on the activities and projects in other watersheds within the Lower Grand River Watershed. Please watch for the video to be online soon!

The morning concluded with the new LGROW Board Chair, Scott Conners, P.E., City of Walker, asking for questions and giving closing remarks.

After the Forum, 12 of the attendees met to kayak down the Grand River, with kayaks and transportation provided by GR Paddling.

The Spring Forum is an annual event that first began in 2004. For approximately ¼ of the attendees, this was their first Grand River Spring Forum. We look forward to seeing this event continue to grow in the future.

GVMC, on behalf of LGROW, would like to extend a special thank you to Cascade Charter Township for providing the beautiful setting for this year's Forum, as well as our other sponsors, Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc., the West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum, and GVSU Annis Water Resources Institute.