



Three New At-Large Board Members Join GVMC



At our recent Board of Directors Meeting, three new members joined the GVMC Board representing the private sector.

Charlie DeVries is the area Manager of Community Affairs and Philanthropy at ITC Holdings Corp. He has been an active participant in many GVMC activities and joins our Board with a wide variety of experience throughout our region.

Karen McCarthy is Regional/Lead Public Affairs Manager for Consumers Energy. Karen also has been active with GVMC and many of our governmental members in her role with Consumers Energy.

Micki Benz is Vice President of Communications and Advocacy at Mercy Health Saint Mary's. She is very active in the community and will be a great representative of the healthcare industry.

Chairman Al VanderBerg welcomed the new members and said, "GVMC appreciates the expertise and perspective these members will bring to our Board."



EPA awards \$340,065 to GVMC from Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for Stormwater Implementation and Education

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) was launched in 2010 to accelerate efforts to protect and restore our Great Lakes, the largest system of fresh surface water in the world. GVMC, through the Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds (LGROW) and its partners, was awarded funding from the GLRI to implement green infrastructure and other practices to reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff, including sedimentation and degraded habitat, within the urban areas of the Lower Grand River Watershed. The partners and specific activities of the project include:

- Plaster Creek Stewards will install bioswales and reconnect the floodplain at Indian Trails Golf Course to reduce stormwater runoff into Plaster Creek.
- The City of Grand Rapids will work with North Park Montessori School to install bioswales to capture and filter stormwater before it enters Lambertson Creek. This project will complement the downstream improvements planned at the Michigan Home for Veterans.
- Trout Unlimited will work with the City of Rockford and East Rockford Middle School Students to install a bioswale and a raingarden along the White Pine Trail to protect the Rogue River.
- LGROW is coordinating the implementation of the green infrastructure practices and the education and outreach efforts. Through this effort pre-and post-project questionnaires will evaluate the students' increased knowledge from exposure to their watershed issues through classroom presentations and site visits to help with the implementation of the practices.
- The West Michigan Environmental Action Council will be hosting rain barrel events in each of the watersheds.
- Groundswell will be working with the teachers and with City staff to incorporate the work into curriculum and to design interpretative signs.

These projects will result in 9,200 sq. ft. of bioswales, a 500 sq. ft. rain garden, and over 10,000 sq. ft. of floodplain restoration and native habitat leading to a reduction of almost 1.5 million gallons of stormwater runoff entering our local waterways. Educational efforts of this project bring in additional partners to offer extensive experiential learning opportunities. The total project cost is \$451,600 with the EPA providing \$340,065 of that funding and the remaining \$111,535 being contributed by in-kind services from LGROW and its partners.

This is truly an example of GVMC and our Environmental Department working with and assisting partners in a region-wide project. Hopefully this will be the first of many collaborative projects in the future.