

Alliance of Downriver Watersheds

Meeting Notes

March 3, 2026 9:30 am

VIRTUAL MTG



- 1) Welcome: John Danci from Dearborn Heights opened the meeting. In attendance were:

Designated or Alternate Community Representatives from:

Allen Park
Belleville
Dearborn Heights
Ecorse
Flat Rock
Gibraltar
Grosse Ile Township
Inkster
Lincoln Park
Melvindale
Riverview
Rockwood
Romulus
Southgate
Sumpter Township
Taylor
Trenton
Van Buren Township
Wayne County
Westland
Woodhaven-Brownstown
School District
Wyandotte

- Allen Park – Brent Florek
- Belleville – Nathan Johnson
- Dearborn Heights – John Danci
- Flat Rock – Brent Florek
- Gibraltar – Denis Boismier
- Grosse Ile – Brent Florek
- Lincoln Park – John Kozuh
- Riverview – Brent Florek
- Rockwood – Brent Florek
- Romulus – Don Straub
- Southgate – Josh Barry
- Taylor – Kelly McRobb-Ackland
- Trenton – Brent Florek
- Van Buren Township – Kendyl McWilliams
- Wayne County – Sue Thompson
- Westland – Dean Keffer
- Wyandotte – Greg Mayhew

Other Interested Parties:

- Bob Burns – Detroit Riverkeeper
- Jason Ferrall, Wayne County Airport Authority
- Leah Groya, L Groya Consulting
- Casey Jezewski, EGLE
- Jennifer Kangas, HRWC
- Kelly McCabe, HRWC
- Valerie Novaes, OHM Advisors
- Andrea Paine, HRWC'
- Bailee Pasienza, SEMCOG
- Kaitlyn Reedy, Arch Environmental Group for Partner School Districts
- Paul Steen, HRWC
- Elizabeth Thacker, OHM Advisors
- McKenzie Waliczek, Friends of the Detroit River
- Maaik Wielenga, HRWC

OFFICIAL ACTIONS of the ADW taken at the meeting are shown in bold capitalized letters.

Action items for the future are shown in bold italics.

1) Welcome and Introductions

- a. Roll call of Alliance Members and Alternates present – roll call was performed and there was a quorum present.
- b. Introductions of meeting attendees
- c. Addition or changes to draft agenda. There were no changes to the agenda.
- d. Approval of December 2, 2026 meeting notes – **ACTION: There was a motion by Grosse Ile Twp to approve the December 2, 2026 meeting notes. Seconded by Wyandotte. Passed unanimously.**

2) ADW Chair Nominations

- Ron Akers notified the ADW that he is no longer able to continue serving as Chair of the ADW. Thank you to Ron for serving in this roll!
- Don Straub, who is currently the Vice-Chair, agreed to shift to the Chair position. John Danci will continue as Treasurer. There is now a vacancy for the Vice-Chair.
- **ACTION: There was a motion by Wyandotte to approve Don Straub as the ADW Chair, and John Danci as the Treasurer. Seconded by Grosse Ile Twp. Passed unanimously.**
- Please contact Elizabeth Thacker if you are interested in serving as the Vice-Chair. This position is open to official ADW representatives/alternates but is not limited to member employees (consultants that are representatives can also fill this role).

2) Finance Committee Report

- Jennifer Kangas provided a financial summary report that was included in the meeting packet.
- Outstanding 2025 Dues – The invoice for Allen Park was sent to the wrong person. This is being addressed. Gibraltar's dues are being processed. Inkster – invoices were mailed again (dues for 2023 and 2024 are outstanding (2022 and 2025 dues were paid).
- There is approx. \$55k yet to be paid to the facilitation team before closing out 2025. It is projected that there will be a fund balance of \$ 234k after all 2025 bills are paid.

3) Collaborative Plan Updates

- a. Planning and Reporting
 - The Collaborative PPP, PEP, and IDEP have all been approved by EGLE. The facilitation team has been going back and forth with EGLE to address their comments on the Collaborative TMDL. Once all of the plans are approved, the facilitation team will send you the approved plans so that you can upload them in MiEnviro for your individual permit.
 - The post-construction report is due to EGLE on April 1, 2026. This report is annual and is submitted through MiEnviro.
 - If Wayne County does your post-construction reviews, you will receive summaries generated from SEMCOG.
 - If your community performs your own reviews, you will need to generate the post-construction report.
 - If there are no new/redevelopments then you just need to upload a document in MiEnviro stating that is the case.

- Report on projects that have been built (not just reviewed)
- b. IDEP Activities
 - As a reminder, EGLE is not requiring every outfall to be dry weather screened once during the permit cycle.
 - The ADW has a solid data set of member outfalls. Within the next few weeks, the facilitation team will be sending out a google form to the membership to help us determine the best way to review and transfer outfall data to each member. This is to ensure that member communities have the most accurate outfall data prior to performing dry weather screening.
- c. Progress Evaluation Activities Update
 - Paul Steen (HRWC) presented the 2025 Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Results. The full report was provided in the meeting packet.
 - In 2025, HRWC and Wayne County sampled macroinvertebrates in the ADW 22 times at 13 locations.
 - Each site is giving a rating from 0-10 that is based on the number and types of species found. A score of 0 is extremely healthy and a 10 is highly degraded.
 - In general, most ADW streams have degraded water quality and habitat conditions due to heavily urbanized environments.
 - A few locations were found to be healthy, including Blakely Drain at Vining Road and Woods Creek in the Lower Huron Metropark.
 - Brent Florek asked if weather trends are correlated with the bio data. Paul responded that flooding will definitely impact the data. Impacted data is usually removed from the analysis.
 - Kelly McCabe (HRWC) presented the 2025 Chemistry/Flow Monitoring Results. The full report was provided in the meeting packet
 - Measurements are taken for: Phosphorus (TP, PO₄), Sediments (TSS), Bacteria (*E. coli*), pH, water temperature, Dissolved Oxygen, Conductivity, Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), water level and discharge
 - Grades were given for the different parameters based on the measurements. Overall Grades for the ADW: B-Phosphorous, B-Sediments, F-Bacteria
 - Bob Burns asked what is causing the elevated E.coli levels. Kelly responded that it is a complex problem. There have been years spent removing illicit connections. Contributions from animals are a problem.
 - Brent Florek asked if grades could be given separately for partial and full body contact. Kelly responded that is possible. They look at full-body contact because that is the regulatory standard.
 - Brent Florek asked about the difference in data between dry and wet weather. This needs to be investigated further but the highest numbers appear after wet weather. In general elevated bacteria levels in dry weather indicate illicit connections as being problematic. Elevated levels in wet weather indicate bacteria washing off pavement or overflows. The data could be separated based on weather.
- d. Public Education Tasks – Maaiké Wielenga led the discussion
 - ADW E-news – there will be 4 editions emailed out this year. The next editions comes out next week. The email is sent to approximately 250 leaders in the ADW community. If members have a project or story to share, please contact Maaiké Wielenga.

- New PEP Activity for 2026 - Distribute stormwater pollution prevention informational materials and resources for the public and businesses. ADW tip graphics for email, websites and social media available on Trello. Also there is a new business-focused page as part of the ADW website [Tips for Businesses – Alliance of Downriver Watershed](#).
- ADW Calendars – please continue to distribute if you have any left.
- ADW Display Boards – ADW members are required to host the displays every other year. Please reach out to Maaiké to schedule.
- Youth Education Support - the ADW will support the Friends of the Detroit River's Detroit River Water Festival. This is a free, educational event that brings hundreds of students together to learn about their local water resources. The ADW will be covering transportation costs for ADW community schools to get to the Festival. Schools interested in participating can visit their website for more information.
- Introduction to Trello - The ADW Trello Board is a digital hub with all of the resources and materials you need to meet your collaborative PEP requirements. A link to a video tutorial was included in the meeting packet. Please create a login and familiarize yourself with Trello. This will be a powerful tool for completing Public Education tasks going forward.
- In 2026 there will be monthly PEP emails going out to ADW membership to help keep you on track and ensure that tasks of the Collaborative PEP are being met.

4) Announcements and Member Sharing

- a. Friends of the Detroit River/Ecorse Creek Committee Update – McKenzie Waliczek had to leave the meeting but left the following information in the meeting chat.
 - Friends of Detroit River held 4 Community Engagements and finalized concept plans for 3 locations- one along North Branch in Dearborn Heights and two along Sexton-Kilfoil Drain in Allen Park and Lincoln Park
 - Cooperative Weed Management Area – presentation at March meeting to discuss opportunities to manage invasive species along the creek
 - Downriver Community Conference is convening North Branch Strategy Team and is pursuing opportunity for pre-construction stream crossing assessments. Advancing Dearborn Heights 1-Mile Pilot from 60% to 90% Design and in early phases for pilot in Romulus.
 - Wayne County North Branch Ecorse Creek Drain Maintenance Project
 - Reaches 1-5 still under contract
 - Reach 1 – still few outstanding items
 - Reaches 2-3: contractor will start putting riprap down
 - Reaches 4-5: everything has been cleared, finishing bank stabilization and dredging
 - Mill St. Park in Ecorse - With recent constraints, NFWF priorities (shoreline resilience/ habitat restoration) will not be met. Project paused until further notice
 - Ecorse Creek Walking Path in Ecorse - \$2.5 million appropriation was approved for design and construction of walking path proposed in 2022 EC Committee Vision Plan!
 - USACE's Inkster/Powers basin in DH – still going through discussions with EGLE on what permitting will look like, and cost-benefit aspect of the project. Roughly at 60% design. More details to come.
 - Ecorse Creek Cleanups

- 2026 Dates: April 18, May 9, June 13, July 11, Aug 8, Sept 12 - if you have a location along Ecorse Creek in need of cleaning up, please contact mwaliczek@detroitriver.org
- MiCorps Volunteer Stream Cleanup Grant - Need municipal partner to act as fiduciary and provide 25% match. If interested, please contact mwaliczek@detroitriver.org. \$500-\$5,000 award, deadline March 6, 2026
- Spring Detroit River Water Festival at the Refuge will be May 5 and 6, 2026. We need volunteers! Registration required: www.detroitriverwaterfestival.com/spring
- Riverkeeper benefit dinner will be held on April 11, 2-26 (www.detroitriver.org/events)
- b. 2026 Meeting Schedule –May 12, October 13, December 1 (if needed). Will try to have one meeting in person.
- c. Opportunity for member sharing - none

5) **Summary of Action Items and Other Announcements**

- The action items, as identified above in bold/italics, were reviewed.

6) **Adjourn. ACTION: There was a motion by Wayne County to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Grosse Ile Township. Passed unanimously**