

## Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation

### Lois Hartzler Memorial

We are deeply saddened by the loss of Lois Hartzler, one of our first and most devoted members who passed away in September. Many of you will remember Lois for her singing at MCWC events and planning events to help MCWC in its battle with Nestle. One of her many projects was making and selling note cards with her favorite pictures of water. She inspired many MCWC members to work harder in our fight against Nestle and to continue standing up for our environment. She will be missed by all who met and worked with her. – Terry Swier



*Many members of MCWC worked hard over the last six months to get signatures for the ballot initiative. Thank you for your work. It isn't over, of course. We know how hard it is to go against corporate power from the grassroots level. The next steps have not been finalized yet as we go to press. Please stay tuned on Facebook and our website, as well as the website for the Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan, which is [letsbanfracking.org](http://letsbanfracking.org). The following is the press release from the campaign. There is much to celebrate as we move forward.*

### **Michigan ban fracking ballot initiative petition collects 150,000 signatures. Group determined to get a statewide ban on fracking and frack wastes on the ballot.**

Charlevoix, Michigan – The Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan, a statewide ballot initiative campaign ([www.letsbanfracking.org](http://www.letsbanfracking.org)), reached the end of a six-month signature-collecting period with over 150,000 signatures. The Committee says it is keeping all of its options open for getting on the ballot in 2016 or 2018. The minimum number of valid signatures needed is 252,523. The ultimate deadline for submitting signatures for 2016 is June 1, 2016.

Campaign director LuAnne Kozma credits a volunteer base of over 500 people from around the state for working on the campaign. “Resistance is growing. We more than doubled our signatures from our campaign two years ago, thanks to a more trained and dedicated team of people and passionate support from tens of thousands of Michiganders who signed the

petition. We expected volunteers to spend 10 to 20 hours of their time to bring in 200 signatures, which is not hard to do. Some heroic individuals went beyond what a volunteer normally does, with one person gathering over 7,000 signatures, another over 5,000, several over 2,000 and many collected over 500. Getting on the ballot by the grassroots is a heroic effort in every sense of the word. What we accomplished is enough signatures to get on the ballot in Colorado, however the bar is set very high in Michigan.”

The Committee commissioned a second poll of Michigan voters in November to gauge public sentiment. A strong 59% majority believes Michigan should ban fracking and frack wastes before the industry creates health problems for residents. An even larger majority - 66% - wants to ban frack waste in Michigan. Poll results can be found on the Committee’s website at [www.letsbanfracking.org](http://www.letsbanfracking.org).

Peggy Case, president of Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation, and a Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan spokesperson, noted that “Fracking by Marathon Oil continues in Crawford County and elsewhere in Michigan as we speak. The industry has no plan to quit and neither do we. We will continue with the campaign to protect our climate, water, land and health by putting a ban on fracking and frack waste on the ballot. Stay tuned.”

“The Michigan Nurses Association recently passed a resolution stating it ‘supports a ban on fracking due to the risks to public health and the environment.’ This is a step forward in the labor movement in Michigan -- to stand up for the health of our communities and the Great Lakes watershed. This should be a rallying call to all medical and professional organizations, unions, teachers, farmers and fishers, and bakers and brewers to come forward and join us in this struggle to make Michigan frack-free,” said Diane Weckerle, a retired public health nurse with the Committee.

“This is also a call for Michiganders who want to see this on the ballot to get involved in our campaign, because direct democracy requires active participation,” added Kozma. “The ‘procrastination penalty’ we are facing with global warming is we are not acting fast enough. If a group of 500 people can gather 150,000 signatures on a shoestring, a group of 1,500 with more financial support can get us all the way. It won’t be long before we go over the top, but we need more committed involvement and immediate substantial financial support from businesses, community-based organizations, resident groups, unions, and individuals to make the statewide ban on fracking and frack wastes on the ballot a reality,” said Kozma.

“These new poll results show that Michigan voters continue to have major concerns about fracking and frack waste harming Michigan’s environment and damaging their health,” said Jim Williams, a polling analyst at Public Policy Polling, the organization commissioned to conduct the poll. “As more and more voters learn about this issue, they are increasingly siding against the fracking industry across demographic groups.”

The ballot language can be found at the Committee to Ban Fracking in Michigan’s website [www.letsbanfracking.org](http://www.letsbanfracking.org) and also on the Michigan Secretary of State’s website.

## Editorial Opinion

### **Pollution, Plunder, and Privatization**

#### A Tale of Two Cities

The water shut-off campaign by the **Detroit** Water and Sewer Department in Detroit came to our attention when it was documented in the movie "FLOW" and showed up again in "Blue Gold." For those of us privileged to have drinking wells in our back yards providing free water, it took a while to realize what was really going on in Detroit. Why did people have such high water bills? Why couldn't they pay them? Thanks to the educational work of Michigan Welfare Rights Organization and the Detroit People's Water Board, we have been putting the pieces together. It is not a pretty picture.

The latest assault on the people of Detroit came with the appointment of an emergency manager (EM) in 2013. The city had already been cleared of its assets by fleeing industry, middle class and white flight, corporate greed, loss of tax base and lack of resources to deal with poverty. The EM looked for ways to privatize public services to "save money." Was he saving it to repair the aging and crumbling infrastructure? Certainly that is not happening. Rather he was moving to turn the system over to a private corporation and clearing the books to ease that transition. The Great Lakes Regional Authority was created, rates continued to soar, and shut-offs escalated. As part of the ensuing bankruptcy proceedings and creation of the Water Authority, Veolia North America was brought in to "advise." Thus entered the biggest private operator of municipal water in America.

From January 2014 to January 2015, more than 35,000 households were shut off. Water and sewage bills have more than doubled in the past decade. Children have been removed from homes without water. Many have lost their homes due to foreclosure. It's not legal to have a home without water. The abandoned homes are torn down, the land given away for next to nothing to big players, and the people abandoned along with the homes. People who are left in the neighborhoods are scrambling to buy up the vacant lots and rebuild their communities from the ground up, before the developers grab them all. Returning political and economic power to the people of Detroit must be a priority.

Citizens are asking for a Water Affordability Plan (WAP) to deal with the water issue. It would allow people to pay what they can actually afford for water and sewage. Instead of implementing this reasonable plan, the DWSD continues to raise rates and push a Residential Water Assistance Program. This has been a total failure in addressing the issue.

The Detroit People's Water Board and its partner organizations, such as MCWC, is demanding that the WAP be implemented. We demand that shut-offs stop, and the human right to water be acknowledged. Privatization is not the answer. It has not worked for anyone but the corporate stockholders anywhere it has been tried in the world. The State of Michigan should assume responsibility for fixing the crumbling infrastructure it helped create and then return control over water to publicly elected local officials, and public control.

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The story in **Flint** follows a strikingly similar path. The city is abandoned by industry, the jobs are gone along with the tax base, and the water delivery infrastructure is allowed to crumble from mismanagement and lack of funds. Enter an Emergency Manager. Rates skyrocket, way beyond the ability of most to pay, the infrastructure doesn't get fixed, but a new Water Authority is formed. As part of the move to privatize the system through this authority, the EM decides to "save some money" by switching Flint residents from the Detroit water system they have been using to withdrawal from the Flint River. It was supposed to be an interim measure until the new water authority (privatized in cooperation with guess who? Veolia) could finish building its own pipeline to Lake Huron by 2016.

It didn't work too well. The Flint River has very corrosive water. It pulls the lead out of aging pipes and releases toxins that go beyond the requirements of human health. Citizens began to sicken immediately. The EM, the DEQ, and the corporate players all denied there was a problem. The water was safe, until scientific testing and study proved it wasn't. The EPA had to advise against drinking it and finally the Governor had to switch Flint back to Detroit water.

This didn't happen without almost a year of struggle by the people of Flint at the grassroots level. It took them some time to get media attention. Meanwhile their children were being poisoned by lead. It took time for the legal help to emerge and the community to organize itself. But they did it. They got some attention. Lawsuits are pending, legislation has been introduced at the state level, and the former mayor who did nothing was ousted in the last election. The lead is still in the schools and people's homes however. Leaders are demanding state action to deal with this health crisis.

The system is still on board to tie into the new water authority in the spring, which takes control out of the hands of the people of Flint and gives it to Veolia. We oppose this privatization. Leaders on the ground in Flint say it will not solve Flint's water problems, and cannot deliver enough clean water to all of Flint's citizens. They fear the Flint River will again become an option. Returning control to local authorities, with the addition of sufficient state money to fix the infrastructure, is the only sensible course to return the right to clean water to the people of Flint.

Peggy Case,  
MCWC President

MCWC is seeking applications for new board members. We are an activist board, all volunteer, which meets every other month, either in Mecosta or Benzie counties. We need some new members with modern communication skill sets, and younger bodies to complement the existing board.

Please send suggestions or applications to **MCWC Board, P.O. Box 1, Mecosta, 49332**



## Platte River Debates

The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park Service held a public meeting on October 15th, 2015 concerning their potential plan to install a new boat ramp, parking, restroom facilities and road improvements at the mouth of the Platte River (or one of two other sites nearby). There was time given for questions, but concerns were not to be expressed, except in writing. November 15 was the deadline for those concerns, though we know they can be expressed at any time and be considered.

The staff presented the following options for Platte Bay:

**Option 1:** continued dredging and placement of dredging spoils on the east bank of the river. (the nothing new option)

**Option 2:** discontinue dredging, removal of dredging spoils and restoration of the east bank of the river.

**Option 3-5:** a new boat ramp at one of three locations, removal of dredging spoils and restoration of the east bank of the river. Options 3-5 do not mention discontinuing dredging.

In addition to the issue of the boat dock, there is discussion about whether or not to continue dredging the mouth of the river. The dredging spoils are piling up on the east bank, changing the natural flow of the river and spoiling a once pristine beach. Citizens are asking that the river be restored to its natural flow with the removal of the spoils and the discontinuation of dredging.

Development of this pristine area runs counter to the stated purpose and philosophy of the National Park Service, which is to “restore and preserve” the national parks for future generations. In Benzie County, we have about 20 miles of mostly undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline, with several access points for swimming, picnicking, fishing, and boating, including an existing county boat ramp at the mouth of the Platte River.

The ramp, for many years, has had much use in the fall, by salmon fishermen. The salmon fishing has dwindled considerably in the last few years, as there are fewer salmon to be caught. Any real need for an additional boat ramp does not exist at this time.

The endangered Piping Plovers have made this stretch of Lake Michigan shoreline their primary nesting grounds. Park staff and volunteers work for months during the spring and summer to protect the Plovers. SBDNL accounts for one third of successful nesting in all of the Great Lakes Basin. The Plovers are just beginning to make a comeback and beaches at the mouth of the Platte River are key to that success. An additional boat ramp will reduce available nesting space and will further increase beach traffic at an already high use location.

Three MCWC board members attended the public meeting and believe that Option #2 would best preserve the natural integrity of the Platte River and the stated mission of the national park.

Send your comments to <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/platte> , or write to

Superintendent, SBDNL, 9922 Front Street, Empire, Mi. 49630

Please be sure to include your full name and address.

Susan Lavender

## Grand Blanc Students Help Flint Residents

Brittany Wendt, a junior and honors student at Grand Blanc High School, spearheaded a fundraiser to provide water filters for the homes of some of her peers who live in Flint. Partnered with the school volunteer group GB Dignify, they together provided information to parents and received donations totaling more than \$1200. The City of Flint and the State of Michigan are making filters available for households with children under the age of five, but this does not include the Grand Blanc students who live in Flint and are endangered by the lead-tainted water. Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation commends Brittany and GB Dignify Club for their civic-mindedness and concern for the welfare of their fellow students and their families. They personify our ideal of what we are all called to do, care for others by maintaining the safety of our water, locally and state-wide.

Glenna Maneke

Treasurer, Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation

## The Homestead's Water Issue

The Leelanau resort, The Homestead, has a grandfathered agreement to use 13 acres of the national park, Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore. Unfortunately they are using it to spread partially-treated sewage on the land, in the form of spray from three feet above. It is fenced off with signs warning people to keep off the land.

Alternative treatment plans have been proposed, but so far not been accepted nor enforced. The issue has been brought up to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality which has said it is basically a non-issue.

Those of you who have been to the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore know it is the crown jewel of Michigan parks, having been named the most beautiful area in the whole United States by Good Morning America in 2013.

At this point, some letters to Rick Rusz, Chief of Groundwater Permits, DEQ -

**[ruszr@michigan.gov](mailto:ruszr@michigan.gov) - 525 West Allegan Street, P.O. Box 30473, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7973 - 517-335-4709** regarding this

unhealthy issue could help the DEQ to look deeper into the environmental quality of the site and surrounding forest, home to our furred little friends, and of the air that our songbirds fly through. The contamination is also spraying beyond the area permitted by the agreement onto park land the public cannot use now.



Misty Sheehan

*The picture is Marathon Oil's frack equipment, setting up at Beaver Creek 1-14 HD1, a horizontal frack well near Grayling in Crawford County. Gary Cooley -- who has a home 1½ miles away -- took the picture on November 15, 2015*

*Marathon Oil is Michigan's largest fracker.*

*Marathon slashed a 4-acre pad in the middle of the state forest to access this land.*



## Line 5 Still Pumping Oil Under the Straits

The Oil & Water Don't Mix coalition, of which MCWC is a member, continues its work to shut down the flow of oil under the Great Lakes, specifically through Line 5.

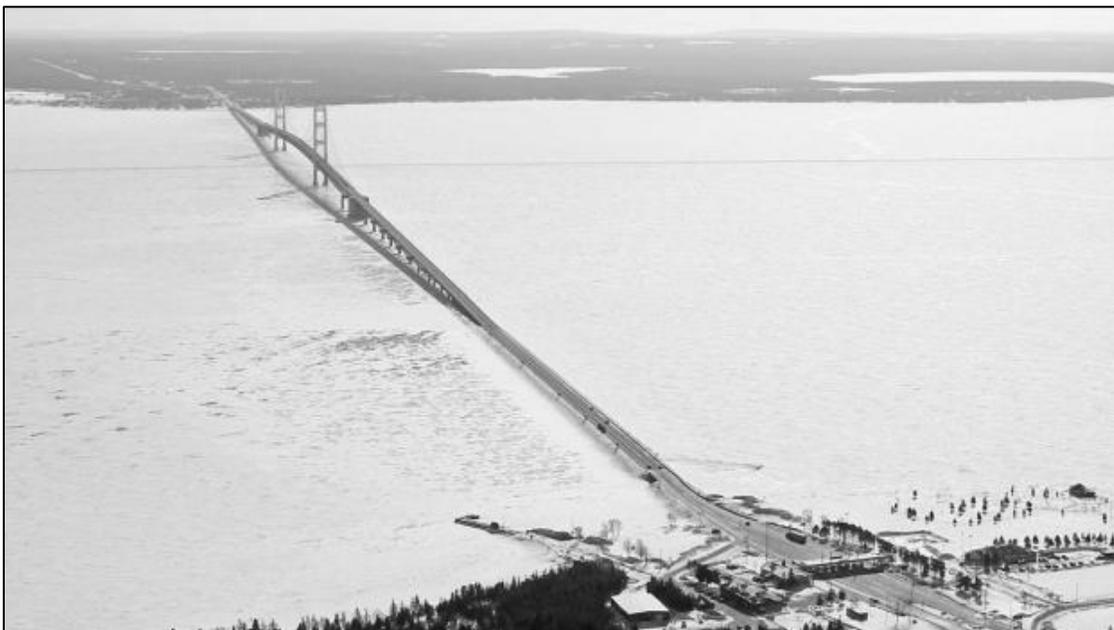
Several sign-on letters have been sent to our Attorney General and governor, press conferences have been held along with lobbying efforts, letters to the editor, expert testimony, demonstrations, yard signs, tabling, education events, and general outrage. The oil still flows as day 150 nears, marking AG Scheutte's task force report statement that "the pipeline's days are numbered."

Although winter is slow in coming this year, we have little doubt that eventually the ice will form. The Coalition is demanding that the flow of oil be stopped before this happens. The reasons are obvious to any clear thinker. Enbridge staged a spill response demonstration in September for the press. It proved nothing, except that the Great Lakes are still in grave danger from oil spills. We have not met anyone who imagines that a 62-year old pipe is safe just because it has lasted 62 years, except representatives from Enbridge. Many of us find that it's a great age for retirement as the arthritis kicks in and aging begins to take its toll.

Several groups in the Coalition are introducing resolutions to various governing bodies around the state to continue the pressure for a shut off. Genesee County passed one in November, which is reprinted here. It gives a good summary of the facts behind the demand for a shut off. If any of our members wish to introduce such a resolution at a county, township or city level, please contact someone through the OWDM website or email Peggy Case ([hildaheron@aol.com](mailto:hildaheron@aol.com)) or Glenna Maneke ([manekegl@hotmail.com](mailto:manekegl@hotmail.com)), your MCWC representatives on the Coalition.

Please stay tuned to the Oil & Water Don't Mix website, ([oilandwaterdontmix.org](http://oilandwaterdontmix.org)), our Facebook page ([facebook.com/Michigan-Citizens-for-Water-Conservation](https://facebook.com/Michigan-Citizens-for-Water-Conservation)) and our website, [saveMIwater.org](http://saveMIwater.org), for updates on future actions planned for January and February.

Peggy Case & Glenna Maneke



TO THE HONORABLE CHAIRPERSON  
AND MEMBERS OF THE GENESEE  
COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS,  
GENESEE COUNTY, MICHIGAN LADIES  
AND GENTLEMEN:

WHEREAS, Line 5 is a set of twin, 62-year-old pipelines owned by Enbridge that carry light crude oil and natural gas under the Straits of Mackinac; and WHEREAS, the currents in the Straits of Mackinac at peak volumetric transport can be more than 10 times greater than the flow of Niagara Falls and switch bi-directionally from east to west every few days, and according to a 2014 University of Michigan study are the “worst possible place” for an oil spill in the Great Lakes; and WHEREAS, the Great Lakes contain 20 percent of the world’s fresh, available, surface water and are a drinking water source for over 35 million people; and WHEREAS, one out of every five jobs in Michigan is linked to the high quality and quantity of fresh water in the Great Lakes; and WHEREAS, tourism is one of Michigan’s largest income industries bringing in billions of travelers dollars spent each year; and WHEREAS, agriculture, fisheries, shipping and industry depend on the health of the Great Lakes; and WHEREAS, in 2009 the Great Lakes were linked to over 1.5 million jobs, with Michigan accounting for 35 percent of those jobs; and WHEREAS, Enbridge has a shaking track record that includes 1,244 reportable spills, leaks and releases from 1996 to 2013; and WHEREAS, Enbridge was in violation for their spacing requirements of its 1953 easement for Line 5 in 2014 and were responsible for a pinhole leak in a section of the pipeline north of the Straits in December 2014; and WHEREAS, Enbridge was responsible for one of the worst and most expensive oils spills in U.S. history when Line 6b ruptured near Kalamazoo in 2010 allowing almost 1 million gallons of tar sands oil to leak for 17 hours before shutting down the

line; and WHEREAS, corrosion is the number one reason that pipelines fail; and WHEREAS, Line 5 was built before the Great Lakes Submerged Lands Act was adopted so it didn’t have to obtain a permit and ensure that the pipeline wouldn’t pose a threat to the waters or the public’s use of the waters; and WHEREAS, Michigan’s Attorney General Bill Schuette has stated (in regards to Line 5) that the “pipeline wouldn’t be built today” and that “the pipeline’s days are numbered”; and WHEREAS, the Coast Guard Commandant testified before Congress in 2015 that the Coast Guard would be unable to respond effectively to an open water oil spill in the heart of the Great Lakes; and WHEREAS, there is no plan for how to recover oil if there was a leak during the winter when the lakes are covered with ice; and WHEREAS, as Michiganders we have a responsibility to be wise stewards of the waters of our state for generations to come; and WHEREAS, protection of Michigan’s water supplies and resources is better accomplished by prevention of contamination and environmental degradation, rather than attempting to clean up contamination and restore degraded environments after the fact.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Genesee, Michigan supports stopping the transportation of oil under the Great Lakes and, further, supports shutting down Line 5.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Board’s Coordinator is directed to send a copy of this resolution to Governor Rick Snyder, Attorney General Bill Schuette, our State Representatives, State Senators, and U.S. Senators calling on them to take swift action to shut down Line 5. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS B\_\_\_\_\_ CDB:cdb 11-12-15 11-23-B02 B02

### House Parties & Speaking Engagements Wanted

MCWC Board of Directors members would like to get to know the membership better and listen to your concerns and suggestions. We would also like to share more with you about the issues we are engaged in on your behalf. One or two of us are willing to travel wherever we are invited. If you can host a small gathering in your home, please contact Peggy at 231-275-2244.

We have also purchased a screen and projector and are able to do slide shows and primitive power points to accompany talks on the water issues facing us. We are looking for opportunities to speak to groups about the triple threats of **pollution, plunder, and privatization** of our water. We also would talk about grassroots efforts to deal with these threats and what MCWC is doing to protect water and our future. If you can set up an invitation for us, please contact Misty Sheehan at 231-326-4014.

OPPOSITION TO A CLASS 2 TOXIC WASTE DEEP INJECTION WELL IN FORK TOWNSHIP OF MECOSTA COUNTY. (October 2015)

A group of concerned Mecosta County citizens responded with letters requesting a public hearing to the October 2015 notice from the EPA seeking "...Comments on Draft Underground Injection Permit" in Fork Township. This pending permit for a Class 2 Toxic Waste Deep Injection Well near Barryton, MI was brought to the attention of the Fork Township Board and the Mecosta County Commissioners by three of the citizens who had written letters requesting the EPA public hearing because of many concerns, a few of which follow:

1. There was inadequate public notification. Only 8 residents of the township were informed of the EPA's request for comment. The deadline for comments was November 9, 2015.
2. The injection site is close to several creeks which flow into the Chippewa River which flows through the village of Barryton with its elementary school and a number of artesian wells. The Chippewa River is part of the Chippewa Valley watershed which flows into Lake Huron.
3. The proposed injection site lies in the heart of wooded areas that contain many potholes, wetlands, creeks, rivers, and chains of lakes which serve as the filters for the aquifers that provide our drinking water, the repositories for our fish and aquatic life, and the transporters of Michigan's fresh water to our Great Lakes
4. The WS Osborn Oil & Gas Operation of San Antonio, Texas, originally drilled the site for oil and stated the well came up dry. They requested a conversion of the site to a Class 2 Injection Well for the "brine" from the oil wells that they own/operate.
5. Class 2 waste injection wells are permitted to pump oil and gas well "brine" underground. This brine can include the BTEX laced flowback from fracked oil and gas wells which endanger the safety of all of Michigan's fresh water. The proposed Fork Township Class 2 Well permit would allow 5040 barrels of waste per day at 976 pounds per square inch.
6. Numerous studies exist about the serious health risks to people, especially children and pregnant women, who live near all deep injection wells.
7. Structural failure of a deep injection well offers the possibility, short term (10 years) and long term (100 years) of contaminating an aquifer, rendering it unusable for drinking water, especially in Michigan which claims to have the most drinking water wells in the U.S.
8. "Brine" spills at injection sites and resulting drainage into fresh water potholes, wetlands, and streams remain a real concern for area residents.
9. Deep injection wells are linked with earthquakes because high pressure injection of waste opens natural fractures and creates other fractures, allowing fluid to migrate up the fractures toward the aquifer layer.

Opposition continues. I urge you to seek information and become part of the solution for this hazard. MCWC opposes all such injection wells and seeks to ban any new ones. - Linda Travis, Mecosta County

**TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT**

Donations and memberships can be made online at: [www.saveMIwater.org](http://www.saveMIwater.org). Or mail your check along with the form to the right to:

**MCWC  
P.O. Box 1  
Mecosta, MI 49332**

We'd love to get you signed up as a sustaining member. We can't promise you fancy address labels, coffee cups or trinkets as a reward. We only promise to apply your money to the work of saving our waters into the seventh generation. You can have your pledge sent or transferred directly to the MCWC account. Contact Glenna Maneke at (231) 972-0500 or manekegl@hotmail.com to arrange this.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!!**

Please include the information to the right when renewing with our new envelopes.

**Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation**  
**P.O. Box 1**  
**Mecosta, MI 49332**

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MCWC is a 501c3 grassroots group organized in December 2000. Our goal is to conserve, preserve and protect the public's natural resources. Our efforts have concentrated on research and education so that informed decisions are made regarding protection of the quality and quantity of Michigan's groundwater, wetlands, lakes, streams, ponds and wildlife.

**Help preserve natural resources – recycle this newsletter by sharing it with a friend!**