



Kyle Grove, District 1, (Sherman, Butman, Clement, Gladwin Twp.)
Ron Taylor, District 2, Vice-Chairperson (Sage and Gladwin City)
Michael Szuch District 3, (Bentley, Billings, Bourret, Grim & Secord)
Karen Moore, District 4, Chairperson (Buckeye, Hay & Tobacco)
Rick Grove, District 5, (Grout, Beaverton City, Beaverton)

Board Agenda May 11, 2021 9:30 a.m.
Agenda and supporting attachments are subject to change.

Consent Agenda – All bolded items will be approved with the motion to approve the agenda.

- A. Call to Order by Chairperson
- B. Pledge of Allegiance
- C. Roll Call
- D. Corrections or Additions to the Consent Agenda
- E. Reading of Cash Balances
- F. Approval of the Board Minutes:**
April 27, 2021 Regular Board Meeting

G. Communications:

H. Finance Reports/Claims and Accounts General Fund

Based on discussion at the Committee of the Whole meeting; which immediately proceeded this meeting, each action will be handled by motion or tabled for additional research as needed.

1. Rite Aid Prescription Account / Use of Credit Card
2. Dispatcher Josh Tweed Training Request
3. Estimates on Car/Deer Accident Claim
4. Request from Deputy Wortman for payment of unused PTO hours per Union Contract
5. Budget Amendment for Guardianship Reviews

I. Committee Meetings

Committee of the Whole of April 27, 2021
Department Head Minutes of April 27, 2021

J. Miscellaneous:

K. New Business:

Based on discussion at the Committee of the Whole meeting; which immediately proceeded this meeting, each action will be handled by motion or tabled for additional research as needed.

1. GIS Cost of Service Contract
2. MiSail Data Exchange Agreement with the State of Michigan
3. L-4029 2021 Tax Rate Request
4. CESF (Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding) Grant for the Prosecuting Attorney's Office
5. Contract Renewal for Equalization Services
6. Resignation of Corporal Sheehan and Publication of Vacancy
7. Resignation of Deputy Wortman and Publication of Vacancy
8. Tree Removal Estimates

L. Chair Comments:

M. Board Member Comments/Report:

1. Kyle Grove, District 1: Township Meetings and Committee Meetings:
2. Ron Taylor, District 2: Township Meetings and Committee Meetings
3. Michael Szuch, District 3: Township Meetings and Committee Meetings:
4. Karen Moore, District 4: Township Meetings and Committee Meetings:
5. Rick Grove, District 5: Township Meetings and Committee Meetings:

N. Administration Reports

O. Public Comments

P. Receive and File

Notice of Special Board Meeting for May 14, 2021
USDA Press Release – Water Quality Partnership
April 2021 Library Statistics

Q. Adjournment

Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or service at the meeting should contact the Board of Commissioners' Office at (989) 426-4821



**Gladwin County Board of Commissioners
Board Minutes, April 27, 2021**

The Gladwin County Board of Commissioners met for the regular board Meeting, on April 27, 2021. The meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by Chairperson Karen Moore. The Pledge of Allegiance was said, roll was called, all commissioners were present.

The Board reviewed the Consent Agenda –

Addition to receive and file. Motion made by Commissioner Taylor to accept the agenda as amended, supported by Commissioner K. Grove, all in favor motion carried.

Cash balances were read by Commissioner Taylor. General Fund balance - \$63,054.72 before payment of bills.

Communications

Finance

1-Motion by Commissioner Rick Grove to award the bid from Greaves Trucking in the amount of \$ 4625 for the demolition of concrete structure, to be paid from line item 101-900-978.001, capital improvements. Seconded by Commissioner Kyle Grove.

Additional discussion on the date of completion, and the 245 Fund; Chairperson Moore would like to discuss this with Maintenance Supervisor Rick Ghent. A timeline and phases of the project were discussed.

All in favor, motion carried.

2- Motion by Commissioner R. Taylor to allow Animal Control Officer Maveal to purchase Shelter Software Program in the amount of \$350 per year, to be paid from 101-430-727-000, Animal Control Supplies (millage fund). Supported by Commissioner Rick Grove; all in favor, motion carried.

3- Motion by Commissioner R. Taylor to allow the establishment of an account for use with Fund 369 for the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funding. The motion will allow the Treasurer and the Administrator to establish line items within the fund for accounting purposes. Supported by Commissioner K. Grove. All in favor, motion carried.

Committee Meetings - approved with the approval of the Agenda

New Business

1 – Motion by Commissioner Ron Taylor to allow the Interim Administrator to sign the Blue Cross Blue Shield Network (BCBSN) contract for jail inmate services from July 1, 2021 through June 31, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner K. Grove; all in favor, motion carried

2- The receiving and filling of the Four Lakes Task Force (FLTF) Land-use Guidelines was noted.

Chairperson Comments

Chairperson Moore spoke to address:

Ask that Capitol Improvements information be redistributed to the board.

Ask for further conversation on the Point of Sale (PoS) topic from:

Treasurer VanTiem discussed the steps being taken and conversations being had on setting up this process. Interim Administrator Maveal noted that the PoS could be included in escrow if needed; stated that looking for source of revenue is a good thing.

Mentioned the search for the Interim Administrator, and moving forward with a public meeting to review the applicants.

Please watch for the News Flash from Four Lakes Task Force.

Board Comments

Commissioner Kyle Grove, District 1 –

Butman Township, no communication with them, virtual meetings take place during work hours.

Clement township did not attend due to a COVID meeting.

Sherman Township and the Sports Complex were missed, but update on the sports complex were given.

VCIO meeting was attended virtually.

Attended a couple buildings and grounds meetings.

Commissioner Ron Taylor, District 2 -

Sage Township meeting on the 14th was face-to-face.

16th, met with the Drain Commissioner, Emergency Manager, and the Engineer from Spicers at Pratt Lake.

19th, attended the City Council meeting at the Road Commission building.

20th, Veterans Affairs meeting, they re-did the bylaws, planning a Memorial Day service. Commissioner Taylor noted these are a super bunch of guys.

22nd, attended a Chapel Dam meeting with the Drain Commissioner, Mike Right and Spicers for the final State dam inspection; will be having an open house.

Zoom meeting with attorneys regarding Pratt Lake. Commissioner Walters is doing a great job.

Commissioner Michael Szuch, District 3 –

Was not able to attend township meetings yet.

Attended a Ground Breaking ceremony for Billings yesterday, May 29 at 11:00 a.m. for their Grand Opening

Attended the Council on Local Government meeting in Butman township last night.

Commissioner Karen Moore, District 4 –

Is on two boards, EDC and MMCA, conversation on the many resources available in our community through these organizations.

Attended Michigan Association of Counties Legislative update, these are held weekly on Monday's.

Attended another webinar of the Lieutenant Governor

FLTF updates were discussed

Council of Local Government last night, June 28th is the next meeting, location TBD.

Commissioner Rick Grove, District 5 –

13th, COW and Commissioners Meetings

Attended City of Beaverton virtually, a lot of street work being done.

22nd, Building and Grounds Meeting

23rd Animal Control, building a website, working on receiving donations, passed their state inspection.

Commented that FLTF is not receiving any tax payers' dollars through the county.

Stated he thinks the "Point of Sale" needs some adjustments before being approved.

Administrators Report -

Public Comment –

_Chris Waugh, regarding the concrete work being done, you are a new board. Prior to two years ago a low-cost loan was available to the county, questioned why things were not addressed when the architect was here. Secondly, regarding the process of hiring an Administrator, she agrees with Chairperson Moore, and questions what is the best mode for, not objective need a standard for this process, feels the person for this role should be local.

-Sheriff Shea, welcomed new Commissioner Szuch. We recently had a corrections staff member assaulted by an inmate. He is back to work and doing well. Agrees with Commissioner R. Grove that the county administrator position should be filled by someone who is going to stick around, would like the opportunity to state his opinion on who is hired.

_ Diana Mella, in reference to filling the county Administrator position, would like to know if Commissioners understand the process in other counties. Stated that the board does not need to be accused of negative actions, and highly supports letting an outside agency be involved in the hiring process for the new Administrator. She wants to be assured that the county can afford this position and ask if a feasibility study has been done? Would still like to know what happened with the Owl system. Lastly, would like the ability to speak on issues after the COW meeting, after discussion, before the vote of the Board at the Board Meeting.

_ Kelly Bax, commented for reasons that people cannot attend in person, we should still have the option to attend virtually. Discussed grant money being spent through the FLTF, and asked the Board to do some research on how the money is being spent. Regarding the steps outside, asked why are we not asking for volunteers to help with county projects. Would also like to know why the FLTF meeting is to be held virtually, and stated her views over public concerns being received and addressed.

_ Chairperson Moore explained the Owl system did not work and was returned for Credit.

No other public comment.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner k. Grove, seconded by Commissioner R. Taylor at 11:07 a.m.

All in favor, adjourned.

Karrie Hulme, County Clerk

Karen Moore, Chairperson

DRAFT



The Gladwin County Board of Commissioners met for the Committee of the Whole Meeting, on April 27, 2021. Chairperson Karen Moore called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was said; All commissioners were present.

Public Comment

_ Chairperson Moore recommended that residents sign up to receive Four Lakes Task Force (FLTF) newsletters. Would still like to have a townhall meeting, pending FLTF news flash. Chairperson Moore reminded residents that public comment is 5 minutes.

_ Gayle Reid had questions about the process for receiving bids on the concrete step project. There was concern over the amount of money that may or may not be saved. Noted that an Architect had been hired for this project in the past. Computer concerns were stated, believes the board should look into leasing computers in the future.

_ Andre Shepcheck, of Hay township commented on last week's FLTF videos, who gave Dave Kepler permission to use county property to conduct business, he would like to see the documentation on this. Asked about accountability and would like to know where the authority of the FLTF ends.

_ Joel Vernier, Secord Township Supervisor discussed a grant received by Mid Michigan Community Action Agency and a well project being worked on. Discussion was had on the steps involved in this project, the challenges with real estate and permits, as well as delays created with drilling in winter. Would like help from the county on Point-of-Sale ordinances within the township to help alleviate these challenges and to work out a system to escrow at closing.

_ Kelly Bax discussed the Tobacco Dam, and a potential crack created by EGLE. Asked about the FOIA request that was denied and if the commissioners looked at the emergency management plan. Discussion was had on emails that were sent by Ms. Bax; email was read. The reply to Ms. Bax' email from Midland County was also read.

No other comments

City Administrator Report – none

County Affairs

1. New Commissioner for District 3, Michael Szuch was introduced. Committee assignments were discussed.

County Facilities and Transportation-

1. Formal Bid opening for the removal of the demolition and removal of concrete steps, one bid received - 3/11/21, Grieves Trucking - \$4625. Conversation about the bid was had. Discussion on the former architect mentioned during public comment; Fund 245 Courthouse Preservation Fund has a balance of \$46,433.69 .

Data

1. Shelter Software Program, Interim Administrator Maveal – discussion on the needs of the animal shelter for software, and the cost associated with that. Software has been reviewed by IT Right.

511 Council – none**Gladwin Parks and Recreation – none****Insurance**

- 1 -Blue Cross Blue Shield Network group enrollment for the Gladwin County Inmates was discussed. This is an annual renewal and has been reviewed by the county attorney.

Memorial Restoration - none**MERS - none****Public Safety – none****Personnel**

- 1 - Chairperson Moore discussed the hiring process for the Interim Administrator. Would like to have an outside company to evaluate the resumes for an objective recommendation. Conversation was had about the cost associated with that process, and discussion on MAC resources.
- 2- Commissioner Rick Grove welcomed the new District 3 Commissioner.

Finance

- 1 – Use of Fund 369 for the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Funding. Treasurer VanTiem spoke about the process for setting up this fund and transfers to the general fund. Further conversation on how the money can be spent.

Report from Civil Attorney –

- 1- Attorney Hoerauf discussed the Four Lakes Task Force Guidelines for Secord, Smallwood, Wixom and Sanford Lakes. Conversation on dangers and problems with newly exposed lake bottoms. Additional conversation on the authority of the Board to create an ordinance and the lack of resources to enforce it. Guidelines are a reasonable approach to an unenforceable ordinance.

No additional discussion. Meeting closed at 9:53 a.m.

Karrie Hulme, County Clerk

Karen Moore, Chairperson

Department Head Minutes
April 27, 2021

Present: Karrie Hulme, Michael Shea, Christy Van Tiem, Ann Clayton, Kim Donn
Board Members Present: Karen Moore, Michael Szuch and Ron Taylor

Interim Administrator Maveal opened the meeting and discussed the following topics:

1. Grants, State or Federal awards that are submitted for reimbursement by a department must be copied to the Treasurer. The Treasurer will use the department's submission for reimbursement to make sure revenues are being properly allocated against the General Ledger.
2. Departments must make regular deposits of their revenue. The Auditors classify "regular deposits" as deposits turned over to the Treasurer with a receipt range no longer than a two-week time frame.
3. The shredding project is set for May 21, 2021. Departments are asked to have all items for shredding to be staged in the basement of the Health Department within a week prior to the scheduled date. This will allow for an approximate box count to be given to the vendor prior to arrival.
4. MMRMA has grants available to the County for any projects that are classified as "risk limiting". Please see the Interim Administrator if there is a project your department would like to pursue.
5. Discussion on the bandwidth usage through MERIT.
6. IT Right and MOS are working on the XMedius eFax project. There will be training during implementation. Dates and times for the transfer of services will be sent to the departments once received.

Department concerns brought before the group:

1. Telephone line issues.
2. Discussion on the need for upgrades monitors for training. Options for dual monitors and webcams. The Interim Administrator will confirm that this is an eligible expense under COVID grant funding.

Meeting adjourned
Laura Brandon-Maveal
Gladwin County Interim Administrator

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING
GLADWIN COUNTY BOARD of COMMISSIONERS
Gladwin County Courthouse, 401 W Cedar Ave., Gladwin MI (989) 426-4821

GLADWIN COUNTY, MICHIGAN

To: The residents and property owners of Gladwin County, Michigan, and any other interested parties.

Please take notice that the Gladwin County Board of Commissioners will hold a Special Meeting on Friday, May 14th, 2021 at 8:45 a.m. The purpose of the meeting will be to review the applications for the Administrator Position. This meeting will be held in person; those unable to attend may submit comments to countyclerk@gladwincounty-mi.gov by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday May 13, 2021.

This meeting is open to all members of the public in compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

Posted 04/30/2021

Karrie Hulme,
Gladwin County Clerk



United States Department of Agriculture



GLADWIN COUNTY
MICHIGAN

Natural Resources
Conservation Service
3001 Coolidge Road, Suite 250
East Lansing, MI 48823
(517) 324-5270
www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov

Gladwin County
401 West Cedar Avenue
Gladwin, MI 48624
(989) 426-7351
www.gladwincounty-mi.gov

Glawin County – USDA Partnership to Provide \$5.7 Million for Water Quality

EAST LANSING, May 3, 2021 – A partnership led by Gladwin County will bring over \$5.7 million in funding from the United States Department of Agriculture to improve water quality by reducing agricultural runoff and soil erosion.

The Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation Project was one of 85 projects, including four in Michigan, selected for funding through the USDA’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The funding from the USDA, along with contributions from local partners, will be used to implement conservation practices on agricultural land in Gladwin and Midland counties. Examples of conservation practices that will be funded through the project include cover crops, nutrient management plans, filter strips, and conservation tillage.

“Protecting water quality by implementing practices to reduce runoff and soil erosion on agricultural land is our primary mission and we look forward to working with the Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation Project partners,” said the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service’s State Conservationist Garry Lee.

RCPP, is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and provides funding to locally-led projects to address regional natural resource concerns. Gladwin County is the lead partner for the Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation Project, other partners include

The Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation Project is a five-year project that will focus on reducing the amount of sediment and phosphorus entering the river, which is the largest tributary in the Saginaw Bay Watershed. Agricultural producers in the project area will be able to apply for conservation financial assistance to implement new conservation practices on their land.

There are currently 336 active RCPP projects that have engaged more than 2,000 partners. For more information, visit the [RCPP website](#).

2540 - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) - Great Lakes Region - 2021 - Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation

Project Name: 2540 - Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation

Funding Pool: Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs)

Lead Partner Organization: Gladwin County(019987627)

Lead State: MI

Partner Address: 555 W. Cedar Ave. Suite C, Gladwin, MI 49624

CCA: Great Lakes Region

Partner Name: Kristina Hill

Partner States:

Organizational POC: laurab@gladwincounty-mi.gov | (989) 426-7561

Project Start and End Years: 2021 - 2026

Primary Resource Concern: Aquatic habitat

Project Type: RCPP Classic

Additional Resource Concern: Field sediment, nutrient and pathogen loss

Description of Goals and Objectives:

The proposed Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation Project includes collaboration with an array of partners throughout Gladwin and Midland Counties working towards common conservation goals: improved water quality, reduced sedimentation and flooding, and increased aquatic habitat potential. Project partners will work collaboratively with the agricultural landowners to implement innovative long-term solutions to the conservation and sustainability issues present - the approach is simple: • Implement outreach groups throughout the RCPP area to promote idea sharing, collaboration, and BMP success with those outside initial RCPP area; • Engage agricultural producers and landowners, educating on the importance of water quality through sustainable, long-term BMP implementation; • Remove the existing impairments present in public utilities, including 197,000CY of excess sediment from runoff carrying 146,000lbs of phosphorus and other nutrients degrading water quality, lessening aquatic habitat potential, and increasing downstream flood potential due to reduced storage; • Sign up increased number of producers for existing NRCS programs to implement BMPs on agricultural land tributary to priority water courses – between 30-42 new farmers including up to 25,000AC of farmland; • Implement farmer-led on-field BMPs through existing NRCS programs such as EQIP and CREP to reduce sedimentation into water utilities by 5,400CY of sediment and 30,000lbs of phosphorus annually; • Create focus group to discuss long-term solutions with both agricultural producers and public utility representatives at the table to incentivize long-term BMP implementation on private agricultural lands; • Measure conservation outcomes and next steps for long-term advocates to continue work included above and provide context to the monetary, socio-economic, and environmental benefits of this project.

Description of Expected Environmental, Economic, and Social Outcomes:

Environmental: The Tittabawassee River is the largest tributary and watershed in Michigan's Saginaw Bay watershed, draining to Lake Huron within the Great Lakes system via Saginaw Bay, a federally designated Area of Concern (AOC) due to water quality impairments. The proposed project will significantly improve water quality and flood protection conditions through removal of 197,000CY excess sedimentation carrying 146,000lbs of phosphorus caused by years of agricultural runoff, poor land management and, most recently, climate change induced storm intensities. Agricultural water utilities have experienced massive erosion transporting excess nutrient-laden sediment have filled in water courses downstream reducing flood storage protection by reducing available volume and decreasing quality aquatic habitat. In addition to remedying the existing sedimentation issue, the proposed project is looking to sustain the improvements through increased NRCS program enrollment of approximately 30-42 farmers signups over 25,000 acres of priority farmlands adjacent to water utilities and tributary to impaired water courses for outreach and BMP implementation. As a result of BMP implementation, an additional 5,400 cubic yards of sediment and 30,000 pounds of phosphorus will be kept out of the waterways. Socio-Economic: The economics of clean water in and around the Tittabawassee River area are critical as it relates to the financial, physical, and social fabric of the communities in Gladwin and Midland Counties. Proposed outreach and implementation work will be prioritized in areas of economic and socially disadvantaged agricultural communities such as those around the Cities of Gladwin, Beaverton and Sanford, Michigan. These areas were identified based on the need for improved on-field conservation farming practices, existing erosion and sedimentation issues, poor water quality in the local water utilities and community need given existing low per capita income (50th).

2540 - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) - Great Lakes Region - 2021 - Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation

Partner Information

| Partner/Entity Name | Partner/Entity Type | Role of Partner | Contribution Amount |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---------------------|
| Midland County Drain Commissioner | CO-County Government | Implementation, Collaboration | \$ 2,000,000.00 |
| Midland County Conservation District | CD-Conservation District | Outreach and Engagement, Lead On-Field Implementation Coordinator | \$ 700,000.00 |
| City of Beaverton | LG-Local Government | Administration, Collaboration | \$ 1,500,000.00 |
| Midland County Road Commission | CO-County Government | Implementation, Construction Oversight | \$ 185,000.00 |
| The Nature Conservancy | NP-Not-for-profit organization or entity | Outreach and Education Assistance - Formulate Watershed Focus Group | \$ 0.00 |
| Gladwin County Drain Commissioner | CO-County Government | Fiduciary, collaboration, design and implementation | \$ 1,365,000.00 |
| | | | \$750000.00 |

Partner Contributions

| Partner/Entity Name | Fund Year | Contribution Category | In-Kind vs Cash | Amount | Proposed Typical Action | Relationship to project scope and requested RCPP funding |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--|-----------------|----------------|--|---|
| Midland County Drain Commissioner | 2021 | FA: RCPP Watershed Activity Related Expenditures | Cash | \$1,500,000.00 | Required Match | Cash contribution for implementation activities including: sediment basin removal, bank stabilization, bank stabilization, open channel 2-stage implementation and channel bed stabilization. |
| Midland County Drain Commissioner | 2021 | TA: "Implementation" TA per APF | Cash | \$500,000.00 | Other non-inherently governmental FA contract support services (e.g. securing and managing contracts for 3rd party services like engineering studies, surveys, appraisals to satisfy NRCS requirements (C,)) | Data collection, engineering, design and monitoring. |
| Midland County Conservation District | 2021 | FA: RCPP Watershed Activity Related Expenditures | IN-Kind | \$650,000.00 | Required Match | Leverage with existing NRCS programs for farmer-led on-field implementation activities including: cover crops, filter strips, bank stabilization, stormwater runoff control, fencing, streambank and shoreline stabilization. |
| Midland County Conservation District | 2021 | TA: "Enhancement" Expenditures per APF | IN-Kind | \$50,000.00 | Other RCPP project related outreach and education, including inventories, analyses and tools needed to inform outreach (C,E) | Collaboration with property owners - outreach and watershed group formation. |
| City of Beaverton | 2021 | FA: RCPP Watershed Activity Related Expenditures | Cash | \$1,000,000.00 | Required Match | Cash match utilized for implementation activities including: sediment basin removal, bank stabilization, riparian buffer, cover crops and filter strips. |
| City of Beaverton | 2021 | TA: "Implementation" TA per APF | Cash | \$500,000.00 | Other non-inherently governmental FA contract support services (e.g. securing and managing contracts for 3rd party services like engineering studies, surveys, appraisals to satisfy NRCS requirements (C,)) | Data collection, engineering, design and monitoring |
| Midland County Road Commission | 2021 | FA: RCPP Watershed Activity Related Expenditures | IN-Kind | \$185,000.00 | Required Match | Project implementation activities including: sediment basin removal, bank stabilization, open channel 2-stage implementation and channel bed stabilization. |
| Gladwin County Drain Commissioner | 2021 | FA: RCPP Watershed Activity Related Expenditures | Cash | \$1,290,000.00 | Required Match | Project fiduciary, collaboration with farmers, engineering and implementation lead. |
| Gladwin County Drain Commissioner | 2021 | TA: "Implementation" TA per APF | Cash | \$75,000.00 | Technical assistance to producers for planning directly related to installation or management of eligible conservation activities (C,)) | Fiduciary role, communication and reporting. |

2540 - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) - Great Lakes Region - 2021 - Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation

Partner Contributions Summary

| Contribution Category | Total Amount |
|--|-----------------------|
| FA: RCPP Watershed Activity Related Expenditures | \$4,625,000.00 |
| TA: "Enhancement" Expenditures per APF | \$50,000.00 |
| TA: "Implementation" TA per APF | \$1,075,000.00 |
| Total IN-Kind Contribution | \$885,000.00 |
| Total Cash Contribution | \$4,865,000.00 |

Funding Request Summary

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Partner Contribution Ratio | 1.01 |
| Total Project Cost | \$5,702,452.00 |
| Total Financial Assistance Requested | \$4,081,010.00 |
| Total Technical Assistance Requested | \$1,621,442.00 |
| Total Partner Enhancement TA Requested | \$309,878.00 |
| Total Implementation TA Requested | \$1,311,564.00 |
| Total NRCS Implementation TA | \$515,361.00 |
| Total Partner Implementation TA Requested | \$796,203.00 |

2540 - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) - Great Lakes Region - 2021 - Upper Tittabawsee River Regional Conservation

Financial Information

RCPD Financial Assistance Funding Request

Type of Assistance: Financial Assistance (FA) Request Type: Watershed Total Funding Requested: \$4,081,010.00

| Contract Fund Type | State Year | Amount | Deliverable Type | Proposed Practice | Description |
|--------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Watershed | 2021 | MI \$ 4,081,010.00 | Public Works/Watershed Awards | Land Treatments - cover crops, filter strips, stabilization Construction - sediment excavation, bank stabilization, channel stabilization | Financial assistance requested for implementation of conservation Land Treatments - cover crops, filter strips, stabilization as well as Construction - sediment excavation, bank stabilization, channel stabilization. |

Total Financial Assistance Requested: \$ 4,081,010.00

RCPD Technical Assistance Funding Request

Type of Assistance: Technical Assistance (TA) Request Type: Enhancement TA Total Funding Requested: \$309,878.00
 Technical Assistance (TA) Partner Implementation TA \$796,203.00
 Technical Assistance (TA) Total Partner TA Requested \$1,106,081.00

| Technical Assistance Type | State | Amount | Proposed Practice | Relationship to project objectives and contributions. |
|---------------------------|-------|---------------|---|---|
| Enhancement TA | MI | \$ 309,878.00 | Other RCPD project related outreach and education including inventories, analyses and tools needed to inform outreach (C,E) | Farmer and property owner outreach and development of subwatershed focus groups to ensure communication and discussion. |

Partner Implementation TA \$ 467,801.00 Providing information or tools needed by NRCS to support Agency ranking (C,I) NRCS Support staff budget at 5% of overall budget to assist with agency ranking tools.

Partner Implementation TA \$ 328,402.00 Other non-inherently governmental FA contract support services (e.g. securing and managing contracts for 3rd party services like engineering studies, surveys, appraisals to satisfy NRCS requirements (C,I) Data collection, engineering, design, monitoring

Are you requesting an FA/TA variance from the standard FA 70% / TA 30%? No

Narratives

01 Describe the compelling need for the project and an overview of how the project will generate targeted conservation benefits. The Tittabawsee River is 91 miles long, with a network of contributing tributaries totaling 621 miles running through central Michigan. The focus areas for the proposed project are near the tributary confluences located in the economically depressed, and degraded areas of Gladwin and Midland Counties. Much of these rural counties are dependent on agriculture and recreation to drive their struggling economies, yet the agricultural communities in these areas are riddled with eroded banks due to poor conservation practices, exacerbated by intense flooding events and downstream impoundment failures occurring in Spring, 2020. In light of the recent Sanford and Wixom dam catastrophes, adjacent property owners to the tributary agricultural water utilities and waterways in these economically depressed areas are desperately in need of assistance to re-establish stabilization

2540 - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) - Great Lakes Region - 2021 - Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation

and remove excess sedimentation impairments to improve water quality and aquatic habitat for their agricultural and recreational value. The cost to repair the damage is far too great to bear in these low-income producer areas. This proposed project will assist landowners by alleviating some of the cost to remove the excess sedimentation impairing water quality, and then begin the process of re-building through bank stabilization and farmer-led conservation BMP implementation.

The proposed project need is great to assist property owners in these economically depressed areas and build upon existing efforts to assist with water quality and conservation practice improvements around the dam failure areas, as well as the downstream Saginaw Bay watersheds. Understanding the upstream tributary waterways have a profound impact on the overall watershed health, the goals of this project are to ensure existing impairments are removed and sustainable agriculture practices implemented by the landowners for long-term water quality improvements. Sustainable agriculture is dependent on good soil, land, and water conservation practices that can ensure long-term sustainability of those resources. Soil and nutrient loss over the proposed project area have decreased agricultural productivity and impaired aquatic resources from local utilities/streams to downstream water courses, depositing in impoundment areas and ultimately ending in Saginaw Bay. Our project team will work with farmers, landowners and local government in the project areas to rectify the current sedimentation issues and implement conservation BMP practices to help conserve important agricultural and water resources that support a thriving agricultural industry critical to the rural economies of Gladwin and Midland County.

This project will rely on proven and innovative approaches to achieving sustainable resource conservation efforts building upon existing USDA project funding in the Sanford/Wixom dam failure areas, as well as previous RCPP funding in the Saginaw Bay watershed employing similar approaches to implementing conservation practices on agricultural land and increasing the permanence of those practices to improve water quality in the region. Implementing sustainable agriculture and repairing shared natural resources in these rural areas is dependent upon the availability of RCPP funding and will bolster their economies. This project also builds on the efforts of multiple project partners throughout the project areas working with farmers and communities to promote watershed stewardship and address resource impairments. These approaches, combined with combined knowledge or the partners and their relationships with the communities, stakeholders, farmers, and landowners throughout the project areas will ensure successful conservation outcomes including the enhancement and protection of natural resources that support a healthy, sustainable agricultural industry, recreation and tourism, and sustainable rural economies in Gladwin and Midland County.

02 Describe rationale for inclusion of each RCPP activity type (e.g., rental contracts, entity-held easements) in project proposal, and how each activity relates to the generation of conservation benefits.

COVER CROPS AND BUFFERS

RCPP funding will be used to acquire easements or leases along drains to establish cover crops and buffers. The Drain Commissioners will also discuss potential reductions in assessment fees to farmers in the drainage districts that choose to participate. Such conservation practices can reduce long-term drain maintenance costs and those reductions can be passed along as discounts. Half of the easement/lease will be used for productive cover crops while the other half will be a native plant buffer. Cover crops such as alfalfa, forage-grade hay, wheat or oats, experimental bio-fuel plant biomass (e.g. switch-grass), fruit-bearing vines and trees, and other similar types of production that reduces exposed soil adjacent to drains in the fall-winter-spring. Education emphasis and resources will be placed on hardy crops that have low phosphorus release during the dormant season. Such cover crops allow productive use of a part of the easement to generate farm revenue while helping reduce soil erosion and filter runoff. The Gladwin and Midland County Conservation District will identify landowners and approach them to discuss interest in the programs and best management practices under the NRCS CREP and EQIP programs. Resources and education will be delivered to help landowners select and implement productive uses for the cover crops. The land easement/lease area will also include a native buffer strip that is not used for active production. It will be planted with native herbaceous plant communities comprised of cool and warm-season grasses and native nut and fruit-bearing trees. The combination of the cover crops and native plant buffers along drains will substantially reduce sediment and nutrient runoff to waterways. It will not only improve water quality in the drains, but also large receiving rivers and Saginaw Bay (Lake Huron). In addition, the cover crops and buffers will improve wildlife habitat and re-establish wildlife travel corridors along the drains. Where they can be combined with two-stage channel design, the water quality and wildlife habitat values will be substantial.

2-STAGE CHANNEL DESIGN

Where feasible, drain cross-sections will be modified to create 2-stage channels. Two-stage channels consist of a main low-flow or bankfull channel in the center of a larger trapezoidal ditch with adjacent flood terraces. Existing trapezoidal drains can be altered to create this two-stage approach within existing drain easements. The smaller bankfull channel promotes sediment transport and creates more diverse aquatic habitat for fish and macroinvertebrates. In contrast, most trapezoidal drains have over-sized channels that promote sedimentation (which increases the need for periodic maintenance) and lack aquatic habitat diversity. Two-stage channels are also shown to improve water quality by reducing sediment and nutrient loading. The flood terraces either side of the bankfull channel help dissipate flood energy and reduce erosion while providing wildlife habitat and travel corridors.

BIOENGINEERED BANK STABILIZATION

Eroding drain banks lead to sediment and nutrient loading and increased drain maintenance. Eroding banks will be identified and prioritized in terms of severity and sediment and nutrient loading potential. The highest priority eroding banks will be stabilized using bioengineering or soft-engineering techniques. Such techniques typically involve bank sloping to a flatter slope where space permits, reconstruction of the toe with bioengineering materials and/or armoring the soil surface with bioengineering materials. Bioengineering

2540 - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) - Great Lakes Region - 2021 - Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation

materials include wood in the form of bundles (fascines) or mattresses and usually consist of living cut plant material. They also include biodegradable erosion control blanket and matting. Most importantly, they include native plant materials including live woody cuttings and seed mixes that help establish diverse native cover that provide long-term soil stability

03 Describe the rationale for the proposed geographic scope of the project.

The proposed project area is primarily located in Gladwin and Midland Counties located within the Saginaw Bay – Lake Huron drainage basin in the central Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Nearly the entire land mass of each included county drains to the Tittabawassee River and, ultimately, out to Saginaw Bay. The Tittabawassee River watershed encompasses a land area of 2,471 mi² and is the fifth largest in Michigan. Mean gradient (4.7 ft/mi) within the main stem Tittabawassee River is steep relative to other Michigan rivers and varies from 0.9 ft/mi near the mouth to 68.8 ft/mi in the headwaters. Rivers typically have steep gradient in their headwaters with more moderate gradient further downstream. In the Tittabawassee River, however, gradient remains quite steep within the central portion of the main stem. High gradient reaches in the main stem lie beneath impoundments making these rare and valuable habitats unavailable to stream biota making water quality and habitat restoration an important component of our project. Tributary water courses to the main branch are abundant but are significantly degraded by sediment and nutrient loading from the adjacent agricultural lands and excessive erosion. In turn, the tributary water utilities and downstream impoundment areas farmers and the community rely on are impaired. The excess sedimentation has reduced protection to the communities, exacerbating erosion issues along the private farmland, within the public utilities, and at downstream waterways/impoundments. The sedimentation primarily contains runoff from the upland ag land which is laden with excess nutrients degrading water quality and potential for aquatic habitat. Throughout 2019 and 2020, the Gladwin and Midland County areas were also hit very hard by climate change driven intense storm events, ultimately leading to the failure of the Edenville and Sanford Dams (Wixom Lake) with reduced flood potential. The private property owners are now left to pick up the pieces and pay for very costly repairs to their properties abutting the waterways affected. These rural Counties and property owners depend on agriculture, seasonal recreation, and small rural municipalities to support their depressed economies. There farmland and public waterways are now in dire need of critical repairs, not only to fix the damage done - but ultimately to create a more sustainable future for the producers and their communities through improved conservation practices and increased stability of public utilities protecting private land, water quality and reducing the flood potential. The project contains six specific geographical areas within the two counties:

- 1) Ross Lake - Heavily sediment due to tributary water utilities from upstream agricultural areas has decreased water quality and aquatic habitat for the community.
- 2) Burtleson Drain - Tributary to Ross Lake - excess erosion, bank instability
- 3) Davidson Drain - Tributary to Ross Lake.
- 4) Nestor Creek
- 5) Curtice Intercounty Drain
- 6) Cedar River Watershed (including Wixom and Sanford Dam areas)

As the largest flow contributor to Saginaw Bays ecologically significant and productive ecosystem, the Tittabawassee Rivers ecological health is critically important and dependent upon the communities of its watershed including Midland and Gladwin County residents. Saginaw Bay is also critically important to the State of Michigan and nation as its recreational value attracts tourists from across the United States. The upstream rural communities in its watershed are as dependent on it as they are on the agricultural industry. Likewise, the inland lakes in the project area are economically important natural resources that can be degraded by a lack of conservation practices.

04 Describe proposed approach for evaluating the success of the project, including outcomes.

Project partners and stakeholders will collaborate to define trackable targets and metrics through a consensus-building process. Applicable and appropriate targets and metrics representing conservation outcomes will be established for each project area. Examples of targets include miles of drain improved, acres of land under BMPs, and number of landowners participating. Ross Lake targets will likely focus on water quality parameters such as nutrient concentrations, water clarity, and dissolved oxygen concentrations. The Wixom Lake targets can be rather simple and based on major project milestones such as obtaining permits and construction substantial completion. Metrics will be established as necessary as quantifiable and measurable ways of determining if the targets have been met. Teams adopt a number of best practices to ensure the fair and consistent evaluation of project success over the course of application. Our current strategy to accomplish this includes: • Bimonthly internal meetings of the Core Team to review project results and progress towards goals. • Quarterly Project Team meetings with representatives of Midland, and Gladwin Conservation Districts, as well as willing partners and active farmer mentors, to review progress, results and evaluate farmer feedback. As part of the funding request, our team will utilize staff experienced with NRCS conservation planning. This will be key in getting feedback from farmers themselves about on-farm implementation. • Each conservation district's sub-awardee will be required to submit quarterly financial and narrative progress reports to Gladwin County. Partners will be required to submit an interim progress report after the 3-year mark as well as a final summary report upon projection completion. • When Farmer Mentors are under contract, they will send a report each month detailing specifics of meetings (mentee, date, duration, type, etc.). • Number and frequency of on-farm technical assistance provided by conservation district staff and farmer mentors will be tracked and reported annually. Because of the voluntary nature of farmers utilizing these services, it is difficult to project a goal for on-farm visits. As such, these interactions will be captured and reported in reports to NRCS. Tracking environmental metrics to measure success will include the following activities: • Success in recruitment will be determined by fully obligating all farmer FA funds within first two years of project start date. This aggressive goal will be met through careful conservation planning, sufficient technical assistance and proactive discussion of contingency plans. • The environmental benefits obtained through soil health practice implementation (i.e. sediment, P&N reductions, and water replenishment) will be assessed via MSU's Institute of Water Research's GLWMS modeling platform. This system houses multiple water erosion and nutrient runoff models (www.iwr.msu.edu/glwms) that can be used to assess environmental results to the field level. These results will be

2540 - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) - Great Lakes Region - 2021 - Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation

assessed and reported to NRCS annually. Given the amount of funding for surface practices to be made available, edge/field monitoring will report out reductions in nutrients over the course of this program.

Methods of evaluating behavior change outcomes will include: • The number of strip trial test plot contracts converted to whole farm contracts will also be tracked, reported to NRCS • The number of RCPP farmer participants joining Farmer Led Watershed Groups will also be tracked, reported.

05 Will this project help producers meet or avoid natural resource regulatory requirements? If so, describe how.

The project team anticipates that the proposed implementation actions will help farmers to avoid any regulatory requirements in three ways:

1. It is important to understand that there are no mandates in the proposed projects. Farmers may chose to participate in these restoration and stabilization efforts to the extent that they feel comfortable without fear of legislative action. Any sedimentation improvement actions on productive land that will increase water and habitat potential quality in the utility waterways, impoundment areas and ultimately Saginaw Bay are entirely voluntary and will be a focus of the community outreach and education activities. Monitoring activities will help educate participating farmers as to nutrient and sediment loading coming off their land and, therefore, prepare them for any future regulatory discussions. With formation of a Farmer Led Watershed group in the Tittabawassee as a delivery mechanism to convey BMPs and cost share through, we would also be promoting this project heavily with some targeted outreach efforts in the area. Being educated, pro-active producers will stand united with their watershed group partners if/when regulatory compliance discussions become necessary in the future.
2. Independent of any farmer-led implementation actions taken by producers, this proposed project proposes to remediate sediment and improve water and habitat quality removing the need for communities to require agricultural producers to pay fully for these actions out of their own pockets. Particularly in the economically depressed areas within the Gladwin County boundary, private land owners and producers are struggling to pay exorbitant assessments as would typically be required to remediate the excess sediment and stabilize the banks to reduce the risk of continued erosion/sedimentation. By decoupling improved habitat from actions on productive farm land the proposed projects will improve rural in stream habitats and remediate impairments. This will remove some of the community pressure to regulate agricultural producers and help agencies recognize the value in assessing completing monitoring activities for project success. The proposed project will help producers meet County drain fee assessment financial requirements which is a strain on their limited resources given the economically depressed area in which our proposed project is occurring. Through long-term lease agreements and with the help of drain fee reductions in collaboration with the County Drain offices, agricultural producers will be relieved of the fee assessment that traditionally pay for costly repairs to public utility waterways. The upper Tittabawassee River region has historically been under served with low NRCS conservation program signups and, as such, plagued with poor long-term poor conservation practices. Over time, and with the compounding effects of excess sedimentation and climate change, property damage and public water utilities intended to provide relief to farmers has increased flood damage causing larger erosion issues on private properties.

06 Describe the plan and lead partner's experience managing and tracking the delivery of third-party contributions (if included in the proposal).

Gladwin County will lead the project as fiduciary, working closely with project partners as detailed in budget narrative section. The County is familiar with the role of tracking and managing third-party contracts as a municipality frequently in this situation. Contracts will be sub-divided into categories for management purposes and reporting:

- FA Match
- FA RCPP Funds
- TA Implementation Match
- TA Implementation RCPP Funds
- TA Enhancement Match
- TA Enhancement RCPP Funds

This will allow for careful tracking of match funds for reporting, as well as proper categorization of NRCS fund draws in compliance with contractual obligations under this project scope. The Conservation Districts will manage and lead farmer-led implementation and pay-outs through this funding and existing NRCS programs (ie- EQIP/CREP). Their team of conservation experts are well versed in understanding the intricacies of how programs work and necessary metrics to meet costing and project goals.

07 Describe how partner contributions add value to the proposed project to leverage and multiply the benefits of the potential committed RCPP funding.

The proposed project will build upon existing efforts taking place throughout the Tittabawassee River and Saginaw Bay watershed regions to reduce sedimentation and erosion, improving water quality and aquatic habitat within these watersheds and ultimately Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron. Partner contributions add significant value to assist property owners with costly repairs and removal of impairments that are necessary to fully realize the water quality benefits of the on-land farmer conservation BMP implementation. Producers rely on public utilities to allow for proper drainage from their lands and mitigate the risk of flooding. Poor land management practices, extreme erosion events, as well as the Wixom and Sanford dam failures have exacerbated sedimentation and degraded stabilization within these water courses. This issue is perpetuating downstream of the agricultural land and needs to be mitigated. Partner contributions help significantly leverage this work through innovative use of RCPP funding to remove/repair the existing impairment in harmony with on-field BMP implementation through traditional NRCS programs. Both of these proposed projects merried together will multiply the benefits of the requested RCPP funding and ensure this economically depressed farming region does not continue to incur more degradation of their properties, nor have to pay costly assessments to fix - money they do not have.

2540 - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) - Great Lakes Region - 2021 - Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation

08 Provide a justification for why this project could not be carried out through other NRCS Farm Bill programs—what RCPP flexibilities does the project take advantage of?

The proposed project will leverage existing NRCS conservation programs to maximize outreach and signups to agricultural producers, also maximizing BMP implementation and utilize RCPP flexibilities to allow for remediation of existing degraded water quality, aquatic habitat and flooding issues. As a socially and economically depressed area, removal of the existing impairments is a huge cost burden for the agricultural property owners to bear. They have already lost so much and have incurred many costs to repair adjoining property and public utility areas (through assessments) needing emergency repair due to climate change, mass erosion and flooding. The RCPP funding opportunity will allow for innovative use of funding to allow for removal of the issues and begin the healing process for the region. A key piece of improving the current state of the current water quality condition is to fix the damage that's been done - the excess sedimentation continues to plague the public utility, downstream impoundments. Over time, this has caused irreversible damage to public lakes, private property and has caused an unnecessary amount of financial and emotional strain on the region. Through RCPP, project partner can innovatively utilize Farm Bill programs to remedy existing impairments and look to the future with more outreach and implementation of sustainable practices, ensuring the sustainability of this project goals and long-term security for the agricultural producers in this depressed region.

09 Does the partner plan to target project funding to particular locations or producers based on a scientific assessment or research-based plan? If so, please describe the approach.

The proposed project is focusing efforts to high-priority agricultural areas throughout Gladwin and Midland Counties around the upper regions of the Tittabawassee River watershed (0408020105). Impairments in these upper reaches of the Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron have a profound effect on the water quality index and degraded habitat continuing the plague this Area of Concern. In particular, funding will be targeted to the economically depressed agricultural tributary areas and degraded utility water courses feeding the Sanford and Wixom Dam region. The catastrophic dam failures that occurred in these areas May 2020 have brought light to the many impairments in these agricultural regions and the lack of financial resources to help property owners remedy the situation. See attached map for geographical context and predicted water quality of watersheds - the impairment levels shown in the map are based on the local riverine fish community's 'Index of Biotic Integrity' scores. In 2014, TNC conducted a comprehensive SWAT model analysis on all HUC12 catchments in Saginaw Bay watershed to determine baseline IBI scores for each system. These IBI scores were then categorized into levels of severity and applied as a map layer in GLWMS. TNC and Midland CD staff will target outreach & recruitment into the high priority sub watersheds identified and targeted by this program. Using all of GLWMS's built-in modeling capabilities (such as the High Impact Targeting, or HIT, model), RCPP phase II will be able to target its farmer financial assistance to high priority fields through an automated priority ranking process that rapidly assesses a project's fields (see prioritization factors in question 8). TNC's complementary and concurrent farmer-led watershed group development work in the Saginaw Bay Watershed is also strategically targeted to high-priority sub watersheds, including the Chippewa River and Kawkawin River Watersheds. Because of this, farmer-led watershed groups will be developed during this RCPP project's timespan and ultimately leveraged to recruit and support soil health practice adoption in these areas.

10 Describe any proposed innovative methods or approaches for conservation planning, implementation, or assessment, and/or the proposed use of promising new technologies that have a demonstrated likelihood of success.

This proposed project relies on several innovative methods to maximize conservation success through improved water quality, reduced flooding and improved habitat conditions. First is to leverage significant partner match to remove the existing degraded water utilities. This is critical to begin the healing process and the financial support of partners and NRCS will help alleviate this cost pass-through to property owners along these waterways.

In addition, on-field implementation and producer BMP sign up is critical to the long-term sustainability. Partnering with the Conservation Districts and utilizing existing relationships is key to the success of this effort.

Lastly, conservation planning along agricultural drains will focus on long-term vehicles such as leases or easements rather than incentive programs and efforts to get farmers to commit to long-term conservation along drains on their properties. Incentive programs and volunteer participation can be subject to fluctuating crop prices that lead farmers to abandon them in favor of higher yielding crop production. A combination of creative vehicles will be promoted to willing landowners and farmers in an effort to maximize the amount of land where conservation practices can be installed. However, conservation planning and partnership fill focus on practice permanence. In addition, the Gladwin and Midland County Drain Commissioners will explore opportunities with farmers for reducing drainage assessments for farmers that choose to participate in NRCS approved conservation practices. As opposed to paid incentives, farmers may be more encouraged to change land management practices to achieve resource conservation when it has financial benefits regardless of crop prices.

11 Is this a brand-new project or is this part of an existing effort? Describe the extent of project activities completed to date, and how the proposed activities relate to any existing efforts. Include a brief description of any historical coordination with NRCS staff or programs.

This project will build substantially on existing efforts around the Tittabawassee River watershed and Saginaw Bay region, particularly conservation and restoration efforts. The project will focus efforts on the upstream areas tributary to the dam catastrophe areas.

1. The Four Lakes Task Force (FLTF) has engaged with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), to remove flood debris, stabilize damaged dams and repair erosion to private properties that resulted from the May 19, 2020 flood and dam breaches. The NRCS has an Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program that will provide grants for repairs to eligible properties. The EWP program grants pay 75% of construction costs. FLTF received an appropriation from the State of Michigan to pay part of the

2540 - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) - Great Lakes Region - 2021 - Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation

25% matching fund requirement. Over 130 properties have qualified for EWS grants to-date, with total construction costs estimated in excess of \$15 million.

- Debris removal from Sanford Dam was completed in November. Additional debris removal projects are being planned for the exposed bottom land on all four lakes. The goal is to prevent any flood up to a 100-year flood from carrying away the debris and causing further damage downstream.
- The first dam stabilization project will begin in early December, with FLTF partnering with the State of Michigan to stabilize the Tobacco River portion of the Edenville Dam. Additional dam stabilization projects are planned for the Tittabawassee River side of the Edenville Dam, as well as the other three Tittabawassee River dams. The goal is to prevent further erosion of the remaining dams or another dam breach that would result in disastrous flooding downstream.
- The first one of 120+ erosion repair projects began November 23, to repair a flood-damaged causeway that will give 22 families road access to their homes for the first time in over 6 months. Other erosion projects will involve repairs to shorelines in front of properties at highest risk of damage if not repaired before the spring runoff. These projects will begin in early December. The goal is to reduce risk to life or structures due to flood-related erosion.

Project work will continue through the winter, weather permitting, then start again in the spring after weight limits are removed from public roads.

FLTF is grateful for our partnership with NRCS and the EWP program.

2. The Ross Lake, Curtee Intercountry Drain, Nestor Drain, and Cedar River watershed projects are new projects with ongoing conservation efforts by the respective Conservation Districts in the rural agricultural communities. NRCS coordination has not occurred on these new projects yet. However, the respective Conservation Districts have been cooperating the NRCS to implement BMPs on agricultural lands.

The Burleson Drain and Davidson Drain are existing projects that will be enhanced using RCPPP funding to increase conservation outcomes. Gladwin County is working with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) to stabilize eroding soils on the those drains and has completed all data collection and engineering design so they are shovel ready. A two-stage channel will be constructed along Davidson Drain to increase conservation outcomes of the project by providing flood energy dissipation, wildlife corridor habitat, and more diverse aquatic habitat. Step-pool structures will be installed in Burleson Drain to stabilize the eroding bed and increase habitat diversity. In additional v-notch rock chutes will be installed along both drains to address ongoing agricultural runoff and gully formation. NRCS coordination is not part of these projects.

3. This project will build upon the \$10.3M Saginaw Bay RCPPP, which launched in 2015 and will be ongoing until April 2021. To date, the current RCPPP has contracted with 94 farm operations to implement 56,632 acres of soil health and nutrient management practices across six counties. Continuing conservation throughout the Bay region.

12 Describe the lead partner's experience managing Federal funding awards or similar projects and conservation projects, including the execution of deliverables and engagement with ag producers and private landowners to get conservation on the ground.

Gladwin County is well versed on leading Federally funded projects as a County municipality. The staff are knowledgeable and experienced at understanding the contractual and fiduciary responsibilities of leading an effort of this size regionally with numerous project partners. This project team is working specifically with project partners with similar experience and capacity including Midland County, both Gladwin and Midland Conservation Districts and TNC-Michigan Soil Health & Nutrient - a project team bringing a plethora of conservation experience to this project. This experience includes extensive grant management and innovative conservation program development. Some of the more recent federal grants managed by this team include a \$1M EPA-GLRI conservation cost share grant, a \$328K USDA-NRCS CIG grant on filter strips and a \$10.3M RCPPP classic grant. Current projects include EPA-GLRI subawards of \$203K (for farmer peer networks) and \$217K (for WQ monitoring), and privately funded studies which include a harvestable buffer feasibility assessment and a strip tillage economic analysis. The local

Other desired qualifications will include experience with NRCS contracting and screening requirements and a background in sustainable ag practices.

Integral success will be driven by the farmer-led implementation and outreach work by the Gladwin and Midland Conservation District Partners. Both have been vetted and selected for their technical capability, proven track record and experience with similar programs. Conservation District staff are local liasons with community farming connections and a deep understanding of existing NRCS programs, and the pathway to successful implementation. Many of the staff grew up in a farming family and understand both sides of the issue regarding conservation - cost vs. production payout - and the advocates for these under served producers will help ensure execution of the proposed project conservation goals.

Technical data collection and design lead will be handled by ECT - a consulting firm with over 25 years of environmental restoration work within the Great Lakes region and specifically Gladwin and Saginaw Bay areas. ECT is currently a technical engineering and compliance lead on the RCPPP project in Grand Rapids with the Lower Grand River Rapids Restoration project and has intimate knowledge of what is required to engage owners in conservation, as well as regulatory and environment assessment needs when working with Federal funding awards under USDA/NRCS. ECT is leading innovative agricultural runoff intercept projects around the Saginaw Bay region with local community leaders, Farm Bureau and Bay County Conservation District. Designing conservation level spreading filter strips to intercept tile drain outlet water prior to entering water utility drains. This project also requires farmer property owner trust and support to execute.

13 Describe proposed producer outreach activities designed to identify, inform, and enroll eligible producers and entities in RCPPP contract activities.

Working with our project partners at the Gladwin and Midland County Conservation District offices, as well as our non-profit partner TNC and the local NRCS office, our project team brings a depth of understanding to the highest priority agricultural producers in the Upper Tittabawassee River watershed region. The support staff consist of long-time residents, some of which grew up in the farming community, all of whom truly understand the long family history of the producers in the targeted restoration areas. It is only with the support of the District staff that we can be successful in reaching the largest number of farmers along the degraded water courses under this proposal. The proposed project is targeting funding specifically to the impaired Tittabawassee River (0408020105) watershed within the greater Saginaw Basin (see attached project and watershed maps).

2540 - Critical Conservation Areas (CCAs) - Great Lakes Region - 2021 - Upper Tittabawassee River Regional Conservation

Midland and Gladwin Conservation District staff will work in collaboration with County Drain offices and TNC to target outreach & recruitment into the high priority properties adjacent to degraded water utilities as identified and targeted by this program. It is these areas in which property owner's have the opportunity to make the biggest impact on water quality improvements through long-term conservation practice implementation. These areas are also in dire need of excess sedimentation and stabilization work which is far too costly for the producers in these limited resource and economically depressed areas. Working collaboratively, project partners will develop and initiate farmer-led watershed groups in geographically sensible sizes to garner the sense of farmers helping farmers and allow a safe place to invite participation, share success stories, and assist with signups. This activity will strategically target high-priority water course properties, but include all of the Upper Tittabawassee areas within Gladwin and Midland Counties to maximize overall conservation success. Because of this, farmer-led watershed groups will be developed during this RCPP project's timespan and ultimately leveraged to recruit and support soil health practice adoption in these areas.

14 Describe any proposed efforts to encourage or include the participation of historically underserved producers, including socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resource and veteran farmers and ranchers, or to include as a contributing partner(s) an organization(s) working with or representing those groups of producers.

The economics of clean water in and around the Upper Tittabawassee River watershed project area are critical as it relates to the financial, physical, and social fabric of the communities in Gladwin and Midland Counties. The project team will conduct outreach to specifically target under served, socially and economically disadvantaged farmers and property owners throughout both counties, however those directly adjoining degraded water utilities will be prioritized to maximize effectiveness of the restoration and conservation efforts included under this proposal. The majority of the work included under this proposal will take place within the Gladwin County boundary. This county falls at the 50th per capita income in the state of Michigan with less than 50 percent of county median household income above poverty level based on recent data sets. With the recent loss of Wixom and Sanford Lakes due to the 2020 dam breeches, the local property owners have found themselves with costly erosion and sedimentation issues to deal with, leaving the repair costs to the land owners and economically disadvantaged farming communities.

The goal of this proposed conservation project is to help bring financial relief through existing NRCS implementation measures, to educate and assist owners. The priority farming property owners included in this application are identified adjacent to the water utilities experiencing erosion and heavy sedimentation. By improvement of these impairments, the water courses will experience improved water quality, aquatic habitat for fisheries, and reduced risk of continued flooding/failures downstream. Activities to encourage farmer participation in this program will be led by the Gladwin and Midland County Conservation Districts, in partnership with TNC. As local Conservation District staff know and understand the property owners and have existing relationships to rely on for outreach. As an advocacy non-profit, TNC brings years of agricultural outreach experience around the greater Saginaw Bay watershed to the project team, and with it an understanding of effective ways to assist owners. The outreach team will work collaboratively to formulate watershed groups within the farming communities included to open further communication and assistance with signups and implementation needs. The 2017 Census of Agriculture indicates there are approximately 1,600 producers in these counties, with nearly 99% of them being family owned farms and 25% of producers ages 65 and older (see attached). The total number of farms has continually decreased each year in both counties by approximately 10%, which can likely be attributed to the financial hardships and aging farmer demographics. With a current total around 989 operational farms throughout both Counties, well over half are of the under-served population at 584 farms run by:

Hispanic, Latino, Spanish origin 12

With military service 162

New and beginning farmers 410

With an aggressive outreach plan in place to put smaller sub-watershed focus groups in place in cooperation with key producers, our project team is confident we can maximize the assistance to the most needy farmers in the Gladwin-Midland County areas. Project partners will work hard to ensure the best effort is made to reach these producers by using multiple modes of communication (print, digital, radio, in person) and multiple media outlets (social media channels, print advertisements, radio channels etc.).

| April Usage Statistics 2021 | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------------------------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Door Count/Curb-side | Programs | In-person Program Attendance | # | Virtual Library Programs | | | | | |
| Gladwin Statistics | | | | 10- Second View/Engagements/Kits | | | | | |
| Upstairs Childrens | | | Children | Gladwin County District Library Statistics | | | | | |
| Downstairs Adult | | | Teen | Story Time | | | | | |
| Curb-side | | | Adult | Craftivity Kits | | | | | |
| Gladwin Total | | | | Book Club | | | | | |
| Beaverton Statistics | | | | Adult Garden Kits | | | | | |
| Beaverton Door | | | Children | Adult Spice Kits | | | | | |
| Curb-side | | | Teen | 11000 Books Before Kindergarten | | | | | |
| | | | Adult | Adult Crafts | | | | | |
| Beaverton Total | | | | Total | | | | | |
| GCDL Total | | | | New Monthly | | | | | |
| New Borrowers | | | | Yearly Total | | | | | |
| Check-Outs | | | | Facebook | | | | | |
| Requests Placed | | | | Instagram | | | | | |
| Requests Filled | | | | Community Posts (Shares) | | | | | |
| Computer Use | | | | | | | | | |
| Wireless Use | | | | | | | | | |
| Gladwin | | | | | | | | | |
| Beaverton | | | | | | | | | |
| GCDL TOTAL | | | | | | | | | |
| Overdrive | | | | | | | | | |
| Audiobooks | | | | | | | | | |
| E Book | | | | | | | | | |
| New Users | | | | | | | | | |
| Checkouts | | | | | | | | | |
| Web Site Visits | | | | | | | | | |