

Clean water is important to all of us!

What we do in our homes and businesses directly impacts our water and beaches.
This is especially important for us that live in Southwest Michigan!

Why do Lake Michigan beaches close?

Residents and tourists alike enjoy playing and swimming at our Lake Michigan beaches, but we shouldn't take this for granted. **Our water is at risk!** Wastewater containing bacteria and pathogens, such as E. coli, can make its way into Lake Michigan!

Where does contamination come from?

Communities along the lakeshore and further upstream can have a direct impact on water quality. In Southwest Michigan we live in an area that drains directly into Lake Michigan. Any leaking waste from our communities eventually makes its way into Lake Michigan.

What needs to be fixed?

The causes are failing septic systems and wastewater infrastructure. Most infrastructure is 50–100 years old and in need of repair and proactive maintenance. Both are leaking wastewater into streams and waterways.

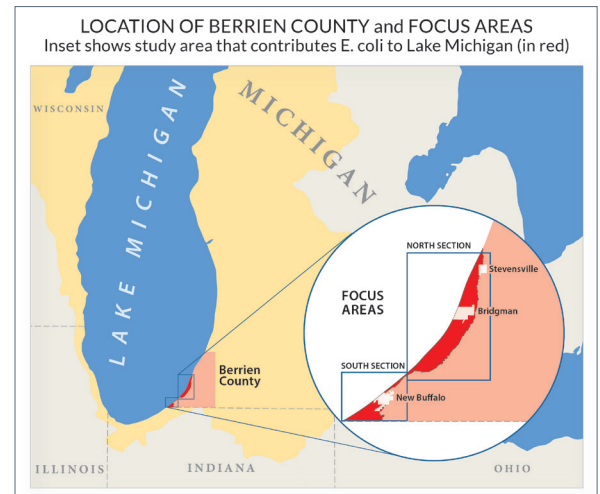
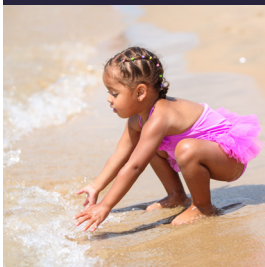
Let's follow the water's path...

From your home or businesses, it is critical that our septic and sewer systems don't seep or leak into the ground.

This whole area drains into Lake Michigan, emphasizing that what happens on the land and around our homes impacts the quality of Lake Michigan water.



E. coli is an **invisible bacteria** which comes from untreated wastewater and can make water unsafe for recreation and use.



Help solve Southwest Michigan's wastewater infrastructure problems.

IMPROVE & MAINTAIN systems now, PROTECT clean water long term.

HOMEOWNERS & BUSINESSES ON SEPTIC SYSTEMS

- + Adopt "Septic Best Practices" to reduce system stress
Visit betterbeachesswmi.org
- + Repair/Replace/Maintain septic system
- + Learn where water flows from your property

HOMEOWNERS & BUSINESSES ON SEWER SYSTEMS/CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

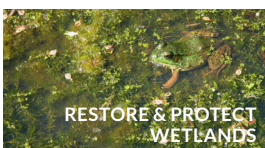
- + Adopt "Sewer Best Practices" to reduce system stress
Visit betterbeachesswmi.org
- + Implement "Urban Water Management Practices"
Visit sustainoxcreek.org/improve
- + Get involved in local government forums
- + Support bills/millages to improve and maintain infrastructure

PROPERTY OWNERS ALONG WATERWAYS & WETLANDS

- + Add or maintain plantings along banks to avoid erosion
- + Restore and protect wetlands
- + Learn where water flows from your property

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS & DRAIN COMMISSION

- + Replace failing wastewater collection system infrastructure
- + Identify and correct illegal dumping or connections
- + Identify and correct failing septic systems
- + Enact a septic inspection time of sale ordinance
- + Enact/improve water quality protection related ordinances
- + Improve zoning maps to locate intensive uses appropriately
- + Protect conservation lands and wetlands
- + Maintain buffer areas, stream banks, and wetlands



OUR PARTNERS



Stevensville Village, Lincoln Township, Lake Township, Bridgman City, Chikaming Township, New Buffalo Township, New Buffalo City, Grand Beach Village, Michiana Village