

# Strategic Plan



Photo by Mark Cassino

**MISSION:** To restore and protect the health of the Kalamazoo River, its tributaries, and its watershed by collaborating with the community, government agencies, local officials, and businesses.

**VISION:** We envision a Kalamazoo River and connected waterways that are free-flowing, with good water quality, and healthy ecosystems that are managed and protected by decisions and actions in the region and provide environmental, social, and economic benefits. This will be accomplished by engaging a strong and effective community of dedicated partners working together to protect the Kalamazoo River Watershed.

**HISTORY:** The Kalamazoo River Watershed Public Advisory Council (PAC) was formed in 1993 by concerned citizens to assist the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (formerly Michigan Department of Environmental Quality) in the development of a Remedial Action Plan to address the polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) contamination and cleanup of the Kalamazoo River. In 1999, the PAC broadened its mission and goals to encompass a wide range of water quality concerns, restoration needs, land and water resource protection actions, and promotion of recreation and stewardship on the river. This change in focus was accompanied by a change in name to the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council (KRWC). The KRWC has been, and continues to be, primarily funded through grants and donations from individuals and businesses. The Kalamazoo River Watershed Council is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

**VALUES:** We work to support the health and sustainability of the Kalamazoo River, its tributaries, lakes and watershed. This work will be accomplished following these values:

**Adaptability:** We get results by continuing to innovate and adapt to new technologies, science-based information, evolving partnerships, and changing circumstances.

**Accountability:** We are committed to the success of our projects and are accountable to our project partners, stakeholders, and those that steward and enjoy the Kalamazoo River and its watershed. The Board and staff bring a wealth of experience and technical expertise in water resource management to the Council.

**Collaboration:** We are proud of our long-history of partnerships and community collaboration and seek to continue to foster these relationships and grow our network of watershed stewards.

**Sustainability:** We strive to secure resources to provide sustainable finances and relationships to support our work now and into the future to advance our mission and achieve shared goals.



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**NICHE:** Our organization's niche is forming partnerships among a variety of stakeholders to help organize effective and efficient programs and initiatives to restore, protect and promote the Kalamazoo River Watershed. We rely on science-based information to guide our projects and outreach efforts. Our focus on community engagement facilitates appreciation and stewardship of our watershed to include protection of our water resources, wildlife habitat, and a safe and healthy ecosystem for all.

**GOALS:** For the coming years, the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council has identified the following strategic goals and will work with all who wish to invest in making the Kalamazoo River Watershed healthier.

## Water Quality Monitoring and Tracking Goal

Assess the current status of the water quality of the Kalamazoo River, its tributaries and lakes to establish a baseline for key parameters to allow tracking of trends over time and help determine factors that are impacting water quality.

### Objectives:

- Coordinate a strategic effort to collect, analyze and dispense meaningful water quality data from the watershed. These efforts will be guided by scientifically-determined monitoring strategies and objectives, and will seek to develop partnerships that maximize the use of existing monitoring initiatives and data.
- Secure a sustainable source of funding and resources to support the water quality monitoring and tracking efforts.

## Education and Outreach Goal

Help people living in the Kalamazoo River Watershed connect to the streams, lakes, and wetlands in the watershed through scientifically based, current information and resources to promote effective stewardship, behaviors, and decision-making.

### Objectives:

- Work with watershed residents, organizations, school groups, governments, and other interested parties to dispense appropriate information through projects and programs.
- Serve as a publicly-accessible, expert source of watershed information through a variety of methods, including public events, newsletters, and social media.
- Undertake projects that reduce pollutant sources in both rural and urban areas of the watershed.
- Intentionally expand our reach to those in the watershed community who have been underrepresented in the past. This will be accomplished through expanding our outreach and programming to areas of the watershed and communities within the watershed that have historically not been exposed to KRWC programs.





## Services Goal

Implement essential services and programs and secure financial support to restore the ecological health of the waters, help stakeholders improve, protect and steward the resource, and encourage appropriate recreation within the watershed.

### Objectives:

- Help facilitate watershed-wide events such as Kanoe the Kazoo paddling events, Krazy for the Kazoo river clean-ups and establishment of a Kalamazoo River Water Trail.
- Provide public education and outreach collaborative services to help industries, municipalities, and local units of government fulfill Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Public Education Program (PEP) permit requirements more efficiently. Currently, each entity is responsible for its own PEP program. Under this collaborative service, the KRWC would minimize service duplication and overlap to provide much of the required permit programming for multiple entities.
- Work with the State of Michigan, US Environmental Protection Agency and local stakeholders to restore the Kalamazoo River Area of Concern and Superfund site and remove the remaining beneficial use impairments.
- Facilitate the appropriate removal of dams and other obstructions in the river and its tributaries to allow free-flowing waters for improved habitat, ecosystem health and safe recreation.
- Assist with public education, planning and project implementation that addresses flooding, climate change, and ecosystem resiliency.
- Offer contract services to individuals, organizations, businesses, schools and municipalities. Examples include invasive species management guidance, wetland delineations, natural shoreline assessment and design. (See KRWC Services Agreement – Attachment)

## Organizational Strength Goal

Ensure long-term health of the organization and its programs by diversifying funding and supporting and maintaining a talented, dedicated board of directors and staff to realize and further the mission of the organization.

### Objectives:

- Offer contract services as described above.
- Seek grant opportunities for projects and programs that support the Council's mission and vision
- Expand charitable funding streams to include individuals, organizations, foundations and businesses
- Engage the Board to participate in program development, delivery, fundraising and promotion
- Increase the number of paid staff to allow greater impact and reach with watershed programs and projects
- Re-evaluate plans annually and adjust operations, as needed, to adapt to changing circumstances to assure organizational strength and sustainability.

