



Michigan Wetland Board for Local Transportation Agencies
517.482.1189 www.miwb.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 9, 2023

Southeast Michigan's first-ever wetlands mitigation bank will speed road improvement process throughout region

Oxford, MICH – The County Road Association (CRA) of Michigan and Michigan Wetland Board (MiWB) today unveiled the first-ever wetlands mitigation bank in southeast Michigan for public transportation agencies, paving the way for faster delivery of road improvement projects at a reduced cost.

The state-funded roughly 15-acre Oakwood Mitigation Bank in Brandon Township grants road agencies no-cost “credits” for replacing wetlands lost due to road improvement projects such as lane widening or widening shoulders for safety. Buying wetlands from a commercial wetland bank is costly: up to \$130,000 per acre – which takes money away from the actual road project.

Under state law, wetland disturbances caused by road projects must be mitigated with created wetlands to maintain ecological balance throughout the environment. A road agency must mitigate a wetland in its watershed if the project will impact one-third acre or more. If the project affects any wetland at all, but less than one-third acre, the agency can tap a mitigation site anywhere in Michigan.

“Establishing this mitigation bank in Oakland County is fantastic news for Michigan drivers and local road agencies because it means faster delivery of road projects, lower costs and improved green space,” said Denise Donohue, CEO of CRA. “Southeast Michigan has many little lakes and wetlands that are impacted by roadwork. Having a same-watershed mitigation resource avoids time-consuming delays with big price tags. It’s gratifying that these state-funded wetland sites facilitate roadwork more quickly. A true win-win-win for roads, wetlands and taxpayers.”

The MiWB Program uses state transportation funds to purchase, create, and preserve wetland sites, which are then maintained by an endowment, usually to a local conservancy group. CRA was instrumental in advocating for the legislation and budget that created the program.

The MiWB Program, which began in 2016, is funded at up to \$2 million annually from the Michigan Transportation Fund, and capped at \$8 million. MiWB mitigation sites have already been used in over 125 road projects.

-more-

CHAIR: Steve Puuri, PE

VICE CHAIR: Rob Laitinen

TREASURER: Brad Knight

DIRECTORS: Angela Kline, PE | Tim Wolff | Jim Watling | Mike O'Malley

“The mitigation bank is an immensely important way to balance the need to fix our roads with the responsibility to protect and sustain our environment,” said Holly Vickers, MiWB wetland manager. “The new Oakland County bank will serve a huge swath of southeast Michigan, including 13 counties ranging from Calhoun County to the west and St. Clair County to the east, while protecting our environment.”

CRA provides administrative support for the MiWB board, and its local members comprise the local advisory groups.

Several state, county and local officials attended the Oakwood Mitigation Bank unveiling as well, including representatives from the Road Commission for Oakland County.

###