



MidMichigan Environmental Action Council

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Regional Environmental Group Honors Eaton County Emergency Chemical Spill Response League of Michigan Bicyclists and Michigan United Conservation Clubs Earn Stewardship Awards

Lansing, MI - MidMichigan Environmental Action Council (MidMEAC) presented its Pillar Awards on Thursday, February 28th. "MidMEAC Pillar Awards recognize local efforts to protect our communities and public health," said Theresa Lark, MidMEAC Executive Director.

Pillar Award Recipients

Air Quality: League of Michigan Bicyclists (LMB) | Safe Cycling Initiatives and Passing Distance Legislation

Since its inception in 1981, LMB has worked for a cleaner environment and healthier society, promoting bicycling for both recreation and transportation. In 2018, LMB's advocacy contributed to the passage of a long-awaited statewide safe-passing requirement that includes a bicycle-safety driver education component. "Michigan was one of only 11 states without a safe passing law," said John Lindenmayer, LMB Executive Director. LMB hosts a number of rides and tours throughout the year that are open to all.

Land Use: Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) and Michigan Department of Natural Resources | On the Ground Jr. Stewardship Program

On the Ground Jr. engages students in outdoor work projects and recreational activities to develop stewardship ethics. "About 200 students and teachers worked on public lands, planting and constructing habitat or removing debris," said Shaun McKeon, education coordinator for MUCC's On The Ground Junior program. "Involving young people in stewardship activities is essential to future resource protection and conservation," said MidMEAC Executive Director Theresa Lark.

Water Protection: Eaton County Drain Commissioner | Emergency Spill Response, Slocum Drain

In the early morning hours of May 2, 2018, a magnesium fire and series of explosions devastated an automotive-parts manufacturing plant in Eaton Rapids. Two workers were injured and, fortunately, no lives were lost. In the light of day, emergency workers discovered that chemicals used in manufacturing had been released into nearby Slocum Drain. The Eaton County Drain Commissioner's (ECDC) team, including Deputy Drain Commissioner Eric Deibel, along with engineers and water scientists from Spicer Group, mobilized to contain the spill. They identified the contaminant as die lubricant.

ECDC quickly installed absorbent booms and turbidity curtains to slow the spread of the die lubricant to a nearby wetland and downstream to the Grand River. The team constructed two earthen berms to confine the contaminant. Under ECDC supervision, water scientists, engineers, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) regulators, and hazardous materials specialists isolated and removed the spilled lubricant.

MidMEAC Environmental Stewardship Awards increase awareness of the great work being done to protect our communities from environmental hazards. "This event is made possible by our supporters, including Pillar Sponsors Tri County Bicycle Association, Hayes Green Beach / Alive, Streetkitchen, and Spicer Group," said Lark. Additional contributors include T.A. Forsberg and the Lansing Board of Water and Light. "We also thank Acoustic Liberty for providing music and Streetkitchen for the outstanding venue and food."

MidMEAC is a 501(c)3 organization focused on education, advocacy and volunteerism to advance environmental stewardship in MidMichigan.

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