Grand Marais Gazette

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The Grand Marais Gazette is published and distributed by the Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project

Invasive Species Arrives in Jefferson-Chalmers

What happens when you plan for an amazing garden, packed with perennials, vegetables and fruit trees, but run into an invasive species that cancels it out? You get stuck with it.

In this case, it's an incredible case of the highly invasive and destructive Japanese Knotweed. It's actually a really pretty flowering plant, a visual landscape wonder. But, it also has its drawbacks.

First, it is illegal to possess, grow or cultivate this plant in the State of Michigan. The Knotweed has extremely strong roots, which can damage foundations and sewer systems, for starters. It also inhibits the growth of native plants because it's so aggressive.

See Invasive Species page 3





Community Meeting

Tuesday, November 17
5:00 - 8:00 pm

Hope Community Church
14456 East Jefferson Avenue
DBA, NPDES & Community Updates

Refreshments will be served.

DBA Moves Forward on Flood Protection

Last year, the **City of Detroit** awarded **$20 million** of **Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)** funds to the **Detroit Building Authority (DBA)** to identify an appropriate solution for area flooding and to implement the solution. The DBA's manager for that project, **Kayanna Sessoms**, held a meet and greet in August to provide information to the community about the project.

Ms. Sessoms reported that of the $20M budget, **$1M** is for project management; **$2.5M** is for a **consultant** to conduct a **feasibility study** on a full universe of realistic options to address the flooding; and **$16.5M** is set for construction of the chosen solution.

Ms. Sessoms indicated that she would be providing quarterly updates to the community on the progress of the project. She said that a public meeting would be required before any construction begins.

Further, she assured the community that a vote by city council on the proposed solution would take place before any construction begins.

See DBA page 4



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY

Discharge Permit Issued for Fox Creek

In **September**, many Jefferson Chalmers residents voiced their concerns to EGLE about a pending permit to GLWA for **Combined Sewage Overflows into Fox Creek.** Residents asserted that there should be no overflow discharges at all but that if a discharge occurs, more effective **community notifications** should be required, that **monitoring be improved** with regular and consistent water testing. Residents also requested that Fox Creek water be **periodically backwashed** and continually tested for safety.

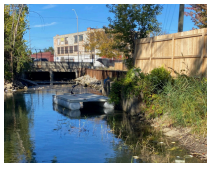
In an October 1 email, EGLE responded to our community's concerns. EGLE noted that outright closure of the Fox Creek outfall would increase basement backups. The Fox Creek Outfall is a prohibited outfall and that means that no discharges are permitted into Fox Creek except in an emergency situation, such as a major storm. EGLE encouraged the community to notify them of any suspected discharges (see **Notice From EGLE** for details).

EGLE further stated that the **proposed permit already contained community notification requirements** for discharges and that those requirements were compliant with state and federal law. **EGLE declined** to require more effective community **notification** methods when discharges occur.

Finally, EGLE responded that backwashing and testing of Fox Creek water is outside the purview of the discharge permit. EGLE suggested alternative methods to request standard monitoring of Fox Creek water safety (see **Notice From EGLE** for details).

On **September 30,** EGLE issued a discharge permit to GLWA for Fox Creek. **The permit is effective for one year, beginning on October 1, 2026**. The permitting process will begin again next year and the community will have a chance to comment on the next permit.







Shoreline Program Update

Calls to the City's **Housing & Redevelopment Dept (HRD)** were not returned before publication deadline.



Notice From EGLE

The following is an excerpt from EGLE's response to our community's concerns regarding Fox Creek water safety:

First, **EGLE's Nonpoint Source Program** has partnered with **Wayne State University** and the **Eastside Community Network** for the development of the **Detroit River Watershed Management Plan (Plan)**. This document provides a strategy for local partners to address water quality and water quantity goals to protect and restore waterbodies within a designated planning area, which includes the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood.

The **Plan** has been drafted and is awaiting review from **USEPA** and approval from **EGLE**. Please note, while these plans are reviewed and supported by EGLE, EGLE does not lead the development of the plan.

Second, **EGLE-WRD** solicits targeted surface water quality monitoring recommendations every year. A targeted monitoring request is an opportunity for stakeholders to provide input on potential water quality monitoring locations for EGLE-WRD staff in the upcoming field season.

More information concerning targeted monitoring requests and how to submit one can be located on EGLE's website using this link: https://www.michigan.gov/egle/about/organization/water-resources/glwarm/monitoring-request-form.

Please note, water quality monitoring would not be conducted during storm events. The focus of the monitoring would be the condition of Fox Creek, not sampling of a CSO discharge.

Finally, if there is concern or evidence that **CSO Outfall 080** (Fox Creek) is discharging, please call our **24-hour Pollution Emergency Alerting System (PEAS) hotline at 800-292-4706** to report the discharge to EGLE. This will help us investigate any potential violations of the permit and take appropriate response actions.

*The **Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project** has submitted a targeted monitoring request for Fox Creek and its connected canals.

Meet The WATER Project Leaders



Toinu Reeves

Toinu (Toy-new) Reeves is a lifelong Detroit Eastsider, economist, educator, and community advocate. He attended **University Liggett School** and Alonzo W. Bates Academy before earning scholarships to **Detroit Country Day School** and **Dartmouth College**. After two years as an IT consultant at **PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)**, he taught mathematics, English, economics, and global perspectives to K–12 students in **India** for 15 years. Toinu holds a **Master's Degree in Economics** from the **University of Michigan** where he is completing his **PhD**. His research examines taxation, economic development, and international trade and finance.

He has served on **Detroit's Equitable Development Task Force** and chaired the **D4 Community Advisory Council's Economic Development Workgroup**. His recent opinion pieces in BridgeDetroit and Metro Times explore innovative approaches to economic development and tax policy.



Jay C. Juergensen

Jay C. Juergensen is a planning, capital program, climate resilience, disaster recovery, and real estate development **expert**. He has been a stakeholder in the **Jefferson-Chalmers** community since **1989** and has worked on numerous important community projects since he arrived, including being the **founding President of Jefferson East.** He brings over **35** years of technical expertise to **The WATER Project** as it was his brainchild. His portfolio includes successfully planning and implementing over **$43 billion** of investment in nearly every sector in **31 communities** across 20 states.

He managed over $**6 billion of Federal aid** as one of the first senior staff appointed to the **Governor's Office of Storm Recovery**, an agency he helped organize and build and whose mission was to rebuild New York's infrastructure after **SuperStorm Sandy**. He has successfully collaborated with community stakeholders as well as local, state and federal agencies throughout the country and held executive positions with the **DC Government, GSA, Navy and DC Water Authority.**

Invasive Species continued from page 1

It must be destroyed and removed.

However, it's also illegal to even *move* this plant, making disposal a very tricky subject. This must be dealt with in place or professionally (and expensively) removed within state guidelines.

Lastly, the only way to effectively destroy this plant is with the very controversial Glyphosate treatment, which is just all around... the last resort for removal. Despite its' effectiveness, this process will still take roughly 4-5 SEASONS to mostly destroy, while also eliminating our chance of getting the garden we'd hoped to have for many years.

We've begun this treatment, and are heartbroken at this loss of the potential for this garden, and the harm it may cause to wildlife and the soil. But now, this is legally required of us.

We're determined to try to reclaim this garden in hopes of rehabilitation and reconnection to the soil and natural species.

One season down, four to go.

Cori Kuh has been a resident in Jefferson-Chalmers for XX years on Algonquin Street the Japanese Knotweed is on Kitchener between East Jefferson and Freud.



Want a $10 yard sign? Order Here:

YOUR AD HERE
Contact:
info@jeffersonchalmerswaterproject.org

Important Dates

WATER Project Community Meeting
November 17, 6-8 PM
Hope Community Church
14456 E. Jefferson

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR
WATER Project Community Meetings

2027 Calendar
February 16
May 18
August 17
November 16
Locations TBD

• • •

Jefferson-Chalmers Farmer's Market

Every 2nd and 4th Sunday
June to October

(across from Dickerson Manor)

DBA Moves Forward

continued from page 1



Currently, the project is in the phase of soliciting bids for consultants to conduct the feasibility analysis. A consultant firm will be named by October 30, 2026.The selected consultant will be introduced at a community meeting in November.

The **Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project** continues to oppose any flooding solution that involves any closures of any canals. The WATER Project will continue to advocate for a flooding solution that entails shoreline improvement.

Learn more on Tuesday, November 17, 6-8 pm at Hope Community Church, 1446 East Jefferson.

Kayak Event Success







Once again, **Our Back Yard Detroit** with **John Meyers** hosted a fabulous Clean up & Kayaking event. Over 50 people attended, kayaking and cleaning up pounds of garbage at **Meheras-Gentry Park.** A good time was had by all!

Thanks to this Issue's Contributors: Cori Kuh, Maria Stapulionis, Traci Rubin, Jay C. Juergensen, Toinu Reeves, and Daniel Piepszowski.

The **Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project** is working to find resilient and sustainable solutions to water resource and climate challenges in our community as we seek to create a vibrant place where people live, work, play, recreate and find refuge. **The WATER Project** is **501c3**, charitable organization.

Jefferson-Chalmers WATER Project
Water Access, Technology, Education & Recreation
Keep Sewage out of Basements & Canals • Keep Stormwater out of the System • Keep Great Lakes out of the Neighborhood

To Advertise with or Contribute to the *Grand Marais Gazette*, contact: info@jeffersonchalmerswaterproject.org