

### Public Hearing on Injection Wells for Potash Mine

Michigan Potash Company (MPC) asked the Evert Township Board to create a special Industrial Development District for its proposed operations. As our members know, this whole operation would be a disaster for the sensitive wetlands and drinking water wells in the area, and a threat to the Muskegon River Watershed over the long term if it goes forward. We have tried to alert residents to the dangers this project offers. However the board was not willing to even consider the evidence presented or listen to reason. It voted without study to grant this designation at the board meeting on February 6, 2018. The comment period at the meeting was a farce. The decision had been made beforehand.

MPC has submitted a request for permits for the 11 injection wells needed for this project, 8 production wells and 3 waste disposal wells. Since these wells are permitted by three agencies, one of which is the Oil, Gas, and Minerals Division, they are not required to hold hearings or release much information to the public. However, MCWC requested a hearing and the DEQ decided to grant it. We thank them for this opportunity to share our concerns.

It is important that all who are interested in protecting the watershed be informed about this danger and attend the hearing to voice your concerns. We will be sending you more information and talking points through our action alert process, our Facebook page and our website prior to the hearing. If you can't be there in person, please submit your comments via email to:

[DEQ-OGMQpubliccomments@michigan.gov](mailto:DEQ-OGMQpubliccomments@michigan.gov)

**The DEQ will be holding an information session and public hearing at the Evert Middle School Auditorium (321 North Hemlock St., Evert,) on March 12, 2018 from 6:00pm to 9:00pm**

### Committee to Ban Fracking Needs You

The Ballot Initiative to ban horizontal fracking and frack waste is in its final months of signature collection. Volunteers are needed to complete the work before May. We are almost there. Remember this initiative would make it illegal to inject frack waste into the ground and end the industry push for more injection wells to take the waste from Pennsylvania. If you are looking for a place to sign, and you haven't done so in the last two years, or you want to volunteer to help with this last push, please contact the Committee at [letsbanfracking.org](http://letsbanfracking.org) or let us know and we will get you in touch.

As Osceola Township has learned the hard way, large water withdrawals can reduce (and stop) stream-flows, lower water tables, and cause nearby wells to go dry. The dissolving of over a million tons of salt per year will require water withdrawals far in excess of Nestle's wildest dreams.

Contamination from waste-disposal wells in the U.S. and especially in Michigan is common and well-documented. As many as one out of six have well-integrity violations. Migration of wastes through cracks and into aquifers is also common, especially where oil & gas drilling has taken place. The EPA refused to examine drilling logs for 36 wells near the proposed potash site. These records are needed to assess the risk of waste migration.

Whereby Nestle has caused problems with aquifer depletion and drawdown, Michigan Potash will take much more water and turn it into concentrated brine solutions. Though labelled as "non-hazardous" these brines are toxic to all forms of life in the area, and pose a threat to 4 adjacent creek systems. Long term plans call for expanding onto 15,000 acres with lakes, ponds, streams and wetlands. A single rupture would release enormous volumes of brines in a very short time, with devastating results.

### #MICallToAction : World Water Day 2018

Every year on March 22, World Water Day, people across the world host a day of appreciation for and protection of water sources. As we all know, we are in the middle of a major assault on the fresh water resources in Michigan, and across the nation.

Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation has partnered with a wonderful team of organizations pushing for clean, affordable, protected water. Groups like People's Water Board, Grand Rapids Water Protectors, Demand Action for Plainfield Township, Hazon, and many more, have all joined forces to create a day of peaceful direct action at the capitol in Lansing, MI.

Filled with song, solidarity, and passion-filled action. March 22, marks a turning point in our state. From protection of the Great Lakes to our drinking taps, hundreds plan to join in demanding accountability for the criminal actions and inaction by Governor Rick Snyder, Attorney General Bill Schutte, and the MDEQ Director, Heidi Grether.

At 10 am activists and concerned community members will take off on foot to the capitol's steps then to the MDEQ, where we will demand justice for the atrocities on our water. A wonderful piece of street theater will be performed, and we will hear from affected community members from across the state such as Marian Kramer, Emma Lockridge, Kim Redigan, and our very own MCWC Board Member, Karen Turnbull.

## Water Shut-off Protection Bills Need Our Support

Our allies with the People's Water Board in Detroit are asking for our support in moving two important bills forward in the House. In particular, it is important that constituents of the members of the Local Government Committee meet with their representatives to discuss House Bill 4393 (Shut-Off Protections) and 4389/4390 (Decriminalizing Reconnection of Water Service).

Since an Emergency Manager took over the governance of Detroit and began selling off assets, there have been over 100,000 citizens who have had their water shut off for inability to pay exorbitant bills. Control of the public water system has shifted from the city to the suburbs and efforts to privatize infrastructure continue. The people of Detroit need a public water system, and of course they need water. We think they should only have to pay the dollar a year rate that Nestle gets from the State of Michigan. These House bills have been languishing on the legislature for too long. They must be brought forward, hearings must be scheduled, and ultimately the legislature must listen to the people's will. Water is Life. If you live in these communities with reps on the Committee, please contact them:

The Local Government Committee:

Committee Chair: James Lower (R) – Montcalm County, Gratiot County

Julie Alexander (R) – Jackson County

Roger Hauck (R) – all of Isabella County and ten townships in Midland County.

Ben Frederick (R) – Shiawassee County and townships in Saginaw County.

Gary Howell (R) – Lapeer County

Jim Runestad (R) – Highland, White Lake, Springfield, Milford, and parts of Waterford

Kathy Crawford (R) – Lyon Township, part of Northville, Novi, South Lyon and Walled Lake

Terry Sabo (D) – Muskegon

Jim Ellison (D) – Royal Oak and Madison Heights

Patrick Green (D) – Center Line and the western portion of the city of Warren

Jeremy Moss (D) – Southfield, Lathrup Village, Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms and Franklin.

## Osceola Township Thank you

Hello members of MCWC.

Through individuals concerned about the Nestle Legal Action, the Osceola Township was able to raise \$5,135.17. The group Sum Of Us raised an additional \$30,000.00. The Osceola Township Legal Defense Fund was able to reimburse \$34,195.13 to cover all but the last two billings of the attorney. December 2017 – \$1827.00, and January 2018 – \$4,691.75.

The \$5,135.17 donation came from 35 concerned individuals from Michigan, Vermont, Illinois, Wisconsin, California, Virginia, and probably others. Donations from \$15.00 to \$1,000.00, all people concerned about the water pumping by Nestle. There were many letters and cards of encouragement to the township in support of this Legal battle. But the battle isn't over yet. As you know the Osceola Township Board voted to Appeal the decision to the Michigan Court of Appeals. We have been told that it could take up to six months before the Court makes a decision to either hear the case again or remand it back to Circuit Court – Reed City and we again are counting on you. Sum Of Us has stated that they would again support this effort for up to \$20,000.00 additional.

We cannot thank the group Sum Of Us and its members enough. It's overwhelming to know that people around the world are concerned about water, and yet gave in support of a small township in Northern Michigan that they never heard of before or even where it is located on a map.

Thank You again for your efforts in getting the word out.

Martin E Nieman

Osceola Township Legal Defense Fund

Please send your donations to:

Osceola Township Legal Defense Fund  
6521 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Evart, MI 49631

Attention: Osceola Township Treasurer  
Martin Nieman



## Nestle Boycott

MCWC has joined the boycott of all Nestle-owned products which has been on-going for some time as initiated by Council of Canadians and Corporate Accountability, among others. We are producing some of our own materials to support this boycott, including buttons, a flier, updated lists of Nestle products, and a list of alternative products. There will be a pledge to sign on our website before long. Why Nestle? Because they are the largest of the water grabbers who are privatizing water and moving it out of the basin, and because they engage in consistently poor corporate behavior and deceit in the communities they plunder. We have the power to vote with our dollars.

## Revised MCWC Position Statement

### MCWC Position on Nestlé Water Taking in Ewart, Osceola County

February 14, 2018

The DEQ Public Hearing on Nestlé's permit to increase pumping in Osceola Township, Michigan took place on April 12, 2017 at the Ferris State University Center. The DEQ increased the original 150 gpm (gallons per minute) permit to 250 gpm in January of 2016 without the correct legal framework and without public notification, and before Nestlé even submitted an application. Now Nestlé is asking for 400 gpm. This withdrawal is for every minute of every day with no cap.

We urge you to visit our website for more details as updating occurs at: [www.saveMlwater.org](http://www.saveMlwater.org)

#### MCWC's position:

1. The DEQ scheduled one Public Hearing in Big Rapids. MCWC asked for multiple hearings around the state because this is a STATE-WIDE issue, not only a local Ewart issue. We believe that the DEQ tried to minimize the information about this hearing. This is **an issue that touches many people in Michigan, U.S., and around the world** as Nestlé, a multi-billion-dollar foreign corporation, privatizes our water to sell back to us for their huge profits. Over 600 people attended, many coming from Flint and Detroit. One hundred people testified, and all but two were opposed to the permit.

2. MCWC believes there is a **serious disconnect in the State of Michigan's water policies and laws** that grants Nestlé a permit for \$200 per year to take more than 210,000,000 gallons of fresh spring water (less than \$1.00 for 1,000,000 gallons) while more than 100,000 people in Detroit have had their household water disconnected for non-payment, and currently Flint residents are being disconnected. Flint residents have been subjected to long-term contamination of their drinking water through senseless and possibly criminal governmental acts. Their water bills are outrageously high, and if they were allowed to pay the Nestlé rate, no one would owe more than \$1.00 per year. Many still should not drink their water, and no one would want to bathe in it. Michigan water policies are in serious need of updating if Michigan is going to manage, use and conserve its water resources wisely.

3. MCWC believes that serious and **significant environmental damage** has already occurred on the upper reaches of both Twin and Chippewa Creeks in Osceola County.

- MCWC is calling for a **species inventory** on both creeks to be conducted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service in the summer months.

- MCWC is calling for a **moratorium** on all pumping from PW101, until such time as the ground water table and the upper reaches of the Chippewa Creek has been restored to prior levels before the Nestlé water taking.

4. Nestlé does their own **monitoring** with their independent consultants. MCWC is calling for our DEQ to get *real data* collection of the Nestlé water takings conducted by the **United States Geological Survey**. USGS is willing and able to take on this commitment.

5. MCWC is calling for **real time electronic monitoring** with limit switches and discontinuation of water takings below agreed-to levels of the water table at the White Pine Springs Well 101. Such a system of real time digital monitoring provides the best way to comply with present law that requires that no environmental damage occur because of Nestlé's water takings permit.

6. A precedent was set in the lawsuit that MCWC waged against Nestlé over the water taking at the Sanctuary Springs in Mecosta county in 2005. Nestlé was taking 400 gpm and environmental damage occurred. After a court case that cost MCWC \$1million, Nestlé was ordered to reduce their water taking to 218 gpm average year-round. They have moved 20 miles up the road and want to take 400 gpm and create more harm to the aquifers north of Ewart. MCWC believes that Nestlé/Ice Mountain should **observe the legal precedent set in the Mecosta County court case** and assure that there is no environmental damage resulting from the PW 101 well in Ewart. The Nestlé permit, as submitted, does not meet Michigan requirements of law and cannot be acted upon by the DEQ. The application is based upon computer model information and the Safe Water Drinking Act (SWDA) specifically requires real time data. The DEQ has in fact requested real data from Nestlé three times so far. It has not been provided by Nestlé. The only real data submitted has been provided by independent experts and the citizen scientists of MCWC. This data shows the damage has already occurred at 150 gpm.

7. Bottled water recently surpassed all other bottled beverages as the most popular. MCWC believes that serious legislation about a **deposit on plastic water bottles** must occur. The waste of plastic is astounding, and should not happen. Nestlé should be required to use its facility expansion to recycle its bottles.

8. A **two-year moratorium must be declared for all new water taking commercial wells and all new increases in water taking in Michigan**. During these two years, laws and policies must be changed to manage and protect our valuable public trust resource of water. Canada recently imposed a two-year moratorium after 30 years of Nestlé water taking in Ontario, yet Nestlé continues to pump on expired permits. We must coordinate with Canada to preserve the Great Lakes Basin water. Water is quickly becoming more valuable than oil. We need water for all species to live. The Great Lakes Basin has 20% of the world's fresh surface water, and we must protect this for future generations by countering all efforts to privatize this water for corporate profit.

Respectfully submitted, Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation

Board Members: Peggy Case, President    Karen Turnbull, Secretary    Jeff Ostahowski, Vice President    Chris Swier, Treasurer  
John McLane    Wendy Nystrom    Diane Weckerle    Pam Gilbert    Jim Maturen    Ken Ford    Shannon Abbott

## Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation Position on Senate Bills 652 & 653

Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation is appalled that Senate bills 652 and 653 would even be introduced in Michigan, let alone be taken seriously. But we do need to take them seriously since they are a part of the increasing attack throughout the country on environmental protections over our water, air and land. They also represent a clear public health threat.

At the national level the Environmental Protection Agency has already been totally gutted and is unable to function except to approve permits for favored industries.

This makes it all the more crucial that our state act to *increase* its role in protecting our environment from predatory industries that view Michigan as a perfect place to dump toxins, increase extraction of resources, sell off our water and endanger the health of our citizens. Turning the rule-making functions of the Department of **Environmental Quality** over to a committee composed mostly of the very industries being regulated, along with a few token environmental groups, is no different than just selling off the state to polluters and thieves.

We realize this is a national trend but we do not intend to quietly allow our precious waters, air and land to be abused, privatized, polluted and abandoned to give industry further control and greater profits. The health of the people is at stake here. Industries that would dump toxic waste in the middle of our largest city, or would destroy a pristine wetland and the water it supports with a potash mine, or bring toxic fracking waste to Michigan to dump into injection wells, or take our clean water and remove it from the watershed while thousands are without clean water, should not be allowed to write the rules for their own bad behavior. The people of Michigan should be writing the rules that protect them, and they should expect that anything called a Department of Environmental Quality would be assisting them with that protection. Unfortunately the DEQ already is known to favor industry at every turn, never denying a permit to the oil and gas industry, seldom studying the merits of any industry request beyond looking at industry provided data, and rarely looking to experts with scientific expertise. There are exceptions. Occasionally the DEQ tries to investigate in real life terms. But they are deliberately understaffed already. To give even more power to industry to make the rules would be criminal negligence.

The constitution requires that government protect us and the environment that sustains us. The public trust doctrine has been available as a guide from the state's beginning. These proposed laws must be opposed. Laws should be passed which serve the citizens. "Pure Michigan" was never meant to imply pure freedom for industry to write the rules at our expense.

*Action: Please call your State Senator and your State Representative and tell them how you feel about these bills.*

### Peggy Case

President, Board of Directors

Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation

## The Giant's Footprint

Nestle trucks a good portion of its ICE MOUNTAIN water from Ewart, more than forty miles from its bottling plant in Stanwood. The water trucks carry more than 8,000 gallons and when you include the roundtrip distance the carbon footprint for every gallon from Ewart is about ninety miles. From a carbon footprint standpoint, the water from Ewart that Nestle bottles as ICE MOUNTAIN may not be as clean as Nestle claims.

Nestle is the world's largest water bottler. If you put the bottles Nestle has manufactured, sold and stack end to end they would reach the moon and back. Nestle is presently on its way back to the moon with their plastic bottles. A British University late in 2017 estimated at current rates of plastic bottle pollution, by the year 2050 the world's oceans will contain more total weight of plastic bottles than the total weight of fish in the oceans.

There is nowhere on earth that can be guaranteed free of plastic bottle pollution. In Michigan, even some of our most remote trails in the Upper Peninsula are all too frequently the victims of plastic bottle pollution.

Shouldn't we expect Nestle to devote the expanded space in its facility to recycling all those bottles? The bottled water industry used about four billion pounds of plastic in 2016 which required input equal to at least 45 million barrels of oil.



## New Website Up and Running

Check out our new website at [saveMIwater.org](http://saveMIwater.org). We still aren't finished updating parts of it, but think you will find there is plenty on it to provide more depth on the issues of water conservation. It is linked to our new social media platforms. It also gives you opportunities to research, take actions, and connect to the work of the growing water justice movement. We would love to hear your feedback. Also, check out up-to-date articles and WATER information on the MCWC Facebook page.

## Screw Anchors and Still a Lack of Support



The Enbridge Line 5 saga continues. After endless advisory boards, public comments, submissions by experts, submissions of documents on alternatives, evidence of violations of the original easement requirements, proof that Enbridge withholds crucial information, and general public outrage, Line 5 continues to send oil and gas under the Straits of Mackinac.

Now a permit for screw anchors is the solution. Perhaps we should build a tunnel for a bigger, better pipe. Maybe we can convince the people of the UP that they can't have propane without Line 5 (a clear lie). It's all smoke and whistles to allow the State of Michigan to violate the public trust and allow Enbridge to continue using its shortcut to the refineries in Sarnia, while risking a catastrophic spill.

The Oil & Water Don't Mix Coalition has done great work in exposing the risks, documenting the legal requirements the state must follow, gathering public opinion in support of an immediate shut down. Yet the stalls continue and the risks mount. What must we do to end this nightmare? If you have ideas, let us know. Clearly we need to ramp up the pressure on the state to act on our behalf. Will the pipes make it through another winter?



## Action Committees Need You

Ready to step up your involvement in the work MCWC has taken on to protect our water? We have set up committees to make it easier for you to join the action in the areas that appeal to you. As we take on more and more of the battles to save water in Michigan, we need more active members to carry out that work. Of course your on-going financial support is crucial to our all-volunteer work. But now we are asking for more of your time and energy to carry out these current challenges. If you think you can work on one of these committees, please call Peggy Case at 231-275-2244 for a conversation on how to plug you into the work. We are working all over the state, so it does not matter where you live. We need you.

Current committees are:

- 1) **Corporate Water Grabs** (Nestle, Potash Mining, Fracking)
- 2) **Toxic Waste Dumping threats** (injection wells, US Ecology)
- 3) **Water Pollution threats** (pipelines, big ag, CAFOs, industrial sites)
- 4) **Water Justice** (Flint, Detroit shut-offs, privatized infrastructure, indigenous rights)
- 5) **Education and Outreach** (Speakers, tabling, events, curriculum development, coalition building)
- 6) **Communications** (website, social media, printed materials)
- 7) **Fundraising** (grant writing, events, appeals)

## Meet new board member Ken Ford



Ken is a Registered Forester and a 40-year resident of Hersey Township, Osceola County, Michigan. He manages 30,000 acres of privately owned timber as well as several public school, township and county owned forests, primarily in the Central Lower Peninsula of Michigan. His work has involved forests in every watershed in Osceola County. Throughout the past 40 years, Ken has come to realize that all the wetlands, rivers, creeks, springs and seeps in Osceola County, are interconnected. He views the corporatization of water such as that requested by Nestle and Michigan Potash Company as a very real threat to our local wells, streams, forests and the Muskegon River.

## A Tale of Two Cities Released

This 12 minute video on Youtube was shot last fall in Evart and Flint by Miranda Fox of **Story of Stuff**. Some of your favorite MCWC members are in the video. It connects the dots on Nestle and the Flint water crisis. If you would like to arrange a showing of the film and a discussion of the issues for a group or just a house party, let us know by email at [mcwc@saveMiwater.org](mailto:mcwc@saveMiwater.org) To view the film yourself, go to [www.youtube.com/user/storyofstuffproject](http://www.youtube.com/user/storyofstuffproject). Let us know what you think.

Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation  
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Mecosta, MI 49332

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John McLane  
Wendy Nystrom  
Jim Maturen  
Diane Weckerle  
Pam Gilbert  
Shannon Abbott  
Ken Ford  
info@SaveMiWater.org

*Help preserve natural resources—recycle this newsletter by sharing it with a friend!*



Your Donation and Membership is how we fund our organization.

MCWC is A 501c3 grassroots group organized in December 2000. Our mission is to protect our surface and ground waters from pollution, plunder and privatization through education, advocacy and actions. We work to protect and promote human and ecosystem rights to water and defend the Public Trust Doctrine. All staff are volunteer. Your donation is tax-deductible.

Please send your check to P.O. Box 1, Mecosta, MI 49332

Or pay via our Website: [www.saveMiwater.org](http://www.saveMiwater.org)

**Please help support MCWC as we continue to support communities through research, information distribution, and coalition building.**

**Together, we can help to stop the privatization and commodification of our natural water resources.**

**Water is Life.**

**HELP BY DONATING TODAY**



 **Become a Member**

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