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NEWAYGO COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COALITION

NCEC NEWS

The Environmental Resource Hub for Newaygo County



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"Supporting the beauty and sustainability of the Newaygo County environment through Information, Education, and Advocacy"

August NCEC and Ally Events

Muskegon River TRASH BASH

Bridgeton Trash Bash Kickoff

Saturday 8/2
8am - 12pm

Bridgeton Boat Launch
5835 W 8 River Dr, Grant, MI 49327

Help keep our waters clean throughout August! You can sign up with a team and compete in Bridgeton on 8/2, or anywhere in the Muskegon River watershed 8/1 - 8/31. The team that collects the most trash wins! Stay up to date on prize offerings and winners on Facebook.

More Info & Team Registration

TROUT UNLIMITED

Muskegon River Unlimited - Fishy Fun for the Whole Family

Wednesday 8/6
5pm - 8pm

Thornapple Boat Launch
3403 Timberview Dr
Newaygo, Michigan 49337

Explore the Muskegon River below the surface with river snorkeling; engage in hands-on stream science, learn to cast a fly rod, and enjoy a riverside meal with a wonderful community. Fun for the whole family!

Details and Registration

Don't want to form your own team? Join NCEC's team by emailing Renae!

Email Renae to Join NCEC's Trash Bash Team



NCEC at the Baldwin Farmers Market

Wednesday 8/6
3 - 6pm

Pure Markette
830 N. Michigan Avenue, Baldwin, MI, 49304

Come visit the NCEC booth, support local farmers, and enjoy delicious local produce.

Market Information



Vernal Pool Patrol Fall Training and POOL PARTY!

Saturday 8/23
1pm - 4pm

Kropscott Environmental Center
6123 West Baseline Road Fremont, MI 49412

Learn how to conduct a fall vernal pool monitoring visit and join us for our POOL PARTY celebration!

Details and Registration

July Habitat Workdays



Karner Blue Sanctuary

Tuesday 8/12
8am - 12pm

Parking on 100th Spruce Ave

We will be pulling spotted knapweed.



Coolbaugh

Saturday 8/16
Saturday 8/30
8am - 12pm

Parking on 58th St. just West of Chaseway Dr.

We will be pulling spotted knapweed and preparing for future prescribed fires.



Newaygo Prairie

Saturday 8/23
9am - 12pm

Parking on Poplar just north of 56th

We will be preparing for future prescribed fires.

Workday Updates on Facebook

Aquatic Plants: The Unsung Heroes of Waterways

written by: Jen Barfield

We've all been there, right? Jumping into a lake or wading into a river to cool off on a hot summer day. As you swim around and enjoy yourself, you feel something brush against your foot. Was it a fish? Perhaps a water mammal? As you escape, you look into the murky water, and your eyes catch a glimpse of a plant. It turns out that the more you observe, the more you notice the surrounding plants.

Aquatic plants can root themselves in a lake or riverbed, such as the white water lily, or float within the water column or on the surface, like some types of algae. These aquatic plants play crucial roles in our local ecosystems, including providing habitat, oxygen, and food for many creatures in and out of the water. So, what are these plants in the water doing anyway?

Newaygo County has over 200 lakes and 300 miles of rivers. As we celebrate Clean Water Month in West Michigan, we can take a moment to learn about those pesky plants in the water and why they are crucial for maintaining water quality. First, they photosynthesize—using sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water to produce breathable oxygen, which is essential for fish, insects, and other aquatic life. In addition, the US EPA reports that the amount of oxygen present in the water directly affects other physical, chemical, and biological processes that are simultaneously happening in the ecosystem.



Aquatic plants cross vital habitats for nesting, breeding, and feeding for a wide range of animals. A recent study in the Northern Great Lakes showed that areas with abundant aquatic vegetation had up to 100 times more young fish than areas without such plant life. Emergent aquatic plants, such as cattails, blue flag, and pickerelweed, provide a safe harbor from predators and a hunting ground for small amphibians. Free-floating aquatic plants, such as duckweed, provide habitat needed for beneficial bacteria, zooplankton, and algae, which in turn filter the water and remove pollutants.

Along with providing essential habitats, aquatic plants improve water quality by absorbing nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen, as well as pollutants such as heavy metals. They are vital for protecting wildlife and ensuring clean drinking water for communities. Aquatic plants act as a natural filter in water, absorbing nutrients and pollutants into their tissues and either utilize or store them. This process helps prevent harmful excess buildup that could lead to problems like algal blooms or the invasion of species like Eurasian Watermilfoil. These invasive plants can choke out native species and throw off the delicate balance of aquatic ecosystems.



Lastly, rooted aquatic plants stabilize shorelines by holding sediment in place, preventing erosion and safeguarding the shoreline's integrity. This natural reinforcement helps maintain the landscape's health and prevents the loss of habitats for many species.

The diversity and abundance of aquatic plants play a crucial role in maintaining healthy ecosystems and, consequently, clean water. By understanding the vital functions of these aquatic vegetation, we can better appreciate, protect, and sustain our natural waterways. Next time you're near a lake or river, take a moment to appreciate the diversity and multitude of these unsung heroes.

Be a Better Water Steward

Whether you are lucky enough to have waterfront property, enjoy using it for recreation, or just exist, water is an essential part of life. So many activities impact the quality of the water. Small changes can have big impacts on water quality.



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MSU Conservation Stewards Registration Closing Aug 17th!

The Michigan Conservation Stewards Program (CSP), an educational program for those who are enthusiastic about learning science-based ecosystem management principles and sharing this knowledge with others to help improve their local communities. Through this program, participants will learn essential strategies to understand and help restore and conserve ecosystems in Michigan communities.

The Newaygo County cohort will host their weekly classes on Tuesday nights from Sept. 9 to Nov. 4, 2025 at locations throughout Newaygo County.

This program is a great way to learn more about the ecosystems in our area and connect with other people who share a passion for our environment. Registration closes August 17th! Sign up before the class gets filled!

More Information and Registration

What Else Can I Do?

This is our home. Help us protect our shared environment.

1. Share our website, posts, E-news with Newaygo Community members and Organizations

2. Join a Team! about invasive species, native landscapes, and restoration opportunities.

3. Get involved with Environmental Advocacy

4. Bring your skills and knowledge to NCEC.

5. Donate!

Contact NCEC

Environmental Allies are people, organizations, and departments who are actively doing the work of environmental education, promotion, protection, and restoration in the Newaygo County region.

Your organization can join the list of Environmental Allies by clicking here: Environmental Ally Applications.

NCEC will promote your organization, events, activities and volunteer needs!
Click the button below to submit your event.

Ally Event Form

Your Support Makes A Difference

NCEC is a small but mighty 501c3 non-profit organization! We depend on your tax deductible donations to continue our work, and to help us grow with our Newaygo County Environment needs.

Donate

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