

Michigan  
Environmental  
Council

# Annual Report



# 2007



## INTRODUCTION

# Michigan Environmental Council: Heavy Hitters in Environmental Protection

**P**olitics, they say, is a full-contact sport. And the politics of environmental protection is no exception.

For 28 years the Michigan Environmental Council has been grinding out victories in the halls of the State Capitol, Washington D.C. offices of federal officials and in the lesser-known arenas like city and township halls, the State Public Service Commission, and the departments of Environmental Quality, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

Sometimes it's defense; stopping dangerous legislation, forcing reluctant regulators to enforce conservation laws and providing a firewall against unscrupulous polluters.

Sometimes it's offense; funneling new laws limiting lead in children's toys to the governor's desk; pushing our Congressional delegation to vote for new vehicle mileage standards or channeling the public demand for clean energy development into good legislation.

The battles are often long—years in the making—and the victories often incremental. Great protections for public health and natural resources aren't often achieved with a single exclamation point! They're more often achieved one tough step at a time. The good protections we achieve are never good enough. We're always aiming to build on those wins for the end-game of GREAT protections.

At the end of the day we can't take you on a tour of a tract of land we've preserved. It's not that simple.

But by connecting the dots of political victories, we can clearly illustrate how state and federal policies, laws, and enforcement patterns that we help effect create a web of protection for public health, natural resources and our world-class Great Lakes. And the picture we draw is one of a healthier, more beautiful Michigan.

MEC is an integral power broker when deals are cut in Lansing that affect our air, land, water and quality of life. We are at the forefront of battles that desperately need engagement—both on the ground through our member groups and in the committee rooms and hallways of the Capitol where decisions are made.

As former Gov. William Milliken put it: "The Michigan Environmental Council is the most effective voice for the environment in Michigan."

How do we protect Michigan's people and their special places?

- ▶ We are a source of winning ideas and political strategies embraced by officials of both parties at all levels of government. They seek MEC's ideas and input on efforts to clean up our water, create jobs from clean energy and protect our children from toxic pollutants.
- ▶ We are a source of information for the public, our member groups, the media and government leaders. We help people access and understand critical information on complex subjects. Excellent media relationships help bring attention and deeper understanding to important environmental issues.
- ▶ We are a source of support for member groups, teachers, community organizations and individuals who help us protect water, land, air and the public health that flows from them.

Still growing stronger in our 28th year, we are the voice for millions of citizens who don't want to turn back the clock to an era of environmental indifference.

We're glad to be here. We're strong. We're determined. We're committed. And we will never back down from the full-contact sport of creating a prosperous, clean, 21st Century Michigan that future generations will cheer.

*On the cover, clockwise from left: Michigan's world-class water resources are a source of inspiration and vitality; clean homegrown wind energy is part of a future MEC is pushing for; native dune grasses grace a Great Lakes shoreline; growing up in a healthy and safe environment is the right of every child (children pictured are from Detroit's Bagley Elementary).*

# Pushing Through the Capitol Gridlock

Environmental protections move forward against backdrop of partisan political stalemate in Lansing

Patience and good humor were welcome companions throughout a year that had its share of frustrations and long periods of waiting for the State Legislature to act. Unprecedented partisan rancor and inexperienced leadership in a term-limited legislature paralyzed Lansing in 2007, when the Legislature barely managed to pass a balanced state budget.

As the Legislature and Governor struggled to find a way forward on the budget impasse, MEC took advantage of the hiatus to work with confidence on five important fronts:

- ▶ We broadened our collaborative partnerships and worked behind the scenes to prepare for the flurry of Lansing legislative opportunities—particularly on energy and water—that we knew would ripen in early 2008;
- ▶ We worked with major environmental groups and Michigan's Congressional delegation in Washington to shape legislation for the corporate average fuel economy (CAFÉ) reforms that passed in late 2007;
- ▶ We strengthened MEC's financial foundation with the help of generous old stalwarts and enthusiastic new donors who support our ambitious programs;
- ▶ We took a timely look at our board structure, and with generous participation by almost all of our 70 member groups, reorganized ourselves with a smaller, more focused board that better reflects and best supports MEC.

I invite you to read in greater detail about all this and more in the pages that follow in this report on MEC's 27th proud year of good environmental work.

But even as we take a few well justified bows—and offer sincere thanks to MEC's coalition partners, donors, Board and President's Council members alike—I'd be less than honest if I didn't voice concern for the challenges that lie ahead.



Lana Pollack

I have to think back to my childhood to remember threats to the Great Lakes that are equal to the ones we face today. Historically low water levels make beaches unrecognizable and confuse old-time boaters.

An entire ecosystem is threatened by invasive species. Beaches are littered with dead birds and algae blooms that send disappointed bathers home without the pleasure of a swim in our storied waters. These are all part of the work agenda facing MEC and our partners.

Some Great Lakes problems do have Michigan-based answers: phosphate-free dishwasher detergents, requirements to fix broken septic systems, controls on shoreline developments that have degraded our best lakes, financing for an aggressive program to get rid of leaking underground storage tanks...and money to support reasonable budgets for essential DEQ and DNR oversight programs. But to get other answers, we're going to have to reach out to neighboring Great Lakes states and provinces, and to Washington and Ottawa.

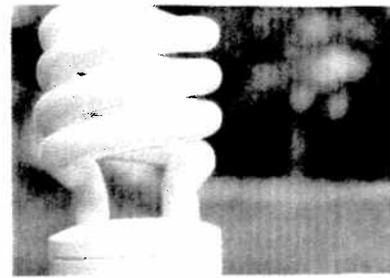
It's time for all the people who live in Michigan (whether year round or just in the summers) to take responsibility for protecting the Great Lakes that are at the heart of our economy and way of life. And it's time to recognize that we cannot do this on the cheap. If we do not embrace a more ambitious public commitment, backed by more designated tax dollars, to protecting our natural resources heritage, we will fail the Lakes. And if we fail the Lakes, we fail ourselves and fail the generations to come.

MEC is delighted and proud to be a leader in this great challenge. And, of course, we are deeply grateful to all of you who encourage, challenge and support us in this work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lana Pollack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Lana Pollack



## Clean Energy Moves to Top of Legislative Agenda

MEC throws its weight behind renewable power, energy efficiency plans

If there's a template on how the Michigan Environmental Council muscled an important issue into the forefront of public and legislative debate, the energy issue was just that in 2007.

Years of grinding behind-the-scenes work culminated in bringing clean energy and energy efficiency to the top of Lansing's agenda as 2007 drew to a close.

A ramped-up energy coalition with dozens of diverse partners worked daily to bring Michigan a future where saving energy—and ratepayer dollars—joins new clean energy standards for electric utilities atop the agenda.

The goal: Reverse some of the \$20 billion sent across state lines annually to import fuels like coal. We intend to keep some of that money in state to pay wind turbine manufacturers, energy efficiency contractors and other nonpolluting ventures.

The battle was joined with new weapons: Numerous new studies showing that efficiency and clean power aren't just for tree-huggers. Such endeavors provide more and better jobs than King Coal, pump more money into the economy, and in many cases are cheaper and faster to implement than the colossal new dirty coal plants.

Adding to the urgency was a new coal rush—seven new proposed coal plants were on the drawing board at the end of 2007. MEC and its allies across the state joined the battle urging receptive legislators and policy makers to fully implement energy-saving programs and renewable power incentives before even considering the proposed coal plague.

The clean energy concept is riding a wave of popular support, thanks in part to years of outreach

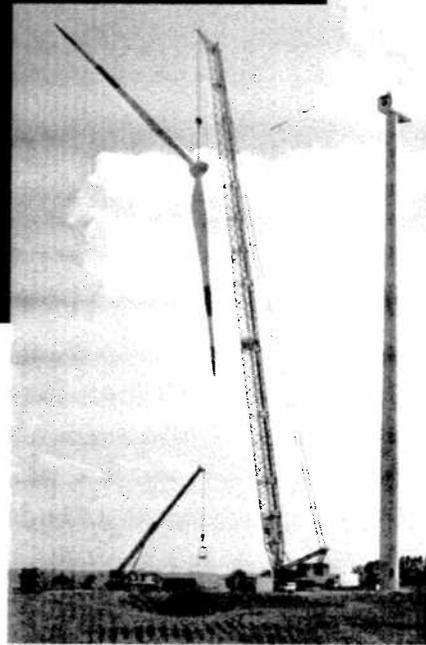
and education by a huge number of individuals and organizations, including MEC and member groups with on-the-ground field organizations.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has embraced the concept, vowing to make Michigan an “epicenter” of clean energy innovation.

Her support of the Midwest Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accords and establishment of the Michigan Climate Action Council are two tangible results of this commitment. MEC is an active participant in both efforts.

The energy coalition's three-legged policy approach includes:

- ▶ Strong energy efficiency programming to protect businesses and ratepayers from absorbing the skyrocketing cost of new coal plant construction, and the uncertain but substantial cost of new carbon regulation. The payoff is more than simply the reduction of air-fouling, asthma-inducing, lung-searing pollutants. A kilowatt hour saved through efficiency programs costs one-third of a kilowatt hour of electricity generated by a new coal plant.
- ▶ Joining more than two dozen states that have enacted renewable energy standards. Requiring utilities to generate a certain percentage of their power through clean energy sources—primarily Michigan's vast untapped wind energy potential—will provide in-state jobs. It will also put an “open for business” sign on Michigan's door for the burgeoning clean energy industry.
- ▶ Establishing integrated resource planning for Michigan's future energy decisions. In short,



*At top, Michigan Environmental Council Energy Program Director David Gard testifies at a Senate Energy Committee hearing as part of MEC's push to establish efficiency and renewable energy programs. Wind energy and alternative fuels are part of the solution to a more diversified energy portfolio that protects ratepayers and the environment.*

creating a level playing field where coal and nuclear ventures will have to compete against cheaper energy efficiency initiatives and cleaner renewables for a slice of Michigan's energy pie.

### **Historic federal progress**

The year 2007 was also productive on the federal front, with enactment of the nation's first statutory vehicle mileage standard increases in three decades. MEC was in constant contact with Michigan's Congressional delegation during the debate. MEC endorsed

forward-thinking mileage policies coupled with protections for the domestic auto industry during public forums and private communications with Dingell, chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

Those same lines of communication continue to facilitate MEC's lobbying on behalf of strong federal climate protection to curb emissions of global warming pollution. Such a plan will cut carbon dioxide releases while spurring the many technologies and businesses that are pioneering alternatives to traditional, polluting technologies, and put the U.S. in a position to pressure China and India to do likewise.



# The Great Lakes: Our Heritage, Our Future

As the only state entirely within the basin, Michigan has the most to gain from smart water stewardship

**W**e recognize our connection to water intuitively. Water supports our economy and defines our way of life. Nothing gets our hackles up like threats to our lakes and streams.

Nestled in the midst of the world's greatest freshwater system—with one-fifth of the entire planet's fresh surface water—Michigan has a unique stewardship role in protecting the Great Lakes and their tributaries.

That's why the Michigan Environmental Council, working as one of the coordinators of the broad Great Lakes, Great Michigan coalition, drove hard during 2007 to establish the nation's strongest water protection laws and to sign on to the eight-state Great Lakes Compact water laws.

MEC and coalition partners helped craft State House legislation to establish public input and multiple safeguards for large water withdrawals, affirm the status of water as a public resource and require scientific analysis before large water takers are allowed to siphon surface or groundwater.

Town hall meetings, press conferences, editorial board meetings and grassroots initiatives helped back the strong proposals.

The effort gained additional momentum in late 2007 when New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson—then a Presidential candidate—suggested that diversions of Great Lakes water might be pursued, noting that the Great Lakes states are “awash in water.”

A firestorm of criticism, including MEC's vigorous public response, forced Richardson to backpedal quickly.

Continuing the fight in 2008, MEC will forcefully advocate for enforcing the letter of new water

protection agreements to ensure that this world-class resource is intact for generations to come.

## Algae, phosphorus and septic pollution

The Michigan Environmental Council worked hard on other Great Lakes protection measures, most notably targeting phosphorus pollution—from fertilizers and dishwasher detergents and human waste from septic systems—that befouls our streams and waterways.

Phosphorus—a commonly used but normally unnecessary component of lawn fertilizer and dishwasher detergent—is a significant contributor to the excessive algae blooms and weed growth that choke Michigan's inland waterways and foul its Great Lakes beaches.

A complex interplay between phosphorus pollution and the effects of invasive species like the zebra and quagga mussel is believed to be the primary cause of a new plague of algae problems.

As part of a statewide task force appointed by Gov. Granholm, MEC helped design proposed legislation to restrict the use of phosphorus. We expect to help that plan gain legislative traction in 2008—spurred by a summer algae season that may be the worst in recent memory.

MEC also worked with allies statewide, including the West Michigan Environmental Action Council and the Clean Water Fund, to push for better regulation of septic system waste, which pumps millions of gallons of untreated sewage to Michigan's waters every day.

Additionally, a ban on phosphorus in dishwasher detergent passed the state Senate in 2007 after years of work by MEC. It seems poised to become law in 2008,



*Top and middle: Michigan's resources nourish our spirit, our economy and our health. With 18 percent of the world's fresh surface water, the Great Lakes surround us and define us. Bottom: The first Conservation Trail marker, adjacent to Humbug Marsh along the Detroit River, documents the importance of citizen action on behalf of natural resources.*

becoming another brick in the firewall against unnecessary and excessive Great Lakes pollution.

**A heritage along the river**

Michigan's history of cherishing its water resources was commemorated in 2007 with the dedication of the first historical marker on the Michigan Conservation Trail—a project initiated by MEC in conjunction with the Michigan Historical Commission.

The marker, near the Detroit River at the entrance to the storied Humbug Marsh, tells the story of the river's decline under the assault of sewage, oil, phosphorus and other toxics; and its resurgence in recent decades under a more enlightened stewardship ethic.

Additional Conservation Trail markers are anticipated in future years, eventually spanning an educational network from the shores of Lake Superior to the Ohio border.

# Lead Protection Law Makes a Good Start Toward Safeguarding Michigan's Children

Bulls-eye drawn on lindane, dioxin, and pesticides as  
MEC attacks Michigan's public health threats

**M**ichigan's children enter our world already under assault from pollutants in our air, water, land and food supply. Asthma-inducing smog, dangerous toxics in our waterways and harmful chemical residue in the food we eat are immediate threats to our children.

The effects of childhood toxic exposure often continue through adulthood, eroding immune systems, lowering educational achievement and constraining economic development through lost productivity and high health care costs.

MEC's work with Lansing power brokers to establish safeguards for the public health—particularly children's health—paid dividends in 2007.

## Lead bills pass

Working through the Michigan Network for Children's Environmental Health (MNCEH), MEC helped obtain passage of the state's first restrictions on lead in children's toys and other products. Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed the bills into law, limiting lead to 600 parts per million in certain products.

That's a good start at putting the brakes on a potent neurotoxin that can cause devastating, permanent physical damage to children. But it's not good enough. The American Academy of Pediatrics, for example, recommends a standard of 40 ppm.

MEC will continue to work with the legislature, the public and through educational programs to lower the

allowable threshold for lead in children's toys and other products.

## Lindane next?

Lindane, another hazardous neurotoxin, has been banned for agricultural use in the U.S. and is outlawed in more than 50 countries. Yet, inexplicably, it is still permitted as a treatment for lice and scabies on children in Michigan.

MEC and its allies pressed hard in 2007 to restrict this dangerous chemical's use, and will continue to push the case in 2008. Pending legislation would allow its use on children only under a physician's direct supervision.

In addition to Lindane, legislative groundwork was laid in 2007 to ban the toxic flame retardant DECA (deca-brominated-diphenyl-ether). Other, less-toxic types of flame retardants are available. MEC and the MNCEH are working to educate legislators, fire chiefs and public health agencies about safer options.

## In the know: Pesticides

The Michigan Environmental Council continues to fight against the widespread and indiscriminate application of harmful pesticides—especially in and near schools and daycare facilities where the chemicals move into the fragile developing bodies of children.

More than 60 organizations and individuals supported the first annual "Know-tification" Day in



*Protecting children from toxics in toys and other children's products was a focus of MEC's health work in 2007. MEC also worked with West Michigan allies to support rules to limit septic sewage in local waterways (below) and to protect children and pets from the effects of dangerous lawn chemicals. (bottom)*



2007, raising awareness for parents and school officials about alternatives to toxic pesticide applications.

MEC will continue to fight powerful industry interests who persist in blocking common-sense pesticide rules designed to keep children and pets safe from widespread applications.

### **Dioxin stalemate**

2007 saw moderate progress—and a continued push by MEC and its allies—in forcing Dow Chemical Co. to clean up its decades-old dioxin contamination of the Tittabawassee and Saginaw Bay watersheds. The hormone-scrambling carcinogen has contaminated the region's food chain, with high concentrations in sport fish and wild game along the river systems.

Nearly a century after the dioxin first was released, 2007 saw the first removal of contaminated sediment from the river basin when Dow was ordered to remove the most toxic "hot spots."

# Smart, Sustainable Growth Cuts a Wide Swath

From roads to land use, state and local policies impact where we work and play



**M**ichigan development—from revitalizing cities to preserving the storied character of the Upper Peninsula—is a crosscutting issue that impacts every aspect of quality of life for those of us who call ‘the mitten’ home.

The Michigan Environmental Council continued its steadfast work to point out smart, sustainable directions in land use, transportation and housing. Staff crisscrossed the state to assist leaders, residents and local officials in puzzling out the best options for intelligent planning.

## Key areas included:

**UP Forestland Ownership Changes:** Working with partners at the National Wildlife Federation, Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University, and the Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development Council, MEC completed an in-depth report of the causes and implications of recent large-scale changes in ownership of UP forestland. In recent years, more than one million acres of formerly corporate-owned land has been sold to real estate investment trusts and timber investment management organizations. This has brought the threat of sprawl to remote areas and small towns in the UP, and reinforced the need for communities to take a Smart Investments approach to incentives intended to spur forest products industries, tourism, and economic growth.

**Transit-Oriented Development:** In partnership with the Michigan Suburbs Alliance, Transportation Riders United, and the Woodward Avenue Action Association, MEC completed comprehensive research outlining the opportunities and economic potential of compact, mixed-use ordinances and zoning policies that

would support mass transit in the Southeast Michigan region. With an eye toward Michigan’s transportation investment programs, we also examined the kinds of funding and state-level policies that could be tapped to support such reforms, for example, the Transportation Economic Development Fund (one of four funds tabbed as “sprawl incentives” in Good Jobs First’s “Geography of Incentives” report for Michigan).

**Sulfide Mining:** Working with numerous partners, MEC fought to ensure that Michigan’s new mining regulations were rigorously applied to a risky proposed Upper Peninsula nickel mine. The mine, which threatens the headwaters of key river systems, received several key permits. MEC will assist the National Wildlife Federation and others, who have taken the battle to the courts.

**Governor’s Climate Action Council:** MEC President Lana Pollack was appointed to the Governor’s Climate Action Council in December 2007, and MEC staff members are participating in several of the Council’s “technical working groups,” including one specifically focused on land use and transportation.

**Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS):** We continue to play a leadership and watchdog role on the state-appointed CSS stakeholder committee. CSS establishes a process that allows Department of Transportation officials and transportation engineers to benefit from “early and continuous” public engagement so that projects better “fit” within the context of the neighborhood and the situation in which they are being built.

**Michigan State Housing Development Authority:** Following up on our work to help develop a five-year plan for incorporating land use more prominently into the programs of the Michigan State

*Smart development of the land, transportation infrastructure and subdivisions is key to helping Michigan protect natural assets and maximize human assets. Exciting progress on new public transit initiatives was among 2007's bright spots.*



Housing Development Authority, we are now working to target state resources to support affordable workforce housing, which is critical to enabling people to live in and support the urban and rural communities in which they work.

**Citizen Planner Green Infrastructure Education:**

As a member of the MSU Citizen Planner Advisory Council, MEC co-sponsored a recent series of seminars on green infrastructure planning. This program reached dozens of local planners in all areas of the state, educating them about fragmentation and strategies for protecting critical environmental assets within communities.

**Critical Dunes Workgroup:** New guidance documents issued by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) regarding the implementation of the state's critical dune program sparked controversy and a challenge by the state's development entities. MEC joined the Michigan Dune Alliance, West Michigan Environmental Action Council and other groups in a stakeholder workgroup to develop recommendations while protecting the statute's fundamental dune safeguards.



**Oil and Gas Drilling and the Au Sable River:**

At the request of our member groups Sierra Club-Michigan Chapter and the Anglers of the Au Sable, MEC has engaged in discussions to develop a long-term strategy for protecting the state's northern forests and river systems from harmful impacts of past and future oil and natural gas development.

**The Dollars and Sense of Smart Growth:** This project, now hosted on MEC's website, allows us to communicate more effectively about the economic impacts of land use decisions by using real case studies and examples from all around Michigan.

# Fighting for Environmental Justice

MEC aligns with groups fighting to alleviate toxic burdens on the poor and disenfranchised

Pure water, clean air and freedom from toxic poisons should be the right of all Americans. Yet, communities of color and low-income citizens continue to bear the brunt of pollution with higher rates of premature death, infant mortality, chronic illness, and crippling afflictions like asthma and lead poisoning.

Fallout from heavy industry, waste disposal and toxic brownfields disproportionately hit people who typically are least able to prevent such injustices.

The Michigan Environmental Council is committed to working with partners in urban centers across the state to obliterate this unfair and unconscionable reality.

A huge step in that direction was taken in 2007 when a campaign led by a number of MEC member groups succeeded in getting Gov. Jennifer Granholm to sign a long-awaited executive directive promoting environmental justice and directing the state to develop and implement an EJ plan.

The directive was a victory for the Campaign for State Action on Environmental Justice, which includes the Michigan Environmental Council. CSAEJ had waged a grassroots campaign for the policy change since 2005.

Thousands of individuals urged Gov. Granholm in support of the campaign's goals. They were endorsed by 35 organizations, including the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS), Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, Ecology Center, East Michigan Environmental Action Council, Clean Water Action and the Sierra Club.

The victory was part of MEC's continuing efforts to assist partners in protecting low-income neighborhoods and communities of color across the state from the disproportionate impact of air pollution, fouled water, and environmental hazards inside and outside the home.

MEC is committed to ensuring that the state's Department of Environmental Quality follows through with a solid plan to incorporate the principles of fairness and equality to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws.

## A post-incinerator Detroit

The Michigan Environmental Council offered its assistance in 2007 to numerous groups and individuals working to close the city's dirty incinerator and to transition to a post-incinerator future that includes better recycling programs and low-cost waste disposal options.

The incinerator, one of the nation's largest, has saddled Detroit residents with pollution and with trash disposal rates more than double the national average. The retirement of the incinerator's bond debt in 2009 gives us an opportunity to find safer, cleaner, cheaper options for Detroit's trash disposal.

MEC contributed to the Detroit City Council Recycling/Environmental Task Force solid waste report, released in 2007, which outlined a post-incinerator future with lower disposal rates, less pollution, more recycling and more jobs and economic development opportunities.

*Clockwise, from right: Southwest Detroit neighborhoods bear a disproportionate burden of pollution, including that from the Marathon Oil Refinery (in background); Power plants, like this one in Lansing, emit air hazards that contribute to asthma and other ailments; minority children in Detroit are statistically more at risk from pollutants.*



Key allies in the incinerator fight include Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice, Michigan Welfare Rights, the Ecology Center and the National Wildlife Federation.

### **A cleaner refinery**

Proposed expansion of Marathon Oil's refinery in Southwest Detroit drew scrutiny from the Michigan Environmental Council. We demanded better pollution prevention measures than originally proposed by Marathon, and pledged our assistance to the many local groups working to protect residents from yet another air pollution hazard in a community already beset with them.

In a 2007 public comment on the proposal, MEC demanded that state regulators apply the most rigorous standards possible to protect the refinery's neighbors, reminding them of Gov. Granholm's Environmental Justice directive.

### **Park under assault**

West Michigan saw its share of environmental injustice, as MEC assisted citizens fighting against the corporate takeover of a treasured local beachfront park in Benton Harbor.

Jean Klock Park, donated a century ago for perpetual use on the shores of Lake Michigan, would be chopped into pieces and turned into an exclusive golf course under a developer's proposal that has drawn fierce opposition.

The proposed tradeoff for citizens—patches of polluted and difficult-to-access land—is the epitome of injustice. MEC will continue working shoulder-to-shoulder with justice and park advocates to ensure that the park continues to belong to the public.

# Children: Future Environmental Stewards

Educational outreach efforts help teachers, students connect with the world around them

Children are the future stewards of our planet, our state, our Great Lakes and our natural resources and the bounty the flows from them.

Preparing teachers to teach students about the environmental challenges and opportunities they will encounter throughout their lives—with an emphasis on scientific understanding—is the goal of MEC’s environmental education initiatives.

Since 1999, MEC has trained more than 300 teachers and reached more than 10,000 students through a nationally recognized program developed by MEC education consultant Keith Etheridge.

In 2007, Etheridge trained 24 Wayne County teachers, including 15 from the Detroit Public Schools, in a summer workshop that helps them develop environmental education units tailored to address their district curricula and state science standards.

The units aim to increase student awareness of environmental issues from a scientific standpoint, without advocacy. They are centered on themes of energy, land use, water quality and air quality.

The training includes the Michigan Environmental Education Curriculum Support (MEECS) units developed by the state Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Education. MEECS integrates the environmental education programs with other curriculums and aligns them to framework standards and benchmarks.

## Where the children play

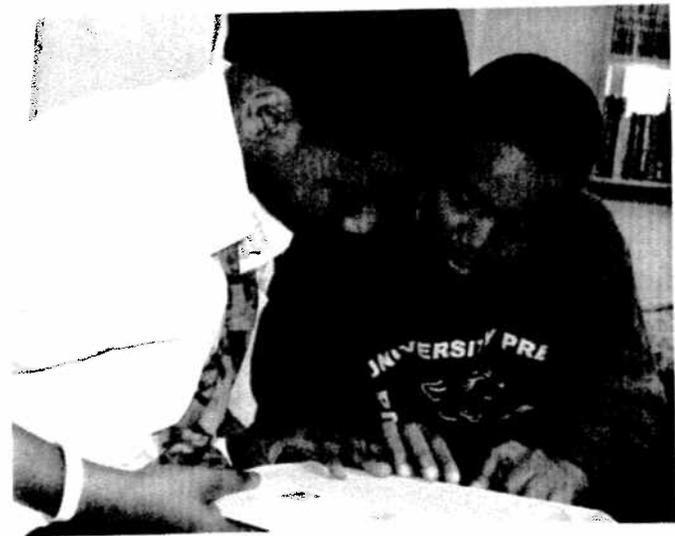
A groundbreaking new documentary on Michigan Television, “Where Do the Children Play?” explores how restrictive patterns of sprawl, congestion, and endless suburban development across America are impacting children’s mental and physical health and development.

MEC assisted in the preparation of a companion book and teaching guide that supplemented the film. Drawing on work promoting safe routes to schools for urban children, MEC authored a chapter in the book exploring the importance of children’s connections to natural areas and the outdoors.

## In the community

MEC speakers also made appearances in classrooms during 2007, discussing environmental themes in forums ranging from elementary schools to Michigan State University’s Environmental Journalism program.

Civic organizations, neighborhood organizations and nonprofit groups were among other venues where MEC speakers conducted educational forums on key resource issues facing our state, nation and world.



*Environmental education programs like those at University Preparatory Academy in Detroit help connect children with the natural world.*

## 2007 Victories

**K**eeping score of environmental policy successes isn't simple. At the end of the year we can't quantify land acquisitions to prove our worth like our friends in the land conservancy business. We don't have field staff that tally the doors they've knocked on like our grassroots allies. Nor do we have the financial bottom lines on which for-profit businesses rely to show progress.

Instead, our currency is political and policy wins and losses at the State Capitol. And after the smoke of a hard-fought environmental battle has cleared, it's often challenging to determine whether the outcome is a win, loss or tie.

That's because policy and legislation aren't often black and white affairs; instead, there are innumerable shades of gray being interpreted by legions of players whose motives often run at cross purposes.

Is it a victory when we achieve the state's first-ever regulations on toxic lead in children's toys? Or is it a loss because the lead limit—600 parts per million—is far in excess of the 40 ppm we would have preferred?

Do we celebrate that we helped require warnings on both—as opposed to one—side of signs that lawn care companies must post in yards treated with dangerous chemicals? Or do we despair because the Michigan Department of Agriculture still refuses more significant protections, like mandatory notification of neighbors that they may be exposed to the chemicals?

What if we deflect outrageously bad legislation into the political Dumpster? Is that a win? Or just the avoidance of an ugly loss?

Nevertheless, after 27 years of interpreting policy and politics, we've acquired a pretty good sense of where the outcome of each political battle falls on the scale of wins and losses.

### For what the bell tolls

And when we feel we've scored a clean victory, we have a longstanding tradition of ringing the bell that hangs near the front door of our Lansing office. When the bell rings, staff gather to hear the good news.

Many of those "bell ringers" are detailed in the pages of this annual report.

### In 2007 they included:

- ▶ Helping—through our Congressional coalition—shape the nation's first vehicle fuel economy increases in more than 30 years, which passed Congress in late 2007.
- ▶ Seeing the first removal of toxic dioxin-laced sediment from the Tittabawassee River after decades of foot-dragging by Dow Chemical Co.
- ▶ The state's first regulations on toxic lead in children's toys, spurred in part by widespread publicity on dangerous lead in toys and other kids' products.
- ▶ Leading the charge against Great Lakes water diversion with the Great Lakes, Great Michigan coalition. Then-presidential candidate Bill Richards was forced to backtrack after suggesting Great Lakes water might be siphoned West and taking flack from MEC and others.
- ▶ Gov. Jennifer Granholm signing an environmental justice directive that obligates the state to pursue policies to protect low-income persons and communities of color from disproportionate pollution burdens.
- ▶ Helping foster Michigan's active role in global warming pollution reduction efforts. That includes participation in the Midwest Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accords and the establishment of the Michigan Climate Action Council on which MEC has a seat.

There were more, of course.

We anticipate giving that bell a good workout in 2008 with the aggressive inroads we've made in securing important victories on issues including energy independence, land use, water protections and children's health.

Weaving the strands of science, politics, health, the economy and public sentiment into policy wins is a complicated business. But it's an important one, and one we'll keep doing on behalf of our allied groups and their thousands of members across the state.



# Media Increasingly Turn to MEC for National, Local Environmental Perspectives

Staffers appear on CNN, in *The New York Times*, on radio and in the blogosphere

From *The New York Times* and CNN to Oakland County's *Spinal Column Newsweekly*, Michigan Environmental Council's policy experts regularly graced the airwaves and printed pages during 2007.

Two of the highest profile appearances were on CNN, where Communications Director Hugh McDiarmid Jr. discussed Great Lakes water protection; and in *The New York Times*, where President Lana Pollack was quoted about federal fuel economy standards and Michigan Congressman John Dingell's role in the debate.

MEC policy staff and coalition partners appeared regularly as guests on radio talk shows and participated in regular reporter call-in press conferences. Media outreach extended to traditional media and to opinion leaders like columnists and editorial page editors; insider publications like *Crain's Business* and the MIRS and Gongwer news services; and Internet-based web services and bloggers.

The high-profile energy and water campaigns accounted for the lion's share of media mentions during the year, but MEC's expertise was sought on a diverse range of topics including children's health, wetlands, land use, toxic flame retardants, the danger of pesticides near schools and daycare centers, public transit, environmental history, environmental politics and myriad other issues.

"We've consistently said that over our dead bodies will you siphon off (Great Lakes) water to build a golf course in Arizona or make up for poor land-use planning in Atlanta."

—MEC's Hugh McDiarmid Jr. in the Kalamazoo Gazette

Reporters and columnists increasingly sought out MEC to provide perspective in their stories, to give "off-the-record" background on complicated issues, and to be steered toward coalition partners and member groups who have the most expertise in a given subject.

In addition, MEC helped allies across the state gain access to newspaper editorial boards and assisted in writing and placing Op/Ed submissions and letters to the editor.

"People who fill up their Lexuses and Escalades... have the benefit of the oil, but the people next to the refineries have increased asthma and other problems."

—MEC's Lana Pollack in the Detroit Free Press on a proposed oil refinery expansion in Detroit

"It's been banned from agricultural practices, it's been banned... for use on animals... and Michigan still uses it to treat head lice."

—MEC's James Clift in the Capital News Service on the chemical Lindane

## Honorees and Awards

2007's environmental heroes made their marks in the halls of the Capitol and on the front lines of grassroots battles

**L**asting and meaningful environmental protection takes a synthesis of grassroots activism and institutional leadership. One without the other seldom gets the job done.

That's why the Michigan Environmental Council annually bestows two awards: One honoring local citizen activism and the other recognizing distinguished service from policy makers, public officials or private sector leaders.

In 2007 the awards went to two women whose starkly different paths to policy change achieved the same results: Michigan's environmental laws and enforcement patterns both bear their positive and lasting imprints.

### An advocate in the legislature

Mary C. Brown earned 2007's Helen and William Milliken Distinguished Service Award.

Brown is a former state representative and environmental activist whose depth of knowledge on a huge variety of subjects—environmental and otherwise—is unparalleled. She has been a leader on issues of social justice and gender equity as well as natural resource protection.

Brown “was a key person during her (16-year) tenure in the legislature in bringing awareness of the importance of the environmental agenda,” said Lynn Johndal, a former House colleague.

Brown's diligent research and advocacy helped secure passage of dozens of laws protecting clean air and other resources. Though she retired in 1994, many of those laws still provide the framework for enlightened resource stewardship.

Her leadership extends beyond the legislature. She is a former state Natural Resources Commissioner, and has been on the boards of the state YMCA and the American Lung Association of Michigan. Her lifelong passion for working with the Girl Scouts is legendary in her native Kalamazoo.



*From left, Mary Brown, Lana Pollack, Lynn Henning celebrate Brown and Henning's environmental honors.*

### She took on the CAFO Goliaths

Lynn Henning is 2007's winner of MEC's Petoskey Prize for Environmental Leadership—by virtue of her grassroots work as a leading advocate for health and water quality near polluting mega-farms (called Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, or CAFOs).

Henning lives on a rural family farm near Hudson, where CAFOs began to spring up, discharging massive quantities of animal waste into open lagoons that spilled into waterways and fouled the air.

She fought back, learning law, chemistry, biology and bureaucracy on the way to becoming one of the Midwest's leading CAFO authorities. And she never backed down, despite threats and intimidation from the CAFO operators who chafed under the scrutiny.

As vice chair of the Environmentally Concerned Citizens for South Central Michigan and a water sentinel with the Sierra Club, she now trains volunteers from around the nation in monitoring and tracking CAFO pollution.

Her work has led to the discovery of more than 200 Clean Water Act violations by Michigan's CAFOs. The result has been better enforcement by the state's Department of Environmental Quality and progress toward changing the laws to recognize the CAFO threat.

### Two paths, one goal

MEC President Lana Pollack said Brown and Henning personify the ideals of environmental protection:

“These two amazing women are shining examples of how committed, informed citizens can drive positive change in their communities, their state, and their nation,” she said. “Sometimes that change begins on the floor of the State House, as it did for Mary. Sometimes it begins at the epicenter of an environmental nightmare, as it did for Lynn.”

# New members invigorate our coalition, reflecting broad commitment to environmental protection

When the Michigan Environmental Council came on the scene in 1980 it had six member groups—each one a traditional “environmental” organization dedicated to the state’s natural resources.

Today that membership has grown to 74, and represents a far more diverse collection of organizations, including those devoted primarily to public health, faith,

energy, urban justice, land protection, water, and elevating environmental issues in politics, among others.

Recognition that natural resources protection cuts a wide swath through so many public policy areas is a sign of a more mature “environmental” movement; one whose work improves our lives in many different ways.

The diversity of our allies and members is one of our greatest strengths. When we can unite all those interests behind common public policy goals, we demonstrate to political leaders the broad and deep commitment of Michigan residents to protecting and restoring our air, land and water.

## 74 strong—our member groups in 2007

4 Towns Citizens Action Team  
Alliance for the Great Lakes  
American Lung Association of Michigan  
Anglers of the AuSable  
Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)  
Association for Children's Mental Health  
Brownstown Land Conservancy  
Children's Trust Fund  
Citizens for Alternatives to Chemical Contamination  
Citizens for Water and Clean Sky  
Clean Water Fund  
Concerned Citizens of Acme Township  
Detroit Audubon Society  
Detroitters Working for Environmental Justice  
Dwight Lydell Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America  
East Michigan Environmental Action Council  
Ecology Center  
Environment Michigan Research & Policy Center  
Environmentally Concerned Citizens of South Central Michigan  
Friends of the Cedar River Watershed, Inc.  
Friends of the Crystal River  
Friends of the Detroit River  
Friends of the Jordan River Watershed  
Friends of the Rouge

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians  
Great Lakes Bioregional Land Conservancy  
Harbor Area Regional Board of Resources, Inc.  
Huron River Watershed Council  
Kalamazoo Environmental Council  
League of Michigan Bicyclists  
League of Women Voters of Michigan  
Liaison for Inter-Neighborhood Cooperation  
Livingston Land Conservancy  
LocalMotion  
Lone Tree Council  
Michigan Audubon Society  
Michigan Botanical Club  
Michigan Chapter of the North American Lake Management Society  
Michigan Citizens Against Toxic Substances  
Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation  
Michigan Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life  
Michigan Interfaith Power and Light  
Michigan Land Trustees, Inc.  
Michigan Land Use Institute  
Michigan League of Conservation Voters Education Fund  
Michigan Mountain Biking Association  
Michigan Natural Areas Council  
Michigan Nature Association  
Michigan Nurses Association

Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance  
Michigan Recycling Coalition  
Michigan Resource Stewards  
Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance  
Mid-Michigan Environmental Action Council  
Milan Area Concerned Citizens  
Mott Community College Environmental Club  
National Environmental Trust/Michigan  
Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council  
Oakland Land Conservancy  
Public Interest Research Group in Michigan (PIRGIM) Education Fund  
Republicans for Environmental Protection, Michigan Chapter  
Romulus Environmentalists Care About People  
Scenic Michigan  
Sierra Club, Michigan Chapter  
Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary  
Southeast Michigan Land Conservancy  
Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision  
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council  
Transportation Riders United  
Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition  
Urban Options  
Voices for Earth Justice  
Washtenaw Land Trust  
West Michigan Environmental Action Council

# Who we are

## 2007 Board of Directors

**Lana Pollack, President**  
Michigan Environmental Council

**Christopher Graham, Chair**  
Michigan Natural Areas Council

**Lisa Wozniak, Secretary**  
Michigan League of Conservation  
Voters Education Fund

**Thomas Kinnear, Treasurer**

**Vicki Levengood, Vice Chair**  
National Environmental Trust

**Terry Miller, Vice Chair**  
Lone Tree Council

**Mike Shriberg, Ph.D., Vice Chair**

**Julie Metty Bennett**  
Scenic Michigan

**Tom Bissonnette**  
Michigan Nurses Association

**Leo W. Dorr**  
Great Lakes Bioregional  
Land Conservancy

**Jeremy Emmi**  
Michigan Nature Association

**Mike Garfield**  
Ecology Center

**David Holtz**  
Clean Water Fund

**Sue Julian**  
League of Women Voters of Michigan

**Gisela King**  
Detroit Audubon Society

**Kathryn Savoie, Ph.D.**  
Arab Community Center for  
Economic and Social Services (ACCESS)

**Terry Swier**  
Michigan Citizens for  
Water Conservation

**Kim Winchell**  
Voices for Earth Justice

**Anne Woiodode**  
Sierra Club, Michigan Chapter

**Mary Brown**

**Del Dunbar**

**Beverly Ghesquiere**

**Timothy O'Brien**

**Tom Porter**

**Pamela Smith**

## President's Council Participants

President's Council participants strengthen the work of the Michigan Environmental Council in three ways: as advisors to the president, board and staff; as ambassadors to community leaders; and as fundraisers for our growing endowment.

**John Baker**

**Vivian Day**

**Paul Dimond**

**William Clay Ford, Jr.**

**Bob Garvey**

**Chris Green**

**Steven Hamp**

**Bill Martin**

**James S. Offield**

**Bill Orabone**

**Joshua Pokempner**

**John Psarouthakis**

**Mary Jo Pulte**

**Jim Reece**

**Gary Rentrop**

**Paul Saginaw**

**Gerry Spencer**

## Our staff in 2007

**Lana Pollack, President**

**Judy Bearup, Office Manager & Assistant to the President**

**James Clift, Policy Director**

**Dave Dempsey, Senior Policy Advisor**

**Roshani Deraniyagale-Dantas, Campaign Coordinator**

**Andy Draheim, Development Director**

**Keith Etheridge, Education Specialist**

**Elizabeth Fedorchuk, Communications Specialist**

**David Gard, Energy Program Director**

**Brad Garmon, Land Programs Director**

**Brianna Gerard, Project Manager & Development Associate**

**Tess Karwoski, Health Program Associate**

**Kate Madigan, Program Associate**

**Hugh McDiarmid, Jr., Communications Director**

**Molly Polverento, Health Program Director**

**Jamie Scripps, Deputy Policy Director**

**Ariel Shaw, Land Use & Energy Program Associate**



*MEC Board Chairman Chris Graham chats with State Sen. Patty Birkholz, chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee.*



*The Michigan Environmental Council's staff provides a strong voice in Lansing for the environment.*

# You Make It Happen!

If you turn the page, you'll see a list of hundreds of individuals and businesses who are making the Michigan Environmental Council a more nimble and powerful voice for Michigan's environment.

Money doesn't always translate into success, but it is an essential ingredient in everything MEC does. And our generous donors are ensuring that MEC has the resources to respond to challenges and seize opportunities, so we can leave future generations an even better Michigan than we enjoy today.

Foundation grants accounted for 72% of our income in 2007, down from 86% just three years ago. The remaining 28% of our budget comes as gifts from individuals and businesses. That money makes a big difference in the topsy-turvy world of politics, because we can move it to where the action is—and because we can use it for direct lobbying when needed.

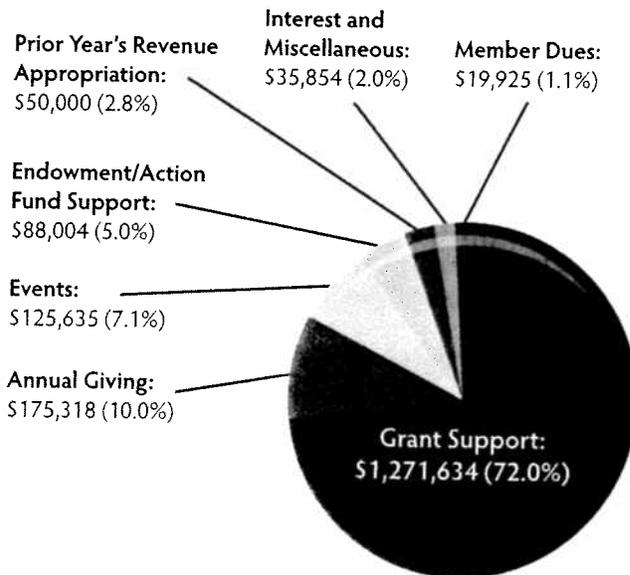
The generosity of our individual and business donors also has driven the strong increases in our endowment and urgent action funds—two additional pillars of our long-term financial might.

When we count our \$750,000 MEC agency endowment at the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (which is not included in the financial information presented below), we now have more than \$4 million in endowment assets and pledges. When we reach our goal of \$5 million, our endowment assets will support our environmental programs to the tune of \$250,000 per year. That represents serious help for an organization of our size.

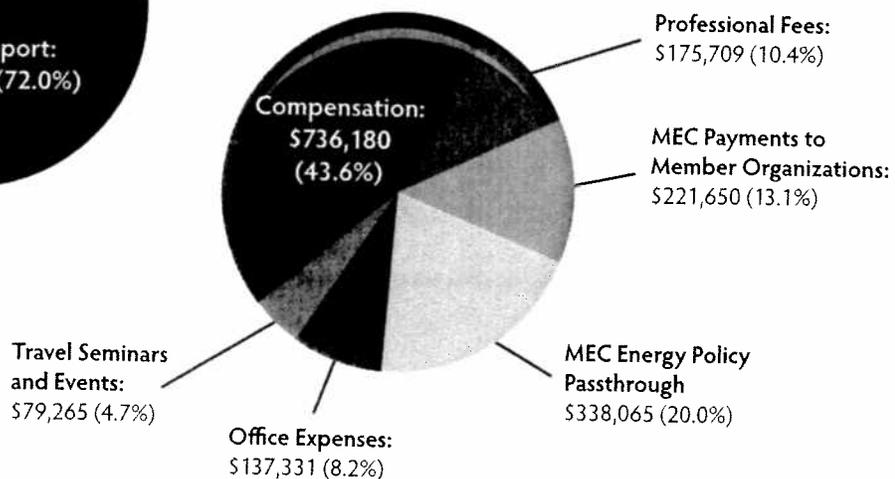
Similarly, our urgent action fund has now passed the \$250,000 mark on the way to our \$500,000 goal. That fund provides the decisive resources we need to respond to unanticipated opportunities or crises. As this report went to print, it was supporting a major radio ad campaign pressuring Michigan's legislative leaders to pass the vital clean energy reforms we need to kick start our economy and respond to climate change.

All these numbers mean that we can do our job better at MEC. It is a job we are privileged to do, thanks to the generosity of the people and institutions you'll see when you turn the page.

## TOTAL REVENUE \$1,766,370



## TOTAL EXPENSES \$1,688,200



**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES***For the 12 Months Ended December 31, 2007***Unrestricted Operations**

<b>Revenue</b>	
Grant Support	\$1,271,634
Annual Giving	\$175,318
Events	\$125,635
Endowment/Action Fund Support	\$88,004
Prior Year's Revenue Appropriation	\$50,000
Interest and Miscellaneous	\$35,854
Member Dues	\$19,925
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,766,370</b>

**Expense**

Compensation	\$736,180
Professional Fees	\$175,709
MEC Payments to Member Organizations	\$221,650
MEC Energy Policy Passthrough	\$338,065
Office Expenses	\$137,331
Travel, Seminars and Events	\$79,265
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$1,688,200</b>
<b>Unrestricted Operations Excess Revenue</b>	<b>\$78,170</b>

**Restricted Operations**

Awarded Grant Revenue	\$2,329,251
Endowment Giving	\$174,891
Endowment Net Earnings	\$150,865
Action Fund Giving	\$125,000
Action Fund Net Earnings	\$5,830
Transfers to Unrestricted Operations	-\$1,359,638
<b>Restricted Operations Excess Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,426,199</b>

**PERE MARQUETTE  
ENDOWMENT ACTIVITY***December 4, 2000 through December 31, 2007***Beginning Balance** **\$0****Addition**

Transfers from MEC Unrestricted Net Assets	\$350,000
Contributions: Cash	\$1,334,674
Contributions: Pledges	\$200,000
Earnings and Capital Appreciation	\$476,169

**Deductions**

Management Fees	\$18,134
Transfers to Support MEC Unrestricted Activities	\$208,008

**Ending Balance** **\$2,134,701****STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS***December 31, 2007***Assets**

Unrestricted Cash Assets	\$328,301
Temporarily Restricted Assets	
Cash Certificates of Deposit/Money Market	\$880,552
Grants Receivable	\$550,000
Unrestricted Property Net Assets	\$11,654
Endowment Net Assets at Fair Market Value	\$2,134,701
Action Fund Assets at Fair Market Value	\$255,214
Building Fund Assets at Fair Market Value	\$5,000
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$4,165,422</b>

**Liabilities and Net Assets**

<b>Total Unrestricted Liabilities</b>	<b>\$42,429</b>
Total Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$1,430,552
Total Endowment Net Assets	\$2,134,701
Total Action Fund Net Assets	\$255,214
Total Building Fund Assets	\$5,000
Unrestricted Net Assets	
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$285,872
Unrestricted Property Assets	\$11,654
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,122,993</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$4,165,422</b>

**ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION FUND ACTIVITY***February 22, 2005 through December 31, 2007***Beginning Balance** **\$0****Addition**

Transfers from MEC Unrestricted Net Assets	\$0
Contributions: Cash	\$175,300
Contributions: Pledges	\$75,000
Earnings and Capital Appreciation	\$10,552

**Deductions**

Management Fees	\$637
Transfers to Support MEC Unrestricted Activities	\$5,000

**Ending Balance** **\$255,215**

# Supporting our work in 2007

The Michigan Environmental Council gratefully acknowledges the individuals, businesses and institutions that partnered with us in 2007 and made our work possible.

## Grant Supporters

ACCESS  
 Americana Foundation  
 Beldon Fund  
 Clean Water Fund  
 Dart Foundation  
 Ecology Center  
 Energy Foundation  
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 Great Lakes Aquatic Habitat  
 Network & Fund  
 Joyce Foundation  
 W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
 Kresge Foundation  
 League of Conservation  
 Voters Education Fund  
 Michigan Department of  
 Environmental Quality  
 State of Michigan  
 Michigan Suburbs Alliance  
 C.S. Mott Foundation  
 National Environmental Trust  
 (NET)  
 National Wildlife Federation  
 (NWF)  
 Patagonia  
 People and Land Program  
 Pesticide Action Network of  
 North America (PANNA)  
 State Environmental  
 Leadership Program (SELP)  
 Union of Concerned Scientists

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BISSELL Inc. —Cathy and  
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 Lana and Henry Pollack  
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 Ambassador Ronald and  
 Eileen Weiser

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 Dula Foundation  
 Meijer Inc  
 The Hurst Foundation  
 TMRW Fund  
 Toyota Motor Company  
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 Larry Hands  
 Susan B. Muzzy  
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 Audrey Otto  
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 Associates

## \$500-\$2,499

### Businesses & Organizations

ACCESS  
 Alcoa Howmet Castings  
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 AT&T Michigan  
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 Clark Hill PLC  
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 Anna and Clayton Timmons  
 Marianne Udow and  
 Bill Phillips  
 Amanda Van Dusen  
 Ken and Sueann Walz  
 Teresa Welsh  
 Frank C. Wheatlake  
 T.J. and Julia Wilkinson  
 Tom and Anne Woivode

## \$100-\$499

### Businesses & Organizations

Adaptive Materials Inc. (AMI)  
 Cascade Engineering  
 Community Foundation for  
 Muskegon County  
 Fellowship for Today  
 Garden Club of Michigan  
 Kalamazoo River Watershed  
 Council  
 Michigan Nurses Association  
 Michigan State University  
 Southwest Michigan Land  
 Conservancy  
 The Jack Lanigan Corporation

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 Thom Black  
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 Rudi and Elisabeth Ansbacher  
 J. Hord Armstrong, III  
 Shirley and Don Axon  
 Menakka and Essel Bailey  
 Frederick Ball  
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 Richard Brewer  
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 Tracy Dobson  
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 Bob Marshall  
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 Elfriede Engel  
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 Randall and Elaine Victor  
 Mel Visser  
 Barry Waldman  
 Gail Walter  
 Jane and Price Watts  
 William Weil  
 Brian Weisman  
 John Weitzel

Byron and Laura West  
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 Peter Young  
 Jens and Frances Zorn

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 Inland Seas Education Association  
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