

The background of the cover is a photograph of a sandy beach curving along a large body of water under a clear blue sky. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a lighter blue. A diagonal teal overlay covers the top-left portion of the image, containing the title and subtitle. The beach is in the foreground, with some sparse, leafless trees and a rocky shoreline in the middle ground.

Partners for Clean Water Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

SEMCOG

SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

MISSION

SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, is the only organization in Southeast Michigan that brings together all governments to develop regional solutions for both now and in the future. SEMCOG:

- Promotes informed decision making to improve Southeast Michigan and its local governments by providing insightful data analysis and direct assistance to member governments
- Promotes the efficient use of tax dollars for infrastructure investment and governmental effectiveness
- Develops regional solutions that go beyond the boundaries of individual local governments; and
- Advocates on behalf of Southeast Michigan in Lansing and Washington

Partners for Clean Water Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025

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ABSTRACT

This report details regional water quality activities and projects conducted by SEMCOG over the past year and supports ongoing NPDES Stormwater Phase II compliance activities. Information in this report helps communities and counties meet the reporting requirements associated with federal Phase II Stormwater Regulation. From stormwater and water resource management activities to green infrastructure implementation and infrastructure resilience projects, including flooding risk mitigation, SEMCOG is actively working with local communities to support water quality improvements throughout the region.

Preparation of this document is financed in part through grants from and in cooperation with the Michigan Department of Transportation with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and other federal and state funding agencies as well as local membership contributions and designated management agency fees.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is developed in coordination with the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water. SEMCOG acknowledges the work of this partnership and the many communities and counties that participate in this group as much of this work is possible through the annual water quality planning support from the region's designated management agencies. Additional support is provided by Southeast Michigan road agencies, funders, consultants, and nonprofits.

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SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN PARTNERS FOR CLEAN WATER

With an abundance of water flowing throughout Southeast Michigan, it is important that communities throughout the region work together to actively support water quality management. As the designated water quality management agency for Southeast Michigan, SEMCOG has been actively involved with water resource planning since the 1970s. SEMCOG focuses on an integrative approach to water resource management. This involves advancing stormwater education and projects, the blue economy, natural resource protection and enhancement, and water infrastructure systems. As part of this integrative management approach, SEMCOG formed the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water to help meet stormwater permitting compliance and to support regional water quality management.

The [Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water](#) consists of [SEMCOG members](#), including representatives from local communities and counties, as well as representatives from watershed councils, not-for-profit agencies, and the private sector. The purpose of the group is to facilitate information sharing, coordinate public education, and leverage resources on water quality, stormwater management, and green infrastructure implementation. This report details regional water quality activities and projects conducted by SEMCOG over the past year and supports ongoing Phase II compliance activities. The information in this report helps communities and counties meet the reporting requirements associated with the federal Phase II Stormwater Regulation. From stormwater and water resource management activities to green infrastructure implementation to flooding resilience and flooding risk projects, SEMCOG is actively working with members and local communities to support water quality improvements throughout the region.

Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water held four meetings during the 2024-2025 fiscal year:

- [September 12, 2024](#)
- [January 28, 2025](#)
- [February 25, 2025](#)
- [June 24, 2025](#)

COMMUNICATION, PUBLIC EDUCATION, AND OUTREACH

ONE WATER CAMPAIGN

SEMCOG, in partnership with the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA), launched the One Water Campaign for Southeast Michigan in 2019. The One Water campaign is aligned with Michigan’s Great Lakes and Fresh Water Week and is a dedicated multimedia initiative that underscores the vital connection between stormwater, drinking water, and wastewater. The 2024 campaign, which ran from June 1-9, focused on stewardship and the crucial role of protecting and enhancing water quality in Southeast Michigan.



Southeast Michigan’s Partners for Clean Water group plays a key role in these efforts. This group, which includes scientists, watershed organization representatives, consultants, community planners, and water resource experts, meets quarterly to discuss significant water issues and projects across the region. With over 20 years of collaboration, this group initiated the “Ours to Protect” campaign, whose messages still appear on signs along local waterways. The Partners for Clean Water have significantly contributed to the development of the One Water campaign, offering ideas and input on key messages related to stormwater, wastewater, and drinking water.

Communities in Southeast Michigan with MS4 Phase II Public Education Program (PEP) requirements can effectively leverage SEMCOG’s One Water Campaign to meet their educational permit requirements. The One Water campaign offers resources and outreach materials designed to raise awareness about protecting and enhancing water quality. [A chart that displays how One Water Campaign materials can support a community’s MS4 Phase II PEP requirements](#) was published in 2024.

In September 2025, SEMCOG published the [2025 One Water Implementation Report](#). This document provides an overview of the One Water messages for the 2024 campaign and includes data on overall public engagement throughout the duration of the campaign. To view One Water materials and find other helpful information on wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water, visit SEMCOG’s [One Water webpage](#). This webpage contains educational videos, social media posts, tip cards, blog series, and more.

SEMCOG’S ENVIRONMENT WEBPAGE

Additional environmental information for Southeast Michigan is available on SEMCOG’s [Environment and Infrastructure webpage](#). This page contains updated information about SEMCOG’s latest projects and easy access to all relevant stormwater resources. You can learn more about water infrastructure by visiting SEMCOG’s [Water Resources and Infrastructure webpage](#), which contains information about SEMCOG’s work in the stormwater, drinking water, and wastewater work. SEMCOG also has a [GREEN \(Growing our Resilience, Equity, and Economy with Nature\) Initiative webpage](#), offering a regional framework showcasing local projects’ impact for improved funding and partnerships. This page includes the approved [Strategic Framework](#) as well as the [GREEN Dashboard](#).

SEMCOG recently added a [Flooding and Resilience webpage](#), which includes contains information regarding SEMCOG’s Flooding and Resilience Task Force, the upcoming Flooding and Resilience Plan, Southeast Michigan’s current and future expected precipitation, [Southeast Michigan Regional Climate Resilience Framework](#), and more.

Table: Website Analytics

Webpage	Total Views (Nov. 2023 – Feb. 2024)	Total Users (Nov. 2023 – Feb. 2024)
Water Resources and Infrastructure	85	29
Stormwater	230	128
Wastewater	161	117
Drinking Water	138	99
Partnerships	59	41
Water Infrastructure Planning Guide	63	97
Water Infrastructure Policies and Actions	12	11
Flooding and Infrastructure Resilience	288	100
Climate Action	200	82
GREEN Initiative	277	177
Green Infrastructure	220	121
Green Infrastructure Vision	31	28
Low Impact Development Manual	47	47
Great Lakes, Green Streets Guidebook	16	16
Parks and Recreation	118	45
Parks and Recreation Plan for Southeast MI	22	22
Southeast Michigan ParkFinder	2106	597
Southeast Michigan ParkFinder App	204	101
Southeast Michigan Trail Explorer	504	411

MEDIA

SEMCOG has multiple publications, including the [Regional Update](#) and Environmental Exchange newsletters, blogs, and social media. Media activities conducted by SEMCOG are described in the following section.

REGIONAL UPDATE



SEMCOG's biweekly Regional Update newsletter is the organization's most important member communication tool. It provides timely information of regional interest 25-26 times a year. Articles include notice of SEMCOG meetings, SEMCOG University workshops, reports, data, news releases, public notices, items of regional interest sent to SEMCOG by partner organizations, membership information (e.g., new members), and legislative information related to SEMCOG work. Target audience includes SEMCOG members, partner organizations, and media contacts. Newsletter is sent via Informz email. Regional Update is posted on www.semco.org, and stories are posted on social media. Open rates are tracked in monthly progress reports. Regional Update was delivered 140,227 times in the fiscal year. The open rate was 31.8%. The click rate was 18.4%. The unsubscribe rate was 0%. A representative sample of Regional Update issues:

- [October 22, 2024](#)
- [December 17, 2024](#)
- [February 18, 2025](#)
- [June 10, 2025](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL EXCHANGE



Environmental Exchange is a monthly newsletter highlighting environmental news, grants, and best practices for SEMCOG members to learn about and stay up to date. The newsletter has 411 subscribers, to date. The following issues of Environmental Exchange were published from Fiscal Year 2024-25.

- [July 2024](#)
- [August 2024](#)
- [November 2024](#)
- [December 2024](#)
- [January 2025](#)
- [January 2025 – Special Edition: MS4 Needs Assessment Survey](#)
- [February 2025](#)
- [March 2025](#)
- [April 2025](#)
- [May 2025](#)
- [June 2025](#)

BLOGS

SEMCOG publishes blogs highlighting regional environmental successes. The following blogs were published during Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

- [Earth Day, One Water, and Collective Action](#)
- [Going with the Flow: Turning to the Water as a Placemaking Driver](#)
- [There is only One Water, and it's ours to protect](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA

SEMCOG maintains a presence on social media platforms including Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn. Social media platforms are ways to spread messages to the public. They are used to circulate blog posts and information from both the Regional Update and the Environmental Exchange. SEMCOG also uses social media to highlight the Green Infrastructure Education series and bring attention to the “What You Can Do...To Protect Our Waterways,” public education campaign. SEMCOG includes messages throughout the year on how Southeast Michigan residents can help protect water quality to keep our followers informed. In addition to giving followers everyday actions, they can do to ensure they understand how to become better water stewards, SEMCOG also uses social media to highlight events and projects happening throughout the region and to share best practices for protecting environmental quality.

Ongoing social media efforts as of June 2025:

- X (Twitter) has 3,634 followers (down 163 from 3,797 followers in July 2024)
 - 176 posts
- Facebook has 3,436 followers (up 79 followers from 3,357 in July 2024)
 - 234 posts
- LinkedIn has 2,263 followers (up 419 followers from 1,844 in July 2024)
 - 129 posts
- Instagram has 858 followers (up 131 followers from 727 in July 2024)
 - 131 posts
- TikTok has 94 followers (up 15 followers from 79 in July 2024)
 - 25 posts

MUNICIPAL TRAINING AND GOVERNMENT OUTREACH

SEMCOG UNIVERSITIES

SEMCOG University workshops provide opportunities for SEMCOG member local elected leaders and staff to learn. Environmentally oriented SEMCOG Universities are described in this section. In addition to SEMCOG Universities, SEMCOG also provides technical assistance and hosts multiple committees, which provide additional educational and outreach opportunities.

SEMCOG offers many SEMCOG Universities in a webinar format. This has given us the chance to record these webinars and make them available for everyone. Visit the SEMCOG Membership Services page to view the [On-Demand Webinar Library](#), and be sure to view the list of upcoming webinars to stay up-to-date on regional environmental news.

SEMCOG UNIVERSITY: ILLICIT DISCHARGE AND ELIMINATION PROGRAM (IDEP)

SEMCOG, in partnership with ECT Consulting, held in-person Illicit Discharge Elimination Program (IDEP) Trainings in 2024. These trainings were developed to assist communities with their MS4 Phase II Stormwater permit compliance. The trainings help educate public works staff on how to identify potential pollutants while out in the field, and how to properly report

and treat these pollutants. SEMCOG also provides training certificates for participants.

IDEP Module 1: Alert Observer and IDEP Module 2: Investigator

SEMCOG offered two training days for both IDEP Module 1: Alert Observer and IDEP Module 2: Investigator – offered in Macomb and Wayne counties to accommodate schedules. IDEP Module 1: Alert Observer training sessions were offered on October 8th in Clinton Township and October 9th in Canton Township, both in-person. IDEP Module 2: Investigator training sessions were offered on October 8th in Clinton Township, October 9th and November 13th in Canton Township, in-person. [The recorded version of the IDEP Module 1: Alert Observer](#) was offered on SEMCOG’s website for those unable to attend in-person. The total attendance for the IDEP training sessions totaled 242, with over 180 attended in-person.

SEMCOG UNIVERSITY: POLLUTION PREVENTION AND GOOD HOUSEKEEPING (PPGH)

[Module 1: Pollution Prevention and Good Housekeeping](#) webinar training was held on October 10, 2024 and had a total of 71 attendees. In 2024, ECT and SEMCOG offered a new addition to the training series; a guided tour of the Farmington Hills Department of Public Works (DPW) facility, showcasing best practices in Pollution Prevention & Good Housekeeping. This in-person training session provided real-life examples of effective housekeeping measures and attendees participated in a live demonstration of how to conduct routine PPGH inspections. Attendance for this demonstration was limited to 25 due to space restrictions.

SEMCOG COMMITTEES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SEMCOG’s [Executive Committee](#) conducts the main policy work and is the financial control body of the organization, providing final approval of regional studies and plans, as well as taking action on policies and legislative positions.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SEMCOG’s [General Assembly](#) consists of delegates and alternates from all SEMCOG member communities and educational institutions. During the March 2023 General Assembly, a panel session to discuss collaboration on Regional Water Infrastructure Priorities and Initiatives was held and the General Assembly adopted the Water Infrastructure Policies and Actions. Additionally, at the October 2024 General Assembly, Clinton Township, Huron River Watershed Council and the City of Northville presented on their Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) projects regarding implementation of green infrastructure.

SEMCOG CURRENT PROJECTS

MUNICIPAL SEPARATE STORM SEWER SYSTEM TRACKING TOOL FOR POST-CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS COMPLIANCE

SEMCOG, in coordination with Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner (OCWRC),

developed an MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) Post-Construction Tracking Tool to support local agency compliance with NPDES MS4 Phase II Stormwater Permit requirements. Post-construction refers to stormwater standards required for new developments and redevelopments, specifically establishing how stormwater is managed from these projects. This tool is available to all local agencies within the SEMCOG region who are required to comply with these related post-construction standards within their NPDES stormwater permits.

The tracking tool utilizes ArcGIS Survey 123 to capture required project and stormwater management calculation details. The tool is designed for county, community, and consultant input to collect individual project development post-construction plan review data. SEMCOG summarizes the information for each permittee and provides that information back in a report format to each contributing local agency who then submits to EGLE as part of their compliance reporting. The tool requests local agencies to input basic location information for new and redevelopments, detailed engineering pre-development/post-development site criteria, and quantities of stormwater managed. The tool supports MS4 permit compliance with consistent reporting format and details. This is a vital tool for local agencies to demonstrate the success of alternative approaches to typical permit requirements. In 2025, thirty communities in four counties (Livingston, Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne) submitted data using the Post-Construction Tracking Tool, totaling 134 projects. This is an increase of 72% project submittals from 2024.

INFRASTRUCTURE COORDINATION AND INTEGRATING CLIMATE RESILIENCY

SEMCOG is working to enhance infrastructure coordination in the region to lead efforts consistent with the goals of the 21st Century Infrastructure Report and the Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC). This effort seeks to institutionalize a process within the existing transportation planning framework that will ensure efficient and strategic investment of resources for project planning and coordination of above and below ground infrastructure, both public and private. Institutionalizing this process includes an online mechanism and strategic planning efforts for sharing infrastructure project capital improvement plans. SEMCOG aims to institutionalize a process for sharing infrastructure project data for near term (4-5 year) and longer term (20 year) projects.

SEMCOG has coordinated with municipalities and partner agencies to collect CIP data to test the SEMCOG regional connection to the State MIC portal. The next steps to wrap up the data collection are to create an outreach strategy when the MIC portal is live to educate member communities and partner agencies and share instruction on how to participate at the regional and state levels.

Throughout this fiscal year, SEMCOG collaborated with MIC staff to develop a workplan for this project that encompasses data collection, surveys, and workshops. Additionally, SEMCOG played a role in facilitating the water infrastructure task force. SEMCOG actively participated in the Water Asset Management Council, to support data collection and strengthening asset management at the local level.

SEMCOG forged active partnerships with both internal and external stakeholders in preparation for the Infrastructure Coordination Webinar. This entailed coordination with entities such as the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Michigan Infrastructure Council (MIC). In addition to the webinar, SEMCOG facilitated a workshop which served as a platform for presenting findings, insights, and feedback gathered from the

collaborative endeavors. The primary emphasis was on establishing a more structured and efficient process for disseminating CIP data, along with enhancing coordination concerning project timing, funding requests, and loan applications.

In addition, SEMCOG actively engaged with multiple stakeholders, including MDOT, GLWA, DWSD, ACEC, and the MIC, to institutionalize a regional infrastructure coordination process. This involved conducting meetings and background research to ensure effective coordination and integration of resiliency planning into RTP development processes. SEMCOG also prepared and presented updates on the infrastructure coordination workshop and upcoming regional resiliency plan at the Executive Committee meeting, reflecting their commitment to transparency and collaboration with key decision-makers.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE AND GREEN PROJECTS

As the designated water quality management agency for Southeast Michigan, as determined under section 208 of the Federal Clean Water Act, SEMCOG continued implementation of the [Water Resource Plan for Southeast Michigan](#) and the [Water Infrastructure Planning Guide](#).

SEMCOG developed the [Regional Resilience Framework](#) to guide project and investment needs for the region. The Framework summarizes actions to assess, plan, and implement resiliency efforts at the local, county and regional levels for communities and organizations in Southeast Michigan. Additionally, the project workplan included the development of a [data portfolio](#) to compile available relevant information for flooding related projects, specifically focused on stormwater drainage. This project also included a [summary of funding strategies](#) to address flooding in the region.

The Regional Resiliency Framework created a baseline for SEMCOG to apply for the FHWA PROTECT grant opportunity. In 2024, SEMCOG was awarded the PROTECT funding, to develop a Flooding and Resilience for Southeast Michigan. In June of 2025 began the development of a Flooding & Resilience Plan for Southeast Michigan. The plan will build a pathway to resiliency identify realistic and viable projects of all scales to mitigate regional flooding, both now and into the future. It will also help to build local community readiness, identifying strategies for communities to address emergency response and preparedness, planning standards, and stormwater engineering and design. SEMCOG contracted with TetraTech as the main consultant for the project. TetraTech has subcontracts with Hubbell, Roth, & Clark Inc. (HRC), Drummond Carpenter, and ICF, to help guide and complete the project tasks. The project will conclude in March 2027.

To guide the development of this plan, SEMCOG has an ongoing Flooding Task Force, made up of more than 80 stakeholders from local communities, elected officials, nonprofit organizations, researchers, utilities, and more. The task force met twice in 2025 and will continue to meet in 2026.

Additionally, SEMCOG also participates in other regional resiliency initiatives, including projects with both U of M and GLWA. As regional partner agencies, we are working collaboratively to align these initiatives.

In Spring 2025, SEMCOG met with the drain commissioners from each County, to hear more about their flooding challenges and priority locations for stormwater improvements. These conversations will help inform regional priorities for the Flooding and Resilience Plan.

In June 2025, SEMCOG and their consulting team began work on Task 3, the Large-Scale Nature Based Solutions Analysis. The consulting team developed an online, interactive [Nature Based Solutions Dashboard](#), to highlight potential opportunities for large-scale nature based solutions in the region. This dashboard was presented to SEMCOG members and partner across the region, to get feedback on potential sites and determine priority areas for developing concept plans. These concept plans will guide the next steps to project implementation.

The year saw SEMCOG's active involvement in several advisory and committee meetings, such as Rouge River Advisory Council, Middle Huron Partners, and Stormwater Hub Quarterly Advisory Group, where we discussed a wide range of topics related to resiliency and water management. SEMCOG's also made significant contributions to the Detroit River Watershed Management Plan by attending Steering Committee meetings and the Technical Advisory Team, acting as a technical resource.

To enhance and update the environmental sensitivity analysis for all transportation projects, SEMCOG worked with Highland Economics (HE) to develop an [Eco Planning Tool \(EPT\)](#). This tool provides an online planning - level service to local agencies, incorporating more recent environmental data and initiatives to inform project selection. SEMCOG met with Highland Economics monthly to touch base about necessary data for the tool, as well as who the tool is targeted to and develop an easy user interface. During this fiscal year SEMCOG sent over needed data to Highland Economics' GIS team. Their GIS team utilized this data to stand up an online tool. SEMCOG worked with their members and partners throughout the year, to test the iterations of the tool and make changes to provide enhanced user experience. Additionally, SEMCOG worked with Hubbel, Roth, and Clark (HRC) on the development of a Stormwater Planning Tool (SPT). This SPT is used to better understand how green infrastructure and conservation projects impact water quality through stormwater runoff and pollutant loading. It connects to the EPT, by providing the runoff and stormwater calculations for projects, and for the best management practices. Both tools were released in October 2025.

SEMCOG advanced recommendations in the Strategic Framework for Growing our Resiliency, Equity, and Economy with Nature (GREEN), which establishes regional metrics, targets, and priority areas to improve the quality, quantity, and connectivity of the region's green infrastructure network. This initiative is driven by the goal to ensure that public benefits of green infrastructure are resilient, equitable, and improve the quality of life in Southeast Michigan communities.

SEMCOG convened two meetings of the GREEN Implementation Team, which collaboratively engages regional stakeholders to coordinate and supports local efforts that can help reach regional targets for green stormwater infrastructure, tree canopy, wetlands, land conservation, and access to nature. Team meetings have included representatives from SEMCOG member communities, along with partner organizations that manage land and implement green infrastructure in Southeast Michigan. Presentations and discussion topics have covered the latest funding opportunities, best practices from local and regional initiatives, and how to demonstrate investment opportunities and track our progress as a region. SEMCOG continued to develop, promote, and apply the [GREEN Dashboard](#), which aims to share SEMCOG's data and resources with its members, while understanding more about project opportunities and needs in the region.

SEMCOG also launched the [Southeast Michigan Wetland Mapper](#) and [Storymap](#), launched

in May 2025. The Mapper highlights the region's diverse wetlands and their various functions, with data sourced from SEMCOG's Open Data Portal and is based on the US Fish & Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory, updated in 2015 through collaboration with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU). This analysis focuses on high-functioning wetlands, highlighting wetlands that function for water quality, carbon sequestration, flood storage, and habitat. The corresponding Storymap acts as background information for the importance of Southeast Michigan wetlands, as well as a user guide for the tool.

SEMCOG is presently contracting with DU to update the National Wetland Inventory for completion by June 2026.

PARKS AND RECREATION

SEMCOG implemented policies and actions in the [Parks and Recreation Plan for Southeast Michigan](#), including continued updates to and promotion of the [Southeast Michigan Park Finder](#) interactive map and mobile application, the [Southeast Michigan Trail Explorer](#), the [Great Lakes Way story map](#), and [New Future of Southeast Michigan Parks](#) recommendations. These regional priorities and resources were promoted through SEMCOG's participation in steering committees and planning teams for regional recreation projects, including ongoing engagement and assistance with State, regional, and local governments, and partners in the nonprofit, philanthropic, and private sector. All these resources are regularly utilized to support local communities with funding applications, promote the region's outdoor recreation opportunities, and guide the development of plans, projects, and policies with SEMCOG's members and partners.

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