

2026 MRWA Annual Conference Final Agenda

Location	time	Class Name	Description	Speaker	W - WW
Tuesday March 17, 2026					
Three Fires	11:30am - 12:45pm	Women in Water Lunch			
Anishnabeg	11am - 6pm	Registration			
Saginaw	1:00pm - 4:30pm	Asset Management	This class will cover the basics of asset management, capacity development and funding. Topics included will be critical infrastructure, maintenance and EPA sustainable practices. Also covered is Core Components of Asset Management and integrating common tools for better management of assets and locations.	Loyd Rawlings, Technical Training Manager, USABlueBook.com, Cell: 417-416-3916, Loyd.Rawlings@usabluebook.com	0.3 WT & 0.3WWM
Entertainment Hall	4pm - 7pm	Exhibitor Set-Up			
Saginaw	7pm - 10pm	Euchre Tournament			

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Wednesday, March 18, 2026					
Grand Foyer	7am	Continental Coffee Break			
Anishnabeg	7am - 3pm	Attendee & Exhibitor Registration			
Registration	7am - 11am	Raffle Ticket Sales			
Entertainment Hall	7am - 11am	Exhibitor Set-Up			
Black River	7:15am	Annual Business Meeting			
Black River	7:15am - 9am	Operator Ethics: The Invisible Backbone of Operations	In a world full of operational and regulatory challenges, daily decisions reflect an operator's ethics and training. This class explores how ethics and training shape decisions, how operators respond to unethical leadership demands, and teaches the skills needed to be a great operator, decision-maker, and leader in the water and wastewater community.	Loyd Rawlings, Technical Training Manager, USABlueBook.com, Cell: 417-416-3916, Loyd.Rawlings@usabluebook.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWM

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Wednesday, March 18, 2026					
Sagianw	9:15am - 11:30am	Lead and Copper Updates	Field surprises and mitigation strategies. Logistics, supplies, funding, and contracting for LSLR. Community engagement and equitable LSLR. Prioritization for LSLR (utilizing data, LSLs density, overburdened communities, EJ, sensitive population).	Jean-Pierre Nshimiyimana, PhD, LSR Specialist; DWEHD, EGLE, 517-420-8204, shimiyimanaj1@michigan.gov; Eric Pocan, Unit Supervisor, Water Infrastructure Funding & Financing Section, Finance Division, EGLE; Dan Sorek, PE, Prein & Newhof; Jeff Weeks & James Jameson, Department of Public Works, City of Ferndale	0.2 WT
Swan Creek	9:15am - 10:15am	Water Loss through Leak Detection and Finding Inflow Infiltration through Smoke Testing	Smoke testing works by forcing non-toxic, artificially generated smoke into sewer lines to visually identify leaks, cracks, or faulty connections. The benefits include quickly and cost-effectively finding and fixing problems like illegal stormwater connections, pipe breaks, and uncapped lines, which helps prevent sewage backups, reduces treatment costs, and minimizes the risk of sewer gases entering buildings. You will learn how smoke testing works and how it can be a quick and easy way to detect leaks.	Matt Lumbert, Wastewater Technician, Michigan Rural Water Association, 269-908-3792, mlumbert@mrwa.net and Jonathan Edwards, Water Circuit Rider, Michigan Rural Water Association, 231-429-3289, jedwards@mrwa.net	0.1 W T & 0.1 WWT
Black River	9:15am - 10:15am	Covering your assets for Sustainability	Effective, proactive water tank management provides significant financial advantages over reactive repairs for rural utilities. This presentation offers a clear cost-benefit analysis of long-term strategies. We will highlight the measurable return on investment (ROI) through real-world case studies showing reduced costs and improved system efficiency. Managers will leave with actionable data to demonstrate the value of comprehensive asset programs.	Bill Bohlen, Water System Consultant, USG Water Solutions, 989-578-1412, william.bohlen@usgwater.com; Sabrina Edgar, Manager, Village of Grass Lake, s.edgar@villageofgrasslake.com; Apurv Aggarwal, USG Water Solutions, apurv.aggarwal@usgwater.com	0.1 WT

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Ojibway	9:15am - 10:15am	Energy Management Comes in Many Ways	A case study of using grant funds to improve well performance and save energy and money on your electrical bills for a small Michigan community. This will show the steps taken by the community to apply for an energy grant, and when the grant was awarded to coordinate with a well company to have the well cleaned and a new motor installed. The energy from before the cleaning and motor replacement was charted and the new motor energy use was compared for the savings.	Ginger Van Conet, Energy Efficiency Specialist, Michigan Rural Water Association, 517-444-1321, ggrant@mrwa.net	0.1 W T & 0.1 WWM
Three Fires	9:15am - 10:15am	USDA Farm Service Agency Updates, Programs and Funding Sources	There are numerous programs and funding sources that communities can participate in at the USDA Farm Service Agency. An overview will be provided by USDA staff.	Kelly Losey, Acting Conservation Chief Program Specialist, Michigan Farm Service Agency, 517-324-5108, kelly.losey@usda.gov	0.1 WT

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Wednesday, March 18, 2026					
Anishnabeg	10am	Water Taste Test			
Sagianw	10:30am - 11:30am	CONTINUED: Lead and Copper Updates	Field surprises and mitigation strategies. Logistics, supplies, funding, and contracting for LSLR. Community engagement and equitable LSLR. Prioritization for LSLR (utilizing data, LSLs density, overburdened communities, EJ, sensitive population).	Jean-Pierre Nshimiyimana, PhD, LSR Specialist; DWEHD, EGLE, 517-420-8204, shimiyimanaj1@michigan.gov; Eric Pocan, Unit Supervisor, Water Infrastructure Funding & Financing Section, Finance Division, EGLE; Dan Sorek, PE, Prein & Newhof; Jeff Weeks & James Jameson, Department of Public Works, City of Ferndale	continued
Swan Creek	10:30am - 11:30am	Are You Ready for an Emergency?	Learn about Emergency Operational Plans, Alternative Operations Plans, Risk Management Plans and tools for doing roundtable planning and training.	Loyd Rawlings, Technical Training Manager, USABlueBook.com, Cell: 417-416-3916, Loyd.Rawlings@usabluebook.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWM
Black River	10:30am - 11:30am	Municipal Funding	Securing funding is a critical step in turning plans into progress, providing the financial support needed to launch projects, expand services or improve infrastructure. By identifying the right funding sources and presenting a clear, compelling case, organizations can build strong partnerships and ensure long-term success.	Mike Vanderploeg, PE, F&V, 616-490-0804, mvanderploeg@fveng.com; Matt Biolette, F&V, 616-330-8887, mbiolette@fveng.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWM
Ojibway	10:30am - 11:30am	MiEnviro system	MiEnviro Portal is the web-based software used by the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) for permitting and compliance. This training will consist of a brief demo on the most frequently used aspects and most helpful tools for operators, including: DMR entry and tips, Schedules of Compliance (SOCs), navigation changes and tips, and site user management.	Julia Miller, Environmental Quality Specialist, EGLE, 989-295-3913, millerj2@michigan.gov	0.1 WW M
Three Fires	10:30am - 11:30am	How PRV Operate & Technology	How PRV's operate, why and how they're used. As well as the new technology you should expect from your PRV	Jim Graber, Cla-Val, 440-523-0496, jgraber@cla-val.com	0.1 WT

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Wednesday, March 18, 2026					
Entertainment Hall	11am - 1pm	Lunch			
Entertainment Hall	11am - 6pm	Raffle Ticket Sales			
Entertainment Hall	Noon - 6	Exhibits			0.1 WO & 0.1 WWO
Entertainment Hall A	1:30pm - 2:30pm	MiWARN	Learn about Mi-WARN and how it is designed to provide a utility-to-utility response during an emergency.	Kyle Bond, Community Water and Wastewater Specialist, Michigan Rural Water Association, 989-745-4405, kbond@mrwa.net	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWM
Entertainment Hall B	1:30pm - 2:30pm	Water and Sewer Rates	Why they are important. Differences in rate structures and the advantages and disadvantages of each.	Joe VanDommelen, EPA Training Specialist, Michigan Rural Water Association, 517-525-4553, jvandommelen@mrwa.net	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWM
	2:30pm -	Break			
Entertainment Hall A	3pm - 4pm	A Simple Introduction to Chemistry	The basics of water and wastewater chemistry will be covered in the basic overview. Topics covered will be atoms, molecules, periodic table, compounds, ions, vapor pressure, acids, bases, and pH.	John Holland, Water Quality Action Specialist, Michigan Rural Water Association, 989-506-0439, jholland@mrwa.net	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWT
Entertainment Hall B	3pm - 4pm	Chlorine Safety	Chlorine safety is essential for protecting employees, the public, and the integrity of your system. Proper storage, handling, training, and use of personal protective equipment help prevent accidental releases and exposure. A strong chlorine safety program ensures regulatory compliance while maintaining safe and effective disinfection practices.	Dave Mitchell, Mitchell Pumps, 267-217-2828, dave@mitchellpumpnservice.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWT
Entertainment Hall	4pm - 6pm	Meet & Greet			
Entertainment Hall	4pm	Water Taste Test Finale			
Entertainment Hall	4:30pm	Water Tower Contest			
Black River	7pm - 1am	Cornhole Tournament/Hospitality Suite			

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Thurs March 19, 2026					
Entertainment Hall	7:30am	Continental Coffee Break			
Entertainment Hall	7:30am - 11am	Registration			
Entertainment Hall	7:30am - 9:45am	Raffle Ticket Sales			
Entertainment Hall	7:30am - 11am	Exhibits			0.1 WO & 0.1WWO
Entertainment Hall A	8:30am - 9:30am	Maps and Drawings	Maps, drawings and records are the only way to inventory underground assets. This course looks at mapping and gatebooks, along with the key information they need to contain. It also covers the latest GIS layering technology.	Loyd Rawlings, Technical Training Manager, USABlueBook.com, Cell: 417-416-3916, Loyd.Rawlings@usabluebook.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWT
Entertainment Hall B	8:30am - 9:30am	Liquid Chemical Metering Systems, AKA Why the Plumbing is as Important as the Pump	We will look into appropriate use and positioning of pressure release valves, injection valves and corporation stops, backpressure valves, foot valves, pulsation dampeners, pressure gauges, and how failure modes can point to these devices or inform specific pump failures. We will look at common municipal water and wastewater treatment chemicals and their unique challenges.	Joe Ciurlino, Solberg Knowles and Associates, 412-737-5543, jciurlino@solbergknowles.com	0.1WT & 0.1WWT
Entertainment Hall	9:45am	Poker Hand Turn In			
Entertainment Hall	10am	Poker Hand Winner Annoujnced			
Entertainment Hall	10am	Raffle Prize Drawing			
Entertainment Hall	11am - 12:30pm	Lunch			
Entertainment Hall	11am	Exhibitor Tear Down			

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Thurs March 19, 2026					
Swan Creek	11:30am - 12:30pm	Operator Ethics: The Foundation of Proper Decision Making	In a world full of operational and regulatory challenges, daily decisions reflect an operator's ethics and training. This class explores how ethics and training shape decisions, how operators respond to unethical leadership demands, and teaches the skills needed to be a great operator, decision-maker, and leader in the water and wastewater community.	Loyd Rawlings, Technical Training Manager, USABlueBook.com, Cell: 417-416-3916, Loyd.Rawlings@usabluebook.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWM
Black River	11:30am - 12:30pm	Basics of pH	This presentation is specifically geared towards operators taking tests. At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to define and explain what pH is and how to properly run a test. Participants will be able to interpret and diagnose the most common issues with running a pH test.	Melody White, CWP, MSc, Principal Technical Consultant, In-Situ, 970-818-1524, mwhite@in-situ.com; Andrew Luessenhop, In-Situ, Regional Sales Manager, 708-541-3376, aLuessenhop@in-situ.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWT
Three Fires	11:30am - 12:30pm	MI Wastewater Operator Update	Discussion of the different certification programs and processes. During this presentation, you will learn more about exam requirements, application processes, exam format, maintaining your licenses, and changes we are making to the program.	Alyssa Sarver, Wastewater Certification & Exam Specialist, 517-881-1371, E: SarverA@Michigan.gov; Sarah Marshall, Sr. Environmental Quality Analyst, 517-388-6679, E: MarshallS15@Michigan.gov; Marian Maier, 517-582-4848, E: MaierM3@Michigan.gov	0.1 WWM

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Thurs March 19, 2026					
Swan Creek	12:45pm - 1:45pm	Water Operator Update	The Drinking Water Operator Training & Certification program has a role in ensuring that municipalities/facilities have certified, quality operators on staff. This is accomplished by offering educational trainings, testing, and other services to operators. We will be discussing common issues and questions we get about the program such as restricted licenses, reciprocity, exam applications, exam scoring, question validation, and subject matter experts.	Scott Schmidt, Senior Environmental Quality Analyst, Drinking Water & Environmental Health Division, EGLE, P: 517-899-6906, schmidtS@Michigan.gov	0.1 WT
Black River	12:45pm - 1:45pm	Centrifugal Pumps Overview	Every system works with centrifugal pumps. This overview explores classifications, essential parts, maintenance and troubleshooting techniques every operator needs to know	Loyd Rawlings, Technical Training Manager, USABlueBook.com, Cell: 417-416-3916, Loyd.Rawlings@usabluebook.com	0.2 WT & 0.2 WWT
Ojibway	12:45pm - 1:45pm	Water Storage Tank Maintenance and Inspections	Learn the critical components of tank maintenance and inspections, including coating service life planning, rehabilitation strategies, and regulatory compliance. This session will explore the different types of maintenance inspections, the pros and cons of each, and the specific responsibilities of operators. Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of how to plan, prioritize, and move forward confidently with their tank maintenance and rehabilitation needs.	Tarin Minkel, PE, Project Manager, Dixon Engineering, 989-613-0710, tarin.minkel@dixonengineering.net and James Rowley, PE, Dixon Engineering, james.rowley@dixonengineering.net	0.1 WT
Three Fires	12:45pm - 1:45pm	USDA Rural Development: Programs & Updates	Overview of rural development programs for water and wastewater	Valarie Handy, Deputy State Director, USDA, 231-233-0052, Valarie.handy@usda.gov	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWM

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Thurs March 19, 2026					
Swan Creek	2pm - 3pm	PFAS Treatment for Rural Water and Wastewater Treatment Systems	Attendees will learn why PFAS pose significant health and regulatory risks for rural drinking water systems, including new federal standards and state-level requirements. They will understand the unique challenges rural systems face, such as limited staffing, aging infrastructure, and budget constraints, and how these factors shape feasible PFAS treatment strategies. Participants will learn how to characterize PFAS-impacted sources, interpret sampling requirements like UCMR5, and use water quality data to develop an appropriate design basis. They will compare leading PFAS treatment technologies-including GAC, ion exchange, and multi-functional media-along with system layouts, waste handling, and lifecycle cost considerations tailored to smaller systems. Finally, attendees will learn about funding pathways, community engagement techniques, and practical next steps for planning and implementing PFAS treatment projects in rural communities.	Phil Farina, Midwest Business Development Manager, Clear Creek Systems, 419-346-8848, pfarina@clearcreeksystems.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWT
Black River	2pm - 3pm	Centrifugal Pumps Overview		Loyd Rawlings, Technical Training Manager, USABlueBook	see above
Three Fires	2pm - 3pm	Pressure Management: Optimizing your Water System with Remote Pressure & Temperature Monitoring	Participants in this session will learn the benefits of pressure monitoring and the challenges with deploying various technologies. Case studies will be shared identifying various hydraulic events and how pressure and transient data has helped the utility realize events that were previously unknown to them.	Colin Reardon, iHydrant, 330-502-1270, Colin.reardon@ihydrant.com	0.1 W T

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Thurs March 19, 2026					
Black River	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Dechlorination Basics	Get an overview of chemicals and techniques for dechlorinating water and wastewater. This course covers when and where you should use specific chemicals, as well as the safety and environmental issues that need to be addressed. It also explores the how's & why's of monitoring Dechlorination efficiency.	Loyd Rawlings, Technical Training Manager, USABlueBook.com, Cell: 417-416-3916, Loyd.Rawlings@usabluebook.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWT
Ojibway	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Source Water Protection Program Plan Development and Implementation	This class will discuss what MRWA Source Water Protection Program (SWPP) development and implementation assistance entails for public water supply systems. Discussion will include what information needs to be developed and collected prior to working with the MRWA, how to organize and create a SWPP Committee, steps throughout the development and implementation process and examples of success stories throughout Michigan.	Kelly Hon, Source Water Specialist, Michigan Rural Water Association, 989-621-2361, khon@mrwa.net	0.1 W T
Three Fires	3:15pm - 4:15pm	Water Loss and Wastewater Inflow and Infiltration Management	Attendees will learn how leak detectors, leak correlators, Networked leak logger systems, and live pressure monitors can help detect, pinpoint, and reduce water loss and main bursts. Best practices for metering water and wastewater flow and level data and flow logging manholes will be presented to reduce water loss and sewer system infiltration. Tracer dyes, smoke testing, and flow monitoring will be presented as ways to detect and prevent sewer inflow and infiltration. Operators will learn how these technologies and activities can be integrated into a mobile GIS and Asset management app.	Mark Beatty, CEO/Principal Owner, Utility Technologies, 513-505-8503, mark@utility.biz	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWT
Saginaw	5pm - 6pm	Reception			
Saginaw	6pm - 8pm	Banquet			
Swan Creek	8pm - Midnight	Hospitality Suite			

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Friday, March 20, 2026					
	8am - 10am	Continental Coffee Break/Registration			
Swan Creek	8:30am - 9:30am	MISS DIG	We will cover giving small systems more tickets than they can handle, rate increases due to contractors, record retention and more.	Colleen Goddard, Education Department Senior Manager, MISS DIG 811, 906-789-3083, cgoddard@missdig811.org	0.1 WT & WWO
Black River	8:30am - 9:30am	Basics of Chlorination	This presentation is specifically geared towards operators taking tests. At the conclusion of this presentation, participants will be able to define and explain chlorine distinction as it applies to Drinking Water and Wastewater. The participants will be able to differentiate between free chlorine and total chlorine and the testing of each. Participates will also be able to diagnose and evaluate the most problems associated with chlorine testing both in the lab and with process instrumentations.	Melody White, CWP, MSc, Principal Technical Consultant, In-Situ, 970-818-1524, mwhite@in-situ.com; Andrew Luessenhop, In-Situ, Regional Sales Manager, 708-541-3376, aLuessenhop@in-situ.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWT
Three Fires	8:30am - 9:30am	MiEHDWIS	Learn about how MiEHDWIS can help you complete tasks and communicate with EGLE quickly, regarding submissions to the State. Attendees will see some of the key functionality of how MiEHDWIS works, and help will be on site to assist in signing up to use MiEHDWIS	Mary Nuznov, I.T. Training Analyst, Data Application Support Unit, Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division, EGLE, 517-977-2807, NuznovM@Michigan.gov and Danielle Scriptor, Departmental Technician, Data Applications Support Unit Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division, EGLE, 586-212-0294, ScriptorD@Michigan.gov	0.1 W T

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Friday, March 20, 2026					
Swan Creek	9:45am - 10:45am	Water PFAS	An Update on PFAS and Michigan's Public Drinking Water Supplies	Ian O. Smith, Ph.D., Emerging Contaminants Unit Manager, EGLE, 517.256.2474, smithi@michigan.gov	0.1 W T
Black River	9:45am - 10:45am	Feedback Session: Discuss of Rural Water Needs and Challenges around Infrastructure and Affordability	This session is designed as a forum to provide an opportunity to both share insight and discuss rural water challenges and needs around infrastructure and affordability. In summer 2023, Public Sector Consultants (PSC) compiled and analyzed water and sewer utility rates in 470 communities across all 83 Michigan counties to identify the average costs of household water utility bills and the gap payment amounts necessary to achieve affordable water rates for all. We recognize that there were some gaps in the data collected for rural water providers and know that rural providers face unique challenges. Our goal is to collect data and input that will support the design of a water affordability program that meets the needs of all Michiganders, including those of rural communities and water providers.	Maggie Pallone, Senior Vice President, Public Sector Consultants, P: 517-331-9458, mpallone@publicsectorconsultants.com	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWM
Three Fires	9:45am - 10:45am	MiEHDWIS	Learn about how MiEHDWIS can help you complete tasks and communicate with EGLE quickly, regarding submissions to the State. Attendees will see some of the key functionality of how MiEHDWIS works, and help will be on site to assist in signing up to use MiEHDWIS	Mary Nuznov, I.T. Training Analyst, Data Application Support Unit, Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division, EGLE, 517-977-2807, NuznovM@Michigan.gov and Danielle Scriptor, Departmental Technician, Data Applications Support Unit Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division, EGLE, 586-212-0294, ScriptorD@Michigan.gov	0.1 W T

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Friday, March 20, 2026					
Swan Creek	11am - Noon	Succession Planning	Succession planning is a proactive strategy to ensure leadership continuity and long-term stability within your community. By identifying and developing future leaders in advance, organizations can smoothly navigate transitions, preserve knowledge and maintain momentum when key team members retire or move on.	Kyle Bond, Community Water and Wastewater Specialist, Michigan Rural Water Association, 989-745-4405, kbond@mrwa.net	0.1 WT & 0.1 WWM
Black River	11am - Noon	MISS DIG	We will cover giving small systems more tickets than they can handle, rate increases due to contractors, record retention and more.	Colleen Goddard, Education Department Senior Manager, MISS DIG 811, cgoddard@missdig811.org, 906-789-3083	0.1 WT & WWO
Three Fires	11am - Noon	EGLE Source Water Assessment Process and Moving to Protection Planning	The EGLE Source Water Assessment Program is in the process of assessing all community water supply assessments for the first time since they were originally required by the 1996 amendments. This presentation will detail the assessment process, why we are updating these reports, and how communities can utilize this information to move towards protection planning.	Jason Berndt, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, Environmental Quality Analyst, berndtj1@michigan.gov, Kelly Hon, MRWA; Source Water Protection Specialist, 989-621-2361, khon@mrwa.net	0.1 WT