



FACTS ABOUT DRAIN COMMISSIONERS

MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY DRAIN COMMISSIONERS

- Michigan's drain commissioners, sometimes called water resources commissioners, administer laws involving flood protection, stormwater management, and soil erosion and seek to protect Michigan's water resources in the process.
- Today, drain commissioners strive to balance the need for proper drainage with water quality and natural resource management in a cost-effective manner, resulting in public health benefits.
- Drain commissioners are county-level officials typically elected to four-year terms (counties with a population under 12,000 may opt to have the drain commissioner's duties performed by the county road commission).
- With the goal of making land habitable and usable, one of the first laws passed when Michigan became a state led to the establishment of drain commissioners.
- The Drain Code of 1956 is the primary statute, or law, that spells out the responsibilities of the drain commissioner and provides the process for constructing and maintaining county drains.
- Some county drains are historic creeks or natural watercourses, while others are underground pipes.
- Many counties have 100 or more established drains, and some have over 1,000 drains. In some cases, primarily in northern Michigan, the drain commissioner's primary duty is maintaining lake levels.
- Not all drains are part of the county drainage system. Some, such as roadside ditches, are the responsibility of the county road commission or private property owners. If you have a question as to whose jurisdiction a drain falls under, please contact your local drain commissioner's office.
- Each drain administered by a drain commissioner's office has a contributing area (similar to a watershed) called a drainage district. A watershed is an area of land that captures rainwater and eventually carries it to the nearest lake, river, stream, or drain, and everyone lives in a watershed.
- Drain commissioners inspect, repair, and clean drains that are part of a drainage district, as needed. Preventative maintenance helps extend service life, like an oil change on your car.
- The costs of drain maintenance are paid through drain assessments to property owners and governmental units within a drainage district based on the benefits derived.

The Michigan Association of County Drain Commissioners (MACDC) is the professional association for county drain and water resources commissioners. For more information, contact MACDC at: 517-484-9761 or admin@macdc.us.