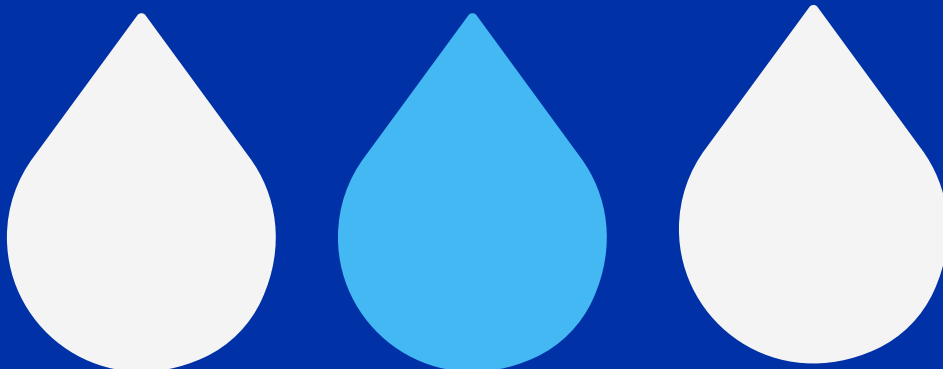


A DECADE IN REVIEW



GLWA

GREAT LAKES WATER AUTHORITY

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

On January 1, 2016, the Great Lakes Water Authority assumed responsibility for one of the largest and most complex water and wastewater systems in the country -- a system millions of people rely on every single day. The work began immediately and never stopped.

I have seen firsthand the dedication, expertise and resolve that built GLWA into the regional organization it is today. This Decade in Review is far more than a timeline of projects and progress. It represents a shared commitment -- by our team members, board members, member communities and regional partners -- to protect public health, support economic vitality and safeguard one of the world's most precious freshwater resources.

As we mark this first decade, we are also introducing a refreshed brand and a clearer set of values that will guide our path forward. These values are not new ideas nor are they a departure from who we've been; they reflect and embody who we already are at our best and who we intend to be in the years ahead.

We are **trustworthy leaders**, delivering safe, high-quality water and wastewater services with transparency and accountability. We are **people focused**, recognizing that our work exists to serve communities and that our strength comes from the dedicated individuals who operate this system every day. We are **dedicated stewards**, responsible for maintaining critical infrastructure and protecting the Great Lakes and the environment that sustains this region. And we are **approachable experts**, committed to sharing knowledge openly and working collaboratively to address complex challenges. Together, these principles underscore a simple truth: water connects us all and it carries us forward.

Much of what makes this system reliable happens quietly, out of sight in treatment plants, pumping stations, laboratories and in field operations across southeast Michigan. It happens in the early hours of the morning, during severe weather and whenever communities need us most. Most of the time, the public may not see this work, but they depend on it every day.

As we look ahead, I am confident that the same spirit of innovation, collaboration and service will continue to guide us in what we can accomplish together. The challenges facing water utilities are significant, but so is our capacity to meet them. By staying grounded in our values and focused on the communities and people we serve, GLWA will continue to protect public health, support economic growth and preserve our water resources for all who come after us.

Thank you for your continued partnership and trust. Because when water works, everything else can too.

Suzanne R. Coffey, P.E.

Chief Executive Officer, Great Lakes Water Authority

Suzanne R. Coffey





VISION

WATER THAT CARRIES US FORWARD

MISSION

To deliver safe, reliable water services that support strong communities and protect our environment for generations to come.

THE LOGO MARK

GLWA's new logo mark was created using elements that relate to the brand's mission and vision. The water droplet at the center of the logo mark ensures that the core work of GLWA is crystal clear: GLWA is a reliable provider of clean water. The surrounding five shapes represent the Great Lakes as well as the five founding members of GLWA. These five shapes link together to create a ripple effect, symbolizing GLWA's work making waves within its communities, creating a more sustainable future for all. These five shapes converge to form a crest-like mark or shield that encircles the water droplet, reinforcing the concept that GLWA is a trusted protector and steward of our water sources. Finally, the house shape within the logo mark drives home the core value of community – the GLWA workforce is at the heart of its mission and reflects the very communities it serves.



Shield



Water Droplet



Community



Five Great Lakes



Ripple Effect

“Rebranding GLWA wasn’t about changing who we are, it was about more accurately representing who we’ve become. Over the last decade, we’ve built a strong organization and our brand now reflects this strength and positions us for the future as we work to earn the public’s trust in all we do.”

— Michelle A. Zdrodowski, *Chief Public Affairs Officer*

VALUES

WE ARE PEOPLE FOCUSED

From the organization’s team members to the communities they serve, people are the driving force behind the “how” and the “why” at GLWA. Comprehensive training and inclusive decision making ensure individuals are seen, heard, and valued. The diverse, intergenerational stories of GLWA’s workforce reflect the very communities it serves, fueling a commitment to quality.

WE ARE APPROACHABLE EXPERTS

As a leader in the water sector, GLWA seeks to educate everyone, from elected officials to our region’s youth, about the value of water in our world. Using personal stories, engaging visuals, and approachable language simplifies complex systems and creates a shared sense of ownership across southeast Michigan.

WE ARE DEDICATED STEWARDS

GLWA treats and returns wastewater to its source often cleaner than how it was found, solidifying a commitment to environmental sustainability and cultivating a brighter future for our communities. As guardians of Michigan’s most valuable natural resource, GLWA is committed to investing in the next generation of water professionals through education, job creation, and research-based collaboration.

WE ARE TRUSTWORTHY LEADERS

GLWA provides safe, high-quality drinking water and wastewater services to millions of people across southeast Michigan, consistently surpassing state and federal standards. Through research-based innovation and operational transparency, GLWA is continuously working to maintain the public’s trust and raise the bar for the water sector around the world.





2016



FROM VISION TO REALITY

Through an unprecedented level of regional collaboration, history was made on January 1, 2016, when the Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) opened its doors and began operations.

The creation of GLWA marked a historic moment for southeast Michigan. Through a new regional model, communities came together around a shared responsibility: protecting public health, safeguarding the environment and ensuring reliable water and wastewater services for generations to come.

The task ahead was significant. GLWA assumed responsibility for one of the nation's largest and most complex water and wastewater systems while continuing to provide uninterrupted service to millions of residents across southeast Michigan. Success would depend not only on operational performance, but also on GLWA's ability to earn the confidence of customers, team members, regulators, investors and the communities it served.

From the beginning, partnership was central to GLWA's approach. Working collaboratively with member communities became the foundation of the Authority's operating philosophy, shaping decisions about infrastructure, finance, affordability and long-term planning. Throughout its inaugural year, GLWA worked to establish the governance structures, operational practices and relationships necessary to support a strong regional utility.

The work of 2016 established the foundation upon which the next decade would be built.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN A NEW REGIONAL AUTHORITY

One of GLWA's earliest priorities was establishing credibility with customers, regulators and the financial community. That confidence came quickly.

Within its first year, GLWA received bond rating upgrades from all three major rating agencies. TWICE. It also successfully completed its inaugural public financing transaction, issuing approximately \$1.34 billion in bonds and generating more than \$300 million in savings and future financial flexibility.

\$ 300 MILLION
IN SAVINGS ACHIEVED

The achievement reflected confidence in GLWA's financial structure, governance model and operational approach. More importantly, it demonstrated that the newly formed Authority could deliver value for member communities while creating a stable financial foundation for future infrastructure investment.

The year also saw the formation of GLWA's executive leadership team, the implementation of new financial systems and processes, the launch of customer advisory and engagement efforts and the introduction of the Authority's first brand identity. Together, these efforts transformed a newly created organization into a functioning regional utility focused on accountability, transparency and service.

GLWA IS AN

“ **A** ”

RATED

UTILITY



ADVANCING ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

While much of the year's attention focused on standing up the new organization, important operational improvements were also underway.

Among the most significant was the startup of the **Biosolids Dryer Facility**, a major investment that transformed how residual materials from wastewater treatment were processed and managed. The facility represented an important step forward for wastewater operations, creating a more sustainable alternative for biosolids management while reducing reliance on landfill disposal.

The project reflected a broader commitment to environmental stewardship and operational excellence.



It also signaled an approach that would become increasingly important throughout the decade: finding innovative ways to improve environmental outcomes while strengthening system performance and long-term value for customers.



MAKING AFFORDABILITY PART OF THE MISSION



GLWA's first year also established an important principle that continues to guide the organization today: reliable water service and affordability must go hand in hand.

In March 2016, the **Water Residential Assistance Program (WRAP)** was launched. Designed to support households facing financial hardship, the program combined bill assistance, conservation measures and other resources intended to help residents remain connected to essential water services.

What began as an innovative regional initiative quickly gained momentum. By the end of its first year, dozens of communities had joined the program, thousands of households had received assistance and nearly 1,900 shutoffs had been avoided. WRAP demonstrated that GLWA's role extended beyond operating infrastructure. The program reflected a broader commitment to supporting healthy communities and ensuring that the benefits of a regional water system reach the people who depend on it every day.





"Working in partnership with our customer communities is the bedrock of GLWA's operating philosophy."

— Sue McCormick, *GLWA's founding CEO*

WE ARE ONE WATER

By the end of 2016, GLWA had accomplished far more than launching a new organization.

Through unprecedented regional collaboration, the Authority demonstrated that a new model for managing and investing in southeast Michigan's water infrastructure could succeed. Early achievements in finance, operations, environmental stewardship and affordability helped establish trust among member partners and the communities they serve.

That philosophy would guide the Authority's next decade of investment, innovation and partnership, shaping how GLWA approached both opportunities and challenges across the region.



SCAN TO VIEW
THE 2016 YIR

An aerial photograph of a large steel truss bridge spanning a body of water. The bridge's intricate lattice of white steel beams is visible, with a few vehicles traveling across its deck. A large, solid blue abstract shape, resembling a stylized 'P' or a curved banner, is overlaid on the right side of the image, partially obscuring the bridge and the water. The water is a deep teal color.

2017

An aerial photograph of a bridge structure, showing the white steel truss framework and a blue truck on the roadway. The bridge spans a body of water, and the image is partially obscured by a large blue rectangle on the right side of the page.

FROM START-UP TO STABILITY

“Coming together is a beginning;
keeping together is progress;
working together is success.”
— Henry Ford

After its historic launch, GLWA’s second year focused on turning a new structure into a stable, functioning regional utility. With the transition to a regional authority complete, the focus shifted from standing up the organization to establishing steady and sustainable operations.

Throughout 2017, GLWA continued to strengthen the foundation established during its inaugural year. Long-range planning, regional collaboration, workforce development and expanded service partnerships reflected an organization increasingly focused on the future. The decisions made during this period helped position GLWA not only to meet the needs of the present, but to navigate the opportunities and challenges that would follow.

CREATING A ROADMAP FOR THE FUTURE

One of the year's most important accomplishments was the adoption of GLWA's first **Five-Year Financial Plan**.

More than a budgeting document, the plan established a long-term roadmap for the Authority and its member partners, providing greater transparency into future investments, operating costs and rate considerations. By looking beyond annual budgets, GLWA demonstrated its commitment to financial stewardship, predictability and responsible decision-making.

The plan also reinforced one of the core promises established during GLWA's formation: balancing the need for continued investment in critical infrastructure while maintaining affordability for the communities served by the system.

The Five-Year Financial Plan became an important tool for aligning operational priorities, capital investments and financial resources. It created a framework for informed decision-making and helped ensure that future infrastructure improvements could be pursued strategically rather than reactively.

"The five-year financial plan document is a first of its kind for GLWA, and an example of a culture that embraces continuous improvement and innovation in everything that it does."

— Nicolette N. Bateson, *Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer*



FORMALIZING THE ONE WATER PARTNERSHIP

Collaboration had been central to GLWA's mission from the beginning. In 2017, that commitment was formalized through the signing of the first **One Water Partnership Agreement**. The historic agreement outlined mutual commitments among GLWA and its customers to work together for the greater good of the region. It established a shared framework for addressing challenges, coordinating investments and advancing a regional approach to water and wastewater management.

Most importantly, the agreement recognized that the future of the region's water infrastructure would depend on collaboration that extended beyond individual jurisdictions. Water systems are interconnected, and decisions made in one community often have implications across the broader network.

The agreement also introduced a first-of-its-kind customer-focused scorecard designed to measure the success of the partnership through the voice of member communities, reinforcing GLWA's commitment to continuous improvement and accountability. The scorecard provides a structured way to measure performance across a variety of areas, including communication, collaboration, responsiveness and overall service.



ONE WATER PARTNERSHIP MISSION

To collaboratively ensure a One Water system approach to our regional water and wastewater system that will be economically, socially and environmentally responsible and sustainable.

The One Water Partnership Agreement transformed collaboration from an aspiration into a shared regional commitment and established a framework that continues to guide the Authority's relationships with member partners today.

INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF WATER PROFESSIONALS

While planning and partnership were essential to long-term success, GLWA also recognized that the future of the organization would ultimately depend on the people responsible for operating and maintaining the system. On June 12, 2017, GLWA officially launched its inaugural **Apprenticeship Program** through a partnership with Focus: HOPE and Henry Ford College. The program was designed to address a growing shortage of highly skilled trades professionals while creating new career pathways into the water sector.

The first cohort of apprentices came from a wide range of backgrounds. Some were existing GLWA team members seeking new opportunities for growth and advancement. Others left careers in industries ranging from hospitality and transportation to facility management in pursuit of a new future. Participants received classroom instruction, hands-on technical training, mentorship from experienced journey workers and a pathway to full-time employment upon successful completion of the program. The initiative reflected a long-term commitment to workforce development at a time when utilities nationwide were confronting retirements and growing competition for skilled talent.

What began with a single cohort would ultimately evolve into one of the most recognized workforce development programs in the water sector, earning state and national recognition while helping build the next generation of water professionals.

"This is a win for everyone. The Authority is able to strengthen its workforce through apprenticeships while filling a skilled-trades gap, and we can also strengthen our community by providing training for jobs with family-sustaining wages."

— Terri Conerway, *Former Chief Organizational Development Officer*



EXPANDING REGIONAL RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH THE FLINT AGREEMENT

In 2017, GLWA also entered into a long-term agreement to provide water service to the City of Flint, representing an important milestone for both organizations and reflecting confidence in GLWA's ability to provide safe, reliable drinking water. Following years of public concern surrounding Flint's water system, the agreement helped provide stability while reinforcing the value of regional cooperation in addressing complex infrastructure and public health challenges.

For GLWA, the agreement demonstrated the Authority's growing role as a trusted regional provider capable of supporting communities beyond its traditional service area. It also strengthened the system's long-term financial outlook while creating benefits for existing member partners.

The Flint Agreement reinforced a broader principle that would continue to define GLWA's approach throughout the decade:

When communities work together, they are better equipped to address challenges that no single organization can solve alone.



SCAN TO VIEW
THE 2017 YIR

An aerial photograph of a coastal wetland area. In the foreground, there are patches of brown, dry-looking vegetation and a small, dark, reflective pond. A narrow strip of land with some green trees and shrubs runs horizontally across the middle. Beyond this, the water is a calm, light blue-grey color. In the distance, there are several small, tree-covered islands or peninsulas. The horizon is visible under a sky with soft, white clouds. A large, bright blue, curved graphic element, resembling a stylized 'S' or a thick brushstroke, starts from the top left and curves down towards the bottom right, partially obscuring the landscape. The year '2018' is printed in large, white, sans-serif font across the center of the image, overlapping the water and the blue graphic.

2018



STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP

By year three of operations, GLWA had shifted its focus toward strengthening the relationships that would sustain long-term success. Throughout 2018, collaboration and long-term sustainability guided the Authority's work, shaping how it engaged with member communities, approached planning and measured performance.

The year marked an important evolution in how GLWA viewed its role within the region. The Authority began referring to the communities it serves not as customers but as member partners, a subtle yet meaningful change that reflected a broader philosophy of shared responsibility and collaboration.

As GLWA continued to mature as an organization, its focus expanded beyond delivering essential services to ensuring those services were aligned with the needs and expectations of the communities it served.

New tools, agreements and initiatives helped strengthen accountability, deepen engagement and create new opportunities for participation across the regional system.

LISTENING, LEARNING, & IMPROVING TOGETHER

Strong partnerships depend on trust, communication, and a willingness to listen.

GLWA's **Member Outreach Scorecard** continued to evolve, with the first-of-its-kind assessment tool being refined during its second year to provide even more meaningful feedback on the Authority's performance. Designed with input and direction from member partners, the Scorecard serves as an ongoing "voice of the member," helping GLWA identify strengths, uncover opportunities for improvement and track progress over time. The second year's results reflected encouraging momentum. Compared with the inaugural 2017 assessment, member partners reported improvement in four key areas: field services, communications, collaboration and technology innovation. Three other areas – member outreach program, emergency communications and team members/staff interaction remained stable. The only decline wasn't really about service quality; it reflected member partners' desire for earlier budget and charge approvals. This is feedback GLWA used to continue improving transparency and predictability in planning.

The scorecard is intended to serve as an iterative 'report card' for GLWA, revealing both points of pride and areas of opportunity for improvement — and, importantly, identifying year-over-year trends in member partners' experience working with GLWA. More than a survey, the Scorecard reinforces GLWA's cornerstones of continuous improvement and partnership while building trust with member partners.



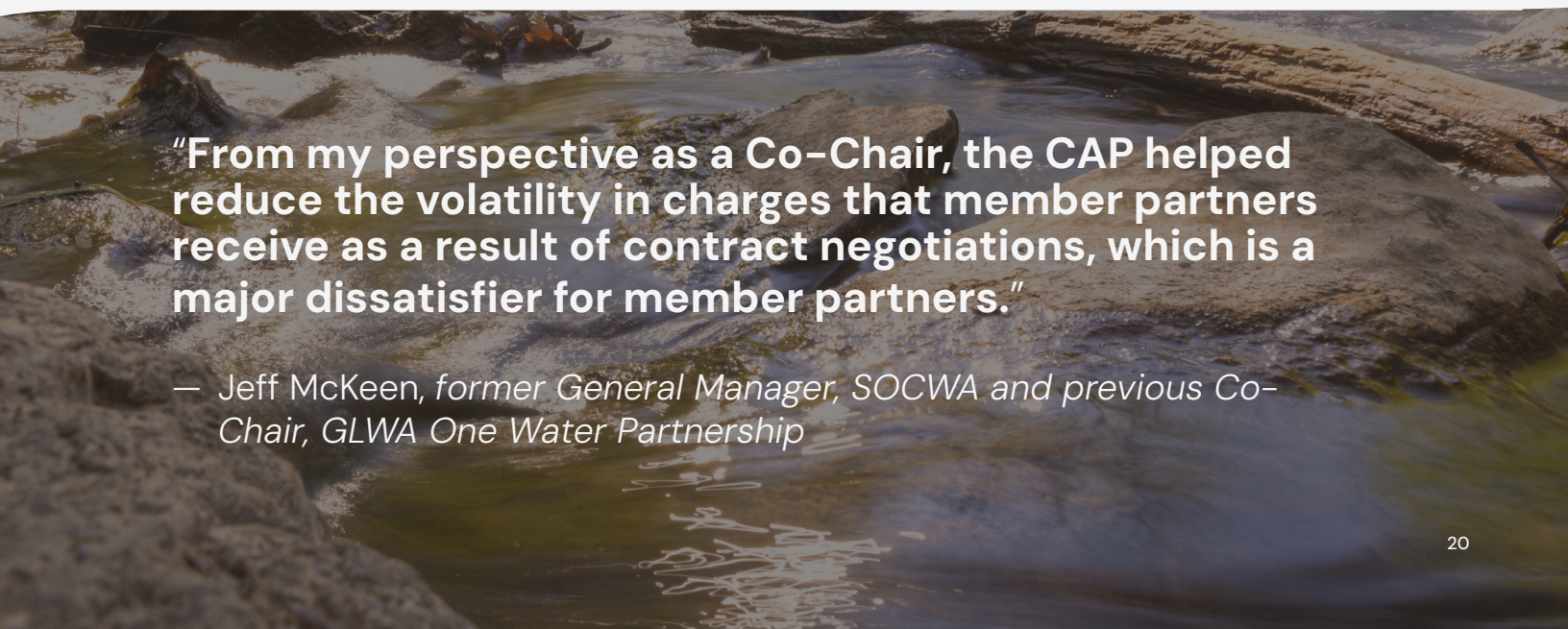
ALIGNING CONTRACTS FOR GREATER STABILITY & EQUITY

As GLWA continued to evolve as a regional authority, it completed a significant **Contract Alignment Process (CAP)** requested by member partners to improve water charge stability and equity. Under the original 30-year model contracts, reopener dates occurred on different schedules, meaning changes in water demand could create annual fluctuations in charges as contracts came up for renegotiation. Because maximum day and peak hour demands account for approximately 90% of each member partner's annual water charge allocation, aligning those schedules became an important opportunity to provide greater clarity and predictability.

These contracts define how water and wastewater services are delivered, how costs are allocated and how decisions affecting the regional system are made. Aligning them required careful coordination and negotiation among dozens of member communities, each with unique needs, priorities and service requirements.

The effort brought together years of technical analysis, stakeholder engagement and collaborative problem-solving, with member partners playing an active role in shaping the outcomes.

Working together, GLWA renegotiated and realigned contract reopeners to a common schedule beginning in 2022 and every four years thereafter. Although the process resulted in a one-time shift in revenue allocations, it established a more consistent framework for future charge calculations, helping minimize volatility while strengthening governance structures and establishing a more consistent foundation for long-term planning and investment.



"From my perspective as a Co-Chair, the CAP helped reduce the volatility in charges that member partners receive as a result of contract negotiations, which is a major dissatisfier for member partners."

— Jeff McKeen, former General Manager, SOCWA and previous Co-Chair, GLWA One Water Partnership

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY THROUGH A SMALL BUSINESS INITIATIVE



While infrastructure and operations remained at the core of GLWA's mission, the Authority also recognized its ability to contribute to broader economic opportunity throughout the region. In 2018, GLWA launched its Small Business Initiative (SBI), creating new pathways to increase awareness of contracting opportunities and encourage greater participation by small and diverse businesses in Authority projects and procurement activities.

The initiative reflected a belief that investments in public infrastructure should create benefits that extend beyond the projects themselves.

GLWA hosted quarterly advisory meetings to better understand vendor challenges, participated in trade fairs and "meet the buyer" events, and established partnerships with professional organizations and government agencies to broaden access to contracting opportunities. A key milestone came when GLWA entered into a Strategic Alliance Memorandum with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to strengthen and expand small business development throughout the GLWA service area.

"This agreement allows the SBA and GLWA to work together to match small business owners with future procurement opportunities within GLWA."

— Constance Logan, *then-District Director, U.S. Small Business Administration*

The SBI initiative underscored the idea that investment in critical infrastructure could also create opportunities for local entrepreneurs and diverse businesses to contribute to the region's future.

Over time, the program expanded awareness of procurement opportunities, fostered relationships with local businesses and laid the groundwork for future business inclusion efforts. Together, these initiatives helped reinforce GLWA's role as both a provider of essential water and wastewater services and a catalyst for economic opportunity and regional prosperity.



SCAN TO VIEW
THE 2018 YIR

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a lush green forest. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding trees. A large, bright blue abstract shape, resembling a stylized 'S' or a ribbon, curves along the right side of the image. The year '2019' is printed in large white digits across the center of the river.

2019



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

By 2019, GLWA's focus was on the future: how to protect the region's water resources, how to prioritize infrastructure investments and how to ensure decisions made today would support communities for decades to come.

Throughout the year, GLWA advanced several initiatives that reflected a more proactive approach to stewardship. Major environmental investments delivered measurable results, long-term planning efforts reached important milestones and GLWA took significant steps to better understand and manage the infrastructure entrusted to its care. Together, these accomplishments reflected a growing emphasis on planning, performance and sustainability, ensuring the regional system would continue serving Southeast Michigan well into the future.

GLWA STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT VISION STATEMENT

GLWA will be a leader in infrastructure management by making decisions informed by risk, regional needs and lifecycle considerations.

SURPASSING PHOSPHORUS REDUCTION GOALS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE

In 2019, GLWA achieved one of the most significant environmental milestones in its history, surpassing federal and state goals to reduce phosphorus levels by 40% by 2025 — six years ahead of schedule!

Recognizing the importance of protecting regional waterways, GLWA invested heavily in improvements at the Water Resource Recovery Facility to reduce phosphorus discharged into the Detroit River and western Lake Erie. Excess phosphorus is a leading contributor to harmful algal blooms, making phosphorus reduction a critical priority for improving water quality throughout the Great Lakes region.

The results exceeded expectations. By 2019, GLWA had reduced phosphorus levels in treated and discharged waters by approximately 60%, becoming the first treatment facility along a Lake Erie tributary to achieve the milestone. This accomplishment reflected years of strategic investment, operational improvements and process optimization focused on delivering measurable environmental benefits while maintaining reliable service for member communities.

Beyond meeting regulatory requirements, the achievement demonstrated what is possible when long-term planning is paired with sustained commitment and technical expertise. It also reinforced GLWA's role as an environmental steward, helping protect waterways that support recreation, wildlife habitat, economic activity and drinking water for millions of people throughout the region.

The work did not stop with achieving the target. GLWA continued collaborating with organizations including Michigan Cleaner Lake Erie through Action and Research (MI CLEAR) and the Detroit River Watershed Project to better understand nutrient loading and identify additional opportunities to improve water quality throughout the watershed.

PHOSPHORUS LEVELS REDUCED BY



60%

IN TREATED & DISCHARGE WATERS

"The reduction in phosphorus that we have been able to achieve in recent years is a testament to the dedication and commitment of GLWA team members that operate our Water Resource Recovery Facility."

*— Navid Mehram, Chief Operating Officer,
Wastewater Operations*

The milestone represented more than an environmental success. It reflected a broader commitment to protecting the Great Lakes and ensuring future generations inherit cleaner, healthier waterways than those of the past.

COMPLETING THE ROUGE RIVER OUTFALL DISINFECTION FACILITY

In March 2019, GLWA completed and began operating the **Rouge River Outfall Disinfection Facility**, a transformative investment designed to improve water quality and reduce the environmental impact of wet-weather events.

The facility addressed what had historically been GLWA's largest annual discharge of treated but non-disinfected wet-weather flow into the Rouge River. Before the Rouge River Outfall (RRO) Disinfection Facility became operational, between 4,000–15,000 million gallons of treated wet weather flows were discharged into the Rouge River each year without disinfection. Today, every drop of water discharged from the Water Resource Recovery Facility into the Rouge River is screened, treated and disinfected before release, significantly improving water quality protections and supporting public health.

COMPLETING THE ROUGE RIVER OUTFALL DISINFECTION FACILITY **CONTINUED**

The project also demonstrated GLWA's commitment to innovation and affordability. By leveraging existing infrastructure and identifying a more efficient solution, GLWA was able to achieve its environmental objectives while avoiding hundreds of millions of dollars in additional construction costs.



"The continued successful operation of the RRO means that both the wildlife of the Rouge River and the people of Wayne County will benefit. The added disinfection will remove any harmful bacteria in the discharge, lessening public health risks; and the disinfecting process will not release any harmful chemicals into the ecosystem of the river.

It's a win-win situation."

— Majid Khan, *Director, Wastewater Operations*

More importantly, the RRO Disinfection Facility's completion marked the completion of the final project in a series of high-priority, core Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) control efforts undertaken over many years. These projects addressed longstanding pollution challenges, improved regional waterways and fulfilled key federal and state water quality requirements.

By completing the RRO Disinfection Facility, GLWA closed a major chapter in the region's environmental infrastructure history, significantly improving water quality in the Rouge River watershed and bringing to a close decades of planning, engineering and investment to protect public health and restore one of Southeast Michigan's most important waterways.

The work also contributed to GLWA's national recognition for watershed stewardship in the years that followed, demonstrating how innovative thinking, disciplined investment and long-term environmental stewardship can deliver lasting environmental benefits for both communities and the Great Lakes watershed.

LAUNCHING GLWA'S STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

While strategic investments like phosphorus reduction and the Rouge River Outfall Facility produced immediate environmental benefits, GLWA was also laying the foundation for future decision-making. In 2019, the Authority launched its **Strategic Asset Management Plan** (SAMP), establishing a comprehensive framework for managing the infrastructure that supports water and wastewater services across southeast Michigan.

The plan recognized a fundamental reality: many of the region's most important assets have been serving communities for decades, with some infrastructure dating back more than 100 years. Maintaining reliable service requires thoughtful stewardship, disciplined investment and long-term planning. A cornerstone of the effort was the development of an Asset Management Policy designed to ensure infrastructure investments are guided by risk, service needs, regulatory requirements and lifecycle considerations.

The vision established by the Strategic Asset Management Plan was straightforward and ambitious:

STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN VISION

GLWA will be a leader in infrastructure management by making decisions informed by risk, regional needs and lifecycle considerations.

The SAMP represented more than a planning document. It signaled a cultural commitment to proactive infrastructure stewardship, an approach that would continue shaping GLWA's investments and priorities in the years ahead.



SCAN TO VIEW
THE 2019 YIR

A scenic photograph of a river flowing over rocks, with a large blue curved graphic element on the right side. The river is filled with water, and the rocks are dark and wet. The water is reflecting the sunlight, creating a shimmering effect. The blue graphic element is a large, curved shape that starts from the top left and curves down towards the bottom right, partially obscuring the river scene.

2020



CONTINUITY IN CRISIS

In 2020, communities across southeast Michigan faced a level of uncertainty few could have imagined. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted daily life, challenged institutions and reshaped how organizations operated around the world. For GLWA, however, one responsibility remained unchanged: providing clean, safe drinking water and reliable wastewater services to the nearly four million people who depend on it every day.

Water and wastewater operations could not pause. Throughout the pandemic, hundreds of GLWA team members continued reporting in-person to treatment plants, pump stations, maintenance facilities and field locations to keep critical systems operating. Teams adapted to new safety protocols, remote work arrangements and evolving public health guidance while maintaining regulatory compliance and uninterrupted service across the region.

Reflecting on the year, leadership compared GLWA's response to the qualities that make metal strong: the ability to withstand pressure, adapt without breaking and remain resilient in the face of adversity. The challenges of 2020 tested every aspect of the organization, but they also reinforced the strength of the people, partnerships and systems that had been built during the Authority's first years.

Even amid unprecedented disruption, GLWA continued advancing major initiatives that would shape the future of the regional water system for decades to come.



"Pipes don't know where one community ends and another begins."

— Suzanne Coffey,
CEO & former
Chief Planning
Officer

A REGIONAL ROADMAP FOR WASTEWATER

One of the year's most significant accomplishments was the completion and adoption of the **Wastewater Master Plan**, a first-of-its-kind, 40-year strategy developed through unprecedented collaboration among member partners, regulators and stakeholders across southeast Michigan.

SERVING **2.8 MILLION PEOPLE** ACROSS **83 COMMUNITIES**

The regional wastewater system includes thousands of miles of pipes, pump stations and treatment facilities that must function as a single interconnected network. The Wastewater Master Plan was designed to move beyond individual community priorities and identify investments and strategies that would strengthen the system as a whole.

Development of the plan involved approximately 100 stakeholders and reflected years of technical analysis, engagement and collaboration. The result was a long-term roadmap focused on protecting public health, improving water quality, supporting affordability and making the best use of existing infrastructure.

At its core, the plan embodied the regional philosophy on which GLWA was founded.

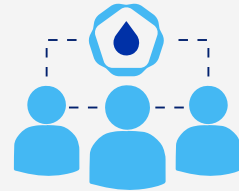
The Wastewater Master Plan established a framework for adaptive management, allowing priorities to evolve as conditions change while maintaining a shared vision for the future. More than a planning document, it demonstrated what can be achieved when communities come together around common goals and shared responsibility for the region's water resources.

BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF LEARNING

As GLWA looked to the future, it recognized that infrastructure alone would not determine the success of the regional water system. Long-term success would also depend on people, namely the operators, technicians, engineers, planners and leaders responsible for managing increasingly complex systems and responding to evolving challenges.

In 2020, GLWA launched the **One Water Institute** (OWI), a regional training and professional development initiative designed to strengthen knowledge-sharing, workforce development and collaboration across the water sector. Built around the principles of continuous learning and cross-disciplinary engagement, OWI created opportunities for GLWA team members, as well as employees from member partner communities, to expand their skills, share expertise and learn from one another.

The Institute reflected a broader belief that water challenges do not exist in isolation.



Aging infrastructure, workforce transitions, environmental stewardship and emerging contaminants require collaboration across utilities, disciplines and communities. By bringing together professionals from throughout the water sector, OWI helped build the relationships and knowledge networks needed to address these challenges collectively.

The program quickly gained momentum. In its first full year, 860 team members completed 59 courses across 282 training sessions, covering topics ranging from leadership development and safety to operations and technical skills. Member partners also participated in professional development and safety offerings, further expanding opportunities for collaboration and shared learning across the regional water community. The Institute's combination of in-person and online programming helped strengthen capabilities throughout the sector while fostering connections among professionals facing many of the same challenges.

Together with GLWA's apprenticeship programs, OWI was later highlighted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a workforce development case study for utilities across the country, a recognition of the Authority's commitment to investing in people as intentionally as it invests in infrastructure. What began as a training initiative evolved into something larger: a platform for developing talent, sharing expertise and strengthening the collaborative culture at the heart of GLWA's One Water philosophy.

ADVANCING SYSTEM INTEGRITY

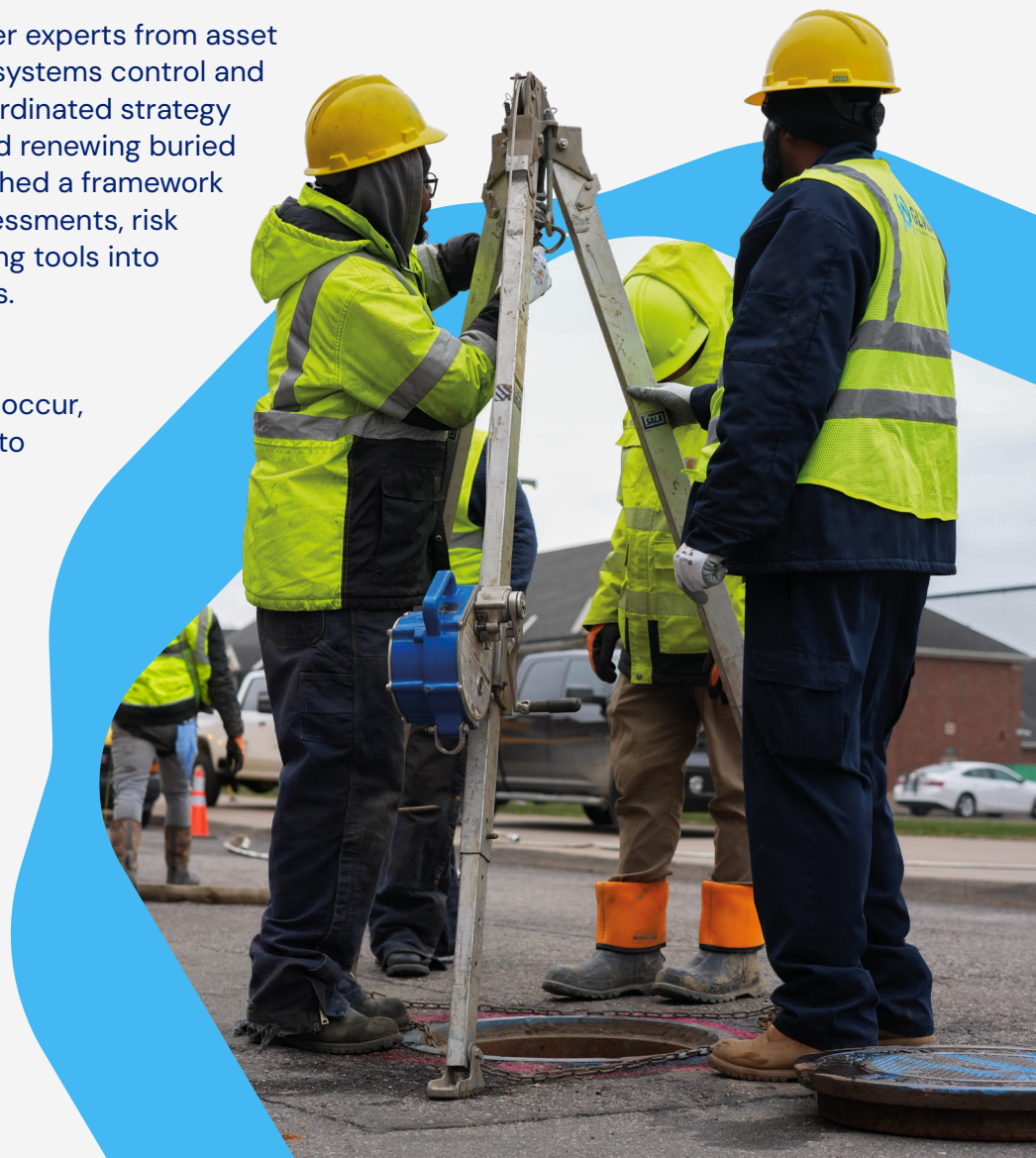
While the Wastewater Master Plan looked decades ahead, GLWA also took important steps to better understand and manage the infrastructure already in service throughout the region.

In 2020, the Authority launched its **Linear System Integrity Program (LSIP)**, a comprehensive initiative focused on the proactive assessment, monitoring and renewal of critical water transmission mains and wastewater interceptor systems. Many of these assets were installed decades ago and remain essential to delivering safe drinking water and wastewater services to millions of residents.

The program represented a significant evolution in how GLWA approached infrastructure stewardship. Rather than relying primarily on reactive maintenance, LSIP applies asset management principles to proactively evaluate system condition, assess risk and prioritize investments based on data and long-term performance needs.

The initiative brought together experts from asset management, field services, systems control and engineering to develop a coordinated strategy for inspecting, monitoring and renewing buried infrastructure. It also established a framework for integrating condition assessments, risk modeling and decision-making tools into future capital planning efforts.

By systematically evaluating infrastructure before failures occur, GLWA strengthens its ability to make informed investment decisions, improve reliability and support long-term affordability for member communities. The program would go on to become one of the Authority's most important infrastructure management initiatives, helping guide investments across the regional system for years to come.



2020: SUSTAINING ESSENTIAL SERVICE THROUGH UNCERTAINTY

The year 2020 reinforced a defining truth about the water sector: success often means continuity. When systems function as intended, communities can focus on recovery, stability and the challenges in front of them without the added burden of service disruptions. In a year marked by uncertainty, water continued to flow, wastewater continued to be treated and essential services continued uninterrupted.

Perhaps more than any project or milestone, that continuity reflected the dedication of the people behind the system — team members who showed up each day, adapted to extraordinary circumstances and remained committed to serving the region when it mattered most.

"The challenges of 2020 tested every aspect of our organization, but they also reinforced the strength of the people, partnerships and systems that support the communities we serve."

— William M. Wolfson, *Deputy CEO & former Chief Administrative and Compliance Officer*



SCAN TO VIEW
THE 2020 YIR



2021



TESTED AND TRANSFORMED

For much of its first five years, GLWA focused on building a strong regional foundation —strengthening governance, stabilizing finances, investing in infrastructure and deepening partnerships across southeast Michigan. In 2021, that foundation was put to the test.

Historic rainfall overwhelmed communities across the region, exposing the challenges that come with increasingly volatile weather and aging infrastructure. At the same time, expectations for water systems continued to evolve. Communities expected not only reliability, but innovation, environmental stewardship and broader economic opportunity.

The events of 2021 reinforced an important lesson:

Preparing for the future requires more than maintaining the systems of today. It requires new tools, new partnerships and a willingness to adapt to changing conditions.

Throughout the year, GLWA responded to immediate challenges while continuing to invest in the capabilities that will help shape the next generation of water management.

RESPONDING TO A HISTORIC WET WEATHER EVENT

In late June 2021, southeast Michigan experienced one of the most significant rainfall events in its history. More than eight inches of rain fell in less than 24 hours in some locations, overwhelming drainage systems, flooding neighborhoods and disrupting communities across the region. Several rainfall gauges recorded precipitation levels associated with a 100-year storm, while others registered what meteorologists classified as a 1,000-year storm.

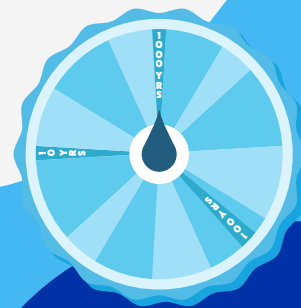
The scale of the storm placed extraordinary demands on local and regional infrastructure. Pump stations, combined sewer systems and local drainage networks were pushed beyond capacity as communities worked to respond to widespread flooding and basement backups. For many residents, the event served as a stark reminder that water infrastructure is most visible when it is under stress.

For GLWA, the storm required an immediate regional response. Teams worked around the clock to monitor system performance, protect critical facilities and coordinate closely with member partner communities as conditions continued to evolve.

The event highlighted both the complexity of operating a regional water system and the importance of strong partnerships during moments of crisis.

Just as importantly, the storm revealed broader challenges facing communities across the region. As discussions continued in the months that followed, a growing recognition emerged that the level of service historically provided by wastewater and environmental protection systems may differ from the level of protection communities increasingly expect from flood control infrastructure. The event accelerated important conversations about climate preparedness, infrastructure investment and regional coordination.

What began as an extraordinary weather event ultimately became a catalyst for change. The storm reinforced the importance of long-term planning, regional collaboration and continued investment in infrastructure capable of serving communities in a changing climate.



**"As a regional authority,
we have the unique ability to pivot our attention to look
at both short-term demands like we have seen this past
summer, but also how we best prepare for the
long term, together."**

— Suzanne Coffey, *CEO*

OPENING DOORS THROUGH INCLUSION

In February 2021, GLWA launched its **Business Inclusion and Diversity (B.I.D) Program**, creating new opportunities for minority-owned, women-owned and disadvantaged business enterprises to participate in major infrastructure projects throughout the region.

The program was designed to increase access, strengthen competition and ensure that the economic benefits associated with major public infrastructure investments reached a broader range of businesses and communities. By encouraging participation from historically underrepresented firms, GLWA sought to create a more inclusive contracting environment while continuing to deliver high-quality projects and services.

The impact was immediate. During its first year, 11 contracts were awarded through the BID framework, representing nearly \$180 million in contract value. With 94 vendor diversity plans submitted, the program also generated strong participation from vendors and contractors, helping establish new pathways for partnership and engagement throughout the region.

More than a procurement initiative, the BID Program reflected GLWA's belief that investments in infrastructure should create opportunities that extend beyond pipes, plants and facilities. The program became an important part of the Authority's commitment to supporting economic growth and expanding participation in the region's future.

B.I.D. Program

BUSINESS, INCLUSION, & DIVERSITY



11

CONTRACTS
AWARDED



180

MILLION DOLLARS
AWARDED



94

VENDOR DIVERSITY
PLANS SUBMITTED





SEEING THE WATERSHED IN REAL TIME

While responding to immediate challenges, GLWA also continued investing in technologies that would strengthen long-term environmental stewardship and water quality protection. In 2021, the authority launched a new **water quality buoy** in Lake St. Clair, expanding its ability to monitor source water conditions in real time. The buoy continuously collects data on environmental factors including temperature, algae activity and other indicators that can influence water quality and treatment operations.

The system provides operators with valuable early-warning information, allowing them to identify changes in raw water conditions and make operational adjustments before those changes affect treatment processes or customers.

By combining traditional infrastructure investments with advanced monitoring technology, GLWA strengthened its ability to protect public health while improving operational awareness throughout the system.

The buoy also reflected GLWA's growing leadership role in regional water quality monitoring and watershed collaboration. Together with ongoing Watershed Hub initiatives and expanded data-sharing efforts, it represented a more proactive approach to understanding and protecting the waterways that support southeast Michigan's drinking water supply.



SCAN TO VIEW
THE 2021 YIR



2022



FROM PROGRESS TO PROOF

For much of the previous decade, GLWA had been focused on building a stronger regional utility: improving operations, investing in infrastructure, strengthening partnerships and creating a foundation for long-term success. Much of that work happened behind the scenes, measured in planning documents, capital projects and incremental operational improvements.

In 2022, many of those efforts produced visible results. The year brought significant accomplishments that demonstrated the value of long-term investment and collaboration. At the same time, it presented new challenges that tested the regional system and reinforced the importance of continued vigilance.

Whether achieving a major regulatory milestone, responding to one of the most significant infrastructure failures in the Authority's history or expanding affordability assistance for households across GLWA's service area, the Authority remained focused on protecting public health, supporting member communities and preparing for the future.

A MILESTONE 45 YEARS IN THE MAKING

In 2022, GLWA achieved one of the most significant environmental and operational milestones in its history when the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) terminated the Administrative Consent Order governing operations at the **Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF)**.

The milestone marked the first time in 45 years that GLWA and its predecessor organization, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, operated without either a federal consent decree or state administrative consent order requiring extraordinary oversight of wastewater treatment operations.

The achievement reflected years of sustained operational improvements, infrastructure investments and a commitment to environmental stewardship. Improvements to solids processing and disposal operations, upgrades to critical equipment, construction of the Biosolids Dryer Facility, completion of the Rouge River Outfall Disinfection Facility and implementation of comprehensive asset management practices all contributed to improved performance and regulatory compliance.

Equally important was the dedication of the workforce responsible for operating and maintaining one of the largest wastewater treatment facilities in North America. Their efforts helped drive dramatic improvements in National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit compliance and water quality performance over more than a decade.

For GLWA, the lifting of the consent order served as proof that sustained investment, operational discipline and long-term planning can produce meaningful environmental outcomes and restore confidence in critical public infrastructure.



TURNING A CHALLENGE INTO A ROADMAP

Just months after celebrating the WRRF milestone, GLWA faced one of the most significant operational challenges in its history. In August 2022, a break occurred on a 120-inch water transmission main — the largest pipe in GLWA's regional water system that carries finished drinking water from the Lake Huron Water Treatment Facility to communities throughout the northern portion of the Authority's service area.

Initially, the incident affected 23 communities and approximately 935,000 residents. The scale of the disruption required an immediate and coordinated response. GLWA teams, contractors and member partner communities worked around the clock to stabilize the system, restore service and protect public health. Within 24 hours, the number of impacted residents had been reduced significantly, and within a week all affected communities had regained some level of service. Final repairs were completed within 45 days.



TURNING A CHALLENGE INTO A ROADMAP **CONTINUED**

While the break tested the regional system, it also highlighted the value of transparency and collaboration. GLWA maintained a steady cadence of communication with member partners, elected officials, the media and residents, providing regular updates through emergency coordination calls, public briefings, fact sheets, videos and digital communications.

Perhaps most importantly, the event reinforced the value of GLWA's Linear System Integrity Program (LSIP), launched just one year earlier. The program was designed to proactively assess water transmission mains and wastewater interceptors, identify deterioration before failures occur and strategically prioritize repairs and renewals.

While the transmission main was out of service, GLWA conducted inspections of adjacent pipe segments and gathered valuable information about overall system condition. The findings helped inform future assessments and strengthened understanding of where investments would have the greatest impact.

The incident served as a powerful reminder that reliability depends not only on responding effectively when failures occur, but on building the knowledge and tools needed to reduce risk before disruptions happen.



EXPANDING ACCESS THROUGH WRAP

While infrastructure and operations remained central priorities, GLWA also continued advancing one of its most important commitments: ensuring water remains affordable for the communities it serves. In late 2022, the Authority launched significant updates to the **Water Residential Assistance Program** (WRAP), expanding eligibility, simplifying participation and introducing a new income-based assistance model designed to better reflect a household's ability to pay.

The updated WRAP Income Based Plan represented one of the most comprehensive affordability programs in the nation. Under the new structure, assistance levels are determined based on both household income and water bill burden, helping ensure that the amount families pay remains manageable relative to their financial circumstances. The program also expanded access by making assistance available to eligible households throughout GLWA's member partner communities while strengthening case management services designed to support long-term financial stability.

Beyond bill credits, WRAP provides arrearage assistance, conservation education and minor plumbing repairs that help reduce water usage and lower future costs. The program reflects an understanding that affordability challenges often extend beyond a single overdue bill and require solutions that address underlying household needs.

By the end of 2022, nearly 5,000 households across the service area were enrolled in WRAP, with approximately \$7 million in assistance provided to eligible residents.

\$7 MILLION

IN ASSISTANCE
FOR NEARLY

5,000

HOUSEHOLDS

"It is our goal to ensure that WRAP continues to evolve so that it can provide real assistance—both financial and in terms of creating a healthier home—to those with the greatest need in the communities we serve."

— Nicolette N. Bateson, *CFO/Treasurer*

The enhancements reflected GLWA's broader belief that water affordability is an essential component of public service and that strong infrastructure must be matched by programs that help ensure residents can access and maintain that service.



SCAN TO VIEW
THE 2022 YIR

A scenic photograph of a forest stream with large rocks and lush green foliage. The water is clear, reflecting the surrounding greenery. A large, bold white number '2023' is centered over the image. A large, solid blue shape, resembling a stylized 'S' or a curved arrow, is positioned on the right side of the image, partially obscuring the forest background.

2023



PREPARING FOR THE NEXT DECADE

Across the water sector, utilities were confronting a new set of realities. Much of the workforce responsible for operating critical infrastructure was approaching retirement. Weather events were becoming more frequent and more severe. Infrastructure systems were growing more complex, while the expectations placed on public utilities continued to rise. Meeting those challenges would require more than maintaining pipes, pumps and treatment facilities. It would require an organization capable of adapting, planning and responding in a rapidly changing environment.

Throughout 2023, GLWA focused on strengthening the foundations that would support its next decade of service. The Authority achieved a major financial milestone that reinforced confidence in its long-term strategy. It invested in attracting and developing the next generation of water professionals. And it implemented organizational changes designed to improve coordination, preparedness and long-term planning.

Together, these efforts reflected an important shift. If the first few years focused on building a regional utility, 2023 was about ensuring that utility was prepared for what comes next.



A DECADE IN REVIEW

GLWA IS AN

“AA”

RATED UTILITY

RECOGNIZING FINANCIAL STRENGTH

One of the year's most significant accomplishments occurred far from a treatment plant, pump station or transmission main. In 2023, GLWA **achieved AA-category ratings from all three major credit rating agencies** — Moody's, Fitch and Standard & Poor's — an important milestone that reflected years of disciplined financial management, operational consistency and thoughtful long-term planning and leadership. The ratings affirmed the Authority's ability to balance substantial infrastructure investment needs with affordability, stable operations and sound fiscal stewardship.

Following the ratings actions, GLWA successfully executed a bond transaction that secured \$250 million in funding for capital improvements across the water and wastewater systems while also generating \$46 million in cash-flow savings through refinancing efforts. The funding supports projects focused on asset renewal, optimization and innovation, helping ensure continued investment in critical infrastructure without losing sight of affordability.

“GLWA now having achieved the ‘AA’ ratings category by all three ratings agencies is recognition of our utility’s long-term strategy for affordability and system resiliency, and a testament to the hard work of every team member at GLWA.”

— Freman Hendrix, *Board Chairperson (2023)*

The milestone demonstrated growing confidence in GLWA's ability to responsibly manage one of the nation's largest regional water systems while continuing to invest in its future.



BUILDING THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

While infrastructure remains at the heart of GLWA's operations, the Authority recognizes that its future depends equally on the people who operate, maintain and improve the system every day. In 2023, GLWA launched its **Tap In** recruitment campaign to raise awareness of careers in the water sector and connect more people with opportunities across the organization.

The campaign reflected a challenge facing utilities across the country. As experienced professionals retire and workforce needs evolve, attracting and developing new talent has become essential to long-term success. Featuring GLWA's own team members and highlighting the purpose-driven nature of utility work, the campaign introduced new audiences to careers in operations, engineering, skilled trades, information technology, finance and environmental services.

Tap In was part of a broader workforce development strategy that included apprenticeship programs, leadership development initiatives, educational partnerships and community outreach efforts. Throughout the year, GLWA participated in events such as MLCareerQuest, where team members introduced more than 1,000 students and educators to careers in the water industry. The Authority also celebrated National Apprenticeship Week and continued expanding opportunities for hands-on training and professional growth.

These efforts earned national recognition, including a National Environmental Achievement Award for Workforce Development. More importantly, they helped build a pipeline of future talent capable of carrying forward GLWA's mission for years to come.



TAP IN

RESILIENCY = STRENGTH

In 2023, GLWA undertook a series of organizational changes designed to strengthen coordination, improve preparedness and support long-term planning across the Authority. Among the most significant was the creation of a **dedicated Resiliency Group** led by the newly appointed System Resiliency Officer. The group was established to bring greater focus and coordination to efforts involving flood mitigation, emergency preparedness, system integrity, energy reliability and long-term risk management.

At the same time, GLWA began transitioning its combined Field Services team into separate and dedicated Water and Wastewater Teams.

The change was designed to deepen technical expertise, strengthen succession planning and create greater operational focus within two increasingly specialized areas of the organization.



These changes reflected lessons learned from major infrastructure events, extreme weather challenges and ongoing system assessments. They also aligned with broader efforts underway across GLWA, including continued expansion of the Linear System Integrity Program, climate adaptation initiatives and long-range infrastructure planning.

The organizational changes implemented in 2023 were designed to do exactly that: strengthen the Authority's ability to serve its communities not only today, but for decades to come.

"Resiliency for GLWA means adapting our processes and operations to be more responsive, proactively addressing identifiable issues in the system, and preparing our team members to prevent and respond efficiently to disruption."

— Todd King, *Chief Resiliency Officer*



SCAN TO VIEW
THE 2023 YIR

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a dense forest. The trees show early autumn colors, with many in shades of yellow and green. A large, bright blue graphic, resembling a stylized letter 'S' or a curved arrow, is overlaid on the right side of the image. The year '2024' is printed in large white font across the center of the river.

2024



INVESTING IN KNOWLEDGE

GLWA entered 2024 with a growing understanding that some of the most important decisions affecting the future of the regional water system would not be made during emergencies or major infrastructure failures. They would be made through planning, scientific research, technology investments and regional collaboration.

Throughout the year, GLWA advanced initiatives designed to better understand the challenges ahead and prepare for them before they become crises. Whether studying future flood risks, strengthening regional partnerships, implementing enhanced corrosion control measures or transforming how infrastructure assets are managed, the Authority focused on continuing to build knowledge and enhance operations to protect public health for decades to come. Together, these efforts reflected a simple but powerful belief:

The best way to protect the future is to prepare for it.

STUDYING THE FUTURE OF FLOOD MITIGATION

As climate pressures intensify and weather events become more unpredictable, GLWA has taken a forward-looking approach to protecting the region's water infrastructure. The ever increasing severity of wet weather events has reinforced the need for a more comprehensive understanding of regional flood risk and solutions to help prevent that risk.

In 2024, GLWA took an important step forward by officially launching the Southeast Michigan Flood Mitigation Study in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

The multi-year study is designed to evaluate flooding challenges across Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties while identifying opportunities to reduce future impacts through coordinated regional solutions. Unlike traditional infrastructure projects focused on a single community or asset, the study recognizes that flooding does not respect municipal boundaries and that meaningful solutions require collaboration across jurisdictions.

Congress approved initial funding for the effort in early 2024, allowing work to begin in partnership with federal, state and local stakeholders. Throughout the year, GLWA convened technical experts, community representatives and government partners to help shape the study's scope and priorities. More than 50 participants contributed to an intensive planning charrette designed to identify challenges, opportunities and potential solutions.

"GLWA has been an outstanding partner, and we are confident in the team's ability to find viable solutions to help address the historic flooding across the region."

— Alex Jimenez, *USACE Detroit District's Chief of Planning*

The study reflects a broader shift in how the region approaches flood mitigation. Rather than reacting to individual events, GLWA and its partners are working to better understand long-term risks and identify strategies that can improve preparedness for future generations.



CREATING A PATH FORWARD FOR A MORE COLLABORATIVE FUTURE

In 2024, GLWA, the **City of Highland Park** and the **State of Michigan** finalized a comprehensive settlement agreement that marked a significant milestone in resolving longstanding legal disputes dating back more than two decades. The agreement established a framework for implementing key operational improvements – including the installation of wholesale water meters – and created a path forward after years of uncertainty.

Reaching the agreement required years of dialogue, coordination and persistence among GLWA, local and state leaders, utility professionals and community stakeholders.

Ultimately, the agreement provided greater certainty for member partners and the regional system while helping close one of the Authority's longest and most complex legal chapters. It also reinforced an important lesson from GLWA's first decade:

Meaningful regional progress is often measured not by the absence of challenges but by the ability to keep working together to address them.

PROTECTING WATER QUALITY & PUBLIC HEALTH THROUGH PROACTIVE SCIENCE

Providing clean, high-quality water is at the heart of GLWA's mission.

That responsibility requires more than meeting today's standards; it requires continuously applying the latest science to anticipate and solve for tomorrow's challenges. In 2024, GLWA completed a comprehensive, multi-year **Corrosion Control Study** to determine the most effective strategy for protecting drinking water as state and federal lead and copper regulations continue to evolve.

While there is no lead in GLWA's treated water and no lead pipes in the regional transmission system, water travels through local distribution systems before reaching homes and businesses. To help provide added protection throughout the local systems, GLWA proactively partnered with nationally recognized engineering firm Arcadis to conduct an extensive study using specialty pipe loop rigs constructed from pipes harvested from local water systems and installed throughout the region to determine the optimal orthophosphate levels for the regional system.



The study concluded that increasing the level of orthophosphate – often described as “**water's bodyguard**” because it forms a protective coating inside pipes that helps prevent metals such as lead, iron and copper from dissolving into drinking water – from 1.2 milligrams per liter to 2.4 milligrams per liter would provide an additional layer of protection for member partners' local systems while supporting their compliance with increasingly stringent state and federal Lead and Copper regulations.

As the change in orthophosphate levels was implemented, GLWA worked closely with member partners, regulators, elected officials, media and residents to explain both the science behind the change and what customers could expect. The effort reinforced a simple but important principle: protecting public health requires not only strong water quality performance but also earning public confidence through clear communication.

"GLWA's processes and infrastructure must evolve alongside scientific advancements and technological improvements. Proactive efforts like these enhanced corrosion control measures underscore our commitment to protecting public health and ensuring our region's water quality remains of the highest quality."

— Cheryl Porter, *Chief Operating Officer, Water & Field Services*

TRANSFORMING OPERATIONS THROUGH DIGITAL INNOVATION

While much of GLWA's infrastructure operates underground or behind the scenes, effectively managing those assets is critical to long-term reliability. In November 2024, after years of planning and preparation, GLWA officially launched **NEXGEN**, its new enterprise asset management system. The implementation marked one of the most significant technology transformations in the Authority's history.

NEXGEN modernizes how GLWA manages, monitors and maintains thousands of assets across its regional water and wastewater systems.

By integrating real-time data, mobile technology and asset lifecycle information, the platform provides team members with greater visibility into system condition and performance while improving decision-making in the field and throughout the organization.



Preparation for the launch involved years of asset verification, system configuration, training and change management. Teams across multiple departments worked together to refine asset inventories, establish new standards and prepare operational staff for the transition. With more than 80,000 assets mapped and hundreds of team members engaged in the system, GLWA has established a strong foundation for smarter, more proactive infrastructure management.

"The true value of NEXGEN is more than the technology itself. It's the foundation it creates for managing our infrastructure more proactively, using better data, stronger analytics and a deeper understanding of asset performance. Those insights will help us make smarter investment decisions for years to come, ensuring we direct resources where they'll have the greatest impact for the communities we serve."

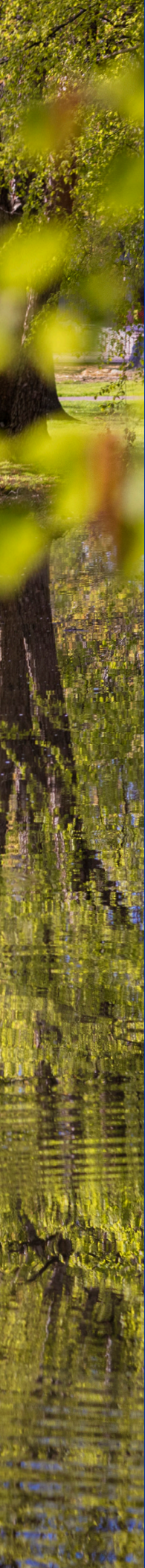
— Jody Caldwell, *Chief Planning Officer*



SCAN TO VIEW
THE 2024 YIR

A scenic photograph of a pond with trees and a golf course in the background. The image is overlaid with a large, bright blue abstract shape that curves from the top left towards the bottom right. The year '2025' is written in large, white, sans-serif font across the middle of the image, partially overlapping the pond and the blue shape.

2025



BEYOND THE HORIZON

Ten years after its formation, GLWA finds itself in a fundamentally different position than where it began. The challenges facing the region have not become simpler. Infrastructure continues to age. Weather events are becoming more unpredictable. Regulatory requirements continue to evolve. Communities expect reliability, affordability and transparency from the essential systems they depend upon every day.

Yet the first decade demonstrated something important: meeting those challenges requires more than responding to immediate needs. It requires the ability to anticipate what comes next.

Throughout 2025, GLWA continued building that capability. The Authority launched long-range planning efforts, strengthened partnerships across sectors and applied lessons learned from infrastructure failures to improve future decision-making. Together, these efforts reflected an organization increasingly focused on operating today's system while preparing for that of tomorrow.

A BLUEPRINT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF BIOSOLIDS MANAGEMENT

In 2025, GLWA launched the Regional Blueprint for Reliable Biosolids Management, a comprehensive planning effort designed to evaluate how biosolids produced at the **Water Resource Recovery Facility** should be managed over the next 30 years. As one of the largest wastewater treatment operations in North America, the WRRF plays a critical role in protecting public health and the environment. Ensuring its long-term sustainability requires thoughtful planning, rigorous analysis and a willingness to evaluate emerging technologies and best practices.

The study brings together technical experts, member partners and stakeholders to assess future processing needs, operational requirements, regulatory considerations and opportunities for innovation. Rather than focusing solely on today's challenges, the effort is intended to create a roadmap that will guide decision-making for decades to come.

Like many of GLWA's most important initiatives, the study reflects a broader commitment to making investments today that position the regional system to meet the needs of future generations.





CONVENING THE WATER-ENERGY CONNECTION

Water and electricity are often discussed as separate systems. In reality, each depends on the other. Recognizing this growing interdependence, GLWA partnered with the University of Michigan to host its inaugural **Electric-Water Utility Resilience Summit** in February 2025. The event brought together leaders from GLWA, DTE Energy, Consumers Energy, ITC and academic experts to explore the relationship between power reliability, water infrastructure and regional preparedness.

"We absolutely need, not just a handshake or a good conversation or a meeting once in a while, but we need to be deeply partnered. This is an opportunity for us to begin a deeper partnership with our utility partners."

— Sue Coffey, *Chief Executive Officer*



The conversations focused on a shared challenge: how utilities can work together to better anticipate disruptions, strengthen critical infrastructure and improve the reliability of essential services. Despite severe winter weather during the event, participation remained strong, underscoring the importance of the topic and the value of collaboration across sectors and marking the beginning of a new regional dialogue about how critical infrastructure providers can work together to prepare for increasingly complex challenges. Participants explored aging infrastructure, extreme weather, funding strategies and resilience metrics while identifying opportunities for future collaboration across sectors.

The summit also reflected GLWA's growing role as a convener, bringing together organizations that may approach challenges from different perspectives but share a common responsibility to serve the public. The discussions helped strengthen relationships, identify areas for future collaboration and advance thinking around infrastructure preparedness throughout the region.

"Stronger collaboration has the potential to build resilience in Southeast Michigan and to position the region as a national leader and model in cross-organizational cooperation." — Seth Guikema, *University of Michigan Professor*



A DECADE IN REVIEW

TURNING LESSONS INTO ACTION

"Last year's transmission main break changed how we assess and prioritize risk across the system."

— Peter Fromm, *Director of Water Transmission*

In February 2025, a major 54-inch transmission main in Southwest Detroit experienced a catastrophic failure, disrupting service for residents and businesses and requiring an immediate regional response. Crews worked around the clock under challenging sub-zero conditions to stabilize the system, coordinate with local officials and restore service safely while protecting public health.

The incident affected hundreds of households and served as a powerful reminder that infrastructure failures are not measured solely in gallons of water lost or feet of pipe repaired. **They are measured in their impact on families, neighborhoods and communities.**

While the response demonstrated the dedication and expertise of GLWA team members and regional partners, the lasting significance of the event extended beyond the repair itself. The break provided valuable new information about system condition and reinforced the importance of understanding not only where infrastructure may fail but also the consequences when it does.

The lessons learned helped shape the continued evolution of the **Linear System Integrity Program** (LSIP), GLWA's long-term effort to proactively assess, prioritize and renew critical water and wastewater infrastructure. Inspection data, condition assessments and insights gathered during the response informed a more sophisticated approach to risk management — one that increasingly considers both the likelihood of failure and its potential impact on surrounding communities.

Throughout 2025, GLWA expanded the use of advanced monitoring technologies, targeted replacement strategies and condition assessments designed to strengthen reliability across the regional system. These efforts included acoustic fiber optic monitoring, carbon fiber reinforcement technologies and additional inspections of critical transmission assets, helping provide a more comprehensive understanding of infrastructure condition and performance.

The work reflects a broader shift in how GLWA manages one of the nation's largest regional water systems. Rather than relying primarily on age-based replacement schedules, the Authority increasingly uses data, technology and system intelligence to guide investment decisions and target resources where they can have the greatest impact.



The result is a more proactive approach to infrastructure stewardship, focused not only on responding effectively when failures occur but also on applying those lessons to reduce the likelihood and impact of future disruptions. In this way, the 2025 transmission main break became an opportunity to strengthen the system for the future.

LOOKING AHEAD

Ten years ago, GLWA was created with a vision of regional collaboration, operational excellence and long-term stewardship. Over the course of its first decade, the Authority strengthened its financial foundation, modernized critical infrastructure, advanced environmental performance, expanded affordability programs, invested in workforce development and deepened partnerships across southeast Michigan. Along the way, it navigated infrastructure failures, extreme weather events, regulatory challenges and evolving community needs — all while continuing to provide essential services to millions of people every day.

The milestones highlighted throughout this Decade in Review tell the story of an organization that has continually evolved to meet new challenges. But they also point toward something larger. The future of water will be shaped not only by infrastructure, but by collaboration. Not only by technology, but by people. Not only by responding to challenges, but by preparing for them.

As GLWA enters its second decade, that commitment remains unchanged: protecting public health, safeguarding the environment and ensuring that the communities the Authority serves continue to benefit from safe, reliable and affordable water services for generations to come.

WATER THAT CARRIES US FORWARD



A DECADE OF RECOGNITION



2016

- Partnership for Safe Water 10-Year Directors Award
 - Northeast, Lake Huron and Southwest Water Treatment Plants

2017

- Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies Gold Award for Exceptional Utility Performance
- Bond Buyer Midwest Deal of the Year Award

2018

- Michigan Public Purchasing Officers Association Purchasing Agency of the Year
- Nation Association of Clean Water Agencies, Water Environment Federation, Water Research Foundation & WateReuse Association – Utility of the Future Today designation

2019

- Leading Utilities of the World Recognition
- Association of Public Treasuries of the U.S. and Canada–Certificate of Excellence for GLWA's Investment Policy

2020

- Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies – Platinum Award for Utility Excellence
- National Association of Clean Water Agencies National Environmental Achievement Awards – Workforce Development & Public Information

2021

- Government Finance Officers Association – Distinguished Budget Presentation Award
- National Association of Clean Water Agencies – 2021 Excellence in Management Award – Gold Level
- Government Technology District Award – Technology Innovation–Operations Category for GLWA's IT Security Risk Reduction Program

2022

- American Public Works Association's Public Works Project of the Year Award – Restoration/Preservation Category – Water Works Park Water Treatment Plant Historic High Lift Pump Station Roof Rehabilitation

2023

- National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Michigan Chapter EMMY Award – Outstanding Public Affairs Program for "Where Does the Water Go?" animated video
- National Association of Clean Water Agencies 2022 Peak Performance Award – Gold Level
- American Water Works Association Michigan Section Professional Excellence Award – GLWA

2024

- Crain's Detroit Business 2024 HR Team of the Year – Organizational Development
- 2024 Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency – Bronze Status
- International Water Association World Congress – Bronze Award in the Innovation Category

2025

- National Procurement Institute's Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award – Procurement Group
- American Water Works Association Public Communications Achievement Award for Public Affairs' Tap In Recruitment Campaign

CHERYL PORTER MAKES HISTORY AS 1ST AFRICAN AMERICAN & 1ST WOMAN OF COLOR TO LEAD INTERNATIONAL WATER ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION

"I am honored to have been selected as AWWA's president. When people see me and look at my career path, I might not be what one would traditionally expect as the president-elect of a national organization, but my non-traditional story began with a drop of water under a microscope in a Detroit Public High School and has spanned nearly three decades to bring me to this barrier-breaking moment in the water sector."



In a historic vote in 2023, the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Board of Directors selected Cheryl Porter, GLWA's Chief Operating Officer – Water and Field Services as its next president-elect. AWWA represents more than 50,000 members worldwide.

A trailblazer within the water sector, Cheryl is the first African American and the first woman of color to serve as AWWA president. Her historic term as president spanned one year from June 2024 through June 2025.

WATER SYSTEM

5 
TREATMENT PLANTS

 **795 MILES** 
OF TRANSMISSION MAIN

 **88** MEMBER PARTNERS
ACROSS **115** COMMUNITIES

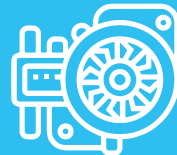
 **3.7**
MILLION
PEOPLE SERVED

 TREATMENT CAPACITY OF
1,720 MILLION GALLONS
PER DAY 

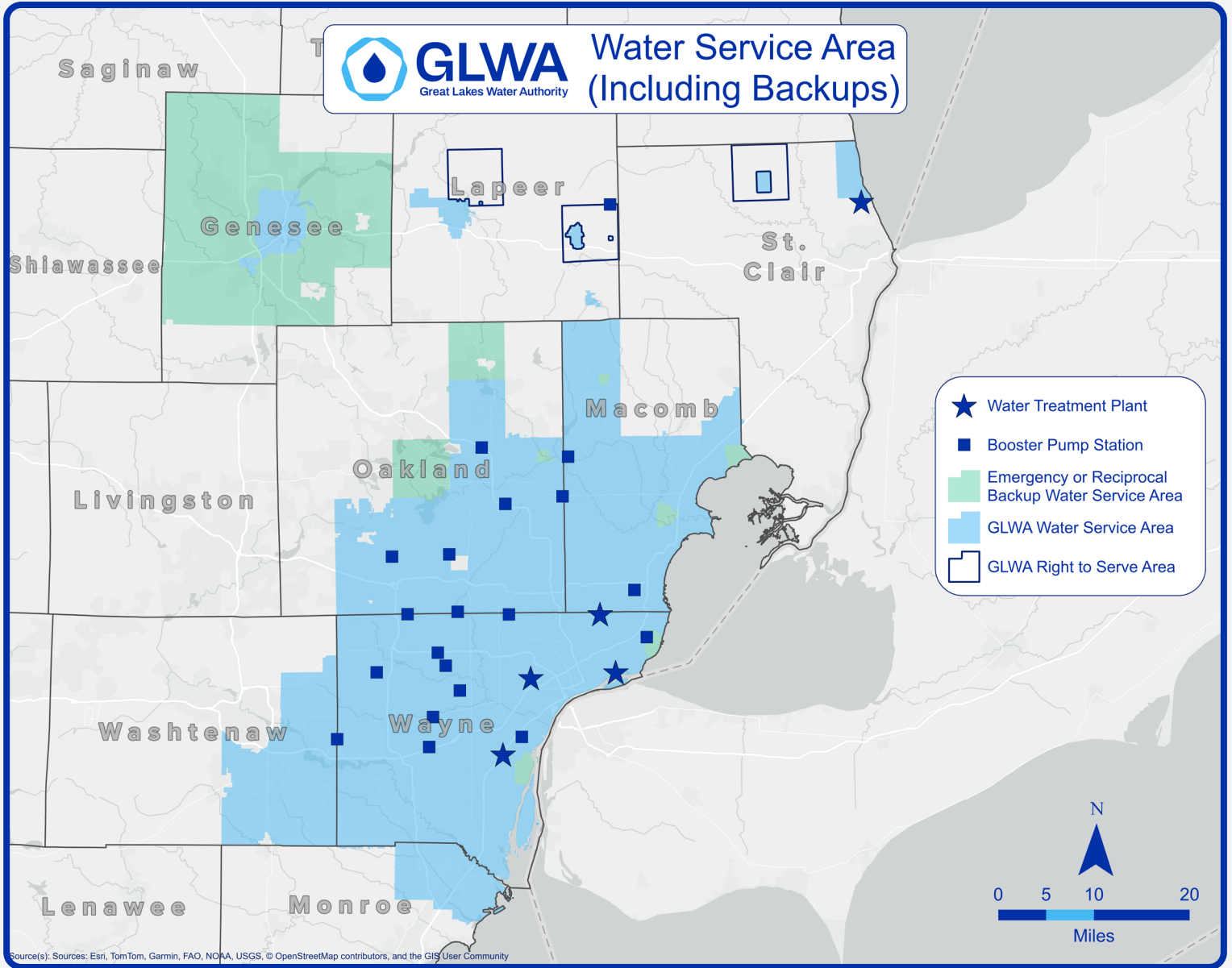
 **3** WATER
INTAKES



19 BOOSTER
PUMP STATIONS



 **1,647 SQ. MILE**
SERVICE AREA



WASTEWATER SYSTEM



THE LARGEST SINGLE-SITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY IN THE UNITED STATES



202 MILES

OF TRUNK SEWERS & INTERCEPTORS



19 MEMBER PARTNERS
ACROSS **83** COMMUNITIES



2.8
MILLION
PEOPLE SERVED



TREATMENT CAPACITY OF
1,700 MILLION GALLONS
PER DAY



9 
CSOs

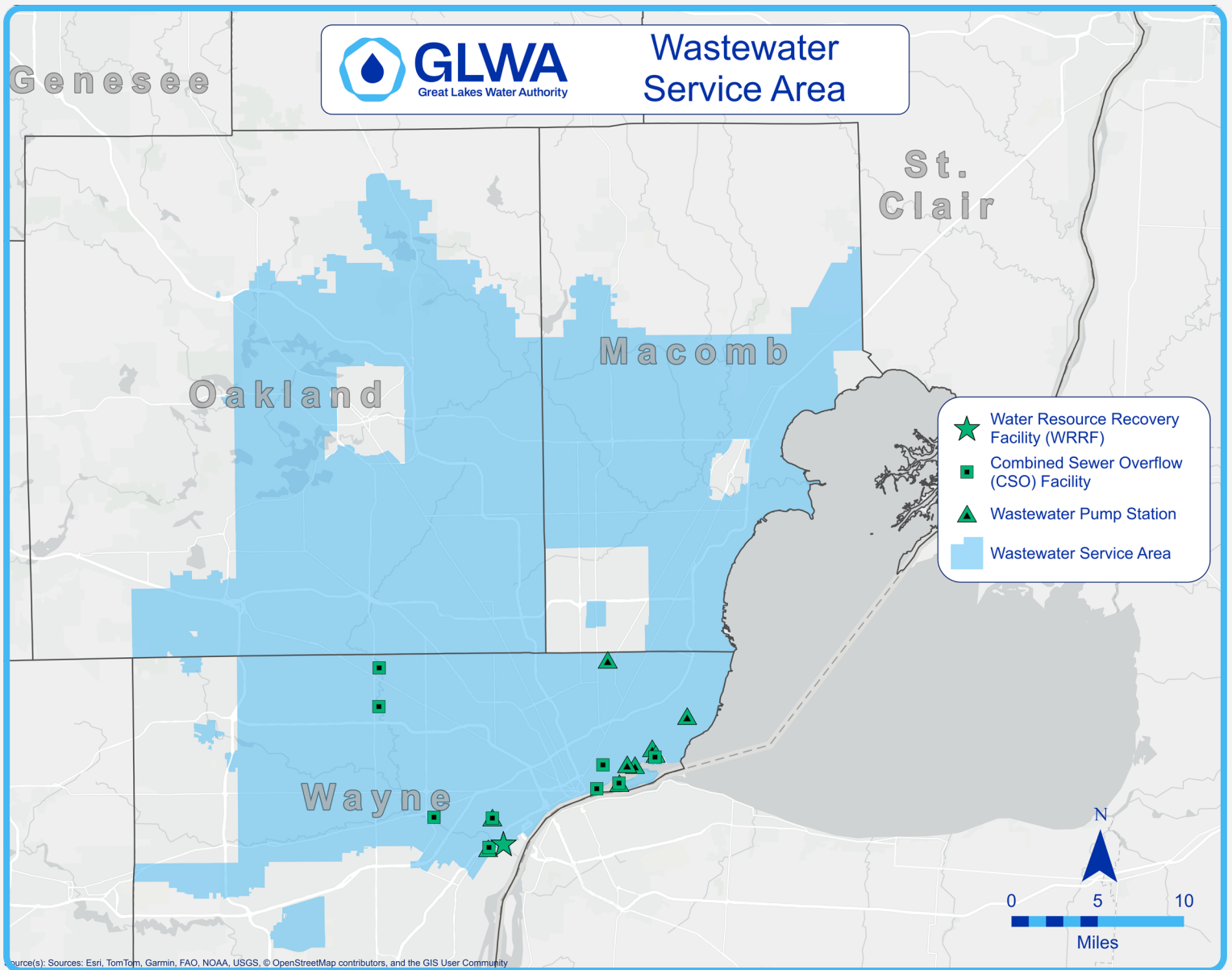


10 PUMP
STATIONS

3 
INTERCEPTORS



952 SQ. MILE
SERVICE AREA





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT

GARY A. BROWN

Board Representative Appointed by the city of Detroit

JAYE QUADROZZI

Board Vice-Chair*; Board Representative Appointed by Oakland County

BRIAN BAKER

Board Representative Appointed by Macomb County

FREMAN HENDRIX

Board Secretary*; Board Representative Appointed by the city of Detroit

MARK MILLER

Board Representative Appointed by the state of Michigan

JOHN J. ZECH

Board Chair*; Board Representative Appointed by Wayne County

**Position held during the 2026 calendar year*

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

TOP ROW: PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT

JEFFREY SMALL

Chief Information Officer

W. BARNETT JONES

Chief Security and Integrity Officer

WILLIAM M. WOLFSON

Deputy Chief Executive Officer

TODD KING, P.E.

Chief Resiliency Officer

JODY CALDWELL, P.E.

Chief Planning Officer

GARY MEKJIAN, P.E.

Community and Legislative
Relations Officer

BOTTOM ROW: PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT

NICOLETTE N. BATESON, CPA

Chief Financial Officer / Treasurer

MICHELLE A. ZDRODOWSKI

Chief Public Affairs Officer

NAVID MEHRAM, P.E.

Chief Operating Officer – Wastewater Operations

SUZANNE R. COFFEY, P.E.

Chief Executive Officer

PHYLLIS HURKS

General Counsel

JORDIE KRAMER

Chief Organizational Development Officer

CHERYL PORTER

Chief Operating Officer – Water & Field Services

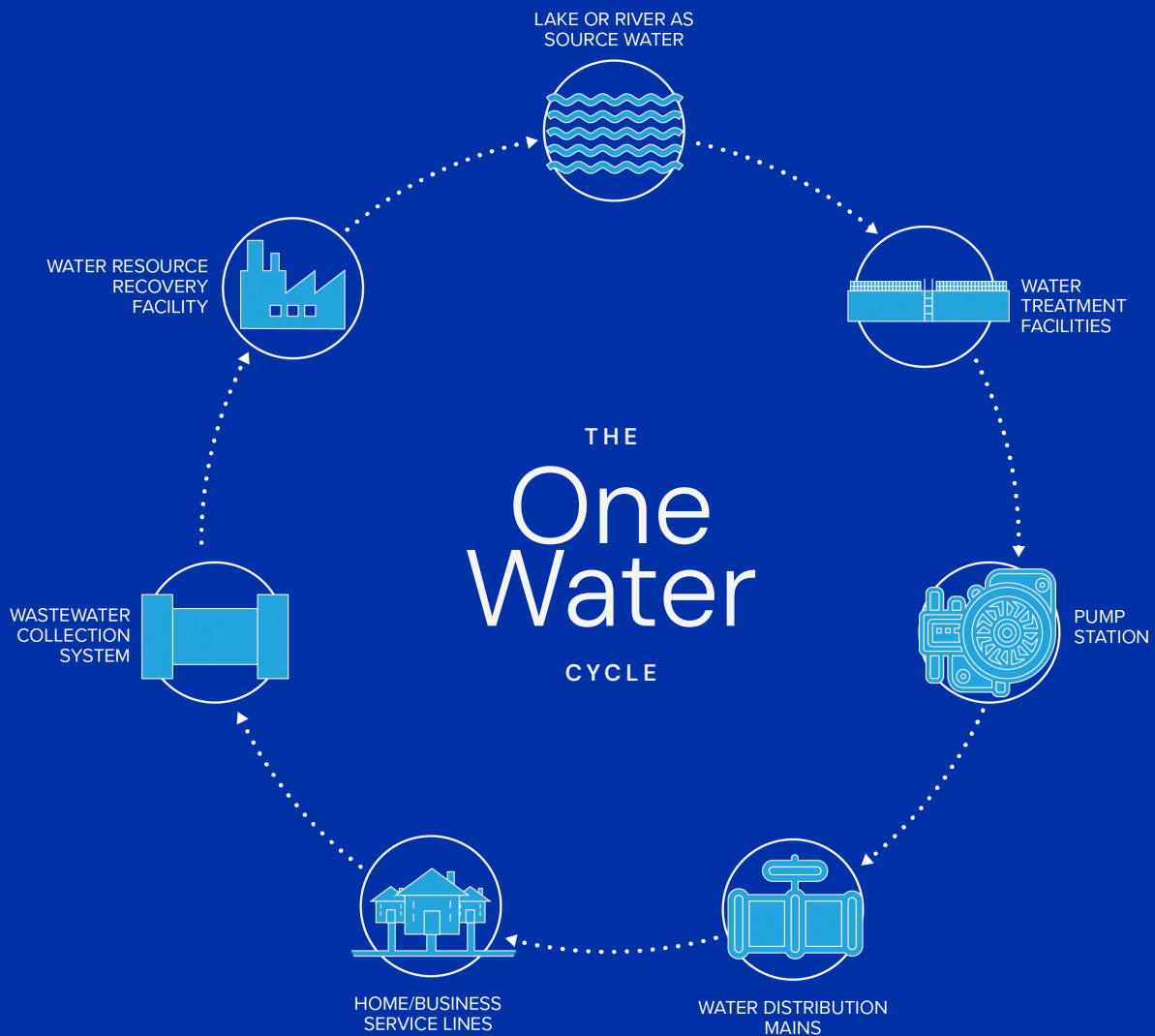






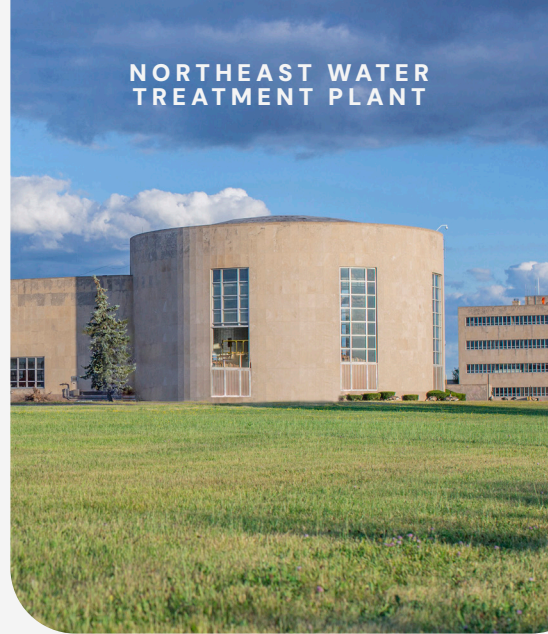
GLWA is all about One Water. The movement of water from the environment to Member Partners and back to the environment. GLWA ensures Member Partner communities get the highest quality water using treatment standards that are stricter than state or federal regulatory requirements. Once the water has been used, GLWA runs it through its treatment process again before returning it to the environment – oftentimes cleaner than when it was received. Working hand-in-hand with its Member Partners, GLWA provides water of the highest quality and efficient and effective wastewater services.

Together, we are one water.





WATER RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY



NORTHEAST WATER
TREATMENT PLANT



LAKE HURON
WATER TREATMENT PLANT



SPRINGWELLS WATER TREATMENT PLANT



WATER WORKS PARK WATER TREATMENT PLANT



SOUTHWEST WATER
TREATMENT PLANT

