

Presenter Biographies

<p>Paul Sachs, Director of Department of Strategic Impact</p>	<p>Paul Sachs is responsible for implementing innovative, pragmatic solutions that positively impact quality of life and economic growth in the County. A Michigan native, Paul was born and raised in Royal Oak, MI, attended Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo (B.S. Earth Sciences '98), and currently lives in Holland, MI with his wife and two daughters. Paul previously worked as a Researcher for the Federal Highway Administration's Research and Technology Center in McLean, Virginia, and as a Planning Analyst for Michael Baker Engineering under contract with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Washington D.C.</p>
<p>Nathan Wiechel, Science Teacher, Allendale Christian School</p>	<p>Nathan Wiechel graduated from Calvin College with a B.A. in elementary education in 2002. The following year he worked throughout Ottawa and Kent Counties as a substitute teacher. Following that experience Nathan taught fourth grade at Allendale Christian for four years. He is now the middle school science teacher, and the 7th grade homeroom and Bible teacher. Nathan has also been the athletic director of Allendale Christian's middle school athletics program for a number of years. In the summer of 2013, he completed his masters work in Educational Leadership at Grand Valley State University. In addition to graduate work, Nathan has taken part in training through Teaching for Transformation and the Ottawa Area ISD to learn more about how to provide students with rich learning experiences that impact the Allendale community. Nathan connected with Ottawa County's Planning Department in Fall 2019 to serve as a community partner in helping to develop replicable programming for area middle school students regarding Ottawa County's unique groundwater sustainability challenges.</p>
<p>Rebeka Mesbergen, Middle School Teacher, Allendale Christian School</p>	<p>Rebeka Mesbergen received her degree in elementary education with minors in math and English from Calvin College. She did her practice teaching in Rehoboth, NM and has been teaching at Allendale Christian middle school since 2000. Rebeka is involved in a variety of extra-curricular activities around school, including keeping the scorebook at girls and boys basketball games, leading Mathcounts, and playing piano for chapels, choir, and anything else that needs a pianist. She works to stay current on educational issues by attending a variety of classes and workshops through different venues.</p>
<p>Wendy Ogilvie, Director of Environmental Programs, Grand Valley Metro Council</p>	<p>Wendy joined the Grand Valley Metro Council in 2013 as the Director of Environmental Programs, bringing her expertise of over 25 years in watershed and stormwater management. Her work focuses on convening and developing partnerships to build capacity in addressing</p>

	<p>environmental issues. She is a Green Infrastructure Professional and Certified Trainer through the National Green Infrastructure Certification Program. She coordinates the work of the Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds, an agency of GVMC, in protecting and restoring the water resources within the watershed. Originally from Maryland, Wendy came to Michigan to earn a B.S. in Forestry from the University of Michigan and a M.S. in Resource Development from Michigan State University.</p>
<p>Benjamin Jordan, Watershed Coordinator, Ottawa Conservation District</p>	<p>Ben Jordan is a lifelong resident of Southwest Michigan and received his degree in Environmental Analysis and Natural Resources Management from Western Michigan University in 2012. Since graduating most of his career has focused on improving water quality and addressing non-point source pollution through both regulatory, and voluntary means. He has been with the Ottawa Conservation District since 2015 where he has successfully written multiple water quality grants, and helps manage watershed projects spanning 5 counties, and 16 HUC-12 watersheds.</p>
<p>Sarah Bouwman, Watershed Technician, Ottawa Conservation District</p>	<p>Sarah is one of the Ottawa Conservation District's newest team members but comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience in water quality and watershed management. She has a bachelor's in water resources from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and a Master's in Conservation Biology from Green Mountain College. Her work experience includes environmental quality monitoring, the development of watershed management plans, outreach and education, and partnership building.</p>
<p>Dr. Aaron Best, Hope College. Harrison C. and Mary L. Visscher Professor of Genetics, Department Chair</p>	<p>Dr. Best began working at Hope College in fall 2004 after completing graduate work and post-doctoral training in the fields of microbiology and microbial evolution at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research includes understanding the unique process of transcription in the human parasite <i>Giardia lamblia</i>, the integration of large scale data sets into models of metabolism for bacteria and the microbial ecology of the Macatawa Watershed. Each project hinges on the use of DNA sequences to guide questions and hypotheses.</p>
<p>Dr. Richard Rediske, Grand Valley State University, Senior Program Manager & Professor Rebert B. Annis Water Resources Institute</p>	<p>Dr. Rediske is a professor of water resources at the Annis Water Resources Institute at Grand Valley State University and conducts research on the fate and transport of toxic chemicals in the environment. Previously, he was the Vice President of Environmental Services for a large consulting engineering firm involved with the remediation of hazardous waste sites. Dr. Rediske has a PhD in Environmental Health Sciences (Toxicology) and a MS in Water Resources Science from the University of Michigan.</p>