



River Raisin

WATERSHED COUNCIL

Partner · Protect · Preserve

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Protecting Our Watershed: Stopping the Spread of Spotted Lanternfly



The arrival of the invasive Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) in the River Raisin Watershed is troubling news for our local ecosystems, agriculture, and communities. Native to Asia, this colorful yet destructive pest feeds on the sap of more than 70 plant species: including grapes, fruit trees, black walnut, and maples. While it poses no direct danger to humans or animals, its impact on plants, crops, and water quality is significant and far-reaching. Spotted lanternflies weaken their host plants by drawing out vital sap, leaving behind a sticky residue known as honeydew. This sugary coating encourages the growth of black sooty mold, a fungus that blocks sunlight and can suffocate plants. Beyond harming vegetation, honeydew creates a sticky mess on patios, cars, and outdoor furniture while attracting nuisance insects such as yellow jackets, flies, and ants. Together, these effects can damage local ecosystems, reduce crop yields, and make outdoor areas unpleasant for residents and visitors alike.

Adult spotted lanternflies (*Lycorma delicatula*) are striking insects, about one inch long and half an inch wide, with tan forewings covered in black

and white bars. Their younger stages, called nymphs, are black with white spots before developing red markings in their final stage. Their preferred host plant is the invasive Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), but they are not picky eaters, feeding on a wide range of native and cultivated plants, which allows them to spread quickly through our region.

Because SLFs can hitchhike easily on vehicles, firewood, and outdoor equipment, human activity plays a major role in their spread. Inspecting cars, campers, and gear before traveling and reporting any sightings to local authorities are simple but powerful steps that help protect our environment.

By staying alert and taking small, proactive actions, we can slow the spread of the spotted lanternfly and safeguard both our landscapes and the waterways that connect us all.

-Lydia Lopez, Water Stewardship Coordinator



Turn the page to find out how to spot spotted lanternflies, report sightings, and take action to protect our local trees and waterways.

MISSION

To inspire behaviors that promote stewardship, improve water quality, and encourage public participation to protect, preserve, and enhance the River Raisin Watershed

Join the River Raisin Watershed Council & Make a Difference!

Volunteer: Lend a hand in projects, restoration efforts, educational programs, and more!

Become a Member: Show your support and contribute to our ongoing efforts to safeguard the River Raisin.

Participate in Events: Join us for workshops, cleanups, and educational outings listed throughout our newsletter.

Your involvement is crucial to our success!

Contact us by phone: (517) 662-8755

Contact us by email: admin@riverraisin.org

Small actions make a big difference, here are steps you can take:

1 Learn to recognize SLF at all stages of its life cycle.



2 Report any sightings to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD).



3 Inspect vehicles, boats, trailers, firewood, and outdoor equipment for egg masses before moving them.



4 Avoid transporting firewood long distances...buy it where you burn it!

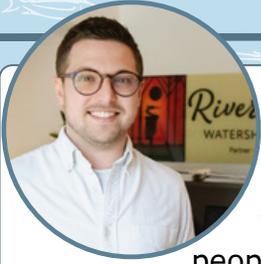


5 Remove and destroy egg masses when found on trees, rocks, or outdoor surfaces. *(photo to right)*



Looking for more information? MSU Extension also provides excellent resources for learning more about the spotted lanternfly and other invasive species. Another great way to stay informed is by following updates from JLW CISMA, our local Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area, which regularly shares regional news, identification tips, and management strategies.

From the Executive Director's Desk with Sean Dennis



It has been a wonderful year so far at the River Raisin Watershed Council! I've had the privilege of working alongside many passionate people who care deeply about our water and the health of the River Raisin Watershed.

When I stepped into the role of Executive Director in January, I was immediately able to dive into the strategic planning process with our executive committee and staff. This process gave me valuable insight into both the history of the Council and the current state of our watershed. While we can celebrate many past successes, there is still important work ahead to further strengthen the health of the River Raisin and the quality of life throughout our region. With this in mind, I am excited to share highlights from our new strategic plan, which will guide the work of RRWC in the coming years.

Now more than ever, RRWC is committed to protecting and stewarding the River Raisin and its watershed. Thanks to the support of local municipalities, schools, partner organizations, and community members like you, we continue to make meaningful progress. Current projects—such as the Brooklyn Dam removal and our semi-annual Adopt-a-Stream water quality monitoring program—are powerful examples of what can be accomplished when we work together. Looking ahead, we are preparing to launch new initiatives that will deepen our role as caretakers of this vital resource.

Over the next five years, our staff, delegates, and volunteers will focus on four key goals:

- *Protect and Improve Water Quality* – Partner with community organizations, farmers, and landowners to ensure cleaner waterways and healthier surrounding lands.
- *Connect People to Nature* – Expand recreational opportunities, improve accessibility, and foster a stronger sense of stewardship across the region.
- *Support a Strong Local Economy* – Promote economic growth through improved waterway access and increased property values, strengthening the sustainability of our communities.
- *Strengthen Our Organization* – Invest in staff and board development while diversifying funding sources to ensure long-term financial health.

If these goals resonate with you, I invite you to get involved. Your support—whether through time, talent, or treasure—truly makes a difference. By volunteering, donating, or simply spreading the word, you help us advance our mission and protect the River Raisin for generations to come.

Together for the River,
Sean Dennis
 Executive Director



The Popular Owl Prowl Returns!

Few sounds capture the magic of nighttime quite like the call of an owl echoing through the dark. The River Raisin Watershed is home to several owl species, such as the Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, and Eastern Screech-Owl, all of which play a vital role in maintaining the balance of our local ecosystem.



Each year, the Watershed Council celebrates these incredible birds with our Owl Prowl event. This gives attendees a chance to listen for owl calls, learn about their behavior, and explore their habitats under the stars. Thanks to our friends at Michigan Avian Experience, participants even get to meet live owls up close! We invite you to join us for this year's Owl Prowl and experience an evening of discovery, conservation, and appreciation for these remarkable nighttime creatures. *-Ivy McClelland, Administrative Assistant*



OWL PROWL

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DATE: December 20th, 2025

WHERE: Stubnitz Environmental Center
N Adrian Dr, Adrian, MI

(multiple time sessions will be offered.)

JOIN US! TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT
WWW.RIVERRAISIN.ORG/UPCOMING-EVENTS

RRWC wants to extend a special thank you to our 2025 donors!

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*Petersburg Representative,
Monroe County*

Sean Dennis, Executive Director
executivedirector@riverraisin.org

Lydia Lopez, Water Stewardship Coordinator
waterstewardship@riverraisin.org

Benny Woith, Administrative Coordinator
admin@riverraisin.org

Ivy McClelland, Administrative Assistant
assistant@riverraisin.com



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