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### **Preserve MI Waters: Stormwater Manhole Cover Art Contest**

**Waterford, Mich., February 2, 2022**—Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner Jim Nash is excited to announce a new stormwater education effort titled, Preserve MI Waters: Stormwater Manhole Cover Art Contest. The contest officially opened February 2, 2022 and asks high school and college students who attend school in Oakland County, to submit original artwork that brings awareness to the importance of managing stormwater. The lucky winner of the contest will see their art brought to life and cast onto 50 stormwater manhole covers throughout Oakland County.

"I'm always impressed by the younger generation's inventiveness and attention to detail," said Nash. "I know we are certain to find a fresh perspective that will inspire our community to pay even closer attention to the significance of storm drains. Our mission is to help our communities understand that the water going into our storm drains travels directly to our freshwater resources, without treatment, making it vitally important that we keep our drains free of pollutants and debris."

The contest's artwork theme focuses on keeping pollution out of our storm drains to protect wildlife and promote recreational activities within Oakland County. After the contest closes on March 11, 2022, the winning design will be chosen by a panel of water industry professionals, environmentalists and elected officials, based on the relevance of the intended water quality message and overall appearance.

The idea of putting art on storm drain covers was inspired at a Drain Board meeting late last year by Oakland County Commissioners David Woodward (Royal Oak) and Gwen Markham (Novi). The stormwater covers will be manufactured by East Jordan Iron Works and will start appearing throughout Oakland County as early as this summer. The winner will receive a \$1000 scholarship award from Pure Oakland Water (POW) as well as a small model of their art at a Board of Commissioners meeting in April. Students interested in participating in the contest should visit [www.oakgov.com/coverartcontest](http://www.oakgov.com/coverartcontest) for complete contest rules and information.

"As we take steps to improve drain and sewer infrastructure across Oakland County, what a unique opportunity to engage our creative community to design new storm drain covers to be used across the county," Woodward said. "The participants will see art and function unite for the benefit of all of us for years to come."

"This contest provides an opportunity to show the public something some photographers have known for decades - manhole covers can be cool," Markham said. "As we maintain our hundreds of miles of drains, these new covers will be a great way to remind users to keep our water clean, infuse art into our communities and add a little personality to our region."

#### **About the Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office**

The Oakland County Water Resources Commissioner's Office is dedicated to protecting public health and safety, preserving natural resources and a healthy environment, maintaining reliable, high quality service, ensuring the value of investment and contributing to economic prosperity. We set goals that encourage efforts to meet or exceed local, state and federal water quality standards, environmental regulations and safety requirements within our control. To learn more about us, visit [www.oakgov.com/water](http://www.oakgov.com/water).

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