



9436 Maltby Road  
Brighton, MI 48116  
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February 14, 2025

**Tasha Smalley, Zoning Administrator**

South Haven Township Hall  
09671 Blue Star Hwy  
South Haven, MI 49090

**Subject:**        *Site Plan Review Application*  
                      *Proposed South Haven Mitigation Bank*  
                      *Parcel Numbers: 80-17-027-014-00 and 80-17-027-060-00*  
                      *Section 27 of South Haven Charter Township (T01S, R17W), Van Buren County, Michigan*  
                      *NE 1979*

Dear Ms. Smalley:

Niswander Environmental (NE), on behalf of 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Farm, is pleased to present the following site plan review application for the proposed South Haven Mitigation Bank located on 80-17-027-014-00 and 80-17-027-060-00 in Section 27 of South Haven Charter Township (T01S, R17W), Van Buren County, Michigan. This proposal identifies a property consisting of two parcels located in northwestern Van Buren County ideal for the creation of a Wetland Mitigation Bank that will service the Paw Paw River Watershed and the Southern Lake Michigan Lake Plain Ecoregion VI.3.2. The proposed mitigation bank would involve the restoration of ±38 acres of wetland and shall be constructed and approved in accordance with the rules and regulations established by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). NE has significant experience establishing wetland mitigation banks throughout the State of Michigan, including the Paw Paw River, Kalamazoo River, Macatawa River, Clinton River, Huron River, and River Raisin Wetland Mitigation Banks, and has been looking for additional banking opportunities.

Wetland mitigation banking is the process, in advance of any authorized (i.e. permitted) impacts, of making “credits” available based on the acreage of functional wetland that was restored or created. The “credits” can then be sold to entities such as businesses or landowners to meet wetland mitigation requirements determined by the EGLE or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Wetland mitigation in Michigan is administered by EGLE under the Wetland Mitigation Banking Rules established under the authority of Part 303, Wetland Protection, NREPA. Wetland Mitigation Banking supports economic development within the Township and surrounding areas.

**PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The primary goal of the South Haven Mitigation Bank is to create 38 acres of self-sustaining forested wetlands in the Paw Paw River Watershed. The site will support a diversity of wildlife and will be preserved forever under a conservation easement. The project will involve the planting of over 15,000 native trees. In addition, the property will be seeded with a native seed mix to promote the establishment of a diverse native plant community with an array of wildflowers, grasses, and sedges.



The proposed South Haven Mitigation Bank has been sited to ensure a successful restoration that maximizes the ecological functions and values locally within the Township. The site will provide an array of benefits to the Paw Paw River Watershed primarily reducing downstream flooding and improving water quality in the Paw Paw River and ultimately Lake Michigan. Wetlands share some common physical properties that have important consequences for planning purposes. Wetlands serve a number of necessary environmental functions including:

- a. Protecting downstream water supplies by providing clean ground water as a result of the nutrient retention and sediment removal.
- b. Functioning as effective natural storage basins for floodwater. Wetlands may be considered large sponges that absorb large quantities of seasonal precipitation, gradually releasing it when the receiving channels are able to accept it.
- c. Providing a habitat for many types of plants and animals that thrive in the type of physical environment created by wetlands. These plants and animals provide an economic and recreational benefit.

The site design and location address several water impairments identified in the EPA approved Paw Paw River Watershed Management Plan (2008) including altered hydrology, sediments, excess nutrients, water temperature and pollutants (i.e. pathogens, organic compounds, heavy metals, and debris and litter). The site will address each of these impairments by the restoration of wetlands (habitat, sediments, and nutrients), preventing and regulating the spread of non-native species, and by improving flood storage by reducing stream peak flows during storm events (hydrology). The removal of surface drainage and the installation of low berms will hold water on-site creating natural wetland conditions.

By submitting this application, we're requesting Township approval or recognition that no Township approval is required for this restoration project.

Todd Losee  
President

*Professional Wetland Scientist #1733*

Tyler Smith  
Director

*Professional Wetland Scientist #3220*

Attachments: Representative Wetland Mitigation Bank Photos  
South Haven Site Plan Review Application  
Landowner Authorization Letter  
EGLE Approval Letter  
South Haven Mitigation Bank Site Plans



## **Representative Wetland Mitigation Bank Photographs**



**Photo 1**

Clinton River Wetland Mitigation Bank  
St. Clair County, MI



**Photo 2**

Huron River Wetland Mitigation Bank  
Monroe County, MI





**Representative Wetland Mitigation Bank Photographs**



**Photo 3**

Kalamazoo River Wetland Mitigation Bank  
Eaton County, MI



**Photo 4**

Kalamazoo River Wetland Mitigation Bank  
Eaton County, MI

**South Haven Charter Township**  
**09761 Blue Star Hwy South Haven MI 49090**  
**269-637-3305 [shtwp.zoninga@gmail.com](mailto:shtwp.zoninga@gmail.com)**  
**Zoning Department 111 Grand St Allegan MI 49010 1-800-626-5964 [mtsallegan@frontier.com](mailto:mtsallegan@frontier.com)**

**APPLICATION SITE PLAN REVIEW, SPECIAL USE  
PUD, SITE CONDO, OTHER**

Property Owner

Name Mike Geerlings  
Address 186 W 35th Street City Holland Zip 49423  
Telephone 616-437-7821 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Representative (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant (if different from Owner)

Name 72nd Avenue Farm, LLC  
Address 8953 Deer Trail City Brighton Zip 48114  
Telephone 810-962-0190 Email tlosee@niswander-env.com

Property Address: 17711 76th Street

Property Number 80-17- 027-014-00 & 80-17-027-060-00

Current Zoning Classification and Use Med Density Residential/Agriculture

Nature of Activity for which Review is Requested: (check which apply)  
Commercial Use \_\_\_; Industrial Use \_\_\_; Multi-family Use \_\_\_; Temporary Use \_\_\_ ;  
Grading/Paving \_\_\_; Special Use \_\_\_; Site Condo \_\_\_; PUD \_\_\_;  
(Other) Wetland Restoration

Describe proposed activity/use: Construction EGLE Approved Wetland Mitigation Bank. Minor grading, installing native wetland seed mix and planting trees.

Signature of Property Owner See attached Date 2/14/2025

Signature of Applicant Steven Niswander Digitally signed by Steven Niswander Date: 2025.02.12 11:22:55 -0500 Date 2/12/25

(owner and applicant must sign)

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Paid ck# \_\_\_\_\_

Planning Commission Action

Date of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Approval Granted; \_\_\_\_\_ Approval Granted with Conditions

Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Approval Recommended to Township Board

Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Disapproval Recommended to Township Board

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*see meeting minutes for full details

Township Board Action (if applicable):

\_\_\_\_\_ Approved

\_\_\_\_\_ Disapproved

Comments/Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\*see meeting minutes for full detail

Applicants applying for Site plan review – refer to Section 22 Site Plan Review

- Please review the whole Section
- 22.05 Preliminary site plan (if applicable)
- 22.06 Final site plan

Applicants applying for Special Use – refer to Section 15 Special Uses

- Please review 15.01-15.07
- See specific land use for regulations
- Also refer to Section 22 Site Plan review (22.02B)

Applicants applying for PUD – refer Section 16 Planned Unit Development

- Please review the whole section
- 16.05 Site plan review requirements

Applicants applying for Site Condo – refer to Section 16A Site Condominium

- Please review the whole section
- 16A.05-06 Site plan review requirements

Other contact Zoning Administrator for submittal requirements

Site plan review fee (not requiring a public hearing) \$500.00

Special use, other review fee (requiring a public hearing) \$750.00

Make payable to: South Haven Township

### **SITE PLAN REVIEW APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

Every site plan submitted for final review shall contain the following information except as otherwise provided for: Section 22 Site Plan Review Procedures

1. Small-scale sketch of properties, streets and land uses within ¼ mile of the subject property.
2. Ten (10) copies of a site plan at a scale of not more than one (1) inch equals one hundred (100) feet, showing all existing and any proposed arrangements of:
  - a. Existing adjacent streets and proposed streets and existing curb cuts within one hundred (100) feet of the property.
  - b. All lot lines and dimensions.
  - c. Parking lots and access points
  - d. All exterior lighting with sample drawings of the fixtures and where necessary engineering calculations showing the effects of such lighting on adjacent properties.
  - e. Proposed buffer strips and screening
  - f. Existing natural features, including but not limited to: stands of trees, streams, ponds, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, critical dunes and high risk erosion areas.
  - g. Existing and proposed buildings, including existing buildings within one hundred (100) feet of the boundaries of the property.
  - h. Number of square feet allocated to each proposed use and gross floor area in buildings, structures, drives and open space.
  - i. For commercial or industrial buildings, the usable floor area for each proposed use.

- j. For residential use, the dwelling unit, floor area and density by type.
- k. Proposed methods of providing sanitary sewer and water supply services.
- l. Proposed methods of providing storm water management with engineering calculations.
- m. Written computation for the required parking in compliance with Art. XX
- n. Review letter from the South Haven Area Emergency Services.
- o. Review letter from the road authority having jurisdiction
- p. Review letter from the County Drain Commissioner
- q. Review letter(s) from any other public agency having jurisdiction.
- r. For plats, condominiums and private roads the professional license seal of the person preparing the plan is required.

NOTE: If any one of the items listed above is absent, unless specifically exempted either in this ordinance or in writing from an appropriate official, the application is incomplete and can only be given conditional approval by the Planning Commission, if a majority of the Planning Commissioners agree.

3. WAIVERS:

The requirements listed above for site plans may be waived except for sub-part 2. b., c., d., and if relevant, n., o., p., and/or r. which shall be required. A site plan eligible for waivers is defined as a project disturbing less than 10% of the lot area or 5,000 square feet, and/or increases gross floor area by less than 10% or 1,000 square feet, as calculated by the Zoning Administrator. If there is a doubt, or if the Planning Commission determines that more information is required, then the project shall automatically be considered to be subject to full site plan requirements.

The applicant is responsible for submitting copies of the site plan as required to the appropriate outside agencies having jurisdiction over physical elements of the plan. These agencies include but are not limited to:

- 1. Van Buren County Drain Commissioner
- 2. Van Buren County Road Commission, Driveway Permits Officer and/or Michigan Department of Transportation, Coloma Field Office (or as redesignated by the Department).
- 3. South Haven Area Emergency Services, Fire Inspector
- 4. If the development includes a wetland, floodplain, high risk erosion area or critical dune, then the applicant shall indicate compliance with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality or successor agency (Plainwell/Kalamazoo district office or as re-assigned) requirements.
- 5. If the development includes a structure over 35 feet in height or is to be located within an airport Accident Safety Zone, then the applicant shall obtain approvals from the Michigan Department of Transportation, Bureau of Aeronautics (Lansing) or successor agency.

APPLICANTS TAKE NOTE: Some of these agencies require lengthy review times. If an applicant fails to contact an agency in a timely manner, then the application may be considered to be incomplete and the Township accepts no responsibility for any delays.



Submit completed application, 10 copies of site plan(s) and fee to:

Zoning Administrator, Tasha Smalley  
South Haven Township Hall  
09761 Blue Star Hwy, South Haven MI 49090  
Twp Hall is open M-F 9-12:30; 1:30-4pm  
ZA office hours Tues's 9:00-12:00pm and Thurs's 1:30-4:00pm  
269-637-3305

Also available:  
Michigan Township Services – Allegan, Inc.  
111 Grand Street, Allegan MI 49010  
1-800-626-5964

Site plan deadline – 15 days prior to meeting  
Public hearing site plan deadline – 28 days prior to meeting

Site plan review fee (not requiring a public hearing) \$500.00  
Special use, other review fee (requiring a public hearing) \$750.00  
Make payable to: South Haven Township

Any questions feel free to call or email [mtsallegan@frontier.com](mailto:mtsallegan@frontier.com)

February 10, 2025

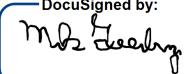
Local and State Review Approvals  
Proposed South Haven Mitigation Bank

**Subject:** *Letter of Authorization  
Vacant Property on 76<sup>th</sup> Street Road  
(Parcel ID 's: 80-17-027-014-00 & 80-17-027-060-00)  
South Haven Township (T01S, R17W, Sec. 27), Van Buren County, MI  
NE 1979*

Dear Sir or Madam,

This letter is to inform you that Niswander Environmental, on behalf of 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Farm, LLC is authorized to prepare and submit any pre-application requests, permit applications, site plan review requests and any other paperwork to Local and State Agencies for the proposed project located on vacant property on 76<sup>th</sup> Street in South Haven Township, Van Buren County, Michigan. If you have any questions regarding this authorization, please call me at (616) 437 7821.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
C6B0A24F0956476...  
Mike Geerlings  
186 W 35<sup>th</sup> St.  
Holland, MI 49423

2/10/2025 | 12:48 PM PST

cc: Todd Losee, 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Farm, LLC  
Tyler Smith, Niswander Environmental  
Nicole Stewart, Niswander Environmental



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY  
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION



PHILLIP D. ROOS  
DIRECTOR

February 12, 2025

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Steve Niswander  
Niswander Environmental, LLC  
9436 Maltby Road  
Brighton, Michigan 48116

Dear Steve Niswander:

Subject: South Haven Mitigation Bank

Per your request, the purpose of this letter is to verify that the property commonly referred to as the proposed South Haven Mitigation Bank, located east of 76<sup>th</sup> Street and south of US-31 in Section 27 of South Haven Township (T01S, R17W), Van Buren County, Michigan has been determined to be suitable for a wetland mitigation bank site by the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). EGLE has reviewed the site and concurs that the site has a history of farming, is predominantly upland, and has a high likelihood of success as a wetland bank. EGLE supports the development of wetland mitigation banks in the Paw Paw River Watershed in compliance with the approved watershed management plan and is looking forward to working with you to make this project a success. If you need further information or assistance, please contact me at 517-282-5768 or [penningtonm@michigan.gov](mailto:penningtonm@michigan.gov).

Sincerely,

Michael Pennington  
Wetland Mitigation Specialist  
Water Resources Division  
517-282-5768