

Boardman Lake Clean-up

On June 26, The Watershed Center teamed up with the Traverse Area Association of Realtors, the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Dive Team, and Scuba North to organize a cleanup project in Boardman Lake. For a number of years, the realtors group has organized a similar cleanup on the Boardman River between the lake and Grand Traverse Bay.

Based on the amount of zebra mussel-encrusted junk that was pulled out in just one morning, the partners will be organizing more cleanups!

Approximately 70 volunteers, including many area scuba enthusiasts, collected approximately 50 tires, a number of bicycles, old wood and metal chairs, a truck bed, a refrigerator and even an upright vacuum.

Supporters include Boardman Lake Glens, which provided food and financial assistance; Pat Noland Builder; Traverse Area Association of Realtors; Scuba North; Grobbel Environmental & Planning Associates; Boardman West/Lake Ridge Condominiums; the American Canoe Association; Cherry Capital Paddlers Club; Dino's Pizza; and the City of Traverse City Department of Public Works. Special thanks to Steve "Iceman" Brown for loaning us a supply of two-way radios! ■



Links & Resources

Do you want to keep up on environmental news, science, and issues in the Great Lakes? Check out www.great-lakes.net – sign up for their listserv and you will get a daily summary of important news from around the basin.

FreshWater

A Quarterly Publication FOCUS

We thought we figured it out...and then...

In December 2003, the Watershed Center and its project partners put the finishing touches on the protection plan for the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed. No sooner had we sent it off to the MDEQ and the EPA for final approval when a new set of guidelines for these plans were released. Fortunately, some additional funding also came along with the new guidelines. Project Coordinator Sarah U'Ren has been working hard the past 18 months to gather additional information; develop more specific milestones and desired outcomes for proposed solutions; and, add even more "oomph" to this already comprehensive water quality planning document.

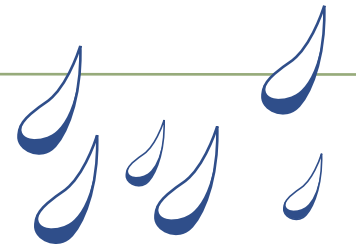
The new guidelines will make the planning document even more valuable over the next few years as the Center and its numerous watershed protection partners – local conservation districts, local governments and other natural resources organizations and agencies – prioritize projects and seek funding for necessary projects.

Some key issues that are being addressed in the updates are:

- Development of more complete inventories of problem road/stream crossings and streambank erosion sites.
- Determination of areas where failing or inadequate septic tanks have the greatest potential to impact water quality; and thus, human health.
- A comprehensive look at current master plans and zoning ordinances for counties, townships and municipalities to determine the level of protection provided in them for water quality and natural resources. For example, we looked at whether or not ordinances provided for vegetated buffers along streams and other water bodies, and, if so, how wide? This survey information will be documented in the plan.

If we were able to improve protective provisions in local ordinances and regulations to be more uniform and sensitive to natural resource impacts throughout our watershed, we would make tremendous strides in ensuring clean water for the now and the future. This planning and zoning assessment will give us a big picture look at strengths and weaknesses and where efforts should be targeted to get necessary protection measures in place at the local level.

Copies of the newly updated plan will be available at the end of the year in both printed and electronic forms. A copy of the printed document will be available for loan at the Center's offices or at the Traverse Area District Library. Free copies will be provided to local governmental units and other resource agencies. Any individual who would like a copy for their use should contact The Watershed Center. There will be a copying fee of approximately \$75 for the document. ■



When it Rains It Pours...Into The Bay

As part of this same grant, the Center is also spearheading the development of a group of interested local government officials, natural resource organizations, engineering firms and other stakeholders to develop a strategy for addressing stormwater issues in our watershed. Among the issues the group may address are education, seeking funding for stormwater infrastructure improvements, and developing and improving local ordinances that relate to stormwater. The first exploratory meeting was held November 8. ■



Stay tuned – the brochure will be available in mid-December. A great stocking stuffer for everyone who cares so deeply about our spectacular water resources!

The Watershed Center's New *Living on an Inland Sea:* Your guide for Living on the Shores of the Great Lakes

Booklets are now available at coastal township offices and through our offices. This handy, concise guide answers many questions for shoreline owners, including the ins and outs of current beach maintenance laws, how to make ecologically sound decisions regarding your property and where to go for more help.

If you own a home on the bay, or other Lake Michigan shoreline, call The Watershed Center or stop by your township offices for your free copy.



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The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay is dedicated to the preservation and protection of Grand Traverse Bay watershed. The Center works with a variety of partners, including local governments and agencies, citizen groups and resource organizations throughout the 973 square mile watershed to achieve our mission. Primary program areas include watershed protection and planning, research and monitoring, advocacy, outreach and education.

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The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay
232 East Front Street • Traverse City, MI 49684
Phone: 231.935.1514 • Fax: 231.935.3829
Email: info@gtbay.org • www.gtbay.org

FreshWater Focus is a quarterly publication of:

- Anne Brasie • Executive Director
- John Nelson • Grand Traverse Baykeeper
- Sarah U'Ren • Project Coordinator
- Anne Hansen • Office Manager
- Kellie Ferguson • Assistant Project Coordinator



FreshWater

A Quarterly Publication FOCUS

Watershed Center Awarded \$199,000 For Stormwater Work

The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay was awarded a two-year \$199,000 grant – one of 15 organizations to receive funds from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Nearly \$2.8 million was awarded to protect Michigan's lakes and streams. The Watershed Center is the only group to receive funding in the northern Lower Peninsula. Project and funding partners for this project are the City of Traverse City and Garfield Township.



The grant will provide funding for the installation of stormwater best management practices at three Traverse City storm drain outfalls and allow the Center to implement several educational campaigns.

Specific tasks include installing new stormwater control and filtering products at three Traverse City storm drains in Grand Traverse Bay: one just west of the Holiday Inn, the foot of Eighth Street on East Bay and a small drain in East Bay Park. The exact solutions for these problem drains will be determined this winter.

“East Bay property owners have been concerned about the Eighth Street drain for several years,” states Tim Lodge, Traverse City's engineer. “We are glad we finally have the funds to address some of the problems there.”

Other tasks include a public information campaign that will strengthen existing efforts to reduce the impact of stormwater and other priority pollutants in our watershed, including pathogens such as *E. coli*. Publications and outreach tours in 2006 and 2007 will be part of the mix. In addition, the Center will be partnering with Garfield Township and others to develop a booklet for developers introducing low-impact design techniques including information regarding cost impacts. The book will be tailored to conditions specific to Northern Michigan, such as soil types, topography and proximity to water.

The Center will also offer simple evaluations and recommendations to residents about how to better control stormwater on their own property.

Funding for these grants is through the Federal Clean Water Act Sections 319 and 205 funds. The Center is currently administering \$740,000 in state and federal funding directed primarily at stormwater-related projects. ■

Lake Level Update

Precipitation for September and the previous 11 months was below average on each of the Great Lakes, except Lake Erie. Comparison of the monthly mean water levels to the long term average for Lake Michigan as of October 21, 2005 indicates that water levels remain 19 inches below average. Levels are predicted to drop another two inches in November. ■

Beach Monitoring

The weather may be getting cold, but we are still thinking beaches! We wrapped our summer testing of nine area beaches Labor Day Weekend, and are happy to report that bacteria counts were generally very low this summer. Rain events required retesting before the weekend several times, but bacteria levels were always normal the second time around. Our weekly tests also did not show any contamination due to the accidental break in a downtown sewer line. Generally speaking, beach closings due to bacterial contamination are up around the Great Lakes.

We have also secured \$12,000 in federal funds administered by the MDEQ for beach testing efforts in 2006.

Beaches tested this year were Clinch Park, West End, Bryant Park, Milliken Park, State Park, Suttons Bay Beach, Northport Beach, Frankfort and Empire. These same beaches will be tested in 2006. ■

Bilge Sponge Distribution

Early this summer we distributed 300 clean boating packets to Clinch Park, Harbor West, Suttons Bay and Northport Marinas. These packets included a bilge sponge and information on clean boating practices and controlling invasive species. Special thanks to Rebecca Mann Kass for all her help in pulling this project together. We will be looking for sponsors to assist with this effort in 2006. ■

Planned giving

You can make a lasting contribution to protecting clean water in our region by making a gift to The Watershed Center in your will or estate planning. Bequests, paid life insurance policies and a variety of other tools can provide tax benefits for you and your family. Consult with your attorney or financial advisor. To let us know about your plans, please contact Anne Brasie at 231.935.1514 or abrasie@gtbay.org.

What you can do!

Winter is on its way! Here are a few tips to keep your transition from warm to cold eco-friendly:

- Button up your house – energy conservation is good for the environment, and your budget.
- Limit your use of sodium-based sidewalk de-icers – try sand (which can be swept up later before it gets into storm drains), or try products with either magnesium chloride or potassium acetate. They have been shown to be less harmful.

Baykeeper[®] Log

- Consulted with Elmwood Township Supervisor regarding purple loosestrife and beach alterations at the Elmwood Township Park.
- Advised Old Mission private landowner regarding beach altering.
- Met with Howard Walker regarding beach altering issues.
- Attended Omena Yacht Club event with tugboat.
- Participated in the DTE Freshwater Institute.
- Attended Media Day on the Bay event organized in partnership with Tip of the Mitt and several other groups, including the National Wildlife Federation.
- Met in Lansing with Deputy Director of the MDEQ regarding issues of concern.
- Presented watershed issues in two area classrooms.
- Actively participated in ongoing efforts of the Land Use and Transportation.
- Provided spoken and written comment at hearings regarding proposed development at Timber Shores in Northport.
- Worked with Grand Traverse County regarding potential prosecution of dredging violation on Old Mission Peninsula.
- Provided photographic evidence to MDEQ for a wetlands violation and a beach maintenance rule violation.
- Distributed bilge sponges and clean boating information to area marinas.
- Collaborated on development of a regional stormwater management group.



Recent Gifts

The Watershed Center recently received contributions from two local foundations for special programs and projects. These special gifts, in addition to those of area businesses and individuals that support us on a regular basis, have had a significant impact and are very much appreciated:

- **The Biederman Foundation:** \$10,000 to technical needs for the Baykeeper program and construction of the Baykeeper tugboat. This grant will allow us to purchase much-needed equipment for full implementation of Baykeeper activities, including new computer equipment, GPS and digital camera equipment, and a printer capable of printing maps necessary for various projects.
- **The Oleson Foundation:** \$8,000 contribution to our boat fund. The tugboat is now fully paid for because of this gift.
- We would also like to extend special thanks to **Scuba North** for their assistance with the inaugural Boardman Lake Cleanup event and for designating the proceeds of their annual Treasure Hunt in the bay to The Watershed Center's operating fund.
- The **Grand Traverse Sports Fishing Association** contributed an additional \$1,250 toward our boat fund. Second only to Rotary Charities which provided a \$22,500 challenge grant, the sports fishing group contributed a total of \$6,800 for this important project. ■

Meet Our New Board

This August the Watershed Center Board of Directors elected five new members:

- **T.J. Andrews** – Environmental and Land Use Attorney, Olson, Bzdok & Howard, PC
- **Thomas Hoogerhyde** – Consultant, Jones & Henry Engineers, LTD; MDEQ, retired Assistant Chief of the Surface Water Quality Division
- **Marilyn Jaquish** – Faculty Emeritus, Northwestern Michigan College
- **Ray Ludwa** – Executive Director, Torch Lake Protective Alliance; Retired Proctor & Gamble Product Development and Organizational Redesign, Facilitator
- **Richard Thompson** – Chancellor Emeritus, Oakland Community College

They join Ken Bindschatel, Phil vonVoigtlander, Jack Nowland, Laura Dagwell, Ellen Kohler, Randy Tucker, Gordy Brown, Steve Mattson and John McKinney.

We welcome these outstanding new board members and the tremendous gifts they bring to our organization. For more details about our board members, visit our website at www.gtbay.org. ■

Thank You!

Special thanks to the following for their recent generous help:

Nancy Thornton, for helping with manpower and funding for the lake cleanup.

Sandy Graham, Backcountry Outfitters, for his year 'round help.

Deb Marois, for her help with the lake cleanup.

Lee Nelson, data entry and office organizing.

Rebecca Mann Kass, Stacy Gilmore and Liz DeLaRossa, for diving in whenever and wherever we need help.

Jim Anderson, for use of his plane and aerial photography expertise which is proving to be invaluable in monitoring sites from the air.

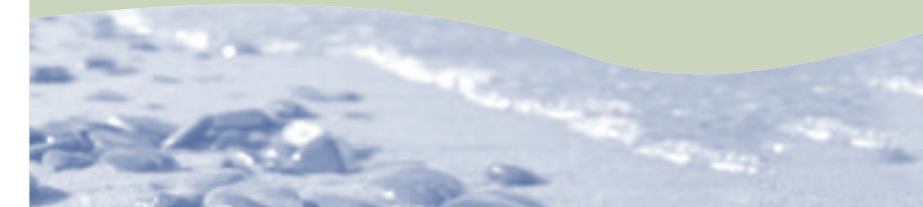
Thanks to **Dave and Laurie Gabel, Ellen Kohler and Matt Cauley, TJ Andrews, John McKinney, Dick Thompson, Julie Johnson, Ann and George Stevens, and Amy and Bill Ranger**, for contributing items to our recent garage sale to benefit the Center.

Northport Marina, for providing a home for the Baykeeper tugboat this summer.

Special thanks to **Jack Nowland**, our official and much-appreciated boat hauler.

Elk Rapids Marina, for hosting us this summer.

To the folks at **NMC's Water Studies Institute and Great Lakes Nonprofit Institute**, for all their support and assistance, including providing us a chance to show off our boat at the recent Council of Michigan Foundations annual meeting.



I would like to help protect

Grand Traverse Bay and its watershed

■ \$35 ■ \$50 ■ \$100 ■ \$250 ■ \$500 ■ \$1000 ■ Other

Please charge my gift to: ■ VISA ■ Mastercard ■ Discover ■ American Express

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■ Enclosed is my check payable to The Watershed Center

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Your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Send this form with your check to:
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