

CHAPTER 8 FUTURE EFFORTS

8.1 *What Comes Next?*

The Watershed Center and other project partners will continue to build partnerships with various groups throughout the watershed for future projects involving the implementation of recommendations made in this protection plan. Funding sources for these projects will be pursued aggressively over the next 1–5 years. Government, foundation, and corporate grants will be researched as possible funding sources. Additionally, potential new mechanisms for funding by local communities will be investigated. It is expected that the implementation phase will last more than 10 years, with some efforts expected to be conducted on a yearly basis indefinitely. Grant funds and other financial sources will be used to implement tasks outlined in Chapter 7, including the continuation of water quality assessment and monitoring, installation and adoption of various Best Management Practices (Section 7.3), and educational tasks outlined in the IE Strategy (Section 7.4). The Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Project Steering Committee should continue to meet yearly during the implementation period.

As stated in Chapter 7, the project Steering Committee looked at the major sources of pollution in the watershed and decided that focusing on reducing and/or eliminating pollution stemming from stormwater runoff, streambank erosion, road stream crossings, fertilizer use, lack of riparian buffers, and the reduction of wetlands will address the bulk of pollution entering the Grand Traverse Bay and its surrounding watershed. Priority should be given to implementation tasks (both BMPs and educational initiatives) that work to reduce the effects from these sources.

Priority tasks that should be conducted over the next 1 – 3 years are as follows, with the most important tasks listed first:

- Begin initial outreach and education efforts outlined in the IE strategy
- Establish stormwater BMPs and ordinances beginning in urban and urbanizing areas
- Stormdrain mapping in urban and urbanizing areas without existing maps
- Streambank and shoreline erosion stabilization projects
- Establish riparian buffers in priority areas
- Assist with developing or revising Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances to include more water quality protection
- Road crossing improvements using BMPs
- Wetland assessment, restoration, and protection
- Initiatives to preserve open space and wildlife corridors
- Continue monitoring programs
- Develop Conservation Plans for farms.

Environmental awareness, education, and action from the public will grow as the IE Strategy is implemented and resident awareness of the watershed is increased. Implementing the IE Strategy is perhaps the most critical and important long-term task to accomplish. The strategy is designed to be used by a wide variety of organizations, not just by The Watershed Center.

Initial IE efforts began during the development of the original protection plan (2001-2003) and have continued throughout the development of the revised protection plan (2003-2005). During these initial efforts, considerable time and effort was put toward introducing stakeholders to the watershed protection plan and its various findings and conclusions, as well as providing general information about the Grand Traverse Bay watershed. During the implementation phase of the IE Strategy, the critical first steps to take will be to build awareness of basic watershed issues and sources of pollution, as well as how individual behaviors may impact the health of the watershed. It will also be necessary to continue to introduce stakeholders to results and information provided in the revised protection plan and show them how they can use the plan to protect water quality in the region.

8.2 Current Work and Projects

There is a lot of work going on throughout the Grand Traverse Bay watershed and the current list of projects is constantly changing as various projects finish and new ones are added each year. As of 2005, The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay and its partners have recently completed a number of projects including: a local *E. Coli* monitoring project; completion of an interactive water quality database (www.gtbay.org/wqquery.asp); installation of educational watershed signs; and a streambank stabilization project.

Currently TWC and its partners (i.e. local Conservation Districts, the City of Traverse City, Three Lakes Association, and others) are working on three monitoring projects and six projects to implement BMPs in priority areas including streambank stabilizations, road stream crossing improvements, riparian buffers installation, and stormwater improvements.

There are a number of other area organizations that have both current and ongoing programs in the Grand Traverse Bay watershed that deal with water quality and natural resources. The Conservation Resource Alliance's Wild-Link program works to establish wildlife corridors to preserve the rural character of northwestern Michigan for outdoor recreation, hunting and wildlife watching in natural surroundings.

The Inland Seas Education Association (ISEA), located on the shores of West Grand Traverse Bay, educates both students and adults on Great Lakes issues and provides first-hand training and experience in the Great Lakes ecosystem. They provide a unique experience by conducting educational sessions on Grand Traverse Bay aboard tall sailing ships. To date, more than 66,000 students have participated in ISEA's shipboard programs.

Additionally, area Conservation Districts (Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Antrim) have ongoing projects to improve road stream crossings and stabilize eroding streambanks. Most of these Conservation Districts also work with local residents regarding other natural resource issues as well.

TWC's annual Freshwater Focus publication provides a summary of these and other ongoing projects throughout the Grand Traverse Bay watershed. This publication is printed each fall as an insert in the Traverse City Record Eagle newspaper; extra copies are available at the TWC office. Additionally, the TWC website has information about their current and past projects as well as links to websites of other area organizations.



Inland Seas Education Association's Schooner Inland Seas