Learn more about what we have done to PROTECT and PRESERVE Grand Traverse Bay and our 1,000-SQUARE-MILE watershed inside.
A Letter from Our Executive Director

In 2015, The Watershed Center remained focused on goals identified in our EPA-approved Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Protection Plan. Since 2005, The Watershed Center has secured more than $8.56 million for projects that have a direct impact on improving water quality. Along with our regional partners, more than $20 million has been invested in land protection, restoration and water quality activities. Our collective efforts over the last decade have greatly reduced the negative impacts that pollutants and environmental stressors have on Grand Traverse Bay’s unique freshwater resources.

The Watershed Center’s restoration work continues to focus on waters that are impaired due to habitat loss, limited connectivity and poor water quality. In 2015, we continued our work on the Kids Creek Restoration Project to prevent 200 pounds of sediment from entering the Creek every year. We spent the summer collecting water samples along Mitchell Creek according to MDEQ protocols. Since 30 percent of those samples exceeded State Water Quality Standards, Mitchell Creek has the potential to be listed on the State’s Impaired Waters List. Through the completion of our small dam inventory throughout the watershed, we have the information needed to prioritize dams for potential repair and/or removal to improve stream connectivity and function.

Through our Grand Traverse Baykeeper® program, The Watershed Center wrote or signed on to more than two dozen letters advocating for water quality protection at the local, state and national level. From local stormwater and soil erosion control concerns to issues like the proposed Waukesha diversion and oil pipelines that affect the entire Great Lakes, The Watershed Center continues to be the eyes, ears and voice for clean water in the Grand Traverse Bay watershed. In John Nelson’s last year as our Baykeeper, he led the effort to appeal a zoning variance that reduced a water setback by 50 percent on a proposed development on Boardman Lake – and won! That court decision set an important precedent in the fight to protect water quality during a time of increased development and growth. As we transition to a new Baykeeper, we are excited to strengthen the program and enhance our reach to protect water quality throughout the watershed.

Grand Traverse Bay is why we live, vacation, work and recreate here – it connects us all. Whether you volunteer, advocate, donate or simply educate yourself to become a better steward, every action we take reduces our impact on water quality and helps ensure our beautiful freshwater resources can be used and enjoyed for generations to come. Support from people like you strengthens our efforts to address emerging issues and continue our decades-long education, restoration, monitoring and advocacy work. The Watershed Center protects what you love, and I encourage you to support our important efforts. On behalf of our clean, healthy waters, we thank you.

Christine Crissman ~ Executive Director
TJ Andrews ~ Policy Specialist
Jonelle Bowers - Development Specialist
Karyn Haas ~ Marketing & Communications
Deb Marois ~ Bookkeeper
TBA – GRAND TRAVERSE BAYKEEPER®
Sarah U’Ren ~ Program Director

For correspondence and address updates: 13272 S. West Bay Shore Dr. Traverse City, MI 49684 231-935-1514 www.gtbay.org

Printed on RECYCLED/ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE paper by:
FINANCIAL AND DONOR HIGHLIGHTS

**Income**

- **Total Income**: $505,458
  - Program Services: $408,546 (80.8%)
  - Contributions: $94,221 (18.7%)
  - Other: $2,961 (0.5%)

**Expenses**

- **Total Expenses**: $493,896
  - Program Services: $19,456 (3.9%)
  - Contributions: $149,167 (30.2%)
  - Other: $325,273 (65.92%)

**Income and Expenses Over Time**

- Income:
  - 2010: $500,000
  - 2011: $1,000,000
  - 2012: $1,500,000
  - 2013: $2,000,000
  - 2014: $2,500,000

- Expenses:
  - 2010: $400,000
  - 2011: $450,000
  - 2012: $500,000
  - 2013: $550,000
  - 2014: $600,000
  - 2015: $650,000

**Donors**

- MI Department of Environmental Quality grants totaling $302,230 (7 donors)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant totaling $24,206 (1 donor)
- Private foundation grants/contributions totaling $130,000 (9 donors)

*Full donor list can be found at gtbay.org*
The issue: A 2-mile portion of Kids Creek is impaired due to sedimentation, flow regime alteration and other human-caused sources – all of which relate to stormwater runoff.

**KIDS CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT**

The issue: A 2-mile portion of Kids Creek is impaired due to sedimentation, flow regime alteration and other human-caused sources – all of which relate to stormwater runoff.

**6 Downspout planter boxes INSTALLED**

**$138,300 FUNDING** for Building 29 work from MI Department of Environmental Quality and ROYAL BANK OF CANADA

**200 Pounds of SEDIMENT ANNUALLY PREVENTED** from entering Kids Creek

**1 RAIN GARDEN installed**

**1,300 Square feet of POUROUS PAVEMENT installed**

**PARTNER**
Munson Medical Center

**COWELL FAMILY CANCER CENTER**

**3,304 Square-foot GREEN ROOF installed**

**ADVOCACY WORK**

An essential part of our mission is to advocate for the environmental health of Grand Traverse Bay and its watershed. We do this by working with local governments, developers, planners and citizens; being involved in community planning projects and boards; and commenting on proposed project permits and legislation. Issues we addressed in 2015 include:

**Stormwater**

**WETLANDS**

**Setbacks from water**

**Marinas**

**Shoreline hardening**

**Netpen aquaculture**

**Soil erosion**

4 2015 State of the Bay
MITCHELL CREEK SAMPLING

Weekly sampling of Mitchell Creek during the summer of 2015 to determine presence of bacterial contamination and whether the creek should be included on the State’s Impaired Waters List.

$15,335 Funding from the MI Department of ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

11 SITES SAMPLED

12 WEEKS of sampling

227 SITE SAMPLES analyzed for E. coli bacteria

RESULTS

PERCENT OF SAMPLES EXCEEDED STATE WATER QUALITY STANDARDS

30%

EXCEEDED PARTIAL BODY CONTACT STANDARDS

11

EXCEEDED TOTAL BODY CONTACT STANDARDS

57

STORMWATER & SMALL DAM ASSESSMENTS

Long-term water quality protection of the Grand Traverse Bay watershed through detailed stormwater analyses in small communities in Antrim county and an inventory of small dams in the watershed.

$22,249 FUNDING from the MI Department of Environmental Quality

6 STORMWATER ASSESSMENTS completed in Bellaire, Central Lake, Elk Rapids, Alden, Ellsworth and Shanty Creek

69 Small dams throughout the watershed ASSESSED

gtbay.org 5
BELANGER CREEK PROJECT

The issue: Two undersized culverts at a road-stream crossing just south of Peshawbestown caused scouring, erosion and sedimentation harmful to habitat and wildlife in Belanger Creek.

$100,000
GRAND TRAVERSE BAND
OF OTTAWA AND CHIPPEWA INDIANS
funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

$9,930
The Watershed Center
funding for ADVISING and EDUCATION/OUTREACH

1 STORMWATER bioretention area INSTALLED

6,000 SQUARE FEET of road embankment STABILIZED with permanent vegetative cover

UNDERSIZED culverts REPLACED with larger, natural-bottomed culvert

ACRES (almost 4 football fields) of impervious road and surface runoff PREVENTED from entering the creek

1 Educational sign designed and INSTALLED

BOARDMAN RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT

The Boardman River is the centerpiece of the largest dam removal effort in Michigan's history.

8 YEARS OF PRE- AND POST-DAM REMOVAL MACROINVERTEBRATE SAMPLING

9 SITES SAMPLED ABOVE AND BELOW OLD BROWN BRIDGE DAM SITE

9 SITES CONSIDERED “HIGH QUALITY” DUE TO SPECIES FOUND, INCLUDING CADDISFLIES, STONEFLIES AND MAYFLIES

2015 State of the Bay
BEACH MONITORING
Weekly monitoring of E. coli bacteria at 15 Great Lakes and 9 inland lake beaches in the region from June 24 to September 2, 2015.

$14,548 FUNDING FROM THE MI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

24 BEACHES MONITORED
321 SAMPLES TAKEN
11 BEACH ADVISORIES
5 ADVISORIES RECOMMENDING NO BODY CONTACT

PARTNERS
CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY
GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
BENZIE-LEELANAU DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ADOPT-A-STREAM
A fun, hands-on, volunteer program to monitor stream health in the Grand Traverse Bay watershed.

16 STREAMS
21 SITES SAMPLED
104 VOLUNTEERS

STREAM SITE HEALTH
RESULTS:
5 Poor
11 Fair
5 Good
0 Excellent

gtbay.org
UPCOMING EVENTS

FEAST OF THE WATERSHED
A sampling of food inspired by the watershed by some of the area’s top chefs
Sunday, April 24, 2016 • 5-9 p.m.
The Parlor • 205 Lake Ave., Traverse City
$35/person • Cash bar
Tickets: mynorthtickets/events/feast-of-the-watershed

SWIM FOR GRAND TRAVERSE
Celebrate clean, healthy water in Grand Traverse Bay with a 2-mile point-to-point open water swim Saturday, August 13, 2016.
Greiblickville Harbor Park to Clinch Park
Registration opens April 15 at www.swimforgtbay.com
SWIM • SPONSOR • VOLUNTEER • DONATE

Presented nationally by
Waterkeeper Alliance SPLASH Swim for Grand Traverse Bay to benefit The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay, presented nationally by Toyota.
For more information on the SPLASH Event Series, visit www.splashseries.org.