

Current Reflections

Fall/Winter 2021



Mini-Grant Program Launches Progress Towards Improving Stormwater

In 2019, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council received \$15,000 from the Great Lakes Commission's Emerging Green Champions mini-grant program. The purpose of the grant was to decrease barriers to adopting green stormwater infrastructure in Cheboygan and surrounding areas, including Benton, Beaugrand, and Inverness Townships. The grant allowed the Watershed Council to collect water quality data at stormwater outfalls and hold workshops to educate the public on green infrastructure. This article provides an update on the ongoing efforts in Cheboygan.



Thanks to everyone who made the Cheboygan native plant garden a success.

Final Workshop

Walking around the City of Cheboygan, landscape architect Wes Landon of Native Edge, LLC saw many opportunities for catching and spreading out stormwater. Every unused patch of grass was a potential native planting or rain garden. Lawns carved by rivulets of rainwater could be rearranged with rocks and woody plants to slow down water. Between the parking lots and overgrown parks, one spot stood out: the flower bed of prickly vines and tumbleweeds at the Water Street parking lot. Aptly named, the parking lot is right on the Cheboygan River and is the last stop for much of the stormwater in the downtown area before it meets the river and Lake Huron. Working with Katie Duczowski of the Cheboygan Downtown Development Authority and the Watershed Council, Landon planned a native plant garden to replace the overgrown vines and wispy grasses. For the final Emerging Green Champions workshop, volunteers planted hundreds of native wildflowers, including nodding wild onion, blue lobelia, and prairie smoke. The garden will slow down rainwater running off the nearby sidewalk, beautify the area, provide pollinator habitat, educate visitors, and protect water quality.

Monitoring

What's in the local stormwater? We sampled stormwater outfalls at ten drains headed for Lake Huron, the Cheboygan River, and the Little Black River to find out. Findings show that total phosphorus and total suspended solids (TSS) are of utmost concern. Total phosphorus is the most important nutrient needed for freshwater biological activity in Northern Michigan. Too much total phosphorus leads to increased plant and algae growth. The average total phosphorus for each site over the monitoring period exceeded the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) benchmarks for stormwater, meaning outfalls are a concern for water quality in the receiving waters. Total suspended solids, or tiny bits of dirt and debris, can increase nutrients in a stream and cover spawning habitat for fish. Average TSS at over half the sites were above values allowed in wastewater treatment plant effluent (which allow for more pollutants than surface water standards). The Watershed Council will work with city staff and engineers to better understand these problems and seek solutions. We will also incorporate the Little Black River into our Comprehensive Water Quality Monitoring and Volunteer Stream Monitoring Programs.

Watershed Council staff and volunteers worked to install a native plant garden at the Water Street parking lot.



What's Next

Work so far in Cheboygan has provided a good foundation to move forward. We are synthesizing data and public input we gathered through this project. The Watershed Council has met with Huron Pines and incredibly supportive city staff to discuss how to move forward. We have identified potential contractors and funding sources for projects to help improve water quality in Cheboygan. Stay tuned!



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Reflections From Our Executive Director

Greetings everyone! As I write this column I am reflecting on my 37 ½ years as your executive director. As most of you know, I am retiring at the end of the year and leaving the Watershed Council in the capable hands of our staff, board members, and members. These past two years we have seen a generational shift in our staff and in some ways our membership. None of the current staff were with the organization during my first 20 years, and many of the members that joined the Watershed Council when I came on have since passed. This is more than my retirement. Rather, it is a passing of the torch to new people, ideas, and the work of the future.



Gail Gruenwald
Executive Director

I have received many cards, emails, and phone calls of appreciation from you these past few months. Our annual meeting was a wonderful tribute to my work here as well. And it was great to see so many of you at the celebration in September. As I have mentioned to others, those in attendance were personal friends who became members many years ago or members who became friends! I value all of your participation and support. Thank you for all of the well wishes.

Some of you have asked what I plan to do next. For one, I will stay involved with the Watershed Council as a volunteer and member. I will attend meetings and events when I can, and you may see notes from me on your annual membership letter! Other than that, my stock response is that I plan to spend more time with my family. I know, it really is cliché, but after the last two years of COVID with my husband Wil Cwikiel living on Beaver Island and my daughters a 30-hour plus drive away, I want the time and flexibility to be with them more.

That's it! No other big plans, at least for now. So please reach out, and let's plan a walk on the beach, a conversation at a lake front deck, or lunch in town. You all have made the important work of the Watershed Council possible. You have given me the opportunity of a career with the best organization in the most wonderful place I can think of, protecting the waters I have always loved. I know you will join me in continuing to support this critical work. It's up to us! Best wishes to all of you and please keep in touch!

Thank You

Logan Dey, for assisting with weeding and watering the native plants garden in Cheboygan.

Sue Kelley and Butch's Tackle and Marine for allowing us to launch into Torch Lake.

Volunteer lake, stream, and botulism monitors.

Bill Beeman for mapping insight.

Kory Alaniz for data entry and stream monitoring help.

Katie Duczowski, Susan Page, Connie Rieger, and Dale Rieger for help planning and planting a native plant garden in Cheboygan.

Julienne Tomatoes, Pond Hill Farm, and Decka Digital for their generous donations to Gail's retirement party.

Congratulations!



Office Manager Natalie Walts and her husband Chris welcomed their daughter, Nora, into the world this April. She's a very curious and happy baby. She especially loves exploring nature with her parents, whether by stroller or backpack. Nora is sure to become a future steward of Northern Michigan waters. We're thrilled to welcome Nora to the Watershed Council family.



Eli Baker washes kayaks prior to the start of the Paddle Antrim festival this September.

The Return of the Mobile Boat Washing Station

This past summer, we saw a significant increase in the amount of people spending time outdoors. People from all walks of life took up new activities, such as hiking, biking, hunting, fishing, and, of course, boating. In fact, boating became so popular that it was very difficult, if not impossible, to purchase a new kayak, paddleboard, or boat. With so many boaters on the water, both new and experienced, there was an increased need for education about clean boating and preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species (AIS). Thanks to grants from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program and the U.S. Forest Service, our mobile boat washing team spent the summer providing that education and awareness. The Charlevoix County Community Foundation and the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation provided additional support to purchase a new-to-us truck that reliably hauled our mobile boat washing station (MOBO) to our summer events.

Almost every weekend this summer, our dedicated team, including interns Sophie and Evan and seasonal staff Hannah, set up MOBO at launches all over Northern Michigan. They had two goals during these events. The first was to decontaminate boats using heated and pressurized water to prevent the spread of AIS that cling to boats and trailers. The second goal was to share the importance of clean boating and actions to reduce the introduction and spread of AIS through interactive displays and free materials with everyone we encountered.

Over the course of the summer, our team talked to over 800 boaters and washed 279 boats, trailers, kayaks, and canoes at a dozen different lakes in Northern Michigan. Thanks to our summer team and many volunteers, we washed over four times the amount of boats washed in 2020. The team reported that many of the boaters they interacted with were more than willing to have their boats washed, and most were familiar with the procedures for preventing the spread of AIS. We also want to acknowledge the hard work and support of the volunteers and program partners that made this summer a success, including lake association members, U.S. Forest Service staff, and local governments. We look forward to another successful year of protecting Northern Michigan's lakes in 2022.



Seasonal employee Hannah Snyder educates young boaters about the perils of aquatic invasive species.



Eurasian watermilfoil covers the containment mat after a series of boat washings. This invasive watermilfoil can reproduce from tiny fragments and easily spread from lake to lake, making it a priority to clean it from watercraft.

Water Under the Bridge

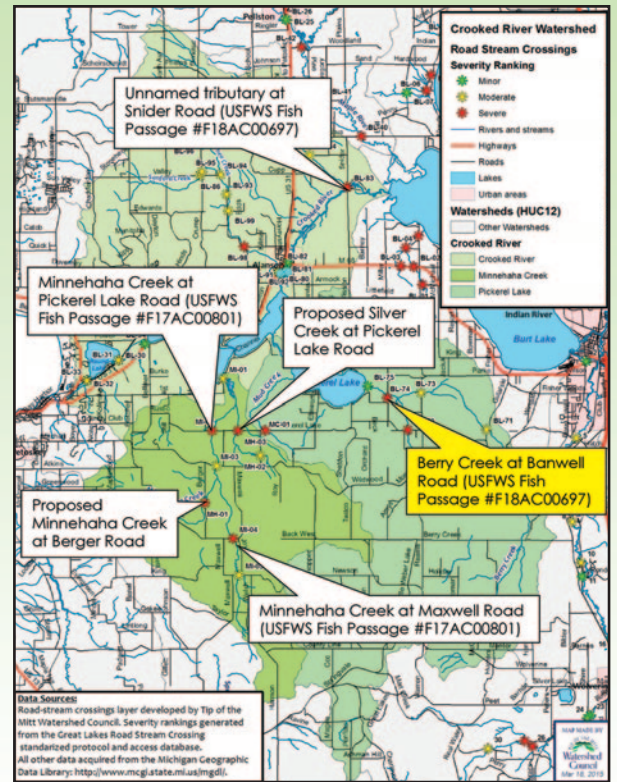
We are excited to report that the new timber bridge that spans Berry (aka Cedar) Creek at Banwell Road in Emmet County is constructed! The project marks another great partnership between the Watershed Council and the Emmet County Road Commission to improve road/stream crossings over coldwater streams for the benefit of fish passage and water quality. The bridge marks the fourth road/stream crossing project over the last four years and is part of our ongoing efforts to improve aquatic connectivity in the Crooked River Watershed. Previous projects include the replacement of two undersized culverts at Maxwell Road with a 16-foot culvert and a timber bridge at Pickerel Lake Road on Minnehaha Creek, as well as an upgraded culvert at the Snider Road crossing over an unnamed tributary to the Crooked River.

Undersized or poorly installed culverts can negatively impact streams. They can cause portions of streams to become disconnected from one another and make it difficult for fish to swim to spawning areas. They can also cause streambank erosion and loss of wildlife habitat.

The Banwell Road bridge is the largest of the road/stream crossing improvements to date. With the bridge replacing two undersized culverts, an additional 5.5 miles of habitat have been reconnected, which will provide significant benefits to coldwater fish species, such as brook trout, as they rely on access to upstream spawning areas.

We are grateful for support from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Habitat Grant Program and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - National Fish Passage Program. Thank you to the Emmet County Road Commission for their continued partnership and for providing additional financial support. We look forward to furthering this important work, together, for the benefit of the Crooked River Watershed.

In the meantime, if you travel Banwell Road, take a look at the new bridge and note how the stream is already responding to its new-found freedom. If you're lucky, you might even catch a glimpse of a brookie.



Into the Weeds

On September 22, we held our 16th Annual Lake Association Summit titled “Into the Weeds.” The overall theme was aquatic vegetation—both native species of practical and cultural import and invasive species that cost immense amounts of time and money to control. If you missed this year’s presentation, you can find it on our YouTube channel at www.bit.ly/intoweeds.

The first presentation was by Joe Nohner from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Nohner spoke about the importance of native aquatic vegetation and the benefits it provides for wildlife and water quality. On a similar theme, Roger LaBine, a member of the Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, engaged the audience with the cultural importance of manoomin (wild rice) and explained how everyone has a part to play in protecting and monitoring the growth of wild rice in Northern Michigan.

The last presentation was from Eric Calabro and Ryan Crouch from the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. They covered state programs to control the growth of aquatic invasive species, differences between mechanical and chemical treatments, and the state permitting process.

In the shoreline breakout session, led by Associate Director Jen Buchanan, lake association members discussed past greenbelt campaigns, as well as what they believe are the greatest obstacles to promoting greenbelts among riparian owners. Attendees noted that more education among lakefront property owners, landscapers, realtors, and local governments is needed. Enforcement of existing waterfront setbacks and greenbelt ordinances and more oversight of state and federal permitting processes is also a critical component for shoreline protection.

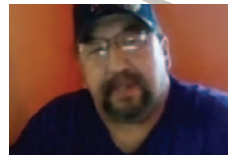
The invasive species breakout session, led by Monitoring Programs Coordinator Caroline Keson, discussed different methods and



Manoomin

Manoomin, the Ojibwe word for wild rice, directly translates into “the good berry.” This word reflects the importance of this healthy staple food to the Ojibwe diet. An aquatic grass rich in protein and low in fat, Manoomin has been an important part Ojibwe life since their arrival to the Great Lakes from the East Coast.

Roger LaBine



Roger LaBine spoke about growing conditions and cultural significance of manoomin (wild rice), which requires a muck-bottomed lake and clean water to grow.

costs of managing invasive species. The New Zealand mudsnail was mentioned as a new invasive species to look out for. The takeaway was utilizing partnerships to achieve shared management goals.

The policy breakout session was intended to introduce attendees to the newest addition to the Watershed Council, Policy and Advocacy Specialist Kacey Cook. The group hit on a number of important topics, including harmful algal blooms, greenbelt ordinances, the permitting process for projects involving dredging and filling of waterways, and stormwater management. The policy team is looking forward to continuing to work with lake associations and local governments on these salient issues.

Overall, a wealth of information was shared, and a lot of ideas were generated. We look forward to next year’s summit.



Participate in the 2021 Aquavist Engagement Survey!
Go to www.watershedcouncil.org/aquavist-network

The Watershed Council is conducting a survey to learn more about how our Aquavist Network can help support your interests. Which water quality issues and initiatives are important to you? What actions to support our waters would you like to see taken? How often would you like to hear from us? If you are new to the network or interested in joining, we would also love to hear from you.

The Aquavists are an informed and empowered activist community dedicated to protecting Northern Michigan's waters. We form a unique rapid response team to act as a voice for the waters in Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, and Emmet Counties.

The network is coordinated through our email listserv. We share action alerts and other resources to inform and empower network members, making it easier to solve problems and share information on the water issues that impact Northern Michigan. The level of participation in the network is up to you. Aquavists can join the listserv as a way to stay informed or as a springboard for taking action by contacting elected representatives, sharing information, participating in local events, and more.

Past topics of discussion have included trichloroethylene (TCE) groundwater contamination in Antrim County, the Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Drop-Off (POD) collection program, and many state action alerts on bills that would impact our water resources.

Please help us learn more about your interests by taking our survey. **You can find it on our Aquavist Network webpage: www.watershedcouncil.org/aquavist-network.**

On the network webpage you can also sign up to join the listserv, link to recent action alerts, and access information on your watershed and local projects. If you would like an issue or initiative to be highlighted on the page, just let us know. For more information, contact Kacey Cook, policy and advocacy specialist, at info@watershedcouncil.org or (231) 347-1181, ext. 1118.

Thank you for taking the time complete the survey and for your commitment to protecting Northern Michigan's water resources!



Water samples collected from the Little Sturgeon River will be analyzed for nutrients, salts, and total suspended solids.



A FlowTracker calculates the amount and speed of water flowing in the Little Pigeon River.

Trolling the Streams

Like a troll in folklore, Monitoring Programs Coordinator Caroline Keson spends quite a bit of time under bridges. On any given stormy day, she might be in a stream under a bridge, suited up in a raincoat and waders and maybe even a life jacket if the water is high. Rather than guarding the bridge, she's there collecting water samples. Monitoring near the mouths of streams and rivers captures pollutants that are added to the stream from its entire watershed. Stream monitoring allows us to compare the water quality of tributaries and thus what might be running off the land and into the water. The data helps us determine the quantity and quality of water flowing through tributaries.

In between brushes with poison ivy and blue heron sightings, Keson uses equipment that detects temperature, depth, dissolved oxygen, pH, and conductivity, which can indicate good or bad water quality depending on results. She collects water samples that are analyzed for nutrients, salts, and sediments, all of which can cause problems when in excess. Measuring the water quality of tributaries helps us understand volunteer data collected on lakes.

Currently, stream monitoring is focused in Cheboygan County around Mullett Lake, the Cheboygan River, and the Lower Black River. Many of the streams drain agricultural areas and are laden with nutrients and sediments during rainstorms. The work is part of a watershed management planning effort funded by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. The monitoring will help Watershed Council staff understand pollutant loads and suitability for fish habitat. Later, data will be used to guard against pollution and provide evidence for improvement.

Emmet County Recycling Compost Giveaway is a Success

Earlier this year, the Watershed Council and Emmet County Recycling (ECR) started a campaign to give away bags and buckets of compost to Little Traverse Bay area residents for use in their gardens and lawns. At the time of writing this article, ECR has given away 158 bags of compost. While compost might not be the first material that comes to mind when thinking about water quality, there is a connection. First, compost increases microbial activity in soil, which promotes plant health. It's a great alternative to chemical fertilizers that can enter our lakes, rivers, and streams through stormwater. Washed out fertilizers can encourage algae and plant growth in our waterways, while compost actually stays put, stabilizes soils, and helps prevent erosion. We're grateful to the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation's Little Traverse Bay Protection and Restoration Fund for supporting this successful effort to get people interested in compost for the health of our waters. If you missed our giveaway this year, have no fear! ECR has been collecting food and yard waste to keep their program going, and they'll continue selling their compost next year. Just remember to think compost before you buy chemical fertilizers for your garden, and help protect water quality in the Little Traverse Bay Watershed.



Marsha Osler brings her kitchen scraps to be composted at the Petoskey Farmers Market. Emmet County Recycling has food waste drop-off stations at both the Petoskey and Harbor Springs Farmers Markets and the Pleasantview Drop-off Center.



Over 20 large pots of purple loosestrife covered with *Galerucella* beetles were hauled by Kieser and Associates, LLC from Kalamazoo to Boyne City to share with area groups in their fight against the invasive plant.

Battling Purple Loosestrife

On a sunny day in July, the nemesis of invasive purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) arrived in Boyne City in quantities capable of managing the pesky plant: the *Galerucella* beetle. Both *Galerucella* beetles and purple loosestrife call Europe home. In Europe, the beetles are a natural predator to purple loosestrife, and they prefer to eat the European species over similar types of loosestrife native to North America. Without any local bugs to eat them, invasive purple loosestrife can take over wet areas, crowding out native plants and reducing wildlife habitat. The *Galerucella* beetles act as a biocontrol or way to control an invasive species using another organism. Biocontrols are alternatives to other methods of invasive species management, including herbicides and mechanical removal. *Galerucella* beetles were approved in 1992 by the United States Department of Agriculture as a safe method to manage purple loosestrife.

Beetles are used in areas that are too large or difficult to access to be easily managed by physical removal or herbicides. A few stands in Northern Michigan have needed attention for some time, including those at Larks Lake, Riverside Park along the Boyne River in Boyne City, and Thayer Lake. Groups representing these three areas came together with the help of the Watershed Council to order *Galerucella* beetles en masse. A consulting company called Kieser and Associates, LLC, (Kalamazoo, MI) tend the beetles in pots of purple loosestrife covered with nets, creating a garden of predators residing on the very plants they intend to take down. Each pot contains 300-400 adult beetles. The pots, like tiny Trojan horses, are placed without their nets on the edge of loosestrife patches where beetles continue to reproduce and spread into the patch throughout the year.

This year, almost 9,000 beetles were purchased and placed by Larks Lake Association, Leadership Charlevoix County, Friends of the Boyne River, and the Preservation Association of Thayer Lake. Nancy Cunningham from Friends of the Boyne River said, “This was the easiest beetle ‘planting’ that I have ever done.” More groups around the area are hoping to take advantage of this biocontrol in the future.



Josh Kieser from Kieser and Associates, LCC, shows volunteer Nancy Cunningham (middle) and staff member Lauren Dey (left) how to remove the nets from potted purple loosestrife plants.

Bay View Association Rain Gardens

As part of the Little Traverse Bay Stormwater Management Initiative, funded through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, seven residential and four community rain gardens were installed in the Bay View area between 2012 and 2015. The larger community rain gardens are not only situated to handle more volume, but they are also centrally located within the community's campus area. This location allows them to be an educational feature for cottagers. Together, these rain gardens help to reduce the volume and rate of stormwater from Bay View that enters into Little Traverse Bay. Nutrients and sediments contained in the stormwater are filtered and absorbed within the rain gardens, improving the water quality of stormwater that does reach the bay. The approximate total square footage of rain gardens is 5,000; the estimated total volume of stormwater treated annually is 550,000 gallons.



Bay View Association Rain Garden

Showcasing Little Traverse

Project Rain Garden

As part of Project Rain Garden, funded through the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, the Watershed Council and partners installed 11 residential rain gardens and one public rain garden within the City of Petoskey through a cost/share program. Featured here a few of those residential gardens. First, Jessica Shaw-Nolff's rain garden on East Lake Street uses over 20 different kinds of native plants to filter rainwater that runs off her roof and driveway.

Lindsey Walker's rain garden on Emmet Street was built on a challenging sloped site, but the contractor was able to devise a multi-tiered rain garden that captures roof runoff. Rick Neumann's garden on Grand Avenue, also built on a slope, features a series of rock-lined pools that capture rainwater as it cascades down the street and across his driveway. Thank you to all the recipients of our grant program for helping to protect Little Traverse Bay.



Bay View Association Rain Garden



Bay View Association Rain Garden



Project Rain Garden
Lindsey Walker's rain garden

Little Traverse Bay Watershed Green Stormwater Management Initiative

As part of the Little Traverse Bay Watershed Green Stormwater Management Initiative, funded through both the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation, approximately 7,600 square feet of bioretention areas/ rain gardens were installed, including three public rain gardens on Petoskey properties, 11 residential rain gardens, one at North Central Michigan College (NCMC), and one at Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council's office in downtown Petoskey.



St. Francis Credit Union Rain Garden



Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council



Sunset Court



Project Rain Garden - Rick Neumann's rain garden



Project Rain Garden - Jessica Shaw-Nolff's rain garden



Volunteers monitoring Minnehaha Creek. You can see Associate Director Jen Buchanan, Emma Lindwall, Chloe Petersen, Stan Royalty, Simon Gelb, and Jack Lindwall wearing the latest in wader fashion while checking on the health of this tributary to Crooked Lake.

Thanks Roy Tassava and Marty Jones for your help monitoring Mullett Creek.



Monitoring Programs Coordinator Caroline Keson shows intern Evan Joneson how to identify invasive *Phragmites australis*. This tall, water-loving grass can swiftly outcompete native plants and displace animal habitat. Interns focused on monitoring Emmet County's Lake Michigan shoreline this year.

Intern Sophie Goodnough paddles in front of a natural shoreline on Long Lake. Natural shorelines are resilient to erosion and provide more water quality benefits than armored shorelines.

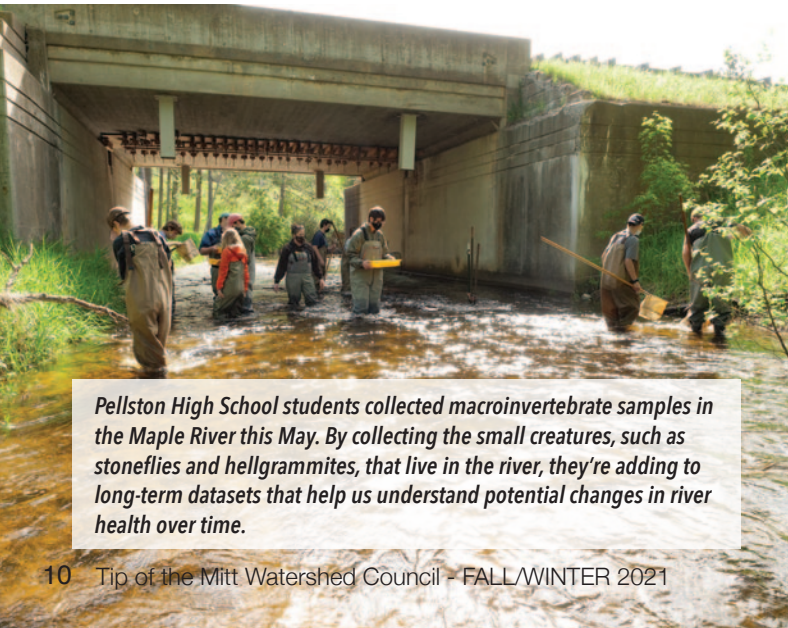
SUMMER FIELDWORK

This was a great summer for fieldwork. We had two wonderful interns, a great seasonal employee helping out with our second mobile boat washing station season, and dedicated staff and volunteers who collected quite a lot of data for our monitoring programs. Even our Watershed Academy students got masked up and contributed to our Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program. It was great to be able to spend face to face time with people who care about maintaining water quality in our region. Here are just a few highlights of a busy field season.

Thanks to you all for making our programs possible!



We had a great turnout for our Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program training this summer. Here you can see Caroline Keson demonstrating how to take chlorophyll-a samples for new monitors across our service area. These samples let us know how much algae is growing in our inland lakes, which can tell us about lake nutrient levels and health.



Pellston High School students collected macroinvertebrate samples in the Maple River this May. By collecting the small creatures, such as stoneflies and hellgrammites, that live in the river, they're adding to long-term datasets that help us understand potential changes in river health over time.





Staff and volunteers installed a native garden to filter stormwater pollutants and protect the Cheboygan River. Native plants like these nodding wild onions, orange coneflowers, columbines, and horsemint have deep roots that help slow stormwater down and soak into the ground. Here you can see interns Sophie Goodnough and Evan Joneson, Watershed Management Coordinator Lauren Dey, and Susan Page mulching plants from Otesgo Conservation District and Birdsfoot Native Nursery.



Interns Sophie Goodnough and Evan Joneson spent an afternoon on Minnehaha Creek learning the ins and outs of water quality equipment with Caroline Keson. The instrument you see Sophie holding measures the amount of water moving through the stream in cubic feet per second. Evan will analyze data to show changes in water quality due to previous road/stream crossing improvements. This is the same type of monitoring we do in our Comprehensive Water Quality Monitoring program.



Kyle Williams volunteered to monitor Beals Lake this year, the first time since 1998. Thanks, Kyle!

Your interest and participation in our mobile boat washing station this year blew us out of the water (pun intended). You can see here Sophie Goodnough washing a boat to prevent the spread of invasive species. See page 3 for more details about this year's boat washing successes.



Lauren Dey pulls up some pondweeds from the bottom of Torch Lake during an aquatic vegetation survey.

Eli Baker can be seen here searching for the endangered Hungerford's crawling water beetle in the Carp and Maple River watersheds, following up on some road/stream crossing work by Conservation Resource Alliance.

With interns, a boat washing crew member, and new Watershed Protection team member in our midst, staff decided to hold an aquatic plant species training. Here you can see Eli Baker showing Evan Joneson a rakeful of eel grass pulled from Crooked Lake. We found more native species that day, including elodea, coontail, and native watermilfoil.

Once we're done with volunteer stream monitoring, we have to identify the macroinvertebrates that volunteers catch in their nets. Here you can see Monitoring Programs Coordinator Caroline Keson with Richard Jenkins from the Stover Creek team and Janie Guiliani from the Pigeon River team checking out small stream-loving creatures at North Central Michigan College.



SUMMER EVENTS

We love spending time with our community. Our events bring us closer to our supporters and to the waters we all cherish. It's also been a challenging year with a lot of uncertainty surrounding the safety of group events. For that reason, we held a few of our events virtually, such as our annual meeting and Annual Lake Association Summit. While some of these images might be screenshots taken from virtual meetings, and a little blurrier than what we might prefer, they represent some final moments for staff members who are leaving the Watershed Council. They also show an abundance of caution we've taken to keep our community safe. So, enjoy, and know that we hope to see more of you in person next year!



2021 Annual Membership Meeting

Our annual meeting took place online with a retirement celebration for outgoing Executive Director Gail Gruenwald and retired Watershed Policy Director Grenetta Thomassey. An impressive roster of speakers took to Zoom to congratulate these two on their successful careers, including U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow, U.S. Senator Gary Peters, Representative Sue Allor, Senator Wayne Schmidt, Charlevoix County Community Foundation Director Chip Hansen, Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation Director David Jones (DJ), Watershed Council co-founders, current and former Watershed Council board members, collaborators, family, friends, and staff. It was a joyous (and sometimes tearful) celebration. We'd like to thank all of those who were able to attend. If you missed the event, you can watch it here: www.bit.ly/annualmeet2021.

Outgoing Board President Bob Kingon not only ran the annual business meeting but also shared his appreciation for Thomassey on behalf of our community's lake associations.

David Crouse, former board of directors president, acted as the perfect emcee for the event. Big thanks to Crouse for tying together a wonderful event.

Doug Fuller, a former water resource program director and long-time friend of Gruenwald's, shared colorful stories of his adventures at the Watershed Council.

Linda Greer is a director emerita of the University of Michigan Biological Station and one of the original founders of the Watershed Council.

Retired Watershed Policy Director Grenetta Thomassey smiles as she accepts her accolades. "I'm a lucky girl who got the job I trained for when I went to graduate school, and I'll be grateful to the Watershed Council for the rest of my life. My love to you all."



This is a shot of Executive Director Gail Gruenwald speaking at the end of the program. In Gail's words, "I appreciate all of your tributes, and I know the Watershed Council is in good hands."



Clean Waters Challenge

Huge thanks to everyone who participated in our Clean Waters Challenge this year. We hope to make this an annual event with even more community members involved. We want to express our sincere appreciation for Bearcub Outfitters, an outdoor gear shop right in downtown Petoskey, for being our generous sponsor for the second year in a row and for supporting so many local environmental initiatives. Congratulations to the families who completed the challenge and won some great prizes!



Whale of a Sale

We raised a grand total of \$9,950 in our annual Whale of a Sale! To the people who donated and bought boats for our sale, thank you so much. Every year, your generosity amazes us. Even during a year in which boats were hard to come by, people thought enough of our organization to ensure that their gently used boats would benefit Northern Michigan's waters.

Gail's Retirement Celebration

Our retirement party for Gruenwald at Pond Hill Farm was a big success. Our pavilion was full of family and friends, including people who planted the seed to start the Watershed Council many years ago. Thanks so much to everyone who came and made the event truly memorable. We will all miss Gruenwald's leadership, and we look forward to carrying her legacy far into the future.

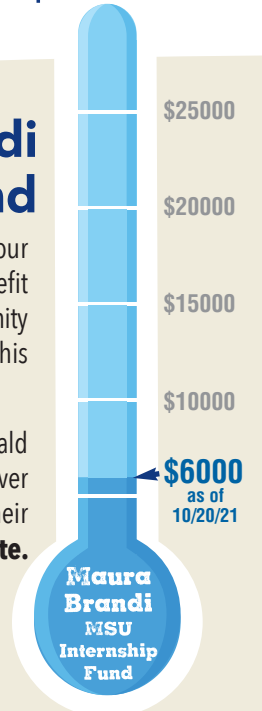
Our Goal
\$30000

Contribute to the Maura Brandi MSU Internship Fund

As you must be well aware by now, Executive Director Gail Gruenwald will be retiring from our organization at the end of the year. We are raising funds in her honor before she leaves to benefit our internship fund, the Maura Brandi MSU Internship Fund, held at the Charlevoix County Community Foundation. **Our goal is to raise \$30,000** so that the total fund is \$100,000. At press time for this newsletter, we have raised \$6,000.

Every summer, our interns make the work of protecting Northern Michigan's waters possible. Gruenwald wants to honor their contributions to our organization by raising funds to both offer larger stipends to cover interns' living expenses and recruit more interns. Can you help us support the students who dedicate their summers to the Watershed Council? **You can donate online at www.watershedcouncil.org/donate.** Click on Tribute Gifts and type "internship fund" into the Tribute Name field. Or, send a check to the Watershed Council at 426 Bay Street, Petoskey, MI, 49770. Make sure to write "internship fund" on the memo line.

Thanks so much for supporting our interns and the valuable work they do to protect our waters!



Intern Reflections

We were fortunate to have two interns join the Watershed Protection Team this summer. These are their reflections on their time spent collecting data and protecting Northern Michigan's waters. Caroline Keson, monitoring programs coordinator, said, "Our interns are truly an extension of our watershed protection team. Evan and Sophie dove deep into our volunteer programs this year and explored some of the most secluded and beautiful spots in Cheboygan County. If you had the opportunity to work with them this summer, you know how helpful they are, and now's the time to show your support. Check out the fundraiser we're having for future interns, and consider what you can do to help us get our next set of summer helpers!"

Evan Joneson, University of Michigan

My experience as an intern with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council has been nothing short of wonderful. I can only say that I feel beyond grateful, and frankly spoiled, that I had the privilege of spending my summer with this outstanding organization.

I've spent my whole life coming up north to Petoskey because my parents grew up here, and I wouldn't have thought it possible for me to gain a greater appreciation for this part of Michigan. From wading in countless pristine rivers and streams to kayaking and boating numerous beautiful lakes, I have experienced some truly incredible wilderness. In particular, I'd like to acknowledge the Minnehaha Creek, the Twin Lakes, and Cheboygan County as areas that made exceptional impacts on me this summer.

The next element of this internship that deserves recognition is the practical experience. I learned so many protocols, surveys, assessments, and skills this summer. We conducted shoreline, streambank erosion, and invasive plant surveys. We performed habitat assessments and road/stream crossing inventories. We learned how to thoroughly monitor lakes and rivers. I know that these experiences will prove beneficial in the pursuit of my career and life goals.

I think that the people I met this summer will be the true, ever-enduring takeaway of this internship. I was lucky to be able to spend the summer living with my grandmother, as well as spending precious time with the rest of my family up here. The friends that I made at the office were wonderful. Lastly, my co-intern Sophie deserves recognition and praise. We made such a great team, and I enjoyed protecting and conserving Northern Michigan's water with her. She is a true friend, a genuine person, and someone who I will always respect, admire, and think of fondly.

I want to again state my appreciation to the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council for my summer internship. The setting, experiences, and friends that they have given me have made an everlasting impact.

Sophie Goodnough, Western Michigan University

Going into this summer, I wasn't sure what to expect. I can happily say that on top of making lifelong friends and connections during my internship, I have learned more than I could have ever imagined and had so much fun while doing it. I am thankful to everyone at Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council for making this summer so memorable.

One of the biggest lessons I learned is to have confidence in everything that I do, even if it's something new or outside of my comfort zone. Luckily, everyone was supportive and helped me overcome a lot of my insecurities. The first big obstacle was learning to back up a trailer. On our MOBO (mobile boat washing station) training day, I think I might have scared Eli (and myself) with how bad my trailering skills were. However, with a little push from Eli, Caroline, and my fellow intern Evan, I started to get better. The first time I successfully backed the MOBO trailer into the Watershed Council parking lot I was so proud that I told everyone in the office about it.

From shoreline and erosion surveys to road stream crossings, I spent most of my summer in the field. One of my favorite memories from Cheboygan County is spending a week kayaking on the Long and Twin Lakes. It was rewarding to see so much wildlife and spend so much time on the water.

Moving to Petoskey and being far away from home was nerve-racking and exciting. I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. I want to offer a special thanks to the entire watershed protection team for teaching me so much. Lastly, I want to thank my awesome co-intern, Evan. We worked nearly every day this summer together, and I will never forget all of the time we have spent. I am beyond grateful to Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council for these memories and connections.



Interns Evan and Sophie and Caroline Keson train using a FlowTracker, a piece of equipment that measures the amount of water moving through a body of water.

Welcome New Members

6/12 - 10/10/2021

Tribute Gifts

Joe and Meg Abbott
Mr. Peter Amspaugh
Mr. Ralph W. Appell
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Astolfi
Ms. Mary Baird
Holly Beazley
Linda Becker
George and Anne Benington
Mr. and Mrs. Douglas P. Bottomley
Boyer City Eagles
Patrick and Carole Brady
Mr. Clayton J. Brown
Dr. Patricia Kolowich and Mr. Jared Buckley
Dana Bucknam
Glen Carpenter
Alisa A. Carroll
Julie Churchill
Matthew R. and Laurie C. Clarke
Kacey Cook
Bruce Cunningham
Steve and Tracy Darnell
Andrew and Mary Ann Deak
Mrs. Linda L. Dean
Kristopher and Lauren Dey
Kirby and Jacq Dipert
Scott and Carrie Eckhold
Farmhouse Vineyards
John and Nancy Plichta
Denise and Gary Fate
Dean F. Fleury
Mrs. Stefany Freeman
Glenn and Martha Fronheiser
Donald Leary and Becky Fuhrman
Mr. and Mrs. Kevin A. Gabler
Ms. Miriam Hiser
Andrew and Dana Hollenbeck
Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Holmquist
Mr. and Mrs. Matt Howell
Jeanne Harrison and Paul Hysen
Mr. John Ilkka
Renee & Earl Ishbia Family Foundation
Dr. John and Janet Kalbfell
Gary Karp
Betsy and Geoff Keenan
Mrs. Vera Kvasnica
Mary M. Langer
Mr. William Larson Jr.
Greg and Marie Law
Carol L. Lazier
TJ and Meggan Lekander
Mr. and Mrs. Ronald B. Leng
Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Longtain
James and Mary Kay Martin

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph D. McCarthy Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Michael McCully
Nanette M. Merica
Paul and Nancy Michael
Katy Milligan
Karl and Julie Miran
Donna Misslitz
Ernest and Staci Moosherr
Dustin and Julia Mueller
Edward and Nancy Murphy
Tom and Debbie Neidhamer
Geoffrey Neithercut
Mr. P. Scott Nofsinger
Mrs. Patricia T. Offenberg
Ms. Donna Organek
Dr. and Mrs. Ronald V. Pacheco
Woody and Leslee Pearson
Drew Piehl
Mary Beth Kazanski and
Thomas H. Pierce
Mr. Frank Pinkepank
Gaylene Ramsey
Mrs. Maureen Robbins
Ms. J.M. Schock
Mr. Gerald G. Schulte
Susan A. Scott
Robert E. Shaw
Mr. and Mrs. Pete Shields
Mrs. Ruth Ann Silvernail
Mr. and Mrs. David Sinclair
Richard and Kimberly Skalnek
Mr. Gates Smith
Kenneth and Peg Stapleton
Mr. and Mrs. Charles and Ellen Story
Robert and Rose Straebel
Kelly Sucher
Andrew S. and Corinna Troth
Ruth Vail
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Vandam
Mr. Ken Visser
Cheryl F. Zuellig

In Recognition

Gail Gruenwald's Retirement
Elaine and Bowden Brown
David and Teresa Crouse
Larry and Gayle Levensgood
Scott and Dibby Smith
Lauren Tepper

Grenetta Thomassey's Retirement
Larry and Gayle Levensgood
Scott and Dibby Smith

Honorariums

John and Vicki Mosley
Brandon Cordes

Larry and Ro Renaud
Ty and Lisa LaPrairie

Shelly Ottimer
Steve Little and Barbara Wotila

Memorials

Doris Dengler
Geraldine Gordon
Jim King
Sally Neese
East Burt Lake Association

Helen Lancaster
Chuck and Kristy Kneese

Jack and Betty Young
Dennis and Carol Kautzmann

Lindy Buffington
Scott and Dibby Smith

Millicent Wilson
Mrs. Steve Miller
George and Linda Regan

Patricia Anne Zobel
George and Carol Wolff
Cathleen Murphy Swendsen
John and Jan Zobus
Carryn Golden
Heather Cullen
Raymond and Christine Boyle
Sean Cullen

THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



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WORTH SHARING!

When you're done reading it, don't throw it out.

Pass it on!

We're Still Truckin' Along

The Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation and the Charlevoix County Community Foundation are steadfast supporters of the Watershed Council. This summer, we needed a new truck that was tough enough to pull both our Boston Whaler and our mobile boat washing station (MOBO). Both foundations stepped up and provided us with grants to purchase a new-to-us Chevy Silverado. So far, we've put a little over 6,000 miles on it. We drove it to over 20 MOBO events. We took it out for stream monitoring, vegetation and shoreline surveys, and so much more. We are grateful for reliable transportation so we can continue protecting the waters we all love. Thanks to both community foundations for keeping us truckin'!



Staff and supporters celebrate our beloved Silverado and two very supportive community foundations. Here's to many more miles to come!

