



What Is the Boardman River Watershed?

The Boardman River Watershed is located in Kalkaska and Grand Traverse counties in Northwest Lower Michigan, and encompasses 291 square miles. It produces one-third of the water volume of Grand Traverse Bay in Traverse City, draining 182,000 acres of land. An estimated two million user days are logged in the Boardman River watershed annually for recreation purposes. Many of these visitors come to paddle, fish, and hike. The river is one of the top ten trout streams in Michigan. Some 36 river miles are designated as Blue Ribbon river sections.

What Is Involved in Developing the Watershed Prosperity Plan?

Building partnerships is at the heart of the Boardman River Watershed Prosperity Plan.

The partners (*comprised of an advisory Leadership Team*) represent environmental, economic, educational and social sectors. They share a vision of economic prosperity and watershed-based environmental quality.

Diverse stakeholders from agricultural, governmental and transportation sectors are part of this coalition.

Informed goal setting will utilize existing plans and initiatives, such as the Grand Vision as a foundation. While traditional watershed planning efforts are focused on specific environmental goals, the Boardman River Watershed Prosperity Plan will link water quality issues with broader goals like place making and economic prosperity. Community capacity building, marketing and branding are among the building blocks.

Over a period of 12-15 months, the implementation plan being developed will include shared objectives for the watershed's environmental, community and economic assets. It will also serve as the framework to achieve those goals, while enhancing capacity, resources and partnerships. Defining threats and opportunities are part of the process as well.

Once approved by Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, the execution of the plan will be stewarded by its various stakeholders. Their strategic and master plans will be linked to the new Boardman Watershed blueprint. The Leadership Team will measure progress and make adjustments as needed over time. Having an approved watershed plan will also position the region to seek support from the state and other funders for a broad range of needs and issues identified through the planning process.

Ultimately, the prosperity plan's accomplishments will be shared by the diverse *Leadership Team*, its stakeholders, and the general public---for whom the environmental, community, and economic assets of the *Boardman Watershed* will be wisely managed and preserved.

How Will the Plan Be Different from Others Completed in the Past?

There have been several planning efforts related to watershed protection, community vitality, and economic growth in the Boardman River watershed region. This prosperity plan will build on previous efforts such as the Grand Traverse Bay watershed plan and the six-county

Grand Vision, to help define specific goals and actions in our watershed that can support these broader efforts.

This is particularly important as the Boardman River is about to undergo a substantial change with the removal of Sabin, Brown Bridge, and Boardman dams and modification of Union Street dam. Dam removal on this scale is unprecedented in Michigan (or elsewhere in the U.S.) and presents an enormous opportunity to proactively plan for the related ecological, social, and economic needs of the broader watershed and its communities.

Returning the Boardman River to its natural flow will have a significant impact on the water quality, fish and wildlife, and recreation, and will also present many new opportunities and challenges for the watershed's economic well-being and quality of life. The *Boardman River Watershed Prosperity Plan* will go well beyond traditional watershed studies, and provide a blueprint for multi-jurisdiction cooperation for the environmental, community, and economic prosperity of the watershed region.

What Has Been Accomplished So Far?

Work has begun in the watershed, led by consulting partner Public Sector Consultants, a Michigan-based research and program management firm with a focus on environmental policy. This firm is joined by Beckett & Raeder of Ann Arbor, an environmental, economic development, and community planning firm with offices in Traverse City and Petoskey; and Lawton Gallagher Group, a Traverse City communications firm.

The consulting team is working with a regional leadership team made up of stakeholders, including:

- Grand Traverse County
- Kalkaska Downtown Development Authority
- Charter Township of Garfield
- City of Traverse City
- Grand Traverse Conservation District
- Traverse Area Chamber of Commerce
- Traverse City Downtown Development Authority
- Traverse Area Association of Realtors
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Rotary Camps and Services of Traverse City
- Watershed Center – Grand Traverse Bay
- Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians

- Conservation Resource Alliance
- DTE Energy
- Oleson Foundation
- Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
- Traverse City Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

Activities to-date include:

- Characterizing the physical, ecological, social, and economic attributes of the watershed
- Evaluating potential sources of pollution or other threats to water quality in the watershed
- Identifying economic, ecologic, and recreation challenges and opportunities
- Hosting three public meetings in June, 2012 to get input on watershed goals and priority uses
- Meeting with stakeholder groups to get input on the prosperity plan
- Revising the current www.theboardman.org website

How Can I Get Involved?

Your involvement is needed to ensure that this plan is a success. You can visit our website at: www.theboardman.org to get more information on the prosperity plan and provide online input to the Leadership Team. You can also request a presentation on the prosperity plan for your organization.

Questions?

If you would like additional information contact:

Andy Knott
Boardman River Watershed Prosperity team
231-935-1514, aknott@gtbay.org

Shanna Draheim, Public Sector Consultants
517-487-9539, sdraheim@pscinc.com

Gregg Smith, Lawton Gallagher Group
231-947-2304, gsmith@lggroup.us