



Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

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In 2008, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council celebrated its 29th Anniversary. Volunteers, members and staff had many great accomplishments illustrating our commitment to protecting the water resources of Northern Michigan. Our 2008 accomplishments include:

POLICY AND ADVOCACY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Great Lakes Compact and new state water use legislation

The Watershed Council led the decade-long effort to pass the landmark Compact through the Michigan Legislature. The Compact is an agreement among the eight US Great Lakes states to prevent diversions and withdrawals that would harm the ecosystem created by the waters of the Great Lakes. Additionally, we were the statewide coordinator of the Great Lakes, Great Michigan Coalition that worked on legislation to not only implement the Compact but also provide new oversight of our state ground water resources.

Reauthorization of the Great Lakes Legacy Act

The Watershed Council worked with Great Lakes partners to secure reauthorization of the Great Lakes Legacy Act of 2008 reauthorizing funds to clean-up contaminated sediments in Great Lakes harbors and tributaries. Designated “Areas of Concern” (AOCs) by the U.S. and Canadian governments, the polluted sites pose threats to human health and to fish and wildlife populations. Of the 31 sites in the United States or shared with Canada, only one site – Oswego River – has been de-listed since 1987.

Wetlands Protection

The Watershed Council worked to ensure the protection of wetlands throughout the Great Lakes. The House and Senate voted to overturn President Bush's veto of H.R. 2419, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, better known as the Farm Bill. The \$286 billion bill reauthorizes farm programs for five years allowing thousands of farmers to restore imperiled wildlife habitat and wetlands around our Great Lakes with the assistance of conservation programs authorized in the bill.

Great Lakes Restoration

The Watershed Council has also been highly engaged on state and federal Great Lakes restoration efforts. In coordination with the Healing Our Waters, Great Lakes Coalition, the Watershed Council helped to secure a commitment to Great Lakes Restoration by the presidential candidates including a specific platform outlining initial steps towards comprehensive restoration by President Elect Obama. We also were highly engaged in the effort to prepare and implement an action agenda to restore, remediate and protect the Great Lakes in Michigan. The purpose of the Initiative is to develop a framework for a comprehensive restoration and protection plan specific to Michigan's needs. In addition to serving as a steering committee member and assisting in development of the framework document, we also hosted a public input meeting in October to obtain the comments from the public on the draft framework to ensure Northern Michigan perspectives are integrated into the final Michigan Plan. Our efforts, in coordination with the efforts of advocates and partners throughout the Great Lakes, will ensure that we will turn recommendations on paper into on-the-ground actions to restore and protect our magnificent Great Lakes for generations to come.

Strong Ballast Water Management Rules

Due to the efforts of the Watershed Council and Great Lakes advocates, we were closer than ever to enactment of bills to prevent and control the invasion of aquatic species in our nation's waters. The Coast Guard Authorization Act which was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives would help stop the introduction of aquatic invasive species from entering the Great Lakes and other U.S. waters via ballast water discharge.

Emmet County Ordinance Change

In February, members of the Aquavist Local Activist Network saw some hard work bring good results. Spearheaded by members of the Pickerel-Crooked Lakes Association, new language was adopted by the Board of Commissioners to amend Section 2210, Minimum Waterfront Setback. This new language was proposed to close a loophole in the existing ordinance, which allowed shorelines to be altered in ways that violated the spirit of the setback provision. We worked closely with the County Planning Staff to craft this language, and after feedback from numerous citizens, lake associations, and local governments, the language was refined and adopted. As a result, our shorelines and water resources in the county have a stronger ordinance on the books to protect them.

WATER PROTECTION & EDUCATION IN 2008

To educate residents about the importance and ease of water conservations, the Watershed Council coordinated a Rain Barrel Sale which resulted in the sale of 300 rain barrels.

Out boater outreach and education program aimed to build awareness of good boating practices, clean water, and current issues affecting water within our Northern Michigan boating community. By knowing more and doing more, boating enthusiasts can contribute to clean water and a healthy, vibrant fish and wildlife community that will enhance their boating traditions. As part of the 2008 program the Watershed Council hosted a Clean Marina Social and distributed 750 “Boater Bundles” around Lake Charlevoix.

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council and the Lake Charlevoix Association hosted the 15th annual “Experience Lake Charlevoix” event. The hands-on program is designed to teach sixth grade students from Boyne City, East Jordan, Charlevoix, Concord Academy-Boyne, and Northwest Academy about Lake Charlevoix and its watershed, including water quality, ecology, and safety.

Held first annual Cheboygan River Watershed Summit.

As part of our *Treasure Lake Charlevoix (TLC) Program*, the Water Protection Team worked with East Jordan Iron Works to develop storm drain markers; worked on updates to the Lake

Charlevoix Watershed Management Plan, and coordinated Lake Charlevoix Watershed Advisory Committee meetings.

Volunteers monitored water quality on 32 sites on 26 lakes, 59 sites on 37 lakes and streams.

Watershed Council staff and interns surveyed Phragmites to document native and invasive stands on over 50,000 acres of lakes and rivers in the Cheboygan River Watershed. They also conducted aquatic plant surveys on five lakes totaling nearly 23,000 acres and conducted shoreline surveys on Mullett and Sixmile Lakes.

Our Restoration Team coordinated the installation of six restoration projects totaling approximately 870 LF of shoreline and streambank including public and private properties.

Conducted 4th *Annual Purple Loosestrife beetle collection* with participation the Walloon Lake Association, Twin Lakes Association, Pickerel-Crooked Lake Association, Larks Lake Association, Mullet Area Preservation Society, and Paradise Lake Association. Data collected will be utilized in the Aquatic Invasive Species Patrol database and will aid the Watershed Council in prioritizing locations for management.

Completed the 4th and last *Healing the Bear* streambank restoration site on Northern Michigan Community College property as part of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Coastal Program.

Stabilized severely eroding streambank on Stover Creek as part of *Restoring Stover: Rehabilitation of a Community Creek* project through U. S. Fish and Wildlife Coastal Program. Also coordinated Stover Creek Cleanup during National River Cleanup week.

Completed *Riparian Protection & Enhancement project* with City of Petoskey at their River Road Sports Complex. The project included tributary crossing, installation of riparian plantings, erosion control matting, no-mow stakes, and signage through Petoskey-Harbor Springs Community Foundation grant.

The Watershed Council was the recipient of a Petoskey-Harbor Springs Community Foundation grant for *Larks Lake Fishery Enhancement projects* that will begin in 2009.

The Watershed Council also received a Michigan Department of Natural Resources Inland Fisheries grant for the *Chandler Dam Removal and Restoration on the Upper Black River*.

Acquired a National Fish & Wildlife Foundation Great Lakes Restoration Program Grant for the “Cheboygan River Watershed Restoration Initiative” project.

In addition to water quality monitoring, research, and education, we often provide comments on proposed activities that have the potential to degrade water quality. Additionally, we have responded to the questions and concerns of thousands of state, regional and local residents and visitors. We conducted many field trips and tours for both adults and children throughout the year ranging from kayak tours to shoreline walks. We hosted several events including the Inland Lakes Summit and Lake Michigan Summit, to educate and inform Lake Associations about current issues. We also assisted local planning commissions by providing natural resource inventories to assist with local planning efforts.

We look forward to working with residents, local governments, and advocates as we plan next year’s priorities for your waters.

About Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council: *Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council speaks for our members including full-time and seasonal residents, lake associations, and businesses. We work to maintain the environmental integrity and economic and aesthetic values of lakes, streams, wetlands, and ground water in Northern Michigan, as well as statewide and throughout the Great Lakes Basin. As the lead organization for water resources protection in Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, and Emmet Counties, the Watershed Council is working to preserve the heritage of Northern Michigan – a tradition built around our magnificent waters.*