



Protecting Our Waters 2020: A Year of Resiliency



TIP OF THE MITT WATERSHED COUNCIL

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Dear Friends,

Thank you for your continued support of Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council during this tumultuous time. Despite altered work routines, the staff and volunteers were able to accomplish the preponderance of goals set out for the past year in protecting our lakes, rivers, and streams. Your donations and volunteer time allowed us to continue the work we've all come to depend on.

The Watershed Council has indeed proven to be a resilient organization, always coming out stronger after dealing with demanding situations. The many activities and accomplishments highlighted in this report demonstrate a commitment to the mission and values of our organization.

My board service concludes at this year's Annual Membership Meeting, and it has been a very rewarding experience. I look forward to future contributions through the many outlets for membership involvement.

Sincerely,



Bob Kingon
Board President

Picture Northern Michigan's Waters...

Waves lapping the Lake Michigan shoreline on a sunny day.

Kids running and laughing through the surf.

Taking your best friend fly fishing in a clear, cold stream.

Finding a Petoskey stone half-buried in the sand.

Spending your whole day on a lake and not coming in 'til dark.

These are the kinds of experiences that may come to mind when you consider our pristine Northern Michigan waters.



Here at Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, we care about our waters as much as you do. We spend thousands of hours advocating for our waters, educating students in our service area about the importance of water quality, and monitoring and restoring the health of watersheds and surrounding landscapes. We've been a respected member of this community for 41 years, and we'll continue to work hard in the years ahead to protect our Northern Michigan heritage.

In these pages you'll learn more about us and our members and volunteers. Enclosed are stories about our triumphs and the people who've helped along the way. Even though 2020 was hard for everyone, we never gave up, and you never wavered in your support. Thanks for being a part of our Watershed Council family.



Our members,
volunteers, staff,
and supporters
made our work
in 2020 possible.

Almost
400 hours
of staff time devoted
to fighting Line 5

\$417,866
in grants
received in
2020

45
volunteers
protecting our
lakes and
streams

2,245
generous
members

30 miles
of shoreline
surveyed

370 hours
working on local
issues and
ordinances

105
state and
federal permit
applications
reviewed

Over **4,500** pounds
of medications
kept out of
our waters

Working For Our Members



For several years, the Watershed Council has devoted significant time and resources to prevent an oil and natural gas liquids disaster from the Line 5 pipeline in the Straits of Mackinac. We are concerned due to the significant potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed Line 5 tunnel in the Straits. The tunnel could threaten Northern Michigan's economy and freshwater supplies, Great Lakes coastal wetlands, threatened and endangered species, and migratory bird habitat.

In 2020, we took an important step to protect our members and Northern Michigan's waters. Enbridge submitted an application to the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) to site a new pipeline in a proposed tunnel beneath the Straits of Mackinac in April. Along with the Michigan Environmental Council, National Wildlife Federation, and the Grand Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, the Watershed Council intervened to become a party to that case.



Why were we able to intervene? Our members. We concluded that the pipeline and tunnel could cause harm to our members and the work we perform in Northern Michigan. That's why we wanted to ensure that the MPSC takes into account the risks to our lives and livelihoods when considering the proposed Line 5 Tunnel project. Thanks for being part of this vital undertaking.

The pipelines in the Straits were struck with a 12,000 pound anchor in 2018.



The Story of a Watershed

While we worked on several projects throughout our service area, we want to highlight our work on the Lake Charlevoix Watershed as an example of our efforts throughout Northern Michigan. Our staff spent many hours transforming over three decades of monitoring and stewardship into action. We completed a long-term study measuring how attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors can help protect water quality. We spent wet afternoons monitoring stormwater to assess its impact on watershed health. We made plans to address shoreline hardening that could cause long-term damage to the lake. Although school programs were disrupted, we provided virtual lessons for Charlevoix schools and shared resources to help students understand water quality monitoring efforts. Through generous funding from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation; Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, we promoted green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) in Boyne City, East Jordan, and Charlevoix to reduce stormwater pollution, with plans to fund construction of GSI projects in the future.

Thanks for trusting our expertise to protect the waters you love. And many thanks to our volunteer monitors for showing up during a trying season.



“Protecting the natural essence of Lake Charlevoix is a passion for me. Because the Watershed Council has the capacity to work for that protection, volunteering with them channels my passion into meaningful work.”

-Tom Darnton

Watershed Council board member and
Lake Charlevoix Association president



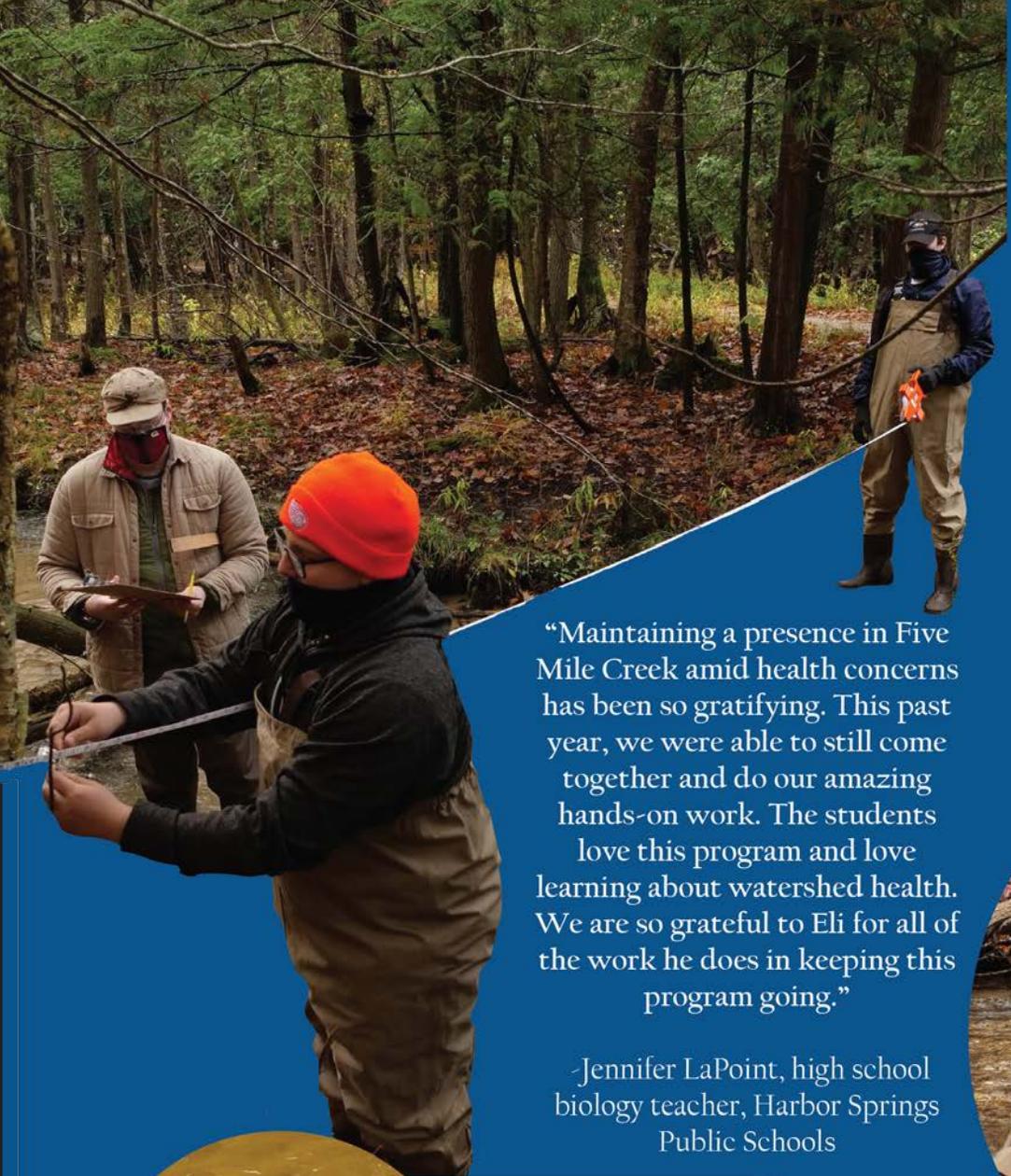
Biggest threats:
shoreline
hardening and
nutrient
pollution



Watershed
size:
234,000 acres



Lake
Charlevoix
includes 60
miles of
shoreline



“Maintaining a presence in Five Mile Creek amid health concerns has been so gratifying. This past year, we were able to still come together and do our amazing hands-on work. The students love this program and love learning about watershed health. We are so grateful to Eli for all of the work he does in keeping this program going.”

-Jennifer LaPoint, high school biology teacher, Harbor Springs Public Schools



Eli Baker collected stream data to share with students.

An Unparalleled Education

A group of high school students steps into the stiff fabric of their beige waders. Their excitement is evident as they laugh and try out their clunky boots. For some, this is the first time they've stepped foot into a stream. Working in teams, they dip nets into the sediment and pull out small aquatic animals they'll identify and count to measure stream health. They use kits, purchased from a grant from the Petoskey Rotary Club Charities, Inc., to test water chemistry. The data they collect will contribute to the Watershed Council's monitoring programs and help us safeguard the waters you love. This is Watershed Academy.



The pandemic took a toll on education programs all over the world. However, the Watershed Council was able to continue to educate high school students in Alanson, Pellston, Bellaire, and Mackinaw City in-person throughout 2020. In other schools, Water Resources Education Coordinator Eli Baker was able to hold virtual lessons, sometimes combined with safe outdoor gatherings. We're grateful for the students, teachers, and funders who make our programs happen for being a part of youth education.

Thank you for protecting our waters as part of the Watershed Council family.

The Watershed Council's contributions continue to grow in challenging times. In 2020, the Watershed Council received \$512,171 in membership gifts. We also received \$453,159 in contributions towards endowments, special projects, and bequests, and welcomed 208 new members for a total of 2,245 member individuals, families, organizations, and businesses.

Our private contributions represent one half of our total operating budget, so you can see why we truly couldn't do it without our members!

The Watershed Council's commitment to long-term financial success

The Watershed Council relies on endowment funds for both current and long-term funding. We have general agency funds at both the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation and the Charlevoix County Community Foundation. We also have a fund that is managed at Fifth Third Bank.

We rely on two funds that support our education programs: one at Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation and the other at Charlevoix County Community Foundation. Our intern program is supported by resources from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation—the Maura Brandi MSU Internship Funds—created to honor a longtime member's daughter who passed away several years ago.

The total market value of all five of these funds as of December 31, 2020, is \$2,784,322.

Endowment funds offer a variety of opportunities for gift giving, including planned gifts. The Watershed Council has set a goal of \$3 million in endowed funds.

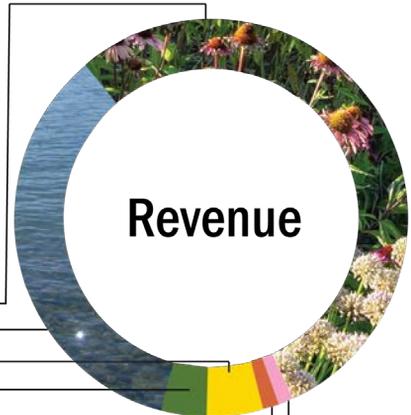
Please consider a gift to help us reach our goal and sustain our programs into the future.



2020 Financial Highlights

The Watershed Council runs a tight ship. We use every dollar wisely, knowing our funding comes from people who expect nothing less from us. Our day to day operations are funded by our Operating Fund. The categories and amounts of revenues and expenses, taken from figures before our audit, are illustrated in the charts below.

Revenue	Amount
Contributions	\$567,610
Grants	\$417,866
Contracts	\$22,038
Endowment Support	\$108,801
Bequests	\$144,270
Other	\$25,024
TOTAL	\$1,285,609

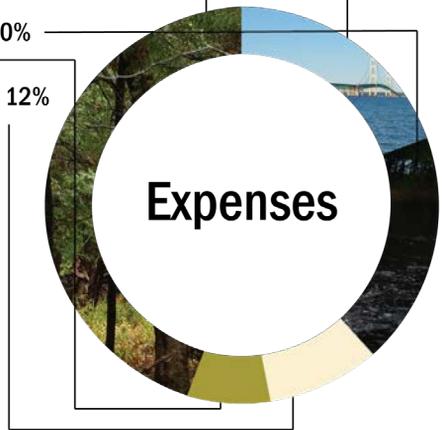


Contributions: 44%
 Grants: 33%
 Bequests: 11%
 Endowment support: 8%
 Contracts: 2%
 Other: 2%



Watershed Protection: 43%
 Policy and Advocacy: 18%
 Outreach and Education: 20%
 Development: 7%
 Management and General: 12%

Expenses	Amount
Watershed Protection	\$538,803
Policy and Advocacy	\$219,934
Outreach and Education	\$254,899
Development	\$84,966
Management & General	\$154,899
TOTAL	\$1,253,501



For a listing of all of our generous supporters please see the online version of this annual report at www.watershedcouncil.org/annual-reports.

Our Mission

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council speaks for Northern Michigan's waters. We are dedicated to protecting our lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater through respected advocacy, innovative education, technically sound water quality monitoring, thorough research, and restoration actions. We achieve our mission by empowering others, and we believe in the capacity to make a positive difference. We work locally, regionally, and throughout the Great Lakes Basin to achieve our goals.



Tip of the Mitt
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(Top L-R): Gail Gruenwald, Jennifer McKay, Natalie Walts, Grenetta Thomassey; (Middle L-R): Hadley Haas, Eli Baker, Kate Cwikiel, Jen DeMoss; (Bottom L-R): Caroline Keson, Jen Buchanan, Molly Voorheis, Ashley Soltysiak. Not pictured: Debbie Esposito, Garrett Greer, and Lizy Michaelson