New fishing access coming to city

By Matthew J. Friday
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CHEBOYGAN — Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council is pleased to be working with the City of Cheboygan to bring additional fishing access along the Cheboygan River.

The access will reduce erosion caused by foot traffic along the Cheboygan River downstream of the Cheboygan Lock and Dam. Thanks to a $25,000 grant from the Great Lakes Fishery Trust's "Access to the Great Lakes Fishery" program, the Watershed Council will facilitate public input and provide funding for design and engineering as the first phase of the project.

Key partners include the contracted landscape architecture firm Sanders and Czapski Associates, City of Cheboygan staff, Cheboygan Area Chamber of Commerce/Visitors Bureau, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Fisheries Division, MDNR Parks and Recreation Division, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and a representative from the Lake Huron Advisory Committee. During a February kick-off meeting, partners identified a number of needs and concerns. For instance, the group considered shoreline recreational areas.

According to Caroline Keson, water resource specialist at Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, the project also presents an opportunity for water resource protection. "Much of the Inland Waterway is developed, but the proposed area is still natural and has wetlands intact. Our plan to protect the shoreline from erosion by providing structures for anglers to safely access the river is a win-win situation. There will be educational signage and native plantings, too. This will be a great place for people to learn about the Cheboygan River and see best management practices in action, right in the heart of the City. Our hope is this will jumpstart more water resource projects in Cheboygan."

The public is invited to view and provide feedback on preliminary options for the fishing access on April 2nd at the City of Cheboygan Council Chambers from 3-6 p.m.

Drawings can also be viewed online at www.Cheboygan.org.

The Watershed Council will present to the Northern Inland Lakes Citizen Advisory Committee on the project on April 12. A formal public comment session will occur when engineering nears the final stages, which is anticipated this June.

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