



Federal Clean Water Act
Section 319
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Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Protection Plan Project

September 5, 2001 - December 31, 2003

The Grand Traverse Bay watershed is one of the premier tourist and outdoor recreation regions in the State of Michigan. The Grand Traverse Bay watershed is located in northwest Michigan's lower peninsula, drains approximately 976 square miles of land, and covers major portions of four counties and more than 50 municipalities and townships. The watershed may be broken up into nine distinctive major drainage basins: Elk River Chain of Lakes, Boardman River, Mitchell Creek, Acme Creek, Ptobego Creek, Yuba Creek, East Bay shoreline and tributaries, West Bay shoreline and tributaries, and the Old Mission Peninsula. Land use and land cover in the watershed is predominantly forest (50%) and agriculture (19%). Other land uses include: open shrub/grassland (15%), water (6.5%), wetlands (2.5%), and urban (7%). The region is currently experiencing tremendous population growth and development pressure, with a predicted 40% increase in population by 2020.

Sediment and excessive nutrient loading are two of the highest priority pollutants that are threatening the Grand Traverse Bay watershed. Other pollutants that threaten the watershed's designated uses include thermal pollution, toxins, changes in hydrologic flow, invasive species, pathogens, and loss of habitat. All of these nonpoint source pollutants degrade water quality, destroy aquatic habitat, and reduce the number and diversity of aquatic organisms. Stormwater inputs are a primary concern throughout the watershed because of the resulting changes to hydrologic flow and potential to contribute to excessive sediment, nutrients, and toxins to the bay and its watershed. This project resulted in a watershed plan that meets CMI requirements and provided I/E to local communities.

Grant Amount: \$249,710

Match Funds: \$ 87,173

Total Amount: \$336,883

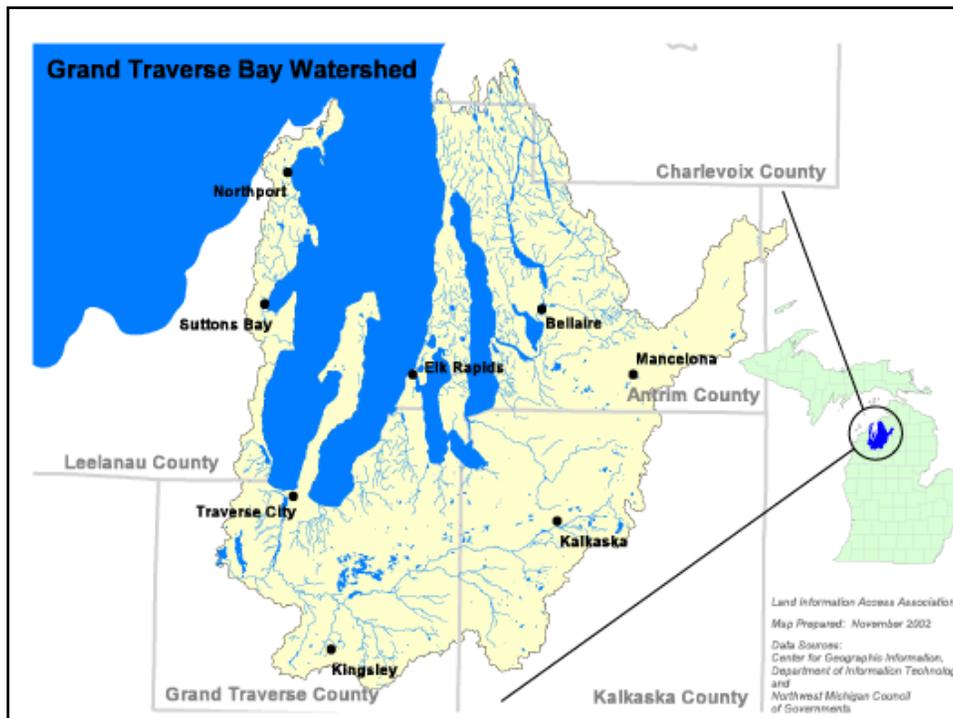
Project Goals:

The project goal was to conduct a basin-wide comprehensive planning process to develop, update, and prioritize recommendations for restoring and/or protecting designated and desired uses of the Grand Traverse Bay and its watershed.

Project Partners:

- Conservation Resource Alliance
- Land Information Access Association
- Peninsula Township
- Northwest Michigan Council of Governments
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Leelanau Conservancy





Key Accomplishments and Products

- Development of *Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Protection Plan*.
- Comprehensive field survey of *Grand Traverse Bay* shoreline.
- Identified ecologically significant shoreline parcels for water quality protection in *Boardman River* and *Leelanau County*.
- Conducted household survey to assess citizens' awareness and attitudes concerning watershed issues.
- Conducted series of six business focus groups to explore area business people/owners water quality concerns and ideas for protection, as well as perceived obstacles to natural resource protection.
- Development of project website (www.gtbay.org); additions/improvements to *The Watershed Center's* existing site.
- *Stream Search* - an ongoing volunteer monitoring program modeled after a similar program by the *West Michigan Environmental Action Council*.
- Conducted information and education activities including: Development of press kit and fact sheets for local media with general information on watersheds and water quality; *Annual Bay Day* watershed festival; *Freshwater Focus* insert in local newspaper to educate area citizens about the protection plan and key issues it addresses; *Shoreline reference guidebook* for *Great Lakes* riparian landowners; *Watershed poster*; *Hosting Regional Watershed Conference*; *Quarterly newsletters*; *Project brochure*