

Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed Project - CMI

June 1, 2002, through May 31, 2005

Tracking Code: 2001-0035

The Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed covers over 500 square miles of land in Antrim, Charlevoix, Grand Traverse, and Kalkaska Counties. At the centerpiece of the watershed is the Chain of Lakes, a series of 14 lakes and interconnecting rivers. From the uppermost lake in the Chain, the water flows 55 miles and drops 40 feet in elevation on its way to the Elk River and then Grand Traverse Bay. The Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed has over 200 miles of shoreline and almost 60 square miles of water. It is the largest subwatershed of Grand Traverse Bay. The goal of this project was to protect and enhance the water quality of the numerous lakes and tributaries by reducing polluted runoff. The approach involved implementing best management practices, improving land management of private property owners, and educating the community about ways to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Restoration and Education Accomplishments Summary:

Agriculture:

- Aerial Rye Seeding for over 1,500 acres
- Special nutrient testing to reduce fertilizer use

Lakeshore Erosion Control:

- Corrected more than 500 feet of eroding shoreline using biotechnical erosion control methods

Publications:

- ERCOL Watershed Permit Guide for Shoreline Property Owners
- Life at Waters Edge—Packet

Signs:

- ERCOL Watershed Signs and Posters



Education Programs:

- Sponsored greenbelt garden tours
- Conducted a program for sensible development for builders

Land Protection/Land Use:

- Resource Inventories for local units of government
- Prepared wildlife management plans to promote voluntary land stewardship practices

Grant Amount: \$ 290,912

Match Funds: \$ 144,722

Total Amount: \$ 435,634

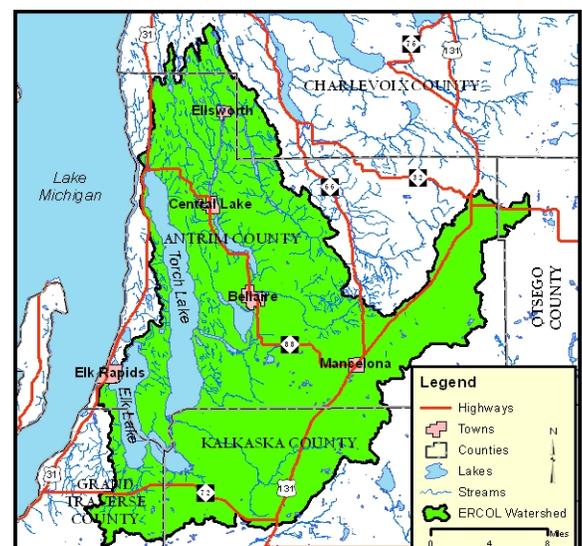
Partners Involved:

Funded:

- Antrim Conservation District
- Conservation Resource Alliance
- Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
- Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Other Partners:

- Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association
- Grass River Natural Area
- Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources
- MSU Extension
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Six Mile Lake Association
- Three Lakes Association
- Torch Lake Protection Alliance



Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed Project

Restoration and Education



Summary of Project:

Restoration and Best Management Practices:

- Provided aerial rye seeding for over 1,500 acres of fields to reduce erosion and nutrient-laden runoff.
- Provided special nutrient testing for agricultural producers to help manage and reduce excessive fertilizer applications.
- Corrected four eroding shorelines covering over 500 feet of linear frontage, using biotechnical erosion control methods. The corrected erosion sites will serve as demonstrations showing reduced sediment and nutrient pollution and improved shoreline habitat. The projects included seawall removal, greenbelt enhancement, runoff diversions, and ice shove.

Education and Protection Activities:

- Developed five WildLink Management Plans for five property owners to encourage voluntary conservation stewardship measures.
- Worked with Whitewater Township to develop the Battle Creek Natural Area protecting 394 acres of creek shoreline and other sensitive habitats
- Obtained an option to purchase 345 acres of land in Forest Home Township.
- Conducted two resource inventories and created GIS maps that were utilized for master plan updates.



Education Events and Publications:

- Conducted two greenbelt garden tours.
- Sponsored a shoreline homeowners seminar.
- Sponsored a workshop for builders and contractors on sensitive development.
- Installed a greenbelt in Richardi Park in cooperation with the Bellaire Garden Club. Printed a sign for the site to educate about greenbelts (to be installed soon).
- Developed and installed signs at Richardi Park; Grass River Natural Area; 2 signs Torch Lake Township Park (Marina Facts sign in addition to the Watershed sign); Whitewater Township Park, Lake Skegemog Roadside Park (four additional to be placed in the future) that describe the special features of the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed.
- Printed posters of the signs to share with schools and other target audiences.
- Created a new publication that reviews regulations and permits needed for activities in shoreline areas.
- Developed 400 folders of materials, titled, "Life at the Water's Edge" for new shoreline homeowners and asked realtors to assist with distribution.
- Conducted numerous presentations to citizen groups, realtors, and local officials.

