



Michigan's
Nonpoint Source
Program

**Federal Clean Water Act
Section 319 Grant**

Tracking code: 2012-0002



**Networks
Northwest**
Talent / Business / Community

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April 2013 through March 2016

The Betsie River / Crystal Lake Watershed Management Planning project was initiated in 2012 with grant funding approved by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The grantee for the project was the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments doing business as Networks Northwest. The Crystal Lake & Watershed Association served as subcontractor for portions of the plan. The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Conservation Resource Alliance and Benzie Conservation District also contributed material and/or paid staff time. The partners joined in this project out of a shared determination to protect the outstanding water resources of the region.

The Watershed encompasses 242 square miles of land and water in Benzie, Grand Traverse and Manistee counties of the Northwestern Lower Peninsula of Michigan. It includes the Betsie River - a state designated natural river - as well as Crystal Lake, Green Lake and Duck Lake and Betsie Lake. Though most of the watershed has very high water quality, two public beaches on Crystal Lake are listed as impaired because of intermittently high Escherichia coli counts. Additional concerns addressed in the 319-approved watershed plan include: Sedimentation from eroding streambanks and aging transportation infrastructure; nutrient, sediment and thermal issues associated with land uses and impervious surfaces; Swimmer's Itch; and the potential impacts of future development.

Grant Amount: \$164,000

Match Funds: \$29,534

Total Amount: \$193,534

Project goals:

1. To develop a comprehensive Watershed Management Plan that will guide local water-quality efforts, while meeting the guidelines set forth by Michigan DEQ and US-EPA.
2. To promote long-term stewardship of water resources, while building upon existing watershed education programs
3. To create a venue for cooperation among the separate organizations (Betsie River Watershed Restoration Committee; Crystal Lake & Watershed Association; Friends of Betsie Bay; and Green Lake and Duck Lake Association) which in the past have worked independently to promote water quality in separate segments of the Watershed.

Partners involved:

Crystal Lake & Watershed Association
Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
Conservation Resource Alliance
Benzie Conservation District
Green Lake & Duck Lake Association



April 2016

Products delivered and Key Accomplishments:

1. The Betsie River / Crystal Lake Watershed Management Plan: 2016-2026. The Plan is the first document to address the entire watershed, including: large and small lakes; headwater streams; the Betsie River mainstream and tributaries in Grand Traverse, Manistee and Benzie counties; and the Frankfort Harbor. The WMP was submitted in May, 2016, for MDEQ approval.
2. Creation of the Betsie/Crystal Watershed Protection Committee, under the administration of the Benzie Conservation District. The WPC brings together partners from the entire watershed to share information, coordinate projects, and monitor the implementation of the Watershed Management Plan.
3. Development of a long-term monitoring plan that will result in consistent sampling of designated sites in the watershed for creation of baseline data and early detection of water-quality threats.

Additional activities:

- Social Indicators Survey of Watershed property owners
- Hydrology study (funded by MDEQ)
- Fishery Status Reports (completed by MDNR)
- Presentations of WMP progress reports to lake associations and the public
- Participation in educational events (Benzie Water Fest; Betsie River Clean-up; Crystal Lake Walkabout)

