



Federal Clean Water Act
Section 319 Grant
 #2013-0022



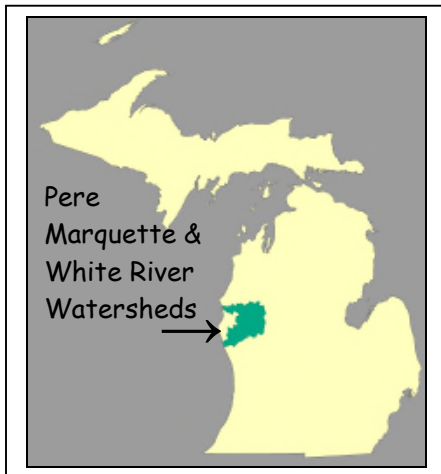
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Big South Branch Watershed Connectivity Restoration & Easements Project

December 2, 2013 - June 30, 2017

The Big South Branch of the Pere Marquette River is the largest of the five main tributaries of the Pere Marquette (PM) River, the only free-flowing, dam-free river in the Lake Michigan watershed. The PM is a state designated Blue Ribbon Trout Stream and Natural River, and federally designated Wild and Scenic River. The Big South Branch is classified under the Natural River plan as well. The Pere Marquette River Watershed Management Plan (2011) identifies water quality issues affecting the watershed including excess sediment and nutrients, thermal pollution, and loss of habitat. This project addressed all these issues by permanently protecting 9 properties totaling nearly 1,100 acres with partner landowners through conservation easements. One of the 9 properties is in the adjoining White River watershed. As noted below, this grant was greatly successful from grant funds/matching funds perspective because of the generosity of the partner landowners. The grant funds were originally expected to cover half of the overall project costs. However, by the end of the project, over \$1,000,000.00 in extra local matching funds had been earned and grant funding accounted for only a fifth of the total project funds.

Grant Amount: \$ 354,200
Match Funds: \$1,387,600
Total Amount: \$1,741,900



9 Permanent Conservation Easements have been established over four subwatersheds of the Pere Marquette and White Rivers.

Best Management Practices:

- 9 permanent conservation easements protecting 1,084 acres of riparian, wetland, and forested and open uplands.

Annual Load Reductions:

- SEDIMENT: 72.7 Tons
- PHOSPHOROUS: 322.61 Lbs
- NITROGEN: 3,113.1 Lbs



Partners involved:

- Jan & Hayley Potter
- Bob & Linda Jenkins
- Lisa Vogel
- Mike & Kathy Oostmeyer
- Mark & Kathleen Waldecker
- Ross & Janice Zeerip
- Chuck Smith
- Rob & Peggy Gunnell
- Community Foundation for Muskegon County and the Muskegon Kiwanis Club



“The Land” conservation easement was protected in late 2016 and is the largest contiguous conservation easement held by the Land Conservancy at 651 acres. The Oceana County property includes forested and emergent wetlands that serves as the headwaters of Ruby Creek, a high quality tributary to the Big South Branch of the Pere Marquette River.



Cedar Creek, at Jenkins Property is another high quality waterway surrounded by cedar wetlands just before flowing into the Big South Branch.



The Land Conservancy was able to work with four contiguous landowners at the Middle Branch of the Pere Marquette River, a new approach using funds provided by this project.