

The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay Antrim County Annual Report FY2016-2017



Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed Plan Implementation Team (ERCOL-WPIT)

- The Watershed Center co-facilitates these bi-monthly meetings with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council.
- Along with Tip of the Mitt, we co-hosted the 4th Local Government Event to update officials on progress writing the ERCOL Watershed Protection Plan and highlighted opportunities for local governments to participate in the implementation of the plan.
- We continue to serve as the permit applicant and fiscal agent for the ERCOL-WPIT's Fish Shelter Committee that has placed 65 fish shelter structures throughout Intermediate, Bellaire, Clam, Torch, and Elk Lakes. While the installations are complete, we are setting up a system to evaluate the shelters and ensure accuracy on their locations.

Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed Protection Plan

- The Watershed Center collaborated with Tip of the Mitt to write a watershed protection plan for the Elk River Chain of Lakes, a sub-watershed of Grand Traverse Bay.
- After securing additional funding, The Watershed Center and Tip of the Mitt are finishing the plan and intend to submit it to the Department of Environmental Quality for approval before the end of 2017.

Urban and Community Forestry Grant

- The Watershed Center collaborated with ReLeaf Michigan and Davey Resource Group to receive a US Forest Service grant that collaborates with communities to implement green infrastructure practices designed to reduce stormwater runoff.
- Five communities in the Grand Traverse Bay watershed were selected to participate, including Bellaire and Elk Rapids in Antrim County.
- This project includes an urban tree canopy assessment, hands-on training to support that assessment, a community outreach workshop to discuss the findings and engage the community, and planting 50 trees in priority areas.
- The Watershed Center has completed most of this work in Elk Rapids and will work with Bellaire on their assessment and tree plantings in fall 2017.

Septic Project Committee

- The Watershed Center is working with Tip of the Mitt and several other ERCOL-WPIT groups to engage stakeholders in discussions about septic issues.
- The committee has outlined 3 objectives: identify problems related to the meta-septic process, including technical and policy points, and prioritize them for environmental impact; identify causes of nutrient pollution from septic systems and examine potential solutions, including both mechanical and biological; and develop an action plan to resolve priority problems.

Golden Brown Algae

- The Watershed Center is working with several other ERCOL-WPIT groups to discuss current conditions of golden brown algae throughout the ERCOL.
- There is a fair amount of research being conducted, so this committee is focused on identifying avenues for outreach and education related to these findings.

Adopt-A-Stream

- The Watershed Center continued our volunteer stream monitoring program that includes several locations along the Rapid River (most in fair condition).
- We worked with Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association to potentially include additional monitoring sites.

Outreach

- The Watershed Center gave numerous educational presentations to local groups (garden clubs, lake associations, realtor groups, etc) and jurisdictions (planning commissions, trustees, etc), as well as participated in several community events/festivals.
- We responded to concerns from several waterfront landowners and educated them on best management practices to protect water quality at their homes.
- We continued to monitor jurisdictions and permit applications for projects with the potential to impact water quality.