

Dear Readers,

Despite its beauty and vastness, there are forces at work that threaten the Grand Traverse Bay and the waters that feed it. Everyone who calls this place home, or their home away from home, has a stake in protecting this precious resource. We cannot take it for granted that the high water quality that we all enjoy in abundance today will always be here for future generations. We need to take steps now to ensure that mistakes of the past are corrected and future problems are prevented.

With that goal in mind, The Watershed Center and a diverse group of partners has been hard at work the past 18 months developing a protection plan for the Grand Traverse Bay Watershed. This plan will serve as a guide for the myriad of agencies and organizations involved in water quality protection efforts as well as citizen groups and others.

This publication serves several purposes. First, it provides area residents with an overview of the planning process and key water quality issues in the Grand Traverse Bay. Second, it provides a snapshot of some recent accomplishments in the watershed. Third, it provides readers with sources of more information and ways they can help participate in protecting area waters. Last, but no less important, it will serve as a platform for a year-long partnership with The Watershed Center and the Record Eagle's Newspapers in Education program to provide watershed education opportunities for area school children.

We encourage you to visit our website at www.gtbay.org, or give us a call at (231) 935-1514 if you would like to learn more or become involved in the watershed planning process.

Sincerely,
Anne Brasie
Executive Director
The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay

This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement 2000-0144. The contents of the document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute an endorsement or recommendation for use.



Special thanks to the
Cherryland Electric
Cooperative Community
Caring Fund for their
support of this project.

Dear Readers,

In 2002, we commissioned Belden Research, a national marketing survey company, to conduct a readership study for the Record-Eagle. One of our goals was to determine the level of reader interest in the types of Record-Eagle news content. As with past surveys, nearly half of our readers (44 percent) said that local environmental issues were at the top of the list.

This didn't come as a surprise. When "quality of life" surveys have been conducted in northern Michigan, environmental issues constantly rise to the top when residents are asked why they live in the beautiful part of the state. Clean, fresh air and water, ample public access to forestland, parks, lakes and rivers and maintaining "open spaces" are cited as reasons we choose to live, play and vacation in this part of the state.

Reader interest is one reason why the Record-Eagle initiated project C.L.E.A.N. Water (Creating Lake Ecology Awareness through Newspapers). The other reason is our commitment to young people through our Newspapers in Education program and our desire to provide relevant and local curriculum material to classrooms. Our goal is to enhance student and community understanding of the issues affecting our watershed and to provide opportunities for every reader to make a difference.

In conjunction with The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay and Northwestern Michigan College, it is with great pride and enthusiasm that we present this program. The purpose of this project is to increase student and public awareness of water quality issues, available resources available to help maintain the health of our water and to outline the connections between current events and the future health of our watershed.

I hope you enjoy this program and find it useful. I welcome any comments you have on this or any Record-Eagle activity and invite you to e-mail me at: zfleet@record-eagle.com or call me directly (231) 946-1403.

Sincerely,
Zeke Fleet
Publisher
The Traverse City Record-Eagle



If you would like to bring Freshwater Focus into your classroom, contact the Traverse City Record-Eagle's Newspapers in Education program at: (231) 933-1402. Additional copies and supplemental activities are available throughout the school year.