

# When it rains, it pours — into the bay

## Stormwater Infrastructure

With assistance from the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, the Center is developing an inventory of existing stormwater infrastructure throughout the watershed. This simple study will determine the number and approximate location of storm drain outlets in major cities and villages. Maps that outline the storm sewer catchment areas will be developed. Traverse City already maintains an accurate map of their system, but this information is not readily accessible for other portions of the watershed. This information will assist in infrastructure planning.

## REACHING OUT/EDUCATION

This publication is part of our ongoing efforts to provide information about water quality issues. Published annually in the fall,

it provides an overview of current projects around the region. Many of the education efforts of The Watershed Center and other collabo-

rating groups are directed at both members of the public and special efforts to assist local governmental officials. Some current highlights include:

### Storm Drain Stenciling

Many people are not aware of where water goes after it flows into a catch basin. In our area, the short answer is: into a river, lake, stream or Grand Traverse Bay. To help build awareness of this simple fact and discourage the dumping of pollutants down these drains, the Center organized a recent storm drain labeling event and has plans for at least one more. Volunteers from a number of neighborhoods in Traverse City applied special stickers to drains marked "Dump No Waste - Drains to Bay." The City of Traverse City purchased the stickers and assisted with equipment.

### Stormwater Toolkit

The Center is developing a user-friendly toolkit for local governments

that will provide information regarding existing resources for developing stormwater plans, evaluating solutions and products, low impact design techniques, etc. This toolkit will be tailored specifically to the types of problems that we face in this region because of our soils, topography and other land use patterns.

### Solving Problems

The Watershed Center is currently researching the development of a stormwater task force that would draw its membership from local municipal governments, related environmental and resource organizations, engineering and construction firms, drain commissioners and other people involved in managing stormwater. The purpose of this group

would be both to provide educational opportunities for members and to develop sustainable solutions to our region's stormwater issues.

Exploration of potential funding mechanisms and sources may also be part of the agenda. The planning for this project is in the very early stages. An initial exploratory meeting will be scheduled for sometime this fall.

The City of Traverse City will be researching and developing a system of stormwater best management practices and updating the city's stormwater ordinance as part of a grant project with The Watershed Center. City staff will inventory all points of stormwater entry in the city and conduct hydrological and hydraulic investigations to determine what potential solutions might be most appropriate and cost effective for each site. These sites will also be prioritized based on a variety of factors. This research will allow the city to develop a plan for ongoing retrofitting throughout the stormwater system.



Sediment is slowly collecting and filling Brown Bridge Pond where the Boardman River enters the pond.



Record-Eagle file photo

Spring brings refreshing and cleansing rains — but the rain is also washing away an accumulation of winter debris off our streets and sidewalks — and sending it directly to our area's waters.

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Did you know?

The Great Lakes Basin is home to more than 37 million people.

Grand Traverse Regional  
Community Foundation