OUR20
Great Lakes Communities Protecting 20% of the Planet’s Surface Freshwater

Presentation to the City of Traverse City
Liz Kirkwood, Executive Director
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“The simple truth is that Michigan has always been and will always be a ‘quality of life’ state...the quality of human life in Michigan depends on nature. The natural beauty of Michigan is much more than a source of pleasure and recreation. It shapes our values, molds our attitudes, feeds our spirits.”

- Michigan Governor William Milliken
A. Threats facing Great Lakes communities
B. Overview & Invite to become an OUR20 Community
C. Goals, Principles & Benefits
D. Regional stakeholders
E. How to join
F. Metrics and Potential Action Plan
Before Clean Water Act

After Clean Water Act
In 2000, the major urbanization in Grand Traverse Bay area were concentrated around Traverse City, Elk Rapids and Suttons Bay, with mostly transportation purpose and some residential and commercial mixed patches.

The forecast for 2030 indicates same rapid urbanization pattern and continuously increasing residential land use. The actual expansion level might vary because the study was done by Dr. Pijanowski’s team in 2002, but the forecast of sprawl pattern is clear and reliable.
1. Educate and Engage Stakeholders
2. Listen and Refine
3. Develop Widespread Community Support
4. Develop, Fund, and Implement an Action Plan
Goals of OUR20

Water For All: Help communities value and know water systems and use public trust law

Blue Solutions: Foster creative, effective educational programs and public communication processes

Collaboration at Work: Empower residents, businesses, leaders and decision makers in the Great Lakes Basin to be well informed and collaborative stewards
1. Recognize all the benefits provided by water that encompass economic, social and ecological dimensions.

2. Be guided by credible science, shared data, collaborative partnerships, and the public trust doctrine.

3. Put water first in community decision-making (practices, policies, planning, stewardship)
4. Develop collaborative solutions aimed at building champions and ownership at all levels across stakeholders

5. Keep public waters in public hands

6. Commit to public education based on best available techniques.
Benefits of Becoming an OUR20 Community

● Reduce rising public costs of climate change impacts to infrastructure, health, and economy.

● Build resilience and improve quality of life.

● Build stakeholder consensus around policy and practice.

● Access best practices and policies.

● Secure regional funding from federal and state sources.

● Enhance Traverse City’s state reputation as a water leader.
Bay Area Transportation Authority
Blue Orange Consulting
City of Traverse City
Conservation Resource Alliance
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
Grand Traverse Bay Watershed Center
Grand Traverse Conservation District
Grand Traverse County Health Department
Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
Green Elk Rapids
Inland Seas
Land Information Access Association
Lake Effect Digital
Left Foot Charley

Michigan State University Sea Grant
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA)
Networks Northwest
Northwestern Michigan College Water Studies Institute
SEEDS
Traverse Area Association of Realtors
University of Michigan Water Center
**SMART Metrics**

**Qualitative:** level of civic engagement and participation in OUR20 Communities programming

**Quantitative:** Gallons of sanitary and stormwater overflow; Number of Beach Day Closures; Length (in feet) of infrastructure repaired or replaced (i.e. old water lines, old sewers, combined sewers);
Kids Creek Restoration Project: By the Numbers

- 65,000 ft³ Storage in stormwater wetland
- 6400 ft² Green roof installed
- 4200 ft Creek restored
- 900 ft Creek daylighted
- 53 Stream banks stabilized

2018 By the Numbers

- 3 Planter boxes installed
- 4 StormTree boxes installed
- 10 Rain gardens planted
Action Plan for OUR20 Community

● Pass OUR20 Community Resolution
  ○ Affirms Water as Shared Public Resource
  ○ Bans Bottled Water at Government Functions
  ○ Keeps Water Infrastructure Publicly Owned
● Engage in Public Awareness Campaigns around Water
● Join Member Network with Best Practices, Tools, Funding Opportunities, Technical Assistance
Possible Action Plan Ideas for GTB Watershed

- Plastics Pollution Awareness Campaign
- Septic System Stewardship and Local Ordinances
- Stormwater Funding Options
- Sustainability Office in City Government
- Citizen-led campaigns to reduce water pollution
- Partner-led campaigns (e.g., green infrastructure)
Thank You!
How is OUR20 Different?

- Platform for diverse stakeholders (not just for local governments or businesses or nonprofits)
- Shared responsibility for community
- Marked by education efforts and action
- Protects water as a commons held in public trust
OUR SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

20% PLANET’S SURFACE FRESHWATER
Choosing Metrics

Qualitative Examples

● Creation of institutional structures such as an Office of Sustainability to model and measure the effectiveness of on-the-ground and long-term OUR20 Community work, and to report to the public on a regular basis.

● The depth and breadth of public awareness of OUR20 Communities initiatives.

● The degree of citizen participation in activities related to the OUR20 Communities initiative.
Quantitative Examples

- Pollutant trends in surface water, groundwater, and drinking water;
- Area coverage of wetlands and tree canopy;
- Gallons of sanitary and stormwater overflow;
- Occurrence of terrestrial or aquatic invasive species;
- 100% commitment to renewable energy by local government;
- Number of educational programs directed to increase Great Lakes and water literacy
- Zero beach closure days