



Looking Toward the Future





TIP OF THE MITT WATERSHED COUNCIL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board President,
Claire Rasmussen

Vice President,
Bob Kingon

Treasurer,
Rick Brandi

Secretary,
Pam Roudi

Board Members

Herm Boatin

Rick Doornbos

Bill Foster

Charlie Gano

Scott Kendzierski

Larry Levensgood

Jim McKimmy

Linda Oelke

Sue Stewart

Donna Stine

STAFF AND INTERNS

Executive Director and Staff Attorney

Gail Gruenwald

Administrative Team

Lynn D. Buffington

Financial and Operations Director

Natalie Walts,
Office Manager

Development/Communications Team

Kate Cwikiel

Communications Coordinator

Debbie Esposito

Data and Membership Specialist

Abigail Hackman

*Administrative and Communications
Assistant*

Policy and Advocacy Team

Grenetta Thomassey, Ph.D.
Watershed Policy Director

Jennifer McKay
Policy Director

Watershed Protection Team

Jennifer Buchanan

Watershed Protection Director

David Edwards

Monitoring and Research Director

Caroline Keson

Water Resource Specialist

Garrett Greer

Program Assistant

Education Team

Eli Baker

*Water Resource Education
Coordinator*

Interns

Alex Rocco

Caleb Short



Dear Friends,

Thank you for your continued support of Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council during these historic times as staff and volunteers continue to further our mission and values. The organization has maintained its professional and financial focus on securing continuation of water protections.

This year's annual report highlights Watershed Council activities, such as contributing to a first term environmental policy agenda for Governor Whitmer, green infrastructure solutions for stormwater controls, and exploring engineering alternatives for Petoskey's Lake St. Dam.

The Watershed Council has also provided ongoing leadership in addressing the multifaceted issues impacting our region by Enbridge Energy operations, in collaboration with other stakeholders.

My board service concludes at this year's Annual Membership Meeting and it has been a very rewarding experience. I look forward to future contributions through the many outlets for membership involvement.



Claire Rasmussen
Board President



Safeguarding Precious Resources

- Completed engineering to bring new fishing access on the Cheboygan River.
- Coordinated ongoing efforts to explore engineering alternatives for Lake Street Dam in Petoskey to improve stream health, fisheries, safety, and recreational opportunities.
- Combatted excess stormwater runoff through the installation of multiple rain gardens and a green roof.
- Collected hundreds of pounds of trash and recyclables along the Bear River with the help of over 150 volunteers during the 15th annual Bear River Cleanup.
- Protected valuable local water resources through our Watershed Action Volunteer Experience (WAVE) program. Volunteer projects included shoreline restoration and greenbelt planting along Birch Lake, invasive species education, greenbelt education, wetland education, and stormwater drain marking.





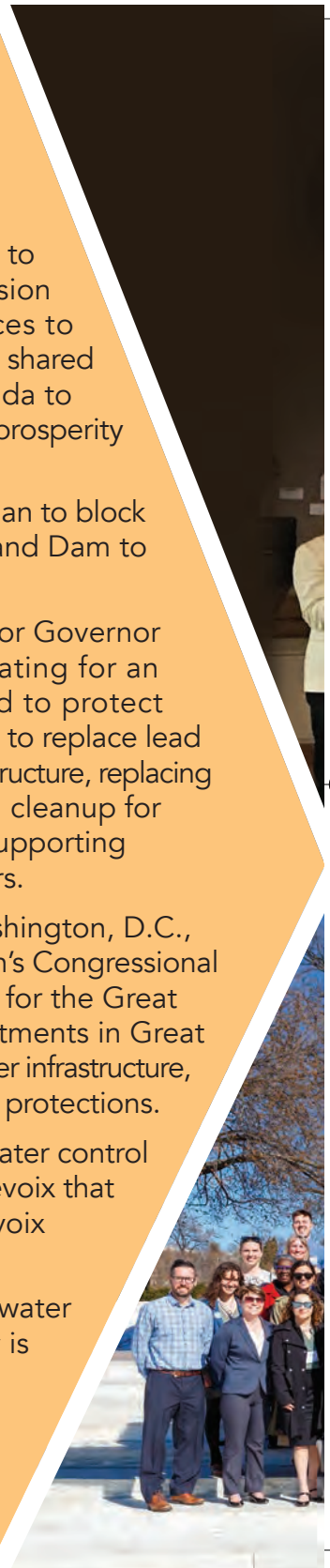
Keeping an Eye on Water Quality

- Measured lake clarity and chlorophyll-a through our Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program.
- Informed residents and lake associations about invasive mussels and potential algal blooms on 20 lakes.
- Collected aquatic insects and other macroinvertebrates (stream dwellers without backbones) to help keep tabs on the health of 18 streams through our Volunteer Stream Monitoring and Watershed Academy Programs.
- Monitored 12 sites of stormwater discharge to help prevent pollutants from entering local lakes and rivers.
- Tracked bird fatalities from avian botulism with our volunteers on 118 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline.
- Completed an investigation into the effectiveness of treating lakes with *Zequanox*, a biological control for invasive zebra mussels.
- Supported the Michigan Swimmer's Itch Partnership in exploring the relationship between mergansers and the flatworm parasites that cause swimmer's itch.
- Completed a lake-wide plant survey on Douglas Lake in Cheboygan County, which revealed that the lake was free of invasive plant species.
- Reported on Lake Charlevoix and Elk River Chain of Lakes shoreline studies to assist efforts in improving shoreline stewardship.
- Tested surface water resources for PFAS compounds in Emmet and Charlevoix Counties, which indicated that PFAS may not be a primary threat.



Advocating for Michigan Waters

- Appointed by Governor Gretchen Whitmer to the Great Lakes Commission. The commission works with its member states and provinces to address issues of common concern, develop shared solutions, and collectively advance an agenda to protect and enhance the region's economic prosperity and environmental health.
- Promoted a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plan to block invasive Asian carp at Brandon Road Lock and Dam to prevent their spread into the Great Lakes.
- Provided an environmental policy agenda for Governor Whitmer's first term. This included advocating for an enforceable PFAS drinking water standard to protect Michigan communities, identifying resources to replace lead service lines and rebuild the state's water infrastructure, replacing the Clean Michigan Initiative, which funded cleanup for brownfields and polluted waterways, and supporting construction projects that protect our waters.
- Represented the Watershed Council in Washington, D.C., leading meetings with members of Michigan's Congressional Delegation to advocate for policy priorities for the Great Lakes. This included boosting federal investments in Great Lakes restoration, drinking water and wastewater infrastructure, Asian carp prevention, and Clean Water Act protections.
- Led the effort to pass a coordinated stormwater control ordinance for the three cities on Lake Charlevoix that complements how the townships in Charlevoix County control stormwater.
- Advocated to improve Michigan's drinking water standard to ensure public health and safety is adequately protected from PFAS pollution.
- Advocated for statewide septic system regulations.



2019 Policy Topics at a Glance:

PFAS

Enbridge Line 5

Asian Carp

Great Lakes Restoration

Drinking Water

Stormwater Control

Septic System Regulation



Photo: David Keith

Policy That Works for the Community

- Collected nearly 6,500 pounds of unwanted and unused medicines through the Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Drop-Off (POD) Program to keep pharmaceuticals and drugs out of Michigan waters.
- Published the guidebook, "Pipeline Permitting in Michigan," to provide information about permitting for pipelines, and to help citizens engage in important decision making processes.
- Participated in the U.S. Coast Guard Straits of Mackinac Ports and Waterways Safety Assessment to ensure that water resources and the environment were accurately considered during the assessment.
- Worked with Michigan's governor, Enbridge, and state, federal, local, and tribal governments to monitor Line 5 and provide recommendations for the path forward.
- Led the effort to treat Eurasian watermilfoil in the Crooked River by coordinating six local governments and two lake associations to address this invasive species.
- Completed three social indicator surveys measuring attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors regarding water resources in the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed, which will help with outreach and education efforts.



Education and Environmental Stewardship

- Taught around 120 middle school students watershed science and environmental stewardship through our successful Water Resource Education Program (WREP). Boyne City, Boyne Falls, and East Jordan Middle Schools joined for the 2018-2019 school year.
- Added new WREP teams at Pellston and Mackinaw City Middle Schools in fall 2019.
- Engaged students from 13 local high schools in our stream monitoring and education program, Watershed Academy.
- Took over three hundred sixth and seventh graders out for the Students Experience Lake Charlevoix expedition. The students spent the day on Lake Charlevoix, learning about water quality, watershed protection, aquatic invasive species, and other topics.
- Performed outreach and education through events like the Earth Week Plus Expo in Cheboygan, Waganakising Bay Day, and the Raven Hill Career Expo.





Thank You for Standing With Us in the Effort to Protect Our Waters

The Watershed Council's contributions continue to grow in challenging times. In 2019, the Watershed Council received \$457,540 in membership gifts. We also received \$111,756 in contributions toward special projects and welcomed 147 new members for a total of 2,150 member individuals, families, organizations, and businesses.

Our private contributions represent one half of our total operating budget, so you can see we truly couldn't do it without our members!

The Watershed Council's Commitment to Long-Term Financial Success

The Watershed Council relies on endowment funds for both current and long-term funding. We have general agency funds at both the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation and the Charlevoix County Community Foundation. We also have a fund that is managed at Fifth Third Bank.

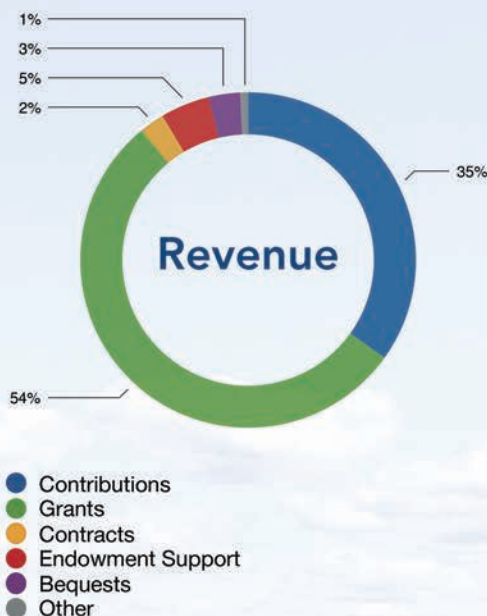
We rely on two funds that support our education programs: one at Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation and the other at Charlevoix County Community Foundation. Our intern program is supported by resources from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation—the Maura Brandi MSU Internship Funds—created to honor a longtime member's daughter who passed away several years ago.

The total market value of all five of these funds as of December 31, 2019, is \$2,559,575.

Endowment funds offer a variety of opportunities for gift giving, including planned gifts. The Watershed Council has set a goal of \$3 million in endowed funds. Please consider a gift to help us reach our goal and sustain our programs into the future.

2019 Financial Highlights

The Watershed Council runs a tight ship. We use every dollar wisely, knowing our funding comes from people who expect nothing less from us. Our day to day operations are funded by our Operating Fund. The categories and amounts of revenues and expenses, taken from figures before our audit, are illustrated in the charts below.

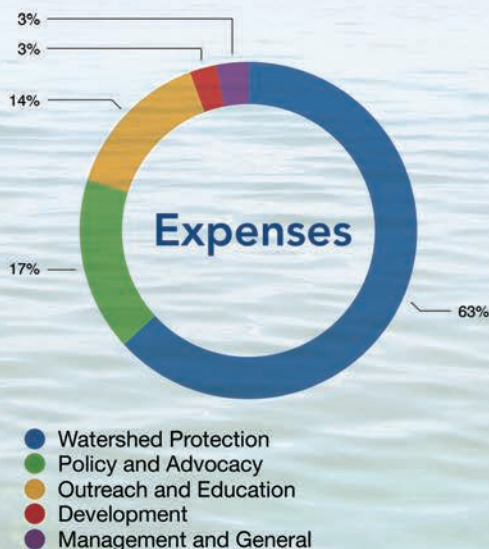


Revenue Amount

Contributions	\$479,021
Grants	\$668,918
Contracts	\$30,773
Endowment Support	\$96,046
Bequests	\$90,275
Other	\$43,617
TOTAL	\$1,408,650

Expenses Amount

Watershed Protection	\$853,356
Policy and Advocacy	\$230,271
Outreach and Education	\$189,635
Development	\$40,636
Management and General	\$40,636
TOTAL	\$1,354,534



For a listing of all of our generous supporters please see the on-line version of this annual report at www.watershedcouncil.org/annual-reports.



2019 Staff: (Left to Right) Abigail Hackman, Kate Cwikiel, Gail Gruenwald, David Edwards, Lynn D Buffington, Garrett Greer, Caroline Keson, Jennifer McKay, Eli Baker, Jennifer Buchanan, Caleb Short, Alex Rocco, and Debbie Esposito

Our Mission

The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council speaks for Northern Michigan's waters. We are dedicated to protecting our lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater through respected advocacy, innovative education, technically sound water quality monitoring, thorough research, and restoration actions. We achieve our mission by empowering others and we believe in the capacity to make a positive difference. We work locally, regionally, and throughout the Great Lakes Basin to achieve our goals.



Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
426 Bay Street
Petoskey, MI 49770
(231) 347-1181

www.watershedcouncil.org