FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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BOARDMAN RIVER TEAM SEEKS CONSULTANT TO DEVELOP GROUNDBREAKING STRATEGY

TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN - Protection and wise use of the Boardman River Watershed and community economic development go hand in hand.

That’s the assertion of a newly formed leadership team which this week issued an RFQ (request for qualifications) to find a consulting partner capable of helping to develop a new approach to natural resource planning – one that takes into account the economic and community development potential of a unique asset.

The collaborative’s task is to develop a new Boardman River Sub-Watershed Prosperity Plan that focuses on long term protection of the watershed, while also addressing the issues of business and job creation within the 291 square mile watershed area.

“This approach aligns with the way our state needs to view its future – with an eye to creating a sense of place and the importance of natural resources to our regional prosperity,” states Doug Luciani, president and CEO of the Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce.

A copy of the RFQ appears on the Boardman River website: www.theboardman.org <http://www.theboardman.org>

“We’re seeking consulting partners with a proven track record in both watershed protection and community economic development,” explained Andy Knott, executive director of the Watershed Center ~ Grand Traverse Bay. “This plan could be a blueprint for the rest of the state and country for innovative watershed planning.” His organization is one of eleven regional business, conservation, government and nonprofits that comprise the recently announced Boardman River Watershed Prosperity Leadership Team. Its oversight covers portions of Grand Traverse and Kalkaska counties (see list below for other members).
Two catalysts for developing the watershed prosperity strategy were the extensive process that led to the decision by Traverse City and Grand Traverse County to remove three dams on the Boardman, while modifying a fourth dam; and the six-county regional citizen-led Grand Vision planning effort.

The new strategic blueprint will take into account an inventory of natural and economic development assets; identification of watershed priorities; definition of current gaps that may impede goal achievement; keying on best practices that support quality of life and economic well being in the watershed; and integration of strategies developed as a result of the region’s Grand Vision process, Traverse City Downtown Development Authority and Grand Traverse County economic development planning.

Rotary Charities of Traverse City and the Great Lakes Fishery Trust provided funding for development of the prosperity strategy. Rotary Charities has also made several grants in support of the process to consider the fate of the Boardman River Dams.

The deadline for consultant submissions in response to the RFQ is May 27, 2011.

**Organizational members of the leadership team include:**

Watershed Center – Grand Traverse Bay  
Grand Traverse Conservation District  
Traverse Area Chamber of Commerce  
Traverse City Downtown Development Authority  
Kalkaska Downtown Development Authority  
Charter Township of Garfield  
Traverse Area Association of Realtors  
Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy  
Rotary Camps and Services  
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians  
Package - Natural Resources Department  
Conservation Resource Alliance

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