THE PURPOSE.

THE PLAN.

The Boardman River Watershed Prosperity Plan is a vision and roadmap for the future management of one of Michigan’s most beautiful waterways. It meets the community’s desire to have a management plan for the river and provides a blueprint for multi-stakeholder cooperation to improve the environmental, economic, and social prosperity of our watershed region.

PROSPERITY

The Prosperity Plan identifies prosperity for the watershed as achieving economic well-being for its residents, protecting and maintaining a high-quality environment, supporting healthy lifestyles, helping people connect and engage with the environment, and offering a diverse range of social and cultural opportunities. Specific and tangible actions and recommendations were developed that residents, policymakers, partners, and project stakeholders can implement to improve the environmental, economic, and social prosperity of the Boardman River Watershed.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

As projects and tasks identified in the Prosperity Plan are implemented, they will be monitored and evaluated for success. The plan will be evaluated both in terms of progress in implementing proposed tasks and in success in improving and protecting water quality, as well as overall environmental, economic, and social prosperity in the watershed.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Balancing increased tourism and quality of life for our residents
2. Broad, diverse economy
3. Cultivate the development of local public and private watershed champions (both current and community capacity that will assure implementation of ownership of the Boardman River Watershed Prosperity Plan)
4. Focus and support economic growth in the watershed’s existing downtown hubs.
5. Generate new community leaders, and include voices from the entire watershed.
6. Protect scenic vistas, rural character, and key cultural and historic sites.
7. Manage and capture opportunities for diverse water-based recreation in the watershed.
8. Promote recreation opportunities to residents and visitors.
9. Manage and capture opportunities for diverse land-based recreation in the watershed.
10. Promote recreation opportunities to residents and visitors.
11. Enhance the high-quality water and other natural resources that are the backbone of social and economic prosperity in the watershed.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Protect, restore, and enhance the high-quality water and other natural resources that are the backbone of social and economic prosperity in the watershed.
   - Reduce threats to water quality in the Boardman River and tributaries from stormwater and wastewater inputs.
   - Restore and enhance wetlands and other aquatic habitat and improve fish passage.
   - Reduce erosion and minimize barriers to fish passage associated with transportation crossings along the Boardman River and its tributaries.
   - Control the spread and introduction of invasive species that threaten designated uses of the Boardman River and its tributaries.
   - Maintain and improve forests and other key wildlife habitat corridors throughout the watershed.
   - Grow a sustainable economy that benefits and strengthens all of the watershed communities.
2. Focus and support economic growth in the watershed’s existing downtown hubs.
   - Encourage the growth of a diverse range of emerging and new business sectors and enterprises.
   - Expand the tourism economy throughout the watershed.
   - Preserve and expand agricultural economic activity in the watershed.
3. Improve the quality of life and advance greater social equity throughout the watershed to retain and attract businesses, a talented workforce, and student and retiree residents.
   - Advance educational opportunities for watershed residents to expand potential economic and social opportunities.
   - Provide affordable and regular transportation options within and between watershed communities in order to better accommodate workforce participants throughout the watershed.
   - Expand affordable housing opportunities throughout the watershed to accommodate the needs of the Traverse City worker market.
   - Protect scenic vistas, rural character, and key cultural and historic sites.
   - Provide managed expansion and improvement of recreation opportunities in the watershed to attract a talented workforce, student and retiree residents, and visitors from around the world.
4. Manage and capture opportunities for diverse water-based recreation in the watershed.
   - Manage and capture opportunities for diverse land-based recreation in the watershed.
   - Promote recreation opportunities to residents and visitors.
5. Improve the quality of life for its residents, protecting and maintaining a high-quality environment, supporting healthy lifestyles, helping people connect and engage with the environment, and offering a diverse range of social and cultural opportunities.
   - Provide hands-on opportunities to engage with the environment, such as invasive species monitoring and education.
   - Support and protect local natural and cultural resources, including protected and historic sites.

COMMUNITY OF LIFE ISSUES

1. Access to nature
2. Healthy, safe communities
3. Clean water
4. Atriums and green space
5. Cultivate the development of local public and private watershed champions (both current and community capacity that will assure implementation of ownership of the Boardman River Watershed Prosperity Plan)

WATER SHED WATERSHED.

The Boardman River watershed is located within the Grand Traverse Bay watershed in northern Michigan. It encompasses parts of Grand Traverse and Kalkaska counties as well as 20 smaller municipalities. The watershed includes 180 miles of river and tributary streams and covers 287 square miles. It makes up almost a third of the Grand Traverse Bay watershed land area and provides almost one-third of the tributary inputs of water to Grand Traverse Bay. It also contains the majority of the Grand Traverse Bay watershed population. As such, the Boardman River watershed plays a large role in the ecological health of Grand Traverse Bay.

NATURAL RIVER DESIGNATION

The Boardman River is considered among the top 10 trout streams in Michigan and is designated Natural River, a program administered by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This designation offers specific protections to preserve and enhance water quality, recreation opportunities, and fisheries and wildlife habitat. For property along Natural Rivers segments of the Boardman River and its tributaries, there are additional setbacks and development restrictions incorporated into and administered as part of the zoning ordinance for that municipality.

THE WATERSHED.

To improve the quality of life for our residents, protecting and maintaining a high-quality environment, supporting healthy lifestyles, helping people connect and engage with the environment, and offering a diverse range of social and cultural opportunities.

- Provide hands-on opportunities to engage with the environment, such as invasive species monitoring and education.
- Support and protect local natural and cultural resources, including protected and historic sites.

- Protect scenic vistas, rural character, and key cultural and historic sites.
- Provide managed expansion and improvement of recreation opportunities in the watershed to attract a talented workforce, student and retiree residents, and visitors from around the world.
- Expand affordable housing opportunities throughout the watershed to accommodate the needs of the Traverse City worker market.
- Manage and capture opportunities for diverse water-based recreation in the watershed.
- Manage and capture opportunities for diverse land-based recreation in the watershed.
- Promote recreation opportunities to residents and visitors.
- Preserve the ecosystem and natural heritage.
- Enhance the high-quality water and other natural resources that are the backbone of social and economic prosperity in the watershed.
CRITICAL AREAS FOR RESTORATION

Location: Traverse City and surrounding urban area
Critical Concerns: Urban stormwater

Location: Kids Creek subwatershed
Critical Concerns: Urban stormwater and sedimentation

Location: Boardman Lake shoreline
Critical Concerns: Sediment contamination

Location: Bottomlands and impounded upstream areas from Brown Bridge, Boardman, and Sabine dam removals
Critical Concerns: Restoration of bottomlands to prevent soil erosion and sediment contribution, protect and enhance in-stream habitat, and control invasive species

Location: Inland lakes with hydrologic connection to the Boardman River and/or increased residential development, including Silver, Arbuthn, and Spider lakes
Critical Concerns: Development may be causing increased pollutant contributions from stormwater, bank erosion, and septic systems

Location: Agricultural lands – Kingsley and Garfield Township areas
Critical Concerns: Nutrient and sediment inputs

Location: North Branch of the Boardman River from Kalkaska Lake Road downstream to the confluence of Failing Creek
Critical Concerns: Temperature and sediment

Location: Village of Kalkaska
Critical Concerns: Urban stormwater

Location: Small dam removal
Critical Concerns: Sediment, hydrologic flow, thermal pollution

Location: Severe streambank erosion sites and transportation crossings
Critical Concerns: Erosion and sedimentation

CRITICAL AND PRIORITY AREAS

Since water in the Boardman River watershed is of high quality, several areas in the watershed were identified for protection or restoration actions. Recommendations were aimed at protecting land from future development or protecting water quality from future potential impairment. Locations for these actions were placed into either Critical Areas (for restoration actions) or Priority Areas (for protective actions).

PRIORITY AREAS FOR PROTECTION

Priority areas are those that are particularly vulnerable to degradation or development pressure and should be protected from future harm.

General: ridgelines and other areas with expansive viewsheds of the Boardman River, headwaters of tributaries
Specific: 10 locations outlined on the watershed map above

IMPAIRED REACH — KIDS CREEK

A 4-mile portion of Kids Creek, a major tributary to the Boardman River, is on the State’s Impaired Waters List due to a poor aquatic macroinvertebrate community caused by sedimentation, flow regime alteration, and other human-caused sources related to stormwater. Kids Creek drains almost 11 square miles, beginning from springs in the Charter Township of Garfield and entering the Boardman River near its mouth at Grand Traverse Bay in Traverse City. Kids Creek experiences severe changes in flow due to stormwater inputs during storm events. The creek exhibits increased flow after rain events and causes regular flooding within the City of Traverse City limits. This increased flow has led to scoured stream bottoms and increased sedimentation within the stream from eroding streambanks. Restoration efforts aimed at helping remove the creek from the Impaired Waters List have already begun. The Watershed Center’s large-scale Kids Creek Restoration Project kicked off in 2013 and is focusing on reducing stormwater inputs to Kids Creek as well as improving in-stream habitat for macroinvertebrates and fish communities.