



2021

Impact Report



Grand Traverse Bay and its watershed support globally unique freshwater ecosystems, residential drinking water, and the outdoor landscape loved by all. For nearly three decades, The Watershed Center has been the leader in protecting, restoring, and advocating on behalf of these beloved waters.

We are scientists, policy experts, and freshwater stewards dedicated to the enduring health of Grand Traverse Bay and its connected waterways. Our passion for this watershed is a way of life and our commitment to protect and preserve it is unparalleled in this region.

“When I found out about The Watershed Center I knew this was something I wanted to be a part of - for my own education and benefit, but also to help bring more awareness about protecting the environment and preserving this amazing resource.”
- Christopher



Photo by Joel Wegman



Photo by Gary Hott



Photo by Shane Wyatt



The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay advocates for clean water in Grand Traverse Bay and acts to protect and preserve its watershed.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeanine Easterday | Chair
Kelli Mengebier | Vice Chair
Christopher Carol | Secretary/Treasurer
Lauren Jeffries
Richard Kane
Christine Petersen
Royce Ragland
Rod Rebant
Robert Reider
Brittany VanderBeek
Nicole VanNess

STAFF

Christine Crissman | Executive Director
Sarah U'Ren | Program Director
Heather Smith | Grand Traverse **BAYKEEPER®**

CONNECT WITH US



www.gtbbay.org



info@gtbbay.org



[@watershedcenter](https://www.facebook.com/watershedcenter)



[@gtbbaywatershed](https://www.instagram.com/gtbbaywatershed)

the Watershed Center is a proud member of the Waterkeeper Alliance.

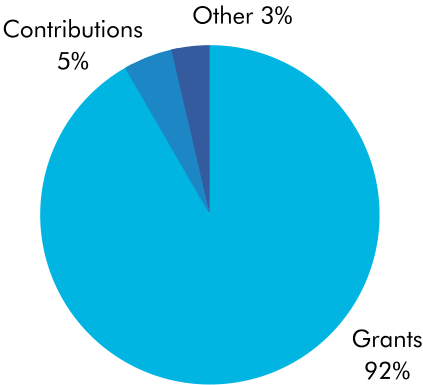


THANK YOU

As a local nonprofit, we rely on grants to fund our on-the-ground work and donations to sustain all other services and programs. Giving to The Watershed Center protects the water you love in the Grand Traverse region.

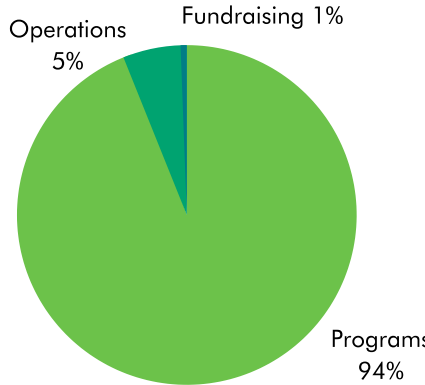
In 2021, your generosity enabled us to enhance our Watershed Warrior program, organize dozens of beach clean ups, participate on the Leadership Team for the Lower Boardman River Unified Plan, complete several restoration and green infrastructure projects, successfully advocate for wetland and water's edge setbacks in local townships, and so much more.

In addition to your financial contributions, dozens of businesses and individuals donated in-kind products, services, or knowledge.



SUPPORT
\$2,108,622

Grants (public & private)
\$1,932,764
Contributions
\$98,831
Other (includes interest)
\$77,027



EXPENSES
\$2,035,410

Program Services
\$1,911,547
Operations
\$111,909
Fundraising
\$11,954

Mitchell Creek

We collected 150 water samples at 9 sites on Mitchell Creek during wet and dry weather to determine the source of elevated *E. coli* levels in the creek. Source tracking analyses were conducted on 27 samples to



determine the source of bacteria - human, pigs, geese, gulls, dogs, and cows - as well as hotspots where the contamination might be coming from. We also installed 5 groundwater wells to determine the directional flow of groundwater and the potential impacts of septic systems.

Photo by Nate Richardson

Setbacks & Buffers

We provided resources, policy expertise, and scientific research to assist 4 local municipalities interested in establishing wetland and/or water's edge setbacks and riparian buffer zoning policies. Setbacks prevent structures

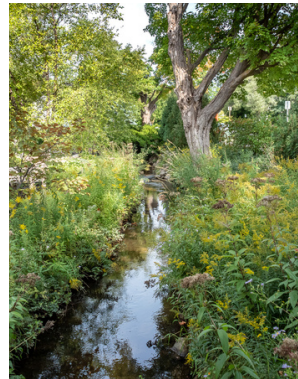


Photo by Rick Kane

from being built too close to a wetland or the water's edge where they are vulnerable to erosion and fluctuating water levels. Riparian buffers preserve native vegetation that improves fish and wildlife habitat, stabilizes shorelines, filters runoff, cools nearshore waters, and alleviates flooding.

Adopt-A-Stream

We added new volunteer teams, expanded the geographic scope of streams monitored, engaged new sponsors and partner organizations, and initiated more rigorous monitoring protocols. We also continued to monitor locations for invasive New Zealand mud snails to track their spread.

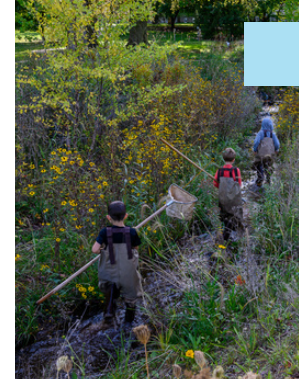


Photo by Rick Kane

Leadership

We understand how to protect our waters and proudly lead planning and advocacy efforts through research, monitoring, education, and collaborating with others along the way. We participated in or led 8 collaborative endeavors that furthered the protection of clean water in our region.



Kids Creek Restoration Project

We administered over \$2.1 million in grant funding to help the City of Traverse City replace 5 culverts along the main branch of Kids Creek. These projects helped restore natural stream function and improved fish passage and habitat for aquatic insects. Appropriately sized box culverts were

installed on Cedar and 6th streets while the remaining two locations on city parkland received clear span pedestrian bridges. Investments in habitat restoration projects like these on Kids Creek benefit our local economy, strengthen healthy ecosystems, and support a resilient community.





83

Adopt-A-Stream
volunteers monitored 27
stream sites



100+

citizen concerns
researched and
addressed



250

water samples collected
from Mitchell Creek for
source tracking



33

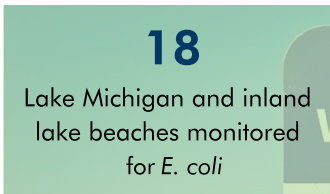
Watershed Warrior
advocates stood up for
clean water



18

Lake Michigan and inland
lake beaches monitored
for *E. coli*

**Monitoring
Water Quality
at Public Beaches**



1,800

pounds of trash collected
by 150 volunteers during
beach clean ups

