



# State of the Bay 2016 Annual Report



**This beauty doesn't just happen.  
It takes people who care and work to protect it.  
It takes each of us.**



## THE WATERSHED CENTER

Grand Traverse Bay advocates for clean water in Grand Traverse Bay and acts to protect and preserve the Bay's watershed.

Christine Crissman: Executive Director

Sarah U'Ren: Program Director

Heather Smith: GRAND TRAVERSE **BAYKEEPER**®

Shelli DiFranco: Dir. of Community Engagement

TJ Andrews: Legal Counsel

For correspondence and address updates:

13272 S. West Bay Shore Drive

Traverse City, MI 49684

231.935.1514 • [www.gtbbay.org](http://www.gtbbay.org)

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## A Letter from Our Executive Director

I've been thinking a lot lately about the big picture. The big picture of The Watershed Center, of the work we do locally, and of our region and nation. My daily drive into the office clocks in at about 45 minutes. This trip affords me the chance to reflect on the past and think about the future.

As I think back on 2016 and look ahead at the rest of 2017, I see these years as a time where we're taking stock, enhancing our core foundation, and strategizing about what's next. In any organization, whether it's a for-profit business or a non-profit such as ours, there are cycles. Busy times of doing what needs to be done and times where you pause, take stock, and plan. At The Watershed Center, we're in the latter. I'm excited about what we'll be able to share in the coming months about what's next for us, including a strategic plan that will take us into the next decade.

In the morning as I head into work, I have the privilege of traveling throughout our watershed. My family and I live in the Chain of Lakes area and I see Elk Lake each morning, rumble over dozens of creeks and streams as I boomerang around East and West Grand Traverse Bay. I cross over the Boardman River as it empties into our bay and I can see the water out my office window. Throughout this trip, I am surrounded by the watershed that my team and I, as well as supporters like you, work to protect.

These creeks, streams, rivers, lakes, and bays are much more than geographical features in our landscape. They are the reason many of us call this area our home or our getaway. These waters are where we take our families to the beach, where we teach our grandkids how



to bait a hook, where we photograph nature and wildlife, where we catch crayfish, and where we watch the sun rise and set.

But this water cannot speak for itself. It cannot tell stormwater runoff to clean itself up before it joins the bay. It cannot have a talk with an elected official to share all the wonderful economic benefits a healthy watershed gives to its residents. It cannot monitor its own beaches for bacteria that may sicken us.

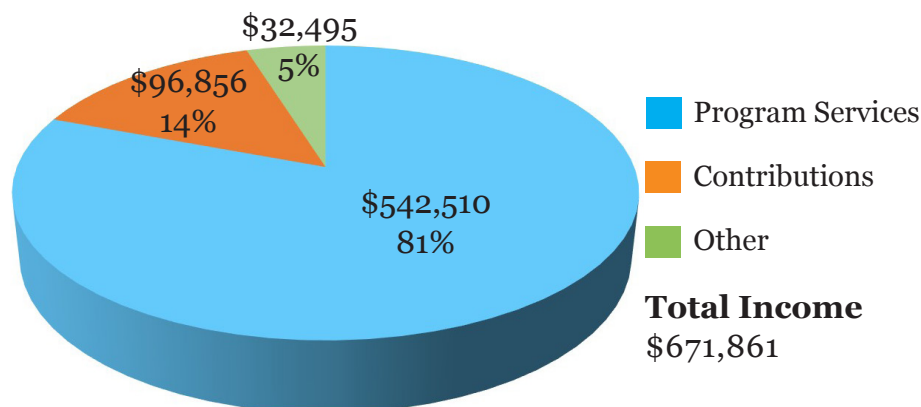
This beauty doesn't just happen. It takes people who care and work to protect it. It takes each of us. The work The Watershed Center aims to do is to continue advocating for clean water, protecting and preserving Grand Traverse Bay's watershed so that we can continue to fish, swim, and drink its water. Not just for us, but for generations to come.

I hope you will continue joining us in this fight to protect our watershed, whether it's by donating your time, your talents, or your dollars.

In solidarity with our water,

# FINANCIAL & DONOR HIGHLIGHTS

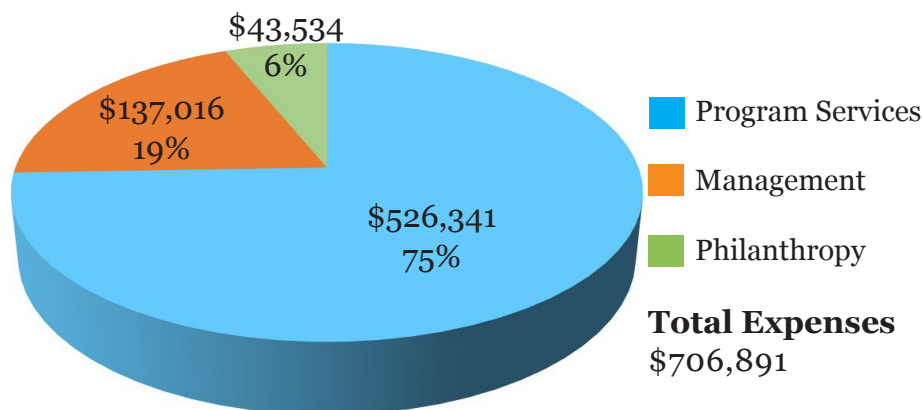
## INCOME



We utilized **\$542,510** of grants awarded for **13** projects that monitor & restore our **1,000mi<sup>2</sup>** watershed.

**80%** of those funds went directly back to **the community**.

## EXPENSES



You helped us raise **\$96,856** of general funds to support our **advocacy**, education, and outreach efforts.

## JOIN US AT THE PEOPLE'S CLIMATE MARCH

Saturday, April 29  
12 p.m.  
Meet at Clinch Park with a  
March and Celebration to Follow  
[www.peoplesclimate.org](http://www.peoplesclimate.org)

*The Watershed Center is proud to serve as a partner for the People's Climate March in Traverse City.*



# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: REDUCING STORMWATER RUNOFF

As part of The Watershed Center's Kids Creek Restoration Project, Munson Medical Center installed a green roof on NW Tower A in 2016.

This 3,100 square-foot green roof can absorb 3,382 gallons of rainwater. That's enough to fill a dump truck 1.6 times!

## WORK CONTINUES ALONG THE BOARDMAN RIVER

Throughout 2016, projects along the Boardman River continued as the Grand Traverse Conservation District, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Ecosystem Planning and Restoration, the City of Traverse City, and The Watershed Center worked on reconnecting the river to its floodplain after the Brown Bridge Dam was removed.

The removal left banks along the river high and inaccessible as a floodplain, which provides critical

functions for the river. Permanent seeding at the site was completed in October 2016 and live staking and tree plantings are scheduled for this spring.



Photo courtesy of the Grand Traverse Conservation District

# UPCOMING WAYS TO SUPPORT TWC

There are many ways in which you can support The Watershed Center. We are always looking for people who want to make a difference by giving their time or talents. Below are a few of our upcoming volunteer opportunities. *For more information or to discuss how you can be involved, contact Grand Traverse Baykeeper® Heather Smith at [hsmith@gtbay.org](mailto:hsmith@gtbay.org). Additional information can be found at [gtbay.org/ways-to-give/volunteer-opportunities/](http://gtbay.org/ways-to-give/volunteer-opportunities/).*

- Adopt-A-Stream
- Paint The Watershed Center
- Adopt-A-Beach
- General office tasks, including Kids Creek survey
- Swim for Grand Traverse Bay
- Avian botulism
- Help with our tug boat, *The Bay Monitor*



## Support The Watershed Center:

volunteer • sponsor • monthly gift • planned gift • matching gift

Visit [gtbay.org](http://gtbay.org) to view our full donor list and learn more.

It doesn't take a lot to make a big impact.



# GRAND TRAVERSE BAYKEEPER®

Our focus is finding sustainable solutions to protect the environmental health of the Grand Traverse region's most precious water resources.

Water quality issues we addressed in 2016 include:



*This precious resource demands protection.*

# BEACH MONITORING

During the summer, The Watershed Center conducts *E. coli* testing at Grand Traverse area beaches in partnership with the Grand Traverse County Health Department, Benzie-Leelanau District Health Department, City of Traverse City, Acme Township, and Leelanau Township.



In 2016, 26 beaches along Lake Michigan and inland lakes were monitored weekly from June 22 - August 31, which resulted in eight beach advisories.

## ADOPT-A-STREAM

55 volunteers on  
15 teams monitored  
stream health at  
25 sites on  
13 streams in our  
watershed.



## CONNECT WITH US

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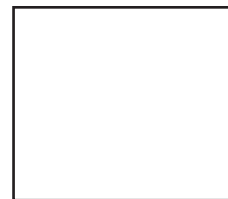


[facebook.com/WatershedCenter](https://facebook.com/WatershedCenter)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS



### SWIM FOR GRAND TRAVERSE BAY

Celebrate clean, healthy water in Grand Traverse Bay with a 2-mile point-to-point open water swim Saturday, August 12, 2017. Greilickville Harbor Park to Volleyball Beach.

Registration opens May 1 at [www.swimforgrtbay.com](http://www.swimforgrtbay.com)  
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