

BOARDMAN/OTTAWAY RIVER NETWORK

November 9, 2023 | 9-10:40am

GT Regional Land Conservancy Conservation Center's Edson Room

MEETING NOTES

I. Welcome and Introductions

See participant list below.

II. Recreation Plan Action Team Updates

- a. Legal framework for the river
 - i. Want to allow space for the river at the table, offering her the same rights and protections.
 - ii. Recognize this framework will inform policies and implementation.
 - iii. Focus on creating a mission statement.
 - iv. **Action item:** interest from group to be sent an article that discusses rivers having rights.
 1. [Global Patterns and Trends in Rights of Nature Legal Provisions: Insights from the Eco Jurisprudence Monitor](#)
- b. Robust and comprehensive education program
 - i. First action is compiling an education program spreadsheet; next step to perform a gaps analysis.
 - ii. **Action item:** group discussed the importance of communication to this effort; we will explore the potential of forming a communications action team.
- c. Healthy thriving river
 - i. Began by grounding in the river's values and identifying threats.
 - ii. Working on identifying indicators and metrics to measure the ecological health of the river while recognizing other aspects that inform the river's overall health (recreation, culture, economy, etc.).

III. Open Forum/Announcements

- a. Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
 - i. Appreciation for public vote in support of the potential land acquisition adjacent to the Brown Bridge Quiet Area.
 - ii. Application to Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund will be reviewed at their December meeting.
- b. Garfield Township
 - i. Recent clear-cutting along Kids Creek from some businesses along US-31; township worked with GTCD and TWC to remedy the cutting, as well as reminded surrounding business owners about the buffer requirement and its benefits.

- ii. Township is working on a Master Plan update, with the intent for a draft to be in front of the Planning Commission in December.
- c. Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians
 - i. Elders on the Tribal Cultural and Support Team are advising the Natural Resources department; they intend to host a summit in January with educational sessions in the morning and afternoon breakout sessions (talking circles).
- d. Conservation Resource Alliance
 - i. Completed Broomhead Road crossing on the North Branch of the Boardman/Ottaway River.
 - ii. Finalizing agreements with both Apple Creek dam landowners; working on design for removal this winter and pre-dam removal fish study.
 - iii. AuSable Institute will provide their report on macroinvertebrate studies conducted on the Boardman/Ottaway River between Grasshopper Creek and the former Sabin Dam impoundment.
- e. East Bay Township
 - i. In the process of rewriting their Zoning Ordinance; held riparian zone workshop, formed working groups with action plans/priorities, added a wetland setback, active planting requirements, floodplain protections, increased tree protections, grading requirements, and much more.
- f. Grand Traverse Conservation District
 - i. Starting to “amp up” program offerings, quality of programs, and partnerships; open to anyone interested in working with GTCD to put on a program.
 - ii. Open invitation to come see what GTCD does.
 - iii. Recently hosted Conservation Stewards program.
- g. Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation
 - i. Host a monthly speaker series, consider conversation about rights of the river.
 - ii. In October 2024, the Council of Michigan Foundations is coming to Traverse City.
 - iii. Community Development Coalition is opening its membership and updating their scorecard objectives.
- h. Marc McKellar (related to Grand Traverse County Road Commission)
 - i. Hartman/Hammond Bridge is slowly moving through the process, but it still impacts Jack’s Creek.
- i. The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay
 - i. Moving one of the Mayfly Stations on Kids Creek to continue to monitor stage, temperature, and conductivity.
 - ii. New Zealand Mud Snails were found in Kids Creek (also outside of the Boardman/Ottaway watershed in Rapid River and new sites on Mitchell Creek); working to put signs up.

- iii. Finishing stormwater wetland near Traverse City Meijer; installed over 800 native trees and shrubs as a woody riparian buffer along Kids Creek between Silver Lake Road and Meijer (City of Traverse City property).
- j. Inland Seas Education Association
 - i. Expanded program offerings to include suite of land-based [Watershed Exploration](#) programs; take place in and around ISEA's campus in Suttons Bay, but open to traveling to regional locations
 - ii. Please share with students, adults, or youth organizations (scouts, robotics clubs, youth groups, etc.)
- k. Department of Natural Resources – Fish Division
 - i. Continue to conduct at least 3 fish surveys in the river each year (plan for foreseeable future).
 - 1. Status & trends site at Ranch Rudolph (3-year cycles, 2023, 2024, 2025); years when don't sample here, choose another site that needs attention, is raising concerns, or hasn't been sampled in several years.
 - 2. Brown Bridge Road crossing site (every year).
 - 3. Former Sabin Dam site (every year).
 - ii. Consistent results at all surveys, nothing too alarming.
 - 1. Saw lower numbers of fish overall (especially at Brown Bridge) most likely due to dry summer and lower than normal inland water levels.
 - 2. Documented more brook trout at former Sabin Dam than have before; each year are finding more.
- l. Traverse City Downtown Development Authority
 - i. Partnered with GTB on a NOAA Coastal Resilience grant application to support Great Lakes fisheries in Leelanau Peninsula and along the lower Boardman/Ottaway River; lower river aspects include design and engineering of underwater fisheries habitat, stormwater management, green stormwater infrastructure, and nature-based solutions tied to place-based infrastructure identified in the DDA's [Conceptual Plan](#).

IV. Next Steps

- a. Meeting notes will be sent to all stakeholders.
- b. Next meeting in spring 2024 to celebrate action team successes.
- c. If there is anything you want to share with this network, please email Christine at ccrissman@gtbay.org.

V. Parking Lot (items discussed but not addressed at this time)

- a. Flagging system for river safety (similar to beach warning system)
- b. Impact of development (interest in moving this forward as an action team)

Participants

Brown Bridge Advisory Committee (BBAC)	Jim Kure
Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA)	Nate Winkler
Department of Natural Resources (DNR)	Patrick Ertel
East Bay Township (EBT)	Claire Karner
Friends of Rennie Lake (FRL)	Pat Bednarz, Jan Gotlin
Garfield Township (GT)	Steve Hannon
GT Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians (GTB)	Eva Petoskey, Naomi Louchouran, Brett Fessell
Grand Traverse Conservation District (GTCD)	Steve Largent, Rachel Straughen, Reb Ratliff
Grand Traverse Regional Comm. Fdn (GTRCF)	Dave Mengebier
Grand Traverse Regional Land Conserv. (GTRLC)	Chris Garrock, Jennifer Jay
Inland Seas Education Association (ISEA)	Juliana Lisuk
Kalkaska Conservation District (KCD)	Renee Penny
Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition (MHRLC)	Bob Stuber
Rotary Charities (RC)	Frey Bradford
Traverse Area Rec. & Transportation Trails (TART)	Chris Kushman
The Watershed Center GT Bay (TWC)	Christine Crissman, Rick Kane
Engaged community members	Drea Weiner, Marc McKellar