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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE WATERSHED CENTER VOLUNTEERS TO MONITOR AREA STREAMS

Traverse City, MI, May 29, 2024 – [The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay](#) will deploy dozens of volunteers to wadable stream sites across the Grand Traverse Bay watershed to monitor water quality the first two weeks of June. Through a partnership with the [Michigan Clean Water Corps](#) and generous funding and support provided by local and regional program sponsors and donors, The Watershed Center’s Adopt-A-Stream program has collected high-quality stream data for over two decades.

Twice a year, trained volunteers monitor stream habitat and aquatic macroinvertebrate diversity and abundance at over 20 stream sites spanning Leelanau, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Antrim counties. Aquatic macroinvertebrates are organisms that live all or part of their life cycle in water (aquatic), are large enough to be seen with the naked eye (macro), and lack a backbone (invertebrate). Macroinvertebrates are used as biological indicators of stream health as they are relatively easy to monitor, have short life cycles and therefore reflect recent changes in stream health, and have known tolerances to pollutants.

Stream monitoring sites include tributaries of several major river systems including the Boardman/Ottaway River, Mitchell Creek, Rapid River, Acme Creek, and Yuba Creek, as well as several smaller tributaries that empty into Grand Traverse Bay. “Many of these streams have little or no preexisting water quality data so enabling volunteers to fill this data gap through the Adopt-A-Stream program has been essential in helping us further understand local stream systems and monitor them for emerging threats,” says Grand Traverse Bay **WATERKEEPER**[®] Heather Smith.

Data collected by Adopt-A-Stream volunteers is used in management and restoration decisions by local and state resource professionals. Data is used to flag issues, evaluate stream segments to prioritize for restoration, assess restoration efforts, establish water quality baselines, monitor for invasive species, and support advocacy messaging. In 2023, Adopt-A-Stream volunteers helped identify new populations of the invasive New Zealand Mud Snail, a species of freshwater snail that is known to have detrimental effects aquatic ecosystems. Volunteer teams are now helping



water resource managers better understand the impact these snails have on native aquatic invertebrate communities.

Additionally, Adopt-A-Stream helps cultivate a sense of freshwater stewardship and better understanding of water quality issues for individuals involved in the program. Adopt-A-Stream provides an opportunity for community members to get involved and feel invested in the health and protection of the natural world.

Adopt-A-Stream would not be possible without the generous support of program sponsors and donors. “We are grateful for the businesses and individuals who know the value of the Adopt-A-Stream program and give generously to fuel ongoing stream monitoring efforts,” says Director of Philanthropy Michelle Handke. “Their support has helped us identify and address threats to our waterways, such as pollution and invasive species, year after year.” Adopt-A-Stream supporters and sponsors in 2023 included Consumers Energy Foundation, Cambium Analytica, ECT, Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, Munson Health Care, SME, SOS Analytical, Tom’s Food Markets, Hazelnut Kids, The Northern Angler, Rotary Camps & Services, Elk-Skegemog Lakes Association, and the Donaldson family.

For more information about this program, visit gtbay.org/adopt-a-stream.

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About The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay

The Watershed Center is a Michigan-based non-profit organization that advocates for clean water in Grand Traverse Bay and acts to protect and preserve its watershed. The Watershed Center blends scientific and policy expertise with education, advocacy, collaboration, and solution-oriented actions to serve as a multi-faceted resource for the community. The Watershed Center engages people in ways that increase knowledge, enjoyment, pride, and informed decision-making around water. For additional information, please visit <https://www.gtbay.org>.