



Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network
The Conservation Fund
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www.saginawbaywin.org

News Release

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Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network Awards \$85,000 in Grants

Access sites on area rivers for kayaking, canoeing and fishing were among the quality of life improvements in this round

Five new projects received more than \$85,000 in funding awards this week from the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN). WIN is a collaborative, community driven quality of life initiative created by a variety of environmental, business and community interests in 1996. WIN was formed to create a more sustainable future for all who live, work and play within the 22-county Saginaw Bay watershed. One of the ways in which WIN accomplishes this objective is by providing financial support to projects that link the economic, environmental and social needs of the region. Key WIN funding partners include: Bay Area Community Foundation, Consumers Energy Foundation, Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation, Midland Area Community Foundation, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, Saginaw Community Foundation, The Dow Chemical Company Foundation, The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, S.C. Johnson Fund, the Cook Family Foundation, the C.S. Mott Foundation and the Saginaw Bay Foundation.

Projects in Arenac, Isabella, Gladwin, Shiawassee, and Saginaw counties will use WIN support to improve access sites and build recreational facilities along key Saginaw Bay tributaries. “We did have a large number of proposals in this round focused on access to our water resources” said Mike Kelly of The Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund administers the WIN program. “It’s encouraging, people and communities understand that to better protect and learn about many of our natural resources and areas, access is important. Many of these sites will become key community attributes and positively impact the quality of life in those areas – providing opportunities for economic impact and recreation” continued Kelly.

Since its inception, WIN has awarded in excess of \$6 million to more than 300 projects across the region.

A full list of the funded projects is attached and can also be found at www.saginawbaywin.org.

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Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network
December 2018 Project List

- 1. Project: Au Gres Harbor ADA Kayak Launch** - Proposed by the City of Au Gres, the Harbor ADA Kayak Launch is part of an ongoing series of improvements at the Au Gres Harbor of Refuge site which also includes a farmer's market pavilion, splash pad, fishing access and more. This site provides access to over 50 miles of Lake Huron frontage, as well as 150 miles of river. The proposed ADA Kayak launch located on the Au Gres River in the City of Au Gres is centrally located for easy access to the Saginaw Bay and Lake Huron connecting to the Blue Water Trail project. This water route was created in 2013 and is underutilized due to the lack of publicity in this area and the lack of a safe secure launch to support paddlers of any kind. Access to these bodies of water will give participants the experience to view the many waterfowl and wildlife along the northern coastline of Saginaw Bay and the Au Gres River system. The ADA Kayak launch is planned as the first phase of developing the area into a kayak destination. The City of Au Gres has three other parcels of riverfront property available for future development in creating a quick in/out and rest stop for kayakers and canoeists. These sites are also included in the community master plan. Securing an ADA Kayak Launch is crucial to the overall project because silent water activities are the largest sector in the tourism industry for Arenac County

Local Champion: City of Au Gres
Contact: Dale Wiltse, City Manager 989-876-8811
WIN Award: \$30,000

- 2. Project: Chippewa River Canoe/Kayak Access Site:** Proposed by the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy, this site will be located in a 24-mile gap along the Chippewa River that currently has no access. The Chippewa River Canoe/Kayak Access Site will open up an underutilized section of the Chippewa River for activities such as kayaking, canoeing, fishing and wildlife viewing. Located 10 minutes east of Mt. Pleasant, MI and 20 minutes west of Midland, MI, Chippewa Watershed Conservancy's (CWC) 3.4 acre Stephen and Agnes Szok Riverbend Preserve protects a high bluff of mature forest land and 1,000 feet of important riparian corridor. The moderate pace of the current on this section of river offers excellent paddling opportunities, but the lack of adequate public access has resulted in minimal use of the this outstanding resource. Boulders and large woody debris offer outstanding habitat for smallmouth bass, bald eagles, river otters and great blue herons. The steep embankment at the site requires infrastructure for appropriate utilization, and the site will also include stairs, a launch platform and informational kiosk.

Local Champion: Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
Contact: Jon Breithaupt, Executive Director 989-772-5777
WIN Award: \$20,000

3. **Project: City of Gladwin Cedar River Access Site Improvements** - Proposed by the City of Gladwin, this proposal contemplates improvements at a city park area that is experiencing increased use as a put-in / take-out site along the Cedar River. The project would be located in the City Park, adjacent to downtown and will include the development of an access platform similar to projects funded by WIN along the Cass and Shiawassee Rivers. Because of increased use and requests for use, the City of Gladwin Parks Dept began a float tube rental program and in the last two year rented nearly 200 tube/trips down the river. The park is the main site for that activity and also hosts hundred of canoe/kayak trips annually. However, the site is not properly designed for this increased use, so the City is raising funds for these improvements

Local Champion: City of Gladwin
Contact: Brian Jungman, Parks Director 989-426-9231
WIN Award: \$5,000

4. **Project: Shiawassee River Access at Fish lake Road** - This project seeks funding to improve a site along the upper Shiawassee River by installing an access point, signage, and traffic safety improvements. Proposed by Headwaters Trails, the site is a key point in the upper stretch of river that is part of the proposed state/national water trail from Holly to Chesaning along the Shiawassee. The WIN funds are proposed to match a pending grant from the MDNR Recreation Passport program. The site was purchased by Headwaters Trail with local fundraising and this funding will support the access improvements. The site has also been identified as a key recreational amenity in the Holly Township Master Recreation Plan linking the river access with walking trails and connection to the Village of Holly and Seven Lakes State Park.

Local Champion: Headwaters Trail
Contact: Sue Julian, 248-795-2808
WIN Request: \$10,000

5. **Project: Wickes Park EZ Launch** - The City of Saginaw, in collaboration with Saginaw County Parks and Recreation and the Cass River Greenway plan to revitalize the Wickes Park launch site, the 13th and final stop on the Cass River Water Trail. The addition of the Wickes Park site as the final stop on the Cass River Water Trail adds the final leg of the water trail from the Cass River launch on M-13 to Wickes Park, a paddle which includes traveling through the Shiawassee Wildlife Refuge corridor as well as the Shiawassee River convergence with the Tittabawasee River, at the southern end of the Saginaw River. This revitalization will include the installation of an EZ Launch all-access system (similar to all-access facilities supported in the past by WIN on the Tittabwassee and Cass), Cass River Water Trail map signage and an interpretive sign. The Cass River Greenway's addition of the Wickes Park launch site as the 13th and final access point on the Cass River Water Trail included the City of Saginaw in the already numerous municipal cooperative efforts involved in making the water trail possible. This regional synergy will provide environmental and recreational benefits for generations to come. Additionally, the location of the Wickes Park launch site provide future opportunities for the location to serve as the end point of the Tittabawasee River Trail and the starting point of the Saginaw

Local Champion: City of Saginaw / Saginaw County Parks
Contact: Brian Keenan-Lechel 989-790-5281
WIN Request: \$20,000