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Mid-Michigan Community Pathways Group Receives Important Grant to Construct Phase I of the Mid-Michigan Community Pathway

The Mid-Michigan Community Pathways Group has been awarded a \$35,000 grant from the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network to connect people with nature in Isabella County. The first phase of the 40+ mile long shared-use pathway includes a timber boardwalk with an educational outlook connecting users with a beautiful, natural wetland area abounding with native plants and animals. This portion of the project will provide educational opportunities to teach pathway users the importance of wetlands and which plants and animals live in them. Partnerships with the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, Central Michigan University, Mid-Michigan Community College, and local school systems will allow students to visit the site and learn about the wetland on a local level.

“Our WIN program is happy to invest in this fantastic project that is not only going to help support the construction of this important local pathway, but also tie into a much larger regional nonmotorized system, including the Pere Marquette system and the Great Lakes Bay Regional Trail”, said Michael Kelly, Great Lakes Director of The Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund administers the Saginaw Bay WIN program. “WIN has long supported projects like this that we feel are important to our regional and statewide economy – local assets such as this continue to make our region unique, and add to our quality of life”, added Kelly. More information on WIN can be found at www.saginawbaywin.org or by calling 989-892-9171.

On a regional level, the project has gained 30+ supporters of the pathway system, including all of the communities located along the US-127 corridor between Clare and Ithaca. This important project will connect the Pere Marquette and Fred Meijer Pathways in Clare and Alma, then eventually connect to the Clinton-Ionia-Shiawassee Pathway in St. John’s.

Steve Davidson, Chairman of the MMCP adds, “This pathway system will allow residents and visitors to travel between the communities located along the proposed route in a safe, healthy manner. Once completed, the regional pathway will connect three east-west pathways transecting the state. The path system will also attract many visitors which will strengthen the local economies.” Fundraising continues for the remainder of the pathway.

The Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (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 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.

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