

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## **FISH, TOURISM, EDUCATION AND TRAIL SYSTEMS RECEIVE MAJOR INVESTMENTS FROM SAGINAW BAY WIN PROGRAM**

*Programs across the region benefit from \$110,000 in support. Nearly \$230,000 invested in projects during 2008*

Major investments in a regional non-motorized trail acquisition, an effort aimed at returning walleye to native spawning grounds, and a unique program to support tourism in coastal communities are among projects that were recently supported by the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network ("WIN"). WIN is a volunteer organization that focuses on opportunities to better link the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of Saginaw Bay communities in order to sustain and improve the region's quality of life. The organization makes grant funds available twice each year, in the spring and fall. These recent projects join investments made earlier this year in construction projects at Midland's Chippewa Nature Center and the proposed Saginaw Bay Environmental Education Center in Essexville. A complete list of grants is included.

"We continue to be focused on projects that promote the concept of sustainability – the relationship of the economy, the environment, and our communities", said Michael Kelly of The Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund administers WIN. "We're excited by the forward-thinking projects that were proposed in this round, including an effort to return walleye and other native species to their historical spawning grounds beyond the Chesaning Dam. The completion of that project will open up nearly 40 miles of river that has been inaccessible to fish for nearly 150 years. That project is an important success story for the natural resources of the Saginaw Bay Watershed, and joins previous investments that we have made at Frankenmuth and Mt. Pleasant". In addition, WIN provided an investment aimed at acquiring more than 6 miles of abandoned railway property that runs between Bay City and Saginaw. "WIN funded an important study four years ago that identified this corridor as a high priority linkage between Bay City and Saginaw. Further, this linkage provides a critical piece of the eventual trail system that is proposed to connect Bay City, Saginaw, and Midland" said Kelly. "We like to think about these as being more than 'grants', we like to think about them as smart investments in the future of our region. These projects will pay dividends well into the future and will serve as regional and national models that will be duplicated elsewhere", continued Kelly.



Other projects receiving funding in 2008 include an effort to market the region's coastal communities as tourism destinations, an investment in a major renovation at Midland's Chippewa Nature Center that will showcase energy efficient building techniques, and funding to support the proposed Saginaw Bay Environmental Education Center that will serve as the future home of the Appledore Schooners.

Ten area foundations and corporations work together as a network to support WIN projects. This Funders Network includes: 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, and the Cook Family Foundation. These foundations and corporations contribute \$300,000 per year to support WIN investments.

To date, WIN and its partners have provided more than \$4 million to support projects that help to identify the Saginaw Bay Watershed as a sustainable community. Funding is provided for projects that create opportunities to connect people, resources, organizations and programs. Priority is given to projects that are innovative, cross governmental boundaries, and attempt to balance the environment, economy, and the community. WIN grants have been matched by more than \$6 million in other funding.

More information about WIN is available on its website at [www.saginawbaywin.org](http://www.saginawbaywin.org).

1. Project: Bay-Zilwaukee Trail - This project, sponsored by the Saginaw Basin land Conservancy - contemplates the acquisition of more than 6 miles of abandoned railway for the purposes of providing a connection between current and proposed nonmotorized/railtrail systems in Bay City and Saginaw. This WIN investment would be used to as match to leverage approximately \$200,000 that will be made available (on a competitive basis) by the Michigan Department of Transportation. This route has been identified as a critical link in the WIN funded Vision of Green report.

Local Champion: Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy  
Contact: Valerie Roof, 989-891-9986  
Tax Status: nonprofit 501c3  
Partners: Michigan Department of Transportation, BACF Railtrail Cmte, City of Bay City  
WIN Grant Approval: \$50,000  
Leverage: \$200,000

2. Project: Shiawassee River Restoration and Chesaning Dam Removal Project: The Chesaning Dam has been identified in the 2003 WIN Fisheries Scoping Study and the subsequent WIN 2005 Low Head Barrier Analysis as a critical impoundment inhibiting fish passage in the Saginaw River system. Like the Frankenmuth Dam (a past WIN investment), the Chesaning project will open river and make native spawning areas available to fish that has been compromised since the late 1800s. Fish passage at Chesaning will open 37 miles of stream habitat - with native walleye and sturgeon being the target fish for restoration at this location. Chesaning recently received a \$900,000 grant from the State of Michigan to assist this \$1.4 million project. It is expected that the remaining funds will be raised this winter and next spring, with an anticipated construction project beginning in Summer 2009.

Local Champion: Village of Chesaning  
Tax Status: Government  
Partners: Clean Michigan Initiative, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Lakes Fisheries Trust, Corps of Engineers  
Contact: Michael Maier, 989-845-3800  
WIN Grant Approval: \$50,000  
Leverage: \$1.35 million

3. Project: MI Great Bay Regional Tourism Marketing & Development Phase 1 - This project requests WIN funding to jump start the development and implementation of a regional tourism initiative for the Saginaw Bay Coastal communities. Based around a joint website (migreatbay.com) Saginaw Bay coastal communities will implement a comprehensive web-based tourism program - in coordination and supported by the State of Michigan's *Pure Michigan* program. The Bay City Convention and Visitors Bureau is providing oversight for the project and has agreed to be the long-term project manager of this effort. Early in 2007, the migreatbay group incorporated and now serves as one of the state's 5 "regional" tourism authorities and now qualifies for state funding dedicated to regional programs.

Local Champion: Bay City CVB  
Tax Status: Tourism Agency  
Partners: Bay City CVB, Lt. Governors Office, State of Michigan  
Tourism Department  
Contact: Shirley Roberts, 989-893-1222  
WIN Grant Approval: \$10,000 with required additional match of \$10,000  
Leverage: \$6,100

4. Project: Dr. Eugene Kenaga Observation Tower. In late 2008, the Chippewa Nature Center in Midland will break ground on a major renovation and expansion of its facility. Major pieces of the expansion include new exhibit space, parking areas, classrooms, and office space. As part of this renovation the facility will be one of the first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified facilities in the region. A major component of the project is a stormwater management system that incorporated a cistern and collection system to slow - and cool - water runoff from the facility before it is drained off to the Chippewa River. The cistern system will be incorporated in the Dr. Eugene Kenaga Observation Tower, which will also be used as an educational exhibit for both observing nature, and rainwater collection.

Local Champion: Chippewa Nature Center  
Tax Status: 501c3  
Partners: Local and regional foundations, corporations  
Contact: Dick Touvell, Executive Director 989-631-0830  
WIN Recommendation: \$50,000  
Match: \$30,000

5. Project: Saginaw Bay Environmental Education Center - This project, sponsored by BaySail -intends to fund the development of a zero-stormwater runoff facility as a permanent home for the Appledore Schooners. The main features of the project are a 2500 sq ft intensive green roof, a porous concrete and previous grass school bus parking area, a rain barrel and cistern runoff catchment and irrigation system, and native species landscaping.

Local Champion: BaySail  
Tax Status: 501c3  
Partners: MDEQ, Consumers Energy, Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy will be leasing office space at the facility to assist in income generation for BaySail.  
Contact: Roger Nugent, 989-895-5193  
WIN Recommendation: \$67,550  
Match: \$25,000