

A YEAR OF

# *Wins*

2001 ANNUAL REPORT



## What Is the Saginaw Bay Watershed?

A watershed consists of all of the land area that drains to a single body of water. With nearly 8,700 square miles, the Saginaw Bay Watershed includes all or part of 22 counties. As Michigan's largest watershed, the region contains rich resources in agriculture, forestry, industry, and recreation. The watershed provides habitat for many species of wildlife and serves as a vital migration resting area for waterfowl and other birds.



**Economy. Community. Environment.** Three words that when used separately, mean very different things. However, taken together, they encompass a concept known as “*sustainability*.” Sustainability is a new way of thinking about the world around us. By making decisions that consider economic development, community revitalization, and natural resource protection, we not only create a restored and protected Saginaw Bay, but also vibrant and economically strong communities. It is this concept that serves as the guiding philosophy of the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN). Since 1996, WIN has worked to integrate this idea into the decision-making process of individuals, regional nonprofits, governments, educational institutions and businesses. Whether it is the restoration of important habitat areas, the introduction of a new business strategy or product, a new educational initiative, or modified planning and zoning policies, the use of sustainability guidelines can help achieve success from a number of perspectives.

WIN develops projects, supports partner organizations, and educates the public in an effort to promote this concept. Since its formation, WIN and its supporting foundations and corporations have provided more than \$1 million for community projects that demonstrate sustainable ideas. In addition, more than \$1.5 million in grants from other organizations have matched this WIN funding.

The year 2001 was one of many accomplishments, achieved through the hard work of our task groups: agriculture/pollution prevention, wildlife stewardship, water resources, land use, and communications/marketing. From a groundbreaking, three-county effort to develop a greenways vision and implementation strategy for the region to a new program that encourages land developers to use environmentally friendly subdivision designs, local groups are recognizing that our regional landscape and our economic prosperity are linked. Other projects this year focused on youth, sustainable business strategies, education, habitat restoration, and other innovative approaches to infuse the concept of sustainability into the way our communities operate and work together.

This report highlights our achievements in 2001. This document is our way to honor these efforts, thank the participants and our financial sponsors, and inform the public. In 2002, we will continue our mission of being a catalyst for change, and a supporter of creative ideas that strengthen our communities, nurture our economy, and protect our environment.

## Our Vision

As stewards of the Saginaw Bay Watershed, we value our shared, unique resources, and together we will balance economic, environmental, and social priorities to enhance the quality of life for this and future generations.

## WIN's Guiding Principles

- Provide a pleasant and healthy environment
- Conserve historic, cultural, and natural resources
- Integrate economic prosperity, ecology, and aesthetics
- Use land and infrastructure effectively
- Continually evaluate and refine shared vision and goals



# WIN Projects Succeed in 2001

WIN had another active year in 2001. With the help of its volunteers and several organizations, numerous projects were launched and many more continued. The projects' scopes are diverse and widespread, but they unite in the common goal to create an awareness of sustainability via the integration of the watershed area's environment, community, and economy. The following are just a few of the projects to receive WIN support in 2001.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF CAVERLY

Greenways can connect public parks, natural areas, historic sites and open spaces.

## Fast Facts

- The Saginaw Bay Watershed is home to more than 90 fish species.
- More than 175 inland lakes are located within the watershed.
- The watershed contains approximately 7,000 miles of rivers and streams.
- Fifteen percent of Michigan's waterways drain in the Saginaw Bay Watershed.
- The watershed area is home to more than 1.4 million people.
- More than 130 endangered or threatened species live in the watershed.

## On the Right Path Saginaw Bay Greenways Collaborative

"Greenways are open-space connectors," says Barbara Nelson-Jameson from the National Park Service. "Greenways can be trails for recreation and non-motorized transportation; natural corridors for wildlife to link from one protected area to another; and green 'buffers' along river corridors to help protect water quality and prevent erosion and flooding."

In 1999, a core group of WIN members came together to discuss a watershed-wide greenways plan. These members formed the Saginaw Bay Greenways Collaborative. In May 2001, this nonprofit group presented their proposal to WIN and received \$130,428 in project support. Other organizations provided matching funds of \$137,030 for this worthwhile land-use effort.

Today, the group is creating a greenways plan for Bay, Midland, and Saginaw Counties that can eventually be expanded across the 22 counties in the Saginaw Bay Watershed.

Similar to efforts in other areas of Michigan and the nation, the formation of a greenways vision involves extensive public involvement. As a result, the group has developed a complete public education plan. As part of the greenways planning process, information will be gathered and analyzed regarding

existing and future non-motorized transportation facilities, as well as cultural, recreational, environmental, economic, developmental, and agricultural resources. Key properties and corridors – and alternative greenways network scenarios – will be identified as plans are established.

“It is difficult for a single municipality or county to look at the bigger picture for greenways,” says Nelson-Jameson. “But the Saginaw Bay Greenways Collaborative provides an excellent opportunity for three counties to work together to develop a truly regional greenways vision.”

**Local Champion:** East Central Michigan Planning and Development Region, in cooperation with the Saginaw Bay Greenways Collaborative

**Partners:** Little Forks Conservancy; Ducks Unlimited; Bay, Midland, and Saginaw County Planning and Parks; Bay and Midland Area Community Foundations; Michigan State University; National Park Service; and others

**WIN Grant Award:** \$130,428

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## Raising Prawn in Mid-Michigan Sustainable Aquaculture Initiative

The waste heat and water from Monitor Sugar Company’s sugar beet processing operations just might be the perfect home for prawn. And the Sustainable Aquaculture Initiative intends to find out for sure.

“This project is studying whether it would be feasible for a manufacturer in the Saginaw Bay Watershed to develop an additional, environmentally sustainable business,” says Mike Kelly, WIN project coordinator.

Researchers at Saginaw Valley State University (SVSU) are testing the theory that the excess hot water generated by



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MONITOR SUGAR

the sugar producer’s operations could be used to support alternative sustainable aquaculture – all adjacent to the existing manufacturing facility. In this case, the target is to raise freshwater prawns.

A multidisciplinary team from SVSU is studying the project’s feasibility. “If the project passes this test, funding will be requested from the National Science Foundation,” says Kelly. “That funding would help create test-scale operations on the SVSU campus and at Monitor Sugar’s Bay City processing facility.”

“This research is important for two major reasons,” says Dr. David Swenson, H.H. Dow Professor of Chemistry at SVSU. “It helps determine an economic basis for engaging in environmentally friendly business practices. That is, it is stimulating a natural drive to utilize waste as a resource that can generate a profit.”

**Local Champion:** Saginaw Valley State University

**Partners:** Monitor Sugar Company and Michigan State University

**WIN Grant Award:** \$28,713

Monitor Sugar Company’s Bay City processing facility could become a site for aquaculture operations.



## Starting Young

### WIN Youth Connections Action Grant Program

Planting the seeds of sustainable development in the youth who live in the Saginaw Bay Watershed will help to instill a lifelong commitment to the region's quality of life. In September 2001, WIN launched an annual grant program aimed at youth education projects that demonstrate the concepts of sustainable development, such as providing wood duck habitats or cleaning rivers.



PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB BISSONNETTE

Students from Bullock Creek Elementary placed wood duck nesting boxes in the Kawkawlin River Flooding area in Midland County.

project leaders to implement, yet address the aspects of community, economy, and environment. By limiting the grants to a modest sum, funds can be awarded in a short time. For example, we sent out applications in September and awards were announced in December.”

“Sometimes the application process leads to a bigger picture,” says Rech. “Our contact with the schools and communities may reveal ideas that would be better suited for a larger project.” The WIN team makes recommendations to expand the scope of

“If we educate the youth now, sustainability concepts will become second nature to the students as they mature,” explains Perry Rech, a WIN volunteer from Ducks Unlimited. “The program mirrors the goals of WIN on a smaller scale by focusing on projects that are easy and quick for the



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF CAVERLY

the projects and works with project leaders to consider applying for larger grants.

“The grant program not only benefits the watershed area, it is an ideal opportunity to introduce WIN to the local youth,” he says. “As we work to nurture

the concepts of sustainability, we promote WIN and help ensure that WIN – and all that it stands for – will be around for a long while.”

More than \$5,000 was awarded in 2001, with the following projects receiving grants from \$100 to \$1,000:

- Bay City Schools' regional environmental monitoring program
- Fifth-grade science camp at Whittemore-Prescott Area Elementary School
- “Keeping Our Rivers Clean,” a Unionville-Sebewaing river monitoring and public education program
- Saginaw River cleanup by Bay City's Woodside Elementary School
- Wood duck habitat projects at two Bullock Creek Elementary Schools, Coleman Middle School, North Midland Family Center, and Pine River Elementary School

**Local Champion:** WIN Communications/Marketing Task Group

**WIN Grant Award:** \$10,000

## Strength in Numbers

### Saginaw Bay Sustainable Business Partnership

“Businesses are not isolated entities,” says Rob Kucinski, WIN volunteer from Monitor Sugar Company. “Businesses are part of their local community, environment, and economy. And as businesses feel mounting pressure to increase value to shareholders, they are also discovering that environmentally sustainable business principles can help in overall business operations.”

Companies are looking for ways to dramatically increase resource efficiencies in a world of finite raw-material supplies and exploding consumer demand. Sustainability practices can help businesses achieve their goals while minimizing possible negative environmental impact, improving health and safety conditions for employees, and increasing profitability. For example, energy-efficient building construction materials can lower heating and cooling expenses; new ventilation systems can cost less to operate and provide cleaner air for the employees; and a pond beautifies the company grounds and enhances the environment while supplying an ideal storm water run-off detention area.

In 2001, the Saginaw Bay Sustainable Business Partnership formed to organize a regional network of businesses, organizations, and educational institutions to collect information and share ideas for incorporating environmentally sustainable business practices. During its first year, the partnership developed its five-year strategic plan and is recruiting members.

“The value of this partnership is in the diversity of its members,” says Kucinski. “We benefit from the knowledge and experience of state agencies, local environmental groups, corporations, small and mid-size businesses, and an across-the-board mix of businesses, such as agricultural, chemical, automotive, and service industries. As a group, we will explore solutions, share success stories, and learn to tailor the successes to a variety of businesses. Our strength in numbers will help many businesses succeed in responsibly increasing value to shareholders, communities, environments, and local economies.”



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF CAVERLY



**Local Champion:** Partnership for the Saginaw Bay Watershed

**Partners:** Area businesses, trade associations, professional organizations, chambers of commerce, and colleges and universities

**WIN Grant Award:** \$30,520

Consumers Energy  
in Essexville set  
aside part of its  
property (below) for  
habitat preservation.



## Keeping an Open Mind Keeps Spaces Open

### Conservation Development Recognition Program

In October 2001, WIN selected Spring Lake Condominiums in Saginaw Township for the first annual WIN Conservation Development Recognition Award. The condominium development team of Baumeister Construction and RC & Associates were honored for incorporating open-land conservation techniques.

The 36-acre, environmentally sensitive complex reserved more than half of the acreage as open space for two lakes, restored natural areas, and paved walkways. The lakes not only provide natural beauty and aquatic habitat, they also serve as storm water run-off containment areas.

“Ideas for this complex began when we participated in a WIN educational tour and workshop,” says Seymour Geiersbach, owner of Baumeister Construction. “WIN explained how to create an environmentally friendly development and why this benefits the residents, community, and developer. We created a complex that gives people a feeling of space and privacy, while making the best use of the area.”

Identifying an award winner, such as Spring Lake Condominiums, is one way that the Conservation Development Recognition Program can promote the conservation of open land and farmland. As Geiersbach mentioned,

The pathways at  
Spring Lake  
Condominiums are  
helping to keep  
residents close to  
the environment.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF GEIERSBACH CONSTRUCTION



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF CAVERLY

the program also included a green development tour, the “WIN Conservation Development Recognition” manual, and a conservation development workshop.

“The Spring Lake Condominiums project proves that conservation and open-land methods can be incorporated into a profitable development project,” says Jim Koski, WIN volunteer and Saginaw County Public Works Commissioner. “The complex is a perfect example of how the WIN team works with communities to sustain and enhance the watershed area.”

**Local Champion:** WIN Land Use Task Group

**Partner:** Home Builders Association of Saginaw

**WIN Grant Award:** \$6,400





## The WIN Funders Network

A network of 13 foundations work together to ensure that WIN projects are successful. These foundations are:

Bay Area Community Foundation  
Consumers Energy Foundation  
Cook Family Foundation  
The Dow Chemical Company Foundation  
The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation  
Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation  
S.C. Johnson Fund  
Kantzler Foundation  
Midland Area Community Foundation  
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation  
Saginaw Community Foundation  
Charles J. Strosacker Foundation  
Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation

For a list of participating companies and organizations with their website links, visit [saginawbaywin.org/info/overflow.html](http://saginawbaywin.org/info/overflow.html).



## 2001 WIN Grants

Projects receiving grants from WIN in 2001 include:


- Bay County Fiscal Impacts of Growth and Public Education Program
- Building Skill in Forage and Pasture Management
- Tri-County Farmland Preservation Workshop
- Flint River Watershed Public Education Project
- Green Infrastructure Geographic Information System Development
- Iosco County Gateway Composting Project
- Loop Park Urban Erosion Control
- Michigan Food and Farming Systems MarketLine Promotion
- Organic Education and Advancement
- Tittabawassee River Greenway Discovery Day
- Saginaw Bay Agriculture Marketing and Development Network
- Saginaw Bay Greenways Collaborative
- Saginaw Bay Sustainable Business Forum (Phase 2)
- Scientific Irrigation Scheduling for Saginaw Bay Watershed Producers
- Shiawassee River Streambed Stabilization Demonstration
- Sustainable Aquaculture Initiative
- Tittabawassee Watershed Management Plan/Water Quality Analysis
- West Genesee – Lapeer Area Urban Wetlands Expansion
- WIN Youth Connections Action Grant Program



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DR. GENE KENAGA

This bird-watching platform at Tobico Marsh near Bay City was completed in 2001.





# *Ways to WIN*

For more information about WIN, visit [www.saginawbaywin.org](http://www.saginawbaywin.org) or contact:

Saginaw Bay WIN

P.O. Box 111

Auburn, MI 48611


(989) 662-6024

Toll-free: 1-877-ASK-4WIN

Fax: 989-662-6065

E-mail: [info@saginawbaywin.org](mailto:info@saginawbaywin.org)

The Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network is facilitated through a partnership of The Dow Chemical Company, The Conservation Fund, and local and regional organizations dedicated to promoting the concepts of sustainability. For more information on this effort, please visit [www. saginawbaywin.org](http://www.saginawbaywin.org).

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WIN • P.O. Box 111 • Auburn, MI 48611  
(989) 662-6024 • Toll-free: 1-877-ASK-4WIN • Fax: (989) 662-6065 • E-mail: [info@saginawbaywin.org](mailto:info@saginawbaywin.org)