

Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network
2002 Annual Report



Creating a Balance





On behalf of the partners and friends of the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN), I am pleased to present the 2002 annual report.

Many thoughts come to mind when one thinks of the Saginaw Bay Watershed. Certainly, one might think of the geological formation itself that links our 22 counties and is home to nearly 1.5 million people. It is a region of tremendous natural beauty, an ecosystem that supports some of the most productive natural and social landscapes in Michigan, and an area that continues to be an important part of our state's economic matrix. However, one might also think of it as a region that has seen the adverse affects of pollution, the damaging ramifications of fragmented landscapes and habitats, and an area that lacks the coordination of governments, corporations and agencies in their attempts to search for answers to some of the challenges that we face – together. It is within this framework that WIN was created.

WIN is an organization designed to promote a singular idea: sustainability. Sustainability is about living and working in ways that meet and integrate existing environmental, economic and social needs without compromising the well-being of future generations. The transition to sustainable development benefits today's society and builds a more secure future for our children. Our challenge is to reduce pressures on the environment today, by changing the way we live and do business now and in the future.

Early on, WIN recognized that simply discussing the concept of sustainability was not enough. With that in mind, we organized a one-of-its-kind partnership of funders who established the *Sustainable Communities Initiative Fund*. The fund, capitalized at \$300,000 per year, works as a source of "venture capital" for innovative projects and new ideas that help demonstrate that a more sustainable future can be achieved today. It is from this fund that our 2002 grants were made, and it is from this fund that WIN has granted more than \$1.5 million to various project partners since 1996.

We continue to be invigorated by our accomplishments and the opportunity to make a difference. That opportunity would not be possible, however, without the dedicated members of our Task Groups, the Resource Group, and our Funders' Network. The members of these committees provide the strategic thinking that guides our efforts, the professionalism that makes the project work, and the constant encouragement that is necessary in any nonprofit group.

The Conservation Fund is proud to be a part of this magnificent effort to promote the concepts of sustainable development in the Saginaw Bay region.

Michael Kelly, Project Coordinator
The Conservation Fund

Project Case Study: Down by the old Mill Pond

The historic Mill Pond Dam, located in Millpond Park in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, was a deteriorating structure and a potential community hazard. This 100-year-old community landmark also limited fish passage and spawning in the Chippewa River corridor, and fragmented more than 71 miles of river habitat.



The new Mill Pond Dam area.

“The key concern of the Mill Pond Dam was the potential for the structure to fail,” says Greg Baderschneider, director of Parks and Building Grounds for the City of Mt. Pleasant. “Because of its condition, we felt it could fail during a major water event and we would experience a massive migration of sediment, which would be detrimental to wildlife habitat and recreational use downriver.”

With partial funding from WIN, additional support from other partners and a match from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, the city commissioned the removal of the dam. Engineers removed the dam and installed a series of gradual “steps,” called weirs, to lower the river level over a 500 ft. corridor. Additional restoration and stabilization of the river bed and shoreline created safe recreational use and fish passage.

“This project has created an ideal model for restoration projects of this nature in Michigan,” says Mike Kelly, of The Conservation Fund. “It is the essence of sustainability because it was conducted with consideration of the economic, social and environmental impacts, not just in the immediate area but for miles and miles of riverbed.”

Where Is the Saginaw Bay Watershed?

The Saginaw Bay Watershed contains rich resources in agriculture, forestry, industry and recreation.

As the state’s largest watershed, it encompasses nearly 8,700 square miles in all or part of 22 counties in central Michigan. Fifteen percent of the state’s waterways drain into the Saginaw Bay Watershed.

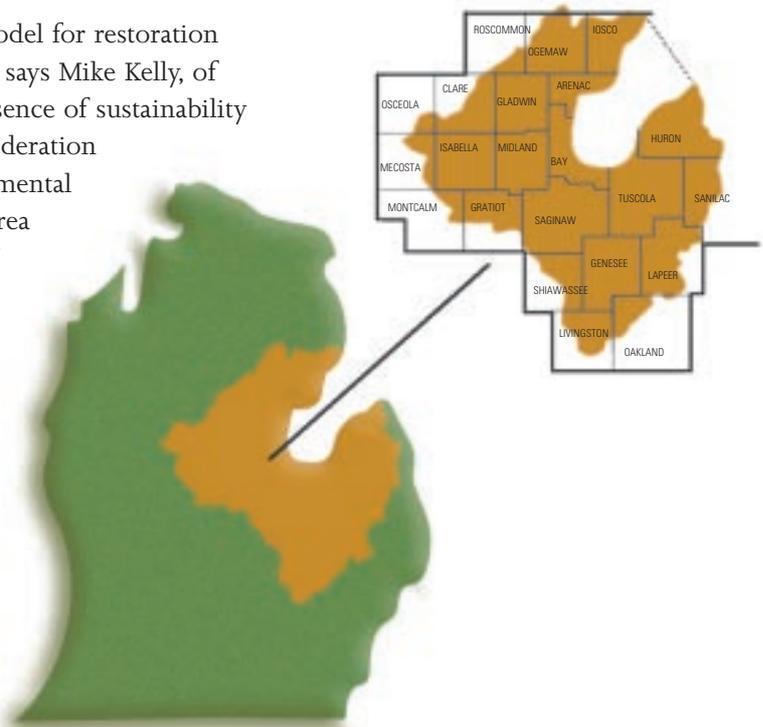




Photo by: Jeff Caverly

“The Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network is our most important partner in sustainability programs. Through the work of WIN, we are able to engage faculty and students in teaching and learning experiences that enrich the scope of our programs while building a more sustainable community.”

— George Puia, professor,
Saginaw Valley State University

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

The WIN Funders’ Network

A committed group of 12 foundations support WIN with financial contributions and technical expertise. They are:

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



Photo by: Jeff Caverly

For a list of participating companies and organizations with their web site links, visit saginawbaywin.org/info/overflow.html.

Sustainability a focus today and for the future

If one word could classify the focus of WIN projects for 2002, it would be sustainability. In awarding grants to 12 organizations that requested funding during the year, WIN's emphasis continued to be on projects that use the resources available today without jeopardizing their availability for use by future generations. Developing a project that demonstrates sustainable concepts includes a review of environmental, social, and economic perspectives.

The following are projects that received WIN funding in 2002.

Nayanquing Point East Marsh Enhancement Phase 3
Highway Borrow Pit Restoration and Enhancement Demonstration
Alternative Energy from Agriculturally-Derived Pellet Fuel
Conservation Development Recognition Program 2002
Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring, Support & Training
Tittabawassee Watershed Management Plan Water Quality Analysis Phase 2
Conservation District Challenge Grants for Wildlife
Conservation Tillage Risk Protection Program
Midland Conservation District Water Tunnel Display
Restoring Natural Flows and Enhancing Fish Passage over Low-head Barrier Dams
2002 WIN Annual Report

WIN Funding Process

WIN follows a unique, interactive process for awarding grant funding for projects and initiatives. Throughout the community-based review process, individuals from many organizations take part by analyzing project applications and offering their expertise on a variety of topics.

WIN awards grant funding twice each year. If you have a project to submit for funding consideration, contact WIN at (989) 662-6024 for an application.

Project Focus

Wildlife area borrowed and returned

Highway Borrow Pit Restoration and Enhancement

The results of progress sometimes inhibit good wildlife habitat. This was the case for a 49 acre highway “borrow” pit area on Cody-Estey Road, just north of Pinconning, Michigan, off of Interstate 75. The area was previously owned by the Michigan Department of Transportation and was once used as a source of fill material to construct Interstate 75. After highway construction was completed, the borrow pit filled with water and ownership of the land was transferred to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to manage for wildlife and public use.



Project team members discuss their options.

Because of the unfavorable habitat that had developed in the area over the years, including an overgrowth of invasive shrubs and brush, the DNR approached WIN about a plan to rejuvenate the abandoned borrow pit.



Photo by: Jeff Caverly

In partnership with Ducks Unlimited and other non-profit organizations and agencies, the group applied to WIN for funding to develop a program to restore the grassland habitat and establish shallow wetlands. Their aim was a demonstration project that could potentially be used elsewhere in the state.

About the Saginaw Bay Watershed

- Home to more than 90 fish species, 138 endangered or threatened species and 1.4 million people
- Includes more than 175 inland lakes
- Contains about 7,000 miles of rivers and streams
- Path for migrating song birds and waterfowl on the Central Flyway
- Significant agricultural and industrial resources supporting Michigan's economy

“Our goal with the project has been to create a wider shallow zone around the pit, control encroachment of invasive shrubs on grasslands and add more attractive shallow wetlands to create a good environment for waterfowl nesting,” says Sara Schaefer, wildlife habitat biologist with the DNR's Wildlife Division.

With the project already underway, Schaefer and her project partners expect to see completion by summer 2003.

Local Champion: Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Ducks Unlimited

Partners: Bay/Midland Pheasants Forever, National Wild Turkey Federation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

WIN Grant Award: \$20,000



Photo by: Jeff Caverly

“WIN is committed to the conservation of the area's natural resources, as well as promoting community education efforts that stress the importance of equal consideration of the area's economic, ecological and aesthetic resources. Dow continues to support WIN's community-based efforts to protect and enhance the watershed's 7,000 miles of rivers and streams for this generation and many generations to come.”

— Terri Johnson,
Public Affairs Leader,
The Dow Chemical Company

“Sustainability can make transportation, education, healthcare and global markets more universally acceptable. It can help balance world economies and improve all people's prospects for self-determination. Sustainability can create new industries and new jobs and it can protect natural resources. This is a key reason why participating in the Sustainable Business Partnership through WIN is important to General Motors. We see this network as an important opportunity to achieve sustainability for people in this community and around the world.

— Jennifer Bigelow,
Environmental Engineering
Supervisor, General Motors
Powertrain, Bay City

“Participating in WIN is important to Ducks Unlimited because we need incentive-based solutions to increasingly complex environmental problems.

WIN promotes environmental stewardship within a working landscape. A healthy economy and a healthy environment are linked . . . we need one to have the other, and we need both to have a healthy community.”

— David Brakhage,
Regional Biologist, Ducks
Unlimited Great Lakes Region.

“WIN is extremely unique in that it brings together a variety of public and private sector organizations, along with members of the grant making community, in an effort that is focused on making the Saginaw Bay Watershed a more sustainable region. The work that WIN allows us to do together is far greater than the sum of its parts.”

— Margaret Ann (Ranny) Riecker,
President, Herbert H. and
Grace A. Dow Foundation



Photo by: Jeff Caverly

Project Focus

Heat from corn – a tasty alternative energy source

Alternative Energy from Pellet Fuel

With an ability to produce heat at one-half the cost of propane or LP gas, researchers at Saginaw Valley State University are in hot pursuit of corn.



“For many years, we have concentrated on identifying alternative energy sources for heating buildings,” says

Christopher Schilling, Charles J. Strosacker professor and chair of engineering at Saginaw Valley State University. “We are most interested in renewable and environmentally friendly pellet fuel that can be made from corn bi-products.”

The Saginaw region and its strong agricultural base were a natural fit for just such a product. With help from WIN and other sponsoring organizations, Shilling and his team are developing a research effort to determine the economic and environmental impact, plus the commercial viability, of a corn product that can be compressed into small pellets and used for fuel in homes or small manufacturing facilities.

Their effort already is off the ground in Saginaw, where a corn burner is being used to heat the Good Neighbors’ Mission. With any success, this abundant fuel source may heat your home some day.

Local Champion: Saginaw Valley State University

Partners: Michigan Corn Marketing Program, Putt Incorporated

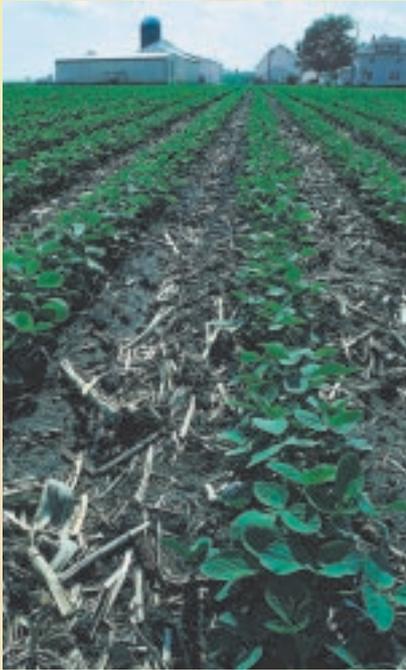
WIN Grant Award: \$51,370

Project Focus

Conservation through reduced farmland tillage

Conservation Tillage Risk Protection Program

Many Michigan farmers till their agricultural land by incorporating most of the crop residue below the soil surface. Decades of this practice leads to increased soil erosion and greater amounts of sediment and nutrients flowing into nearby streams and riverbeds.



Corn rows tilled using "conservation tillage."

The Nature Conservancy, with help from WIN grant funding, is promoting a project designed to help farmers learn and understand "conservation tillage," which is the practice of leaving the majority of their crop residue on the surface.

"If more farmers practice conservation tillage, they can improve soil quality, reduce erosion and slow down water runoff into rivers, yet still maintain a productive farm," says Ken Algozin, Shiawassee River Project Manager with the Nature Conservancy.

The project goal is to enroll 500 acres of farmland within the Shiawassee River Watershed into the program in 2003. By tracking costs, crop yields, profit and stream sediment, Ken and his group will be able to establish the benefits of conservation tillage, and hopefully use this program as a blueprint for expansion in the future.

Local Champion: The Nature Conservancy – Michigan Chapter

Partners: USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Shiawassee County Conservation District, Michigan Innovative Farmers, MSU Cooperative Extension

WIN Grant Award: \$28,000



Photo by: Jeff Caverly

"WIN provides the Bay Area Community Foundation with the chance to truly serve as a leader for community improvement in the environmental arena.

The mission of WIN complements our commitment to our community, as well as our focus on sustainable projects and programs that are for good, forever."

— Jody Tyvela,
Program Officer, Bay Area
Community Foundation

"The Little Forks Conservancy is rooted in the concept of sustainability. The preservation of land for now and for future generations is what drives us. We actively participate with WIN because the organization helps create a community that understands and is aware of the interconnections between healthy land, healthy citizens and healthy businesses."

— Douglas L. Koop,
Executive Director,
The Little Forks Conservancy



Photo by: Jeff Caverly

“As a processor of agricultural products at Monitor Sugar, sustainability is very important since so much of the product is created from the ground. Our association with WIN allows us to hear about the sustainable practices of other companies and to learn about possibilities for our co-products and residual materials to be utilized in other processes. Our involvement in WIN is invaluable as the company moves forward in environmental stewardship.

— Rob Kucinski, Environmental Manager, Monitor Sugar Company, Bay City

Project Focus Opening fish spawning routes

Restoring Natural Flows and Enhancing Fish Passage over Dams

Walleye, sturgeon, white bass and smallmouth bass could be the beneficiaries of a project to identify spawning barriers in tributaries in the Saginaw Bay Watershed region. Existing data indicates that a primary impediment to natural fish reproduction in Saginaw Bay tributaries is the lack of access to historically important spawning areas.

“In most cases, the spawning barrier is a dam,” says Mark Coscarelli, project manager. “Our goal is to help local communities identify techniques and funding sources to open up tributaries or create alternative spawning routes.”



Restoring fish passage alternatives may involve removing dams.

Project members will identify and classify dams in the Saginaw River Watershed; recommend a strategy for funding; and identify cost-effective options for dam removal or barrier-free fish passage alternatives.

Local Champion: Partnership for the Saginaw Bay Watershed

Partners: Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, community representatives

WIN Grant Award: \$35,000

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.

Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network

P.O. Box 111 • Auburn, Michigan 48611

(989) 662-6024

Toll-free: 1-877-ASK-4WIN • Fax: (989) 662-6065

E-mail: info@saginawbaywin.org



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