

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT



BETSIE RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT

Originally Signed in 1991-92 and Updated in Fall 2002

This document serves as a partnership agreement between various special interest groups, private sector organizations and units of government that are interested in the future of the Betsie River.

During the flood in 1989 the Thompsonville Dam was washed away resulting in an extreme amount of severe bank erosion and sedimentation covering the gravel spawning beds throughout the mainstem. This partnership organized to address this problem and others to result in an overall improvement in the water quality and habitat of the Betsie River Watershed for aesthetic, recreational and ecological purposes.

The parties committed to this partnership are united by a mutual concern for the conservation and improvement of the water quality, fisheries, wildlife, forestry and other related natural resources of the Betsie River. The parties recognize that the region's future quality of life and economic stability is partially dependent on the maintenance of the natural resources in the Betsie River Watershed.

BACKGROUND

The Betsie River is located in Grand Traverse, Benzie and Manistee Counties. The river originates at Green Lake near the Village of Interlochen and flows in a westerly direction to Betsie Lake in Frankfort which outlets into Lake Michigan. The Betsie River mainstem is 52 miles long and drains a surface area of approximately 165,800 acres. The topography of the watershed is typical of the northwest Lower Peninsula of Michigan in that it consists of rolling hills and sandy plains, interspersed with wetland and riparian areas.

The Betsie River watershed consists of 35,700 acres of state land, 115,442 acres of private land, and the remaining 14,658 acres are comprised of lakes and streams. Because of its size, volume and location, the Betsie River is an ideal river for fishing. Salmon and steelhead fishing are popular from Pstuka Bridge downstream past Homestead Dam. Brook and brown trout fishing are popular sporadically throughout the mainstem and tributaries. Warm water temperatures in the mainstem in the summer do limit the Betsie River from becoming a better trout stream.

Excessive sedimentation has been currently identified as the largest threat to the long-term health of the water quality and habitat of the Betsie in the *Betsie River Watershed Management Plan*. Historically, the log drives of the 1800's caused great damage to the upland and instream habitat

of the Betsie River. Today, sources of sand or sediment include erosion from streambanks, outdated road/stream crossings, recreational access points, and improper development in the riparian corridor. Approximately 35 miles of the mainstem between Wallin and Betsie Lake have been surveyed and monitored for bank erosion problems. In 1958, the MDNR identified 18,000 lineal feet of eroding streambank on the Betsie. In 1986, the Northwest Michigan Streambank Erosion Inventory identified over 140 erosion sites along the Betsie River. The entire watershed has been surveyed for road/stream crossing locations that are all documented in the Betsie River Watershed Road/Stream Crossing Inventory.

Since 1991, the cooperative efforts of Betsie River partners have significantly reduced bank erosion with the initial installation of log riprap structures during the 1970s, and rock placement and revegetation on 63 streambanks to date. County Road Commissions have been receptive to road/stream crossing improvement projects in the watershed, as well. The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy will help with new land protection projects and monitor and maintain conservation easements and nature preserves in accordance with its mission. The Betsie River partners are responsible for the maintenance of past work and the completion of new, needed projects as noted in the Betsie River Watershed Management Plan.

PROPOSED ACTION

We, the undersigned, concur that in the best interest of the natural resources of the Betsie River Watershed, we will provide technical and financial assistance, and/or in-kind services **as available and on a voluntary basis** to support the Betsie River Watershed Restoration Project. Coordination and information sharing among partners will be accomplished jointly through the Betsie River Watershed Restoration Committee.

This Restoration Committee will be composed of resource related agencies, special interest groups, local units of government, non-profit organizations, and interested citizens concerned with the long term conservation management and use of the river and its watershed. This Restoration Committee will recommend the proposed actions within the watershed project. This Committee will operate under the attached guidelines and assemble officers in leadership positions as the guidelines note.

Conservation Resource Alliance
Chairman

Date

Orsini Fish Hatchery

Date

Friends of the Betsie Bay

Date

Adams Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Date

Friends of the Betsie Valley Trail

Date

Betsie Valley Trail Management Council

Date

Crystal Mountain

Date

Michigan State University Extension - Beulah Office

Date

Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy
Chairman

Date

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians

Date

Green Lake Association

Date

Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Cadillac Regional Office

Date

Michigan Department of Natural Resources Forest Management
Traverse City Regional Office

Date

Little River Band of Ottawa Indians

Date

Joyfield Township Board
Supervisor

Date

Gilmore Township Board
Supervisor

Date

Crystal Lake Township Board
Supervisor

Date

Old Grade Crossing #1 Association

Date

Manistee Sportfishing Association

Date