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Portage Lake Watershed Forever Endowment Plan and Fund

A community-based plan and fund created to ensure wise use and enjoyment of the Portage Lake Watershed now and for future generations

The Portage Lake Watershed is one of the crown jewels of northern Michigan because of its scenic nature, high water-quality resources, varied recreational opportunities, historical significance and connection to Lake Michigan. The Portage Lake Watershed encompasses 21 square miles or 13,300 acres, 3,083 of which consist of the lake itself. The watershed is located in Manistee County, Michigan, and includes the Village of Onekama and parts of Onekama, Manistee, Brown, and Bear Lake townships.

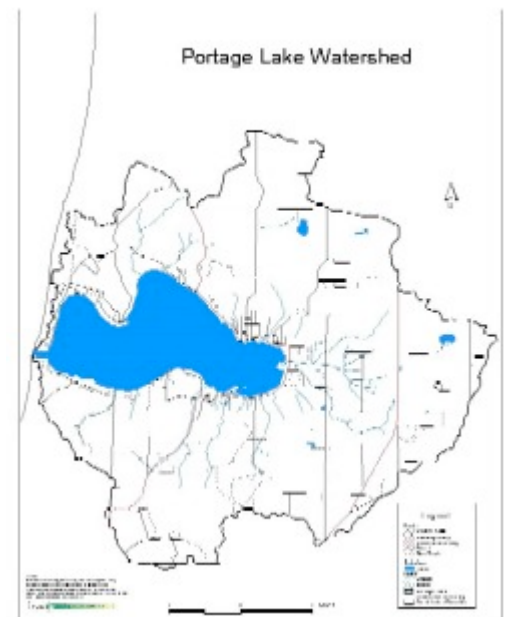
Portage Lake Watershed Forever Endowment Fund

This fund was created in fall of 2006 at the Manistee County Community Foundation (MCCF) to implement and update the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan.

An initial goal of \$500,000 has been established for the fund, which would enable an estimated \$25,000 in interest earnings to be spent each year on initiatives that support the implementation of the plan to “ensure wise use and enjoyment of the Portage Lake Watershed now and for future generations.”

Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan

The Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan will be a *living document* created to aid the community in managing wise use of natural, cultural, historical, social and economic resources to sustain a healthy, thriving watershed. The document will be developed through an inclusive process including representation of all interests in the watershed. The process to develop the plan will begin in earnest in January 2007.



Portage Lake Watershed

Using funds provided under a grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's Coastal Management Program and local resources, the firm Public Sector Consultants (PSC), based in Lansing, will guide plan development. Jack Bails, former deputy director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and Julie Metty-Bennett from PSC will assist the community-driven project. Jack and Julie have rich professional experience in water quality, land use planning, policy development and in managing large grant programs, such as the Great Lakes Fishery Trust and Kellogg Foundation's People and Land Program.

The intent of the Portage Lake Watershed Forever Plan is not to prevent development but to foster locally-driven solutions to land protection and development challenges. Our aim is to foster partnerships in order to understand consequences, alter behavior, and create win-win cooperative efforts.

Why is the plan being developed?

To educate local and seasonal residents, including youth and adults, about the values of the watershed and actions they can take to help ensure its long-term health.

To develop a plan for the economic well-being and quality of life of the watershed. Increasing development and growth pressures are prompting communities to take an active role in guiding future growth and land use in a manner that is responsive to the needs and concerns of its residents and the natural environment of the area.

To ensure the continued health of Portage Lake and its watershed is critical to the economic health of nearby communities that rely heavily on recreation and tourism industries. Due to its unique geography, the current high-quality nature of Portage Lake is susceptible to even modest increases in pollution can have substantial long-term negative effects on the health of the watershed.

To see that all aspects of quality of life are considered and incorporated in the development of the Plan including youth and education; arts, culture and humanities; economy and employment; health and human services, and government and infrastructure.

Who is creating the plan?

Anyone who is interested the long-term health of the Portage Lake Watershed and nearby communities including, but not limited to:

- Community citizens and local residents
- Lake-front property owners
- Lake associations
- Students, Schools, Colleges, and Universities

Seasonal residents and tourists

Businesses (developers, home builders associations, industries, marinas, resorts, farmers, other agribusinesses, etc.)

Recreators (anglers, water sports enthusiasts, swimmers, bicyclists, etc.)

Environmental and conservation groups

Local governments (county, township, village, conservation district, councils of government, health department, drain commissioner, planner, planning commission, road commission, Michigan State University Extension, etc.)

State governments (Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Transportation, etc.)

Federal and Tribal governments (Fish and Wildlife Service, US Geological Survey, US Environmental Protection Agency, US Department of Agriculture, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, etc.)

Citizen groups (churches, civic organizations, youth groups, etc.)

An Advisory Board has been formed to oversee the development of the plan and ensure that all community interests are reflected in plan development.

How much will it cost to develop the Plan?

It is estimated that between \$50,000 and \$70,000 will be needed to develop the plan. Funds in the form of charitable donations are still needed to develop the plan. Please contact the Community Foundation at 231-723-7269 if you are interested in helping to financially support the preparation of the plan.

How long will it take to develop the Plan?

It is expected that between 12 and 18 months will be needed to complete the comprehensive planning process.

How will the Plan be used?

- To provide continuing community education to youth, landowners, residents, visitors, and decision makers about the values of the watershed and related community goals.
- To engage youth and adults in local community issues and service learning projects to foster or reinforce a commitment to community.
- As a pro-active tool to help community citizens, local governments, business, and community organizations guide the future growth and use of the watershed.
- To help guide and interpret ongoing water-quality monitoring and restoration of the watershed.
- To secure funding to support projects that carry out, evaluate, and update the plan.

For additional information contact the Community Foundation or:

Michael E. Acton
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(231) 889-3708

When making a contribution, please note in your check's memo line if you'd like the contribution to go into the spendable fund. If making an online donation, include this information in the instructions box.

Applications

Grant application information can be obtained by contacting the MCCF office at (231)723-7269 .

Past Recipients

There are currently no awards on record for Portage Lake Watershed Forever Endowment Plan and Fund.

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