

Restoring the Boardman River, Michigan

Since 1991, the Boardman River project has been on a mission to restore, protect and maintain the ecological integrity of the Boardman River Watershed as a Blue Ribbon trout stream, a rural greenbelt, and as a recreational resource.

What is being done and why?

Increased sediment due to human influence is the greatest factor degrading the Boardman River and its tributaries. Through the project, eroded riverbanks, road crossings, utility line crossings, and other sources of sediment have been stabilized. These stabilization projects have prevented over 3,000 tons of sediment annually from entering the Boardman and, 1,500 acres of land throughout the watershed have been permanently protected as nature reserves or with conservation easements.

Who is involved?

The Boardman River project is managed by the Grand Traverse Conservation District. The project has been funded by a series of grants including a Section 319 grant from the Michigan DNR and a Clean Michigan Initiative grant from the Michigan DEQ. The project is also funded by other smaller grants and local matches from local organizations, businesses and citizens. Total cost estimates to date are roughly \$1.75 million dollars.

Where can I see the results of this project?

Contact the Boardman River Project Director, Steve Largent (slargent@gtcd.org, 231-941-0960), about opportunities to view the project. Their website states that you can find project staff at almost every Friday Night Live! in downtown Traverse City, Kalkaska's national Trout Festival, or at Bay Day. You can also invite Project staff to speak at meetings, events, or classes. Visit the [Boardman River Project website](#) for more information.

Why is this a model project?

This project is notable because it is implemented at the scale of the watershed. A partnership with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy has allowed for protection of 1,500 acres in the watershed, indicating a recognition that removing land from human degradation will allow the river system to be more self-sustaining. Also, the project is notable because monitoring has occurred both before and after project implementation, one of the recognized factors for a successful ecological restoration project. Monitoring of the fish, macroinvertebrates, and habitat throughout the watershed using MDEQ's Procedure 51 allows for an assessment of the effectiveness of the restoration methods over time.

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