

March 28, 2012 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stan Lilley
Chippewa Watershed Conservancy
P.O. Box 896
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48804-0896
(989) 644-5045
stan@ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org
www.ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org

Water Trail Map Project: Web-based Version is Newest Phase

A local ad-hoc group interested in promoting the Chippewa River has announced today that the web-based version of the Chippewa River Water Trail map is now available on-line.

A group of conservation professionals collectively called the Chippewa River Watershed Planning Group, has been meeting periodically for more than two years to discuss items of mutual interest regarding the Chippewa River Watershed, including water quality, erosion control, recreational opportunities, promotion of the river as an economic resource, and conservation of riparian land. The group, including representatives from the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Isabella Soil Conservation District, Isabella County Departments of Parks and Recreation and Community Development, Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant Parks & Recreation Department and the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy, has conducted roundtable type meetings to explore ways to fund preparation of a watershed management plan, pollution remediation and recreation.

A subcommittee was formed to move forward on opportunities related to the recreational component of the river and grant proposals were prepared by Stan Lilley, Executive Director of the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy, on behalf of the group. The result was the award of grants by the Bay Area Community Foundation (\$12,000.00) and the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (\$22,500). \$7,000 of in-kind support and \$5,500.00 cash from the ad-hoc group brought the total for the project to \$47,000.

The funds were used to produce regionally consistent signage showing the boundary of the watershed, a hard copy Water Trail map of the Chippewa River (7,000 copies) from Barryton (Mecosta County), through Isabella County, and ending in Midland County, showing launching points, safety issues, historical points and riverside amenities, river etiquette signs that will be installed at the primary launch points, and signs that will be installed at every road crossing, visible from the water, to aid river users in determining their progress as well as help first responders locate users in need of help. All of the signage has been produced and will be installed this spring.

The final stage of the Chippewa River Water Trail project involved the creation of an interactive, web-based version of the map that reflects the points as shown on the recently distributed folding map. This version of the river map will be hosted on the Isabella County Government web site. A direct link may be

provided to interested organizations and entities by sending a request to the Isabella County Community Development Department at gismapping@isabellacounty.org. This version of the map allows for inclusion of additional details about each launch site, such as pictures, maps of the parks and locations of hiking trails, restrooms, and parking lots. Users will be able to access the details via handheld devices or personal computers and can download sections of interest pertaining to the Chippewa River Water Trail map. A link to the map is also available on the Chippewa Watershed Conservancy's web site at www.ChippewaWatershedConservancy.org.

Funding support for the Chippewa River Water Trail project has come from:

Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan

Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN)

Bay Area Community Foundation

Isabella County Parks & Recreation Department

Mt. Pleasant Parks Department

Chippewa Watershed Conservancy

Additional Partners include:

Chippewa Nature Center

Midland County Parks

Barryton Township

Charter Township of Union

Buckley's Mountainside Canoes

Chippewa River Outfitters

The Little Forks Conservancy