



# *Au Gres-Sims School District*

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FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

## **Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) Awards Au Gres-Sims a Community Action Mini-Grant**

**January 3, 2018**

**AU GRES, MI** – Au Gres-Sims School District has received a \$1,000 Community Action Mini-Grant from the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN). The grant, awarded in December as part of WIN's 2017 grant program, was collaboratively authored in partnership between Au Gres-Sims, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Heart of the Lakes.

The WIN Community Action Mini-Grant Program offers funding opportunities to organizations who are working to make improvements in their neighborhoods, communities, and watersheds within the framework of "sustainability." This grant helps fund a joint organizational project that will create an eight to ten minute film highlighting key components of the unique STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Curriculum Overlay and Place-based Education (PBE) programs established and designed for sustained experiential education opportunities for students at Au Gres-Sims School District.

A key focus of this project is capturing the dynamic and diverse aspects of STEM programming that have been embedded into curricular projects at Au Gres-Sims. These longitudinal studies and partnerships are located on campus, in riparian zones, and on Big Charity Island, highlighting water quality studies, invasive species, and greenhouse propagation of the endangered and federally protected Pitcher's Thistle plant. Big Charity Island, located within the school district's boundaries, is part of the Michigan Islands National Wildlife Refuge.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist, Michelle Vander Haar, stated, "The partnership USFWS has with Au Gres-Sims School District has drastically expanded our knowledge and management capability of Big Charity Island but, more importantly, we have a fun and exciting mentoring opportunity for our future land stewards. That is something you can't put a value on, and will ensure the integrity of Big Charity Island and other natural places well into the future."

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