

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 25, 2010

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Saginaw Bay WIN to Support Groundbreaking Research on Fish Passage and Spawning Success on the Cass River at Frankenmuth

Central Michigan University to lead effort to learn more about the effectiveness of fish passage efforts prior to and after major work at the Frankenmuth Dam

The Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) has announced today a grant of \$30,000 to Central Michigan University (CMU) to begin an analysis of the effectiveness of fish passage at the site of the proposed Frankenmuth fish passage on the Cass River. The fish passage project is also being supported by WIN through a \$50,000 grant to the City of Frankenmuth. Fundraising for the 2010 project continues. WIN has made similar investments at dam projects in Chesaning and Mt. Pleasant, opening more than 70 miles of stream.

The Frankenmuth Fish Passage project will reconnect more than 73 miles of tributary that has been compromised for more than 150 years, providing access to historically important spawning areas for fish such as walleye and lake sturgeon (a threatened species in Michigan).

“The work that CMU will be doing at this site in 2010 and 2011 is critically important in developing a clearer understanding of the effectiveness of these fish passage structures”, said Michael Kelly of The Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund administers WIN. “While we have great confidence that this type of project will work as planned, there is very little research that has been done to determine the short and long-term efficiency of these designs. With more than 300 dams in the Saginaw River system alone, having this data is extremely important as we look at more opportunities to reconnect our rivers”, continued Kelly.



“This is a valuable project for CMU as we are actively expanding our research capacity and the Great Lakes ecosystem is a college-wide focus of this expansion.” said Brent Murry, Assistant Professor at CMU who is leading this effort. “Our campus is within the Saginaw Bay Watershed thus it makes a lot of sense for us to establish partners and collaborations within this region. Our research capacity in this area is based on extensive expertise of several faculty members in the Biology department that are deeply committed to Great Lakes restoration” said, Murry.

Ten area foundations and corporations work together as a network to support WIN projects. This Foundation Network includes: Bay Area Community Foundation, Consumers Energy Foundation, Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation, Midland Area Community Foundation, Rollin M. Gerstacker Foundation, Saginaw Community Foundation, The Dow Chemical Company Foundation, The Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, S.C. Johnson Fund, and the Cook Family Foundation. These foundations and corporations contribute \$300,000 per year to the Sustainable Communities Initiative Fund at the Bay Area Community Foundation to support WIN projects.

To date, WIN and its partners have provided more than \$4 million to support projects that help to identify the Saginaw Bay Watershed as a sustainable community. Funding is provided for projects that create opportunities to connect people, resources, organizations and programs. Priority is given to projects that are innovative, cross governmental boundaries, and attempt to balance the environment, economy, and the community. WIN grants have been matched by more than \$8 million in other funding.

More information about WIN, is available on its website at www.saginawbaywin.org.