**Great Lakes Fishery Trust**

**GLFT Grant 2012.1277 St. Joseph Boat Launch**

**Synopsis**

**Project Title:** City of St. Joseph Boat Launch Enhancements

**Grantee Organization:** City of St. Joseph

**Project Team:** Glenn Zerler St. Joseph Recreational Harbor Authority chairperson

Bill Marohn St. Joseph Recreational Harbor Authority

Dennis Eade Michigan Steelheaders Association

Jim Marohn Southwest Michigan Steelheaders Association

Derek Perry City of St. Joseph

Jeffrey Saylor Abonmarche

Kathy Burczak Abonmarche

Don Fiskars Fiskars, Inc.

**Contact Person:** Derek Perry, City of St. Joseph, [dperry@sjcity.com](mailto:dperry@sjcity.com)

**Grant amount:** $133,288.13

**Time Frame:** November 30, 2012 – August 31, 2013

**Focus Areas:** Access

**Brief Project Summary:** The purpose of the project was to construct a modern fish cleaning station and restrooms at the City Boat Launch. In addition important improvements were made to the ADA parking and picnic areas at the facility. The new fish cleaning facility is the only one of its kind available to the public in the City of St. Joseph.

**Project in context:** The new fish cleaning station and restroom are located at the City Boat Launch. This property is adjacent to the St. Joseph River which flows directly into Lake Michigan downstream of the site. This location provides many year-round sport fishing opportunities along the shoreline as well as through boats launched at the site. Prior to this project, the City lacked a suitable fish cleaning station and modern restroom facilities. This lack of facilities generated concerns for users and limited the level of quality and service that the City could provide to the resident and visiting sport fishermen.

**Goals of the Effort:** The goal of the project was to provide a public fish cleaning station and restroom at the City Boat Launch facility located on the St. Joseph River.

**Results:** Thanks to the generosity of the Great Lakes Fishery Trust and the local Southwest Michigan Steelheaders organization, the City was able to leverage the necessary dollars need to construct the desired fish cleaning station and restroom at the City Boat Launch.

**Products and Resources:** The St. Joseph City newsletter announced the ribbon cutting. <http://www.sjcity.com/images/departments/communications_marketing/sept-oct2013-newsletter.pdf>

**Final Narrative Report**

**Background/Overview**

1. The project was completed as intended. The project was realistic and attainable with the resources that were requested.

**Outcomes**

1. In an effort to construct the best and most user friendly fish cleaning station the City contacted and requested information from local users and the Steelheaders organizations at the State and local level. This positive interaction also provided the project some additional dollars from the local group to help in the construction of the facility.
2. Our primary audience was the sport fisherman in our area. Our interaction and feedback regarding the project was excellent and helped to enhance the overall finished project.
3. The relationship between the local steelheaders, charters and the City Recreational Harbor Authority were strengthened by this project. The fact that the local steelheader association donated $10,000 to the project is testament to the relationship.
4. The most important benefits of the project include the construction of a modern public fish cleaning station and restroom facility at the City Boat launch which enhances the opportunities for the local and visiting sport fishermen to utilize our outstanding fishery resource.

**Site Specific Information**

1. The fish cleaning station is a 20’ x 20’ structure with metal roof which houses a stainless steel table. The base of the structure is masonry block and has fencing material for walls. The table has a Muffin Monster grinder with spray nozzles and electrical outlets. In addition a fish scaler is also provided in the fish cleaning station. The modern restroom facility has two uni-sex restrooms complete with toilets and sinks. Photographs are attached.
2. A. Visitors can access the site via automobile or by boat. The facility is located at the City Boat Launch facility. <http://www.sjcity.com/live-here/parks>

<http://www.sjcity.com/index.php/play-here/197-city-boat-launch>

B. Besides the new fish cleaning station and restrooms, a picnic pavilion and picnic tables are available at the site. Lighted parking for vehicles and trailers is available and includes ADA designated spots. Three boat ramp skid piers are also provided to launch and recover boats into the St. Joseph River. Fishing along the shoreline is also popular.

C. Educational signage indicating fish species and invasive species information is posted at the site. In addition a “brag” board is available to the fisherman to show case their most recent catches.

D. Year round species include Walleye, Catfish and Bluegill with seasonal runs of Steelhead, Coho and Chinook salmon. Because the site provides access to the Lake Michigan, those lake species are also available for those with boats.

E. The Michigan DNR plants Chinook Salmon on the St. Joseph river near the City Boat Launch site. <http://www.michigandnr.com/fishstock/default.asp>

F. We recommend that all tactics be used to catch the available fish resource.

G. We recommend that visitors contact St. Joseph Today for accommodation and other tourist information. <http://stjoetoday.com/>

H. We have a fabulous fishery and now have the facilities to enhance and entice sport fisherman visitors to our community.

I. All of the projects objectives were met.

**Pictures**

1. Several pictures of the facility are included.
2. A GLFT logo was incorporated into the “brag” board and the City commits to installing whatever other sign it wishes to have displayed when it is available.

**Related Efforts**

1. As indicated earlier in the document this was a group effort that involved the City of St. Joseph contributing $174,504 and the local steelheader association contributing $10,000.
2. The facility was completed in late summer or 2013. 2014 will be its first complete year of operation. Its anticipated that the recent project will spur additional improvements to the property to enhance it.

**Reflections**

1. This was a great project that provided facilities that were truly needed for our area. The additional relationships formed between the participating groups will potentially yield additional benefits to all involved in the future for the fishery.
2. GLFT is a great organization and we truly appreciate their financial assistance with this project.