



PROJECT PROFILE

Synopsis

- **Project Title:** *Kids Creek Restoration Project*
- **Grantee Organization:** The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay (Traverse City)
- **Project Team:** Sarah U'Ren, The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay; Steve Largent, Grand Traverse Conservation District; Steve Tongue, Munson Medical Center
- **Contact Person:** Sarah U'Ren, The Watershed Center Grand Traverse Bay, suren@gtbay.org
- **Grant Amount:** \$100,000.00
- **Start and End Dates:** June 01, 2013-May 31, 2014
- **GLFT Focus Area:** Habitat Protection and Restoration
- **Brief Project Summary:** This project helped improve fish habitat and water quality on an impaired tributary to Kids Creek in the Grand Traverse Bay watershed. Project partners worked together to daylight a section of creek by replacing underground culverts and channelized ditches with a natural meandering channel, replacing two street culverts with open bottom bridge structures, installing in-stream habitat and establishing a riparian buffer and floodplain. Ultimately, over time, the project will help improve fish habitat and water quality and will reduce sedimentation in Kids Creek, helping lead to its removal from the 303(d) Impaired Waters list.

Project in Context

Kids Creek is a tributary to the Boardman River, which flows into West Grand Traverse Bay. The Kids Creek sub-watershed has a long history of degradation from human activity, both agricultural and urban. Since much of the watershed is urbanized, Kids Creek suffers from high amounts of stormwater runoff. The project took place on a major tributary known as "Tributary A" of Kids Creek on the campus of Munson Medical Center (MMC). Both the main stem of Kids Creek and Tributary A are on the State of Michigan's 303(d) Impaired Waters List due to poor aquatic insect communities as a result of stormwater impacts. The project is located in a highly visible urban area of Traverse City. As such, one of the key project goals was to increase public awareness of the importance of Great Lakes fisheries and water quality to the region's prosperity and quality of life.

Work was completed in conjunction with MMC's development of a new \$45 million Cancer Center, which strengthened an already existing partnership between TWC and MMC. These two groups, as well as the Grand Traverse Conservation District (GTCD), have partnered since

2008 on other activities to improve the health of Kids Creek. In 2011, these partners completed a smaller “urban buffer” project on MMC’s campus downstream from this project site. That project involved approximately 850 linear feet of vegetative buffer plantings, in-stream habitat improvements, trails and sitting/observation areas along Kids Creek. This public-private collaboration continued with this project. Additionally, TWC and MMC will also be partnering in the coming years on State and Federally funded projects to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff getting into Kids Creek from MMC's campus.

Goals of the Effort

This project daylighted a section of Tributary A of Kids Creek that had been diverted and covered as Traverse City was developed over the last 150 years. The following activities were completed successfully as part of the overall project goal:

- 900 feet of underground culverts and channelized ditches were restored to a natural meandering channel that is 1,275 feet in length.
- Two street culverts, on 6th Street and Beaumont Street, were replaced with open bottom bridge structures.
- Boulders and root wads were installed to provide both in-stream habitat improvements and bank stabilization.
- Eliminated 72,000 ft² of impervious surfaces.
- Establishment of a 15-30 foot wide riparian buffer and 27,000 ft² floodplain in a new park-like setting.

Results

This project was completed successfully and as originally intended. Aquatic insect and fish community assessments were completed before restoration activities took place, and will continue annually for the next 5 years to assess the success of the new stream channel. Local students and Trout Unlimited volunteers were utilized to rescue fish and aquatic insects from the old stream channel before water was diverted to the new channel.

This project generated a lot of public interest and many MMC employees and visitors, as well as nearby residents, stopped by the project site to check on the project's progress. Many of these people were excited about the project and were made more aware of water quality issues the creek faces as well as ways to protect water resources.

Products and Resources

Both TWC and MMC disseminated information about this project to the public during its timeframe. Both organizations had information on their websites:

- TWC: <http://www.gtbay.org/our-programs/kids-creek-restoration/>
- MMC: <http://www.munsonhealthcare.org/kidscreek>

During the construction process TWC also posted numerous photos on its Facebook page to keep the public up-to-date with progress: www.facebook.com/WatershedCenter/photos_albums. Additionally, TWC included information about this project in our May and December newsletters in 2013. TWC also made short video during placement of one of the bridge structures and posted it to our YouTube page: www.youtube.com/watch?v=zwwQLQ4tEW4.