



Environment & Land Use Grant Cycle March 2024

Antrim Conservation District, DBA CAKE CISMA

Award: \$8,460

Invasive species present an enormous threat to Michigan's biodiversity - second only to outright habitat destruction. CAKE CISMA, through the Antrim Conservation District, plans to use grant funds to jump-start a Native Plant Restoration Program to complement their existing Invasive Species Management Program. CAKE will promote revegetation with native plants as a strategy to improve the long-term effectiveness of invasive plant control efforts while also supporting pollinators/wildlife with ecologically beneficial species. Most invasive plant seeds love disturbed bare ground. Removal of invasive plants causes soil disturbance, so without native revegetation, the return of invasives is likely. During its inaugural year, the Native Plant Restoration Program will function as a pilot initiative accessible to residents, conservation groups, and schools within Charlevoix and Antrim Counties. The program will include a revegetation guide for landowners, a seed library, and staff time for additional events and educational efforts in Charlevoix County.

Camp Daggett

Award: \$8,000

There are areas of the Camp Daggett campus where the invasive species, autumn olive, is overtaking the vegetation and needs to be removed. The plant is difficult to eradicate, but Camp Daggett will partner with Habitat Landscaping to accomplish the task. Once the autumn olive is gone, they will install native, sustainable landscaping, including a diverse selection of native woody and perennial species. The new biodiversity will provide habitat for pollinators and birds as well as an education opportunity for campers. The renovated gardens will be used by the summer camp "nature" area director for camper curriculum as well as year-round as part of an upcoming campus-wide STEAM curriculum. Grant funds will support removal of invasive species and installation of sustainable, native landscaping.

Little Traverse Conservancy

Award: \$7,000

The Elizabeth B Hoffman Nature Preserve, a Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC) preserve in Charlevoix, currently has over 50 acres of agricultural land leased to a local farmer. The long-term plan for this preserve is to gradually transition these fields into native plant meadows that will provide habitat and beneficial relationships for wildlife and people. This fall, LTC plans to start this transition by planting native grasses in an 11.4 acre field after this year's corn harvest. Many of Michigan's grassland birds are declining due to a lack of habitat. This field will become a source of food and shelter for native insects and birds in the coming years. Grant funds will help start the work, by providing support for seeds and planting efforts.



St. James Township

Award: \$7,000

To accomplish their natural resources/recreation goals, St. James Township is working to protect, educate, and improve access at the Gull Harbor Natural Area (GHNA) on Beaver Island. High water, winds, and ice during the winter of 2021/2022 destroyed the interpretive signs and damaged the benches located along one of the hiking trails. With grant funds, they will replace the signage explaining the GHNA story, how to safely access the area, and to help people understand and enjoy the unique ecosystems on this property. Additionally, they will relocate the trail head to higher ground, protecting the two trail heads from motor vehicle traffic to allow better access.

Tara's Meadow Education & Retreat Center

Award: \$3,500

Tara's Meadow Education & Retreat Center (TM) engages communities who are environmentally concerned, and creates educational opportunities for those with less environmental knowledge. This year Tara's Meadow is focusing on local foods and ecological resilience on Beaver Island. With grant funds, they plan to bring Islanders together with expert presenters on soil regeneration, organic waste management, and local foods production. They will also spotlight ecological resilience by hosting "Team Monarch" during the BI Sustainability Week this June. They will bring in a Monarch Butterfly expert from Walloon Lake who will lead the planting of native forbs and collection of Monarch butterfly eggs and caterpillars to protect, raise, and release as butterflies in Charlevoix County.

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council

Award: \$25,000

Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council is planning the removal of Stover Creek dam, located near the mouth of the stream as it meets Lake Charlevoix near Ferry Avenue in Charlevoix. The dam is an old concrete structure that impounds a significant quantity of sediment, serves as a barrier to the migration of fish and other aquatic organisms, affects hydraulics, and may affect stream temperatures. Debris frequently builds up on the dam's upstream face, causing flooding during high flows. If the dam fails and sediment is released, it will smother the benthic organisms and fish downstream and could lead to algal blooms at the mouth. Grant funds will help with removing the dam, restoring the stream channel profile, and creating instream habitat, such as step-pool-riffles and woody structure, along with streambank restoration, which will greatly benefit the overall connection between the stream and lake. Restoring the stream's hydrology will provide aquatic organism passage between the lake and stream, discharge cooler and better oxygenated water to the lake, and return normal sediment transport processes. The burden of flooding on adjoining properties will diminish and nearby infrastructure will be better protected as a result.



Walloon Lake Association and Conservancy

Award: \$5,000

The Walloon Lake Association and Conservancy (WLAC) is working to acquire a truck, essential for advancing their mission and vision of conserving Walloon Lake and its surrounding natural habitats. Staff currently rely on personal vehicles to maintain over 2,300 acres of land in numerous locations around Walloon Lake. This causes inefficiencies in their ability to maintain preserves, as not everyone's vehicle is equipped to transport equipment or handle uneven terrain, and comes at a cost to the organization in the form of mileage reimbursements. Using personal vehicles for preserve maintenance has confused preserve users when they see unbranded vehicles in places they shouldn't be e.g. active-use trails, field areas, etc. Grant funds will help purchase an organizational vehicle, which will greatly improve WLAC's efficiency and ability to complete necessary initiatives in environmental restoration and preservation.

Conservation Resource Alliance

Awarded \$75,000 over three years, in 2022

CRA is replacing three road crossings - Jordan River Road, East and West over the Jordan River, and Fuller Road over Deer Creek. The engineered design for the new crossings calls for full-spanning timber bridges that will be bundled under one contract and implemented over three years (2022 to 2024). Bundling the crossings together allows for cost savings on many fronts and is an efficient use of dollars, time, and management for all involved. The project will improve the overall health of the river and its surrounding habitat by restoring full passage for aquatic species at all life stages, opening a total of 12 miles upstream and 20 miles downstream. The new crossings also will drastically reduce erosion by eliminating 25 tons of sediment each year that currently enters the stream. This project is in its final stages, with construction to take place in 2024/2025.

