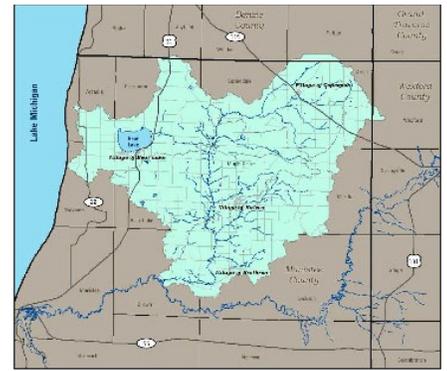


## Greater Bear Watershed

Including Bear Lake and Bear Creek in Manistee Co. Michigan



**July 2014**

### **An interim progress report on Watershed Plan implementation**

In July of 2013, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality approved the Greater Bear Watershed (GBW) Plan. This plan was a joint project of the Bear Creek Watershed Council and the Bear Lake Watershed Alliance. The Greater Bear Watershed Plan began as an update of the 2000 Bear Creek Watershed Plan and was designed to include all waters that compose the Bear Creek Watershed, known as the Greater Bear Watershed for purposes of the new, expanded plan.

Many partners came together to work on the GB WS project. Please visit the [www.bearwaters.org](http://www.bearwaters.org) web site to see the full list of watershed partners.

A final report for the project was submitted to MDEQ in December 2013. Since then, much has been accomplished. Here are some brief highlights,

**Greater Bear Watershed Coordinating Committee (GBWCC)** was formed to assist the Bear Creek Watershed Council and the Bear Lake Watershed Alliance with implementation of the watershed plan. The committee has officers representing both watershed groups. Its purpose, in brief, is to help both long standing watershed organizations work through the Greater Bear Watershed Plan, establish implementation strategies, and meet implementation goals and deadlines. The GBWCC will assist with annual reporting, data tracking, and web site maintenance.

**Information & Education (I & E) Goals** (Section J & Exhibit 91) are being addressed with the appointment of two volunteer committee chairs; one from the Bear Lake Watershed Alliance and one from the Bear Creek Watershed Council. I & E materials are being created and posted on the [www.bearwaters.org](http://www.bearwaters.org) web page and some are being printed for public distribution during local summer festivals. Materials will also be made available in local public locations, as appropriate.

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**Watershed Signs** for state roads and major county roads are being designed and a joint committee from the two watershed organizations is seeking quotes for the costs of sign creation and placement. The goal is a simple sign that tells travelers when they are entering the watershed.

**Water Quality Testing** is proceeding in both Bear Lake and Bear Creek according to watershed plan objectives. Both local watershed organizations are responsible for coordinating testing in their areas of Bear Lake and Bear Creek. Staff from District #10 Health Department assists in E-coli testing. In Bear Creek, the plan calls for dissolved oxygen (DO) testing in July and August, to determine whether DO levels decrease below levels health for local fish. The Bear Creek Watershed Council will attempt to find resources for dissolved oxygen analyses in Bear Creek.

**Invasive Aquatic Plants in Bear Lake** will continue to be treated by the Bear Lake Improvement Board. Our Greater Bear Watershed will help keep the public informed of treatment dates via an email notice.

**The Bear Lake Watershed Alliance Annual Banquet** is scheduled for August 9, 2014. This is the third annual banquet sponsored by the Bear Lake Watershed Alliance. The event raises funds for watershed activities and watershed plan implementation.

**Bear Creek 9-Mile Road Access Site** planning is progressing using services of the Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA). Since the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) purchased a 20 acre site along Bear Creek on the north side of 9-Mile Road in Maple Grove Township, the discussion of access to the creek in its most populate stretch has been controversial. Using the services of CRA, the Bear Creek Watershed Council is facilitating creation of a low-impact, walk-in access design for the site that will allow wading fishermen to fish the nearby area. Woody debris will be added to the stream in this area to provide fish cover and habitat thus improving fishing near the access site.

**Outreach to Neighboring Watershed Groups** has begun by having representatives from the GBWCC attend their meetings and by establishing communications with the neighboring watersheds about each others' activities.