

For Immediate Release

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BOARDMAN RIVER DAMS PROJECT AWARDED \$1,000,000 IN FUNDING

Traverse City, Michigan (December 2, 2010) – The Great Lakes Fishery Trust has awarded \$1 million to the City of Traverse City that will be used to remove Brown Bridge Dam on the Boardman River and restore 1.5 miles of cold-water trout stream, 156 acres of wetlands and 25 acres of upland habitat. This is the first of three dams that will be removed on the Boardman River. When all three dams are removed, it will result in the restoration of over 3 miles of cold-water stream, 253 acres of wetlands and 57 acres of upland habitat.

“The removal of the three Boardman River dams will be the largest dam removal in Michigan’s history and the largest wetlands restoration in the Great Lakes Basin,” said Erin McDonough, a Trustee of the Great Lakes Fishery Trust Board and Executive Director of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs. “It will reconnect 160 miles of free flowing river with the Great Lakes for the first time in nearly 150 years.”

McDonough added that the project, titled The Boardman: A River Reborn, has implications for Michigan and the nation since there are 2,500 similar dams in Michigan and 79,000 comparable dams in the United States that are aging, presenting safety threats and impounding natural waterways.

Todd Kalish, Chairman of the City/County-appointed project Implementation Team, said the funding from the Fishery Trust would be used, along with \$700,000 in funding already secured, to remove Brown Bridge Dam, the furthest upstream dam. The dam is owned by the City of Traverse City and had been operated for hydropower generation from 1921 until being decommissioned in 2006. The dam and its 191-acre impoundment are within the 1,310-acre Brown Bridge Quiet Area that is owned by the City and managed by the Grand Traverse Conservation District. The two year dam removal project will involve: engineering and design, including an analysis of methods to control sediment transport during dam removal; application of all applicable permits; removal of the dam, including demolition of the powerhouse and spillway and breaching the dam; and restoration and monitoring of the project area.

Engineering, design, and permitting work will begin in early 2011. The drawdown of the impoundment will begin no later than July 30, 2011, and deconstruction will take place in 2012. The removal and restoration project is expected to take two years to complete.

Brown Bridge Dam was selected to be the first of the three dams to be removed because it offers the most significant ecological benefits. The Brown Bridge project alone will restore over half of the total wetland acreage, and approximately half of the total stream mileage contained within the entire Boardman River dams removal project.

Kalish noted that the eventual restoration of the cold water river and wetland habitat will support fishery and wildlife resources, and enhance biodiversity in a watershed that currently supports 2 million recreational user days each year. This represents a significant economic impact on the region and State.

“We are grateful to the Fishery Trust for their leadership and continued support for this project,” said Traverse City Mayor Chris Bzdok. “We are also appreciative of the thousands of hours of volunteer time that have been dedicated to this project and the advice and guidance of the Implementation Team for the project.

Great Lakes Fishery Trust has scheduled an official check presentation for December 12 in Traverse City. The City of Traverse City, in partnership with Grand Traverse County and the project Implementation Team will continue efforts to secure funding from a variety of sources to complete the dam removal and river restoration project.

To learn more about the project and stay updated, visit www.TheBoardman.org.

ABOUT THE GREAT LAKES FISHERY TRUST

The Great Lakes Fishery Trust is an innovative funding program created in 1996 as part of a settlement with Consumers Energy and the Detroit Edison Company for fish losses caused by the operation of the Ludington Pumped Storage Plant on Lake Michigan. Since inception, the trust has provided over \$45 million to educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies to improve and protect the Great Lakes fishery. The Board of Trustees includes representation from: National Wildlife Federation; Michigan Department of Attorney General; Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians; Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment; Little River Band of Ottawa Indians; Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians; Michigan United Conservation Clubs; and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

ABOUT THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

In 2009, the dam owners (City of Traverse City owns Union Street and Brown Bridge Dams and Grand Traverse County owns Sabin and Boardman Dams) passed resolutions to allow an Implementation Team (IT) to make recommendations and decisions concerning overall planning and direction of the dam removal project. The IT consists of the dam owners and key agency stakeholder representatives.

THE BOARDMAN: A RIVER REBORN - PROJECT HISTORY

Traverse City Light and Power’s decision in 2004 to discontinue hydropower generation at Brown Bridge, Boardman and Sabin Dams triggered a process to assess the fate of the dams that were built between 1867 and 1921. The Great Lakes Fishery Trust awarded \$476,000 in

2006 to support the process to determine the fate of dams. That process is considered one of the most comprehensive studies of its type ever undertaken in the United States. It involved over 1,000 people in 180 public meetings and the assessment of 91 options for the future of the dams. In April 2009, the Traverse City Commission and Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners reviewed the scientific data and recommendations provided by the study, and voted to proceed with dam removal. In September 2010, the development of funding to sustain this project was supported by a joint resolution of the City Commission and County Board to “achieve the shared goals for a coordinated process to pursue the removal of Sabin, Boardman and Brown Bridge dams and modify Union Street Dam.”

ABOUT THE BOARDMAN RIVER

The Boardman River includes 160 miles of river and tributary stream, located in Grand Traverse and Kalkaska counties in Northwest Michigan. There are a total of 287-square miles in the watershed, producing one-third of the water volume of Grand Traverse Bay in Traverse City and draining 182,800 acres of land. An Estimated 2 million visitors use the Boardman River annually for recreation purposes. The river contains 36 river miles designated as Blue Ribbon river sections and is one of the top ten trout streams in Michigan.

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