



# Grand Traverse Conservation District

## Brown Bridge Quiet Area

### 2018

## Annual Report



Brown Bridge Photos Clockwise: Students from Children's House Montessori conducting plant surveys in the Brown Bridge Bottomlands (GTCD Staff); Volunteer Tree/Shrub Planting at Grasshopper Bridge Site (GTCD Staff); Bear Emerging From Her Den (Shane Hadd, Traverse City); River Access Use At Brown's Landing (GTCD Staff)

## **Brown Bridge Vision Statement:**

"Restore, preserve and protect the integrity of the natural environment, including its inhabitants, yet allow managed public use for generations to come".

## **Brown Bridge Advisory Committee (BBAC)**

- Current Members: Deni Scrudato, Chairperson, Judy Nemitz, Vice-Chair, Nelson Asper, Kathleen Kasdorf; Ed Flees; Paul Maxbauer; Rebecca Millican; Jamie Kidwell-Brix; Michael Vickery; James Garavaglia; Marty Colburn, City Manager; Frank Dituri, Director, Department of Public Services; Michele Howard, City Commission.
- Four (quarterly) meetings of the BBAC were conducted in 2018 including the Annual June Potluck meeting held at Buck's Landing in the Quiet Area. Maps and meeting minutes can be found at: <http://www.traversecitymi.gov/brownbridge.asp>
- Since 1993 (25 years), the Grand Traverse Conservation District (GTCD) has managed the Brown Bridge Quiet Area for the City of Traverse City through a Resource Management Agreement.

## **Grants**

### **DNR Wildlife Habitat Grant**

**Project Title:** *Forage Site Collaborative*

**Status:** 2-year cycle grant closed on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Awarded: \$100,000 Total Project Cost: \$122,585

**Partners:** Grand Traverse Conservation District, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Rotary of Traverse City, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Boy Scouts of America (Webelo's), National Wild Turkey Federation, and Community Volunteers

- The primary goal of the project is to establish foraging opportunities for game species on huntable lands open to the public. Total project deliverables: planted 662 Soft-mast producing trees, planted 250 spruce trees, installed 12.5 acres of native grass and wildflower seed, created 16 wildlife brush piles, and treated 12.5 acres of spotted knapweed.

### **USFWS (Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act funding)**

**Project Title:** Boardman River: Brown Bridge – Aquatic Habitat Improvement and Bank Stabilization Project Using Wood – Phase II

**Status:** Awarded: 2018 Closes: 2020 Grant Amount: \$30,000; Estimated Total Project Cost: \$75,000+

- This project is Phase-II of a multi-phase project to install in-stream large wood habitat and bank protection wood along 1200' reach of the Boardman River after the removal of Brown Bridge dam in 2012. The installation of large wood will provide immediate aquatic habitat benefits while enhancing hydrological, hydraulic, geomorphologic, physiochemical and biological functions while allowing for the safe passage of paddlers. Next year GTCD staff, state, federal, and tribal partners staff will secure additional funding, complete engineered site plans, apply for all necessary permits, and secure sources of large wood to provide instream habitat and bank protection.

### **USFS – Landscape Scale Restoration grant program**

**Project Title:** Threefold Restoration of the Boardman River Bottomlands Post Dam Removals

**Status:** Application Submitted (Pending)

- Through this project, GTCD staff, with partners and volunteers, will restore the landscape of three former Boardman River dam bottomland areas, which includes Brown Bridge, with native trees, invasive species control, and educate forestland owners and the public on these efforts and their benefits now and in the future.

## **Bottomlands Management**

- Contracted with Wildlife and Wetland Solutions to perform invasive species treatment on approximately 35 acres of bottomlands. Priority target species included: reed canary grass, Canada/bull thistle, and spotted knapweed.
- Grand Traverse Conservation District staff thoroughly surveyed the entire bottomlands for invasive phragmites using GPS tracking/waypoints and photo-documentation.
- Coordinated the Northwest Michigan Invasive Species Network crew on the treatment of invasive phragmites on the bottomlands.
- Woodcock Brood Surveys: Upon approval from the Brown Bridge Advisory Committee, permission was granted to Steve Paxton to search for and band woodcock broods using pointing dogs. Paxton stated the bottomlands are “excellent environment for woodcock breeding and brood raising”. However, due to an exceptionally late and cold spring period, success was minimal. Three chicks were seen on the bottomlands, however, none were captured and banded. It is expected that Paxton will request permission to survey the bottomlands again in 2019.
- Vegetation Monitoring: In 2013, MNFI and GTCD staff established several groups of transects within the bottomlands. The method of point-line intercept sampling was selected to quantitatively establish a baseline documentation of the plant species present in each transect. The transects were sampled again in 2014. This year, the Children’s House Montessori school sampled a portion of the transects under the guidance of Grand Traverse Conservation District staff.

## **Volunteer Support**

An estimated 175 hours of volunteer services were provided by community members performing a variety of tasks, including: tree planting, hand-pulling of invasive plant species, trail monitoring, and construction/improvement of infrastructure.

## **Routine Maintenance**

- Routinely inspected all trailheads and parking areas
- Cleaned outhouses and refilled hand sanitizers and toilet paper, as needed
- Mowed and weed-whipped trails and trailheads, as needed
- Fixed several sections of broken cedar log fence and boardwalk planks/rub-rails
- Cleared downfall trees when reported
- Improved pole barn use and capacity through concrete floors and garage door installation
- Installed new dog waste-bag dispenser units that include trash receptacles
- Performed vehicle counts and photo-documented parklands visitors during peak periods of use
- Rotated seasonal poster displays at trailhead kiosk stations
- Periodically inspected Agri-Drain unit (used to create *shallow water wetland*)

## **Brown Bridge Rules**

- For nearly 25 years the City has grappled with how to implement enforceable rules for the Brown Bridge Quiet Area located in East Bay Township. Working through City staff including the City Attorney, City Manager, DPS Director, Parks & Rec. Director, and the BBAC, draft rules were adopted, and an inter-governmental agreement was prepared between the City and East Bay Township. This agreement will allow the rules to be adopted by township ordinance making them enforceable. Adoption of the rules is expected to take place in early 2019.

### **Brown's Landing Pedestrian Bridge**

- Worked with Rotary Friends of the Boardman to secure \$50,000 pledge to support construction of the Brown's Landing Footbridge just downstream of the former dam site where the historic Brown's Bridge was constructed in 1869 by Walter William Brown. This pledge, plus an additional \$40,000 raised by GTCD, will be matched 1:1 by the City through the Brown Bridge Trust Park's Improvement Fund.
- Worked with City Engineering to send out a purchase order to Bridge Brothers for the 90' long pedestrian bridge slated for installation at Brown Bridge. Delivery expected early 2019.