



# Grand Traverse Conservation District

Inspiring exploration, appreciation and  
conservation of our natural world





# Where we are today



Grand Traverse  
Conservation District  
[www.natureiscalling.org](http://www.natureiscalling.org)



# What we do



- 🌿 We support sustainable, local agriculture
- 🌿 We train future generations of conservation leaders
- 🌿 We provide gateways to the natural world
- 🌿 We restore the Boardman River and its watershed





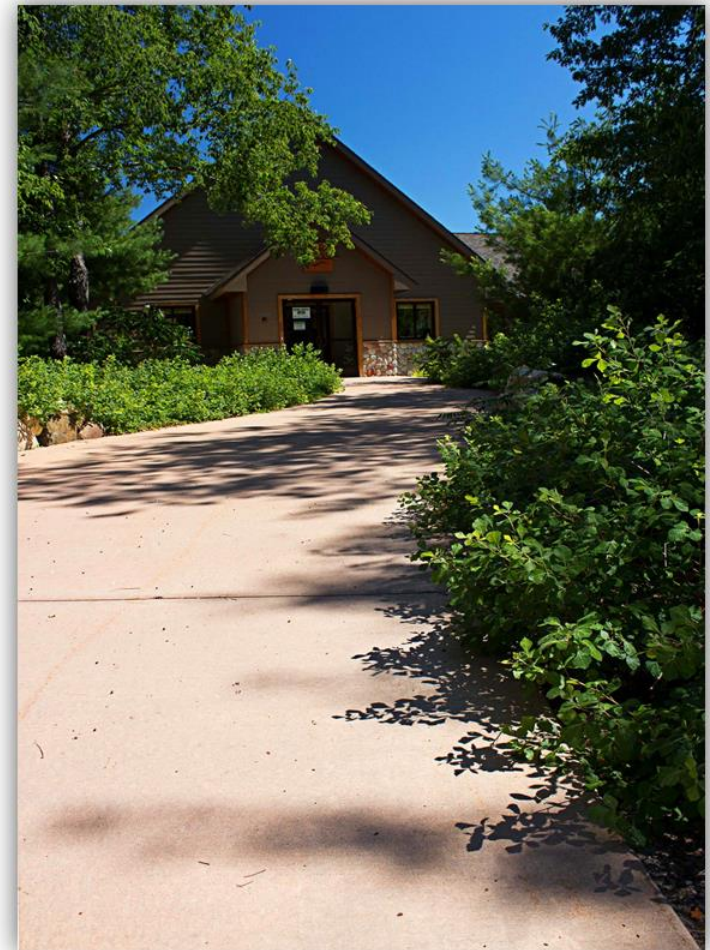
# Boardman River Nature Center



With the assistance of a local university, a Community Survey was created and sent to stakeholders, community members, and educators in 2005/2006

Purpose was to:

- establish need for and support of a nature center
- determine focus of a nature center
- determine target markets for a nature center
- determine areas of programming interest
- determine need for community meeting space



# Boardman River Nature Center



Once the need for a nature center was determined

- GTCD conducted a capital campaign to build the building
- Operations are funded through individual gifts and foundation grants
- Nature Center is primarily staffed by volunteers

There are several local foundations in the Traverse City region that took interest in the creation of a nature center

- Rotary Charities of TC was a major player in helping create the nature center
- They have provided both capital and operational funding





# Boardman River Nature Center



The Nature Center opened its doors in 2008. It was built by the community, for the community, as a place to expand learning outside the classroom and encourage children (and adults) to experience the outdoors. The Nature Center is an interpretive nature gallery aimed to educate and inspire visitors.



# Boardman River Nature Center

## Community Education at the Boardman River Nature Center:



- Community education needs were met with special interest programming at the Boardman River Nature Center
- Peepers Pre-K Program- created in 2008 in response to a growing national concern for the disconnect between children and the natural world. The program provides an ideal environment for those pivotal “first nature experiences”—the ones that last a lifetime and set children down a path of curiosity, empathy, and wonder.
- Nature Education for Students and Teachers (NEST)- field trip programs that allows students a hands-on experience with nature
- Nature Day Camps- Parents wanted a continuation of our programming in the summer





# Boardman River Nature Center



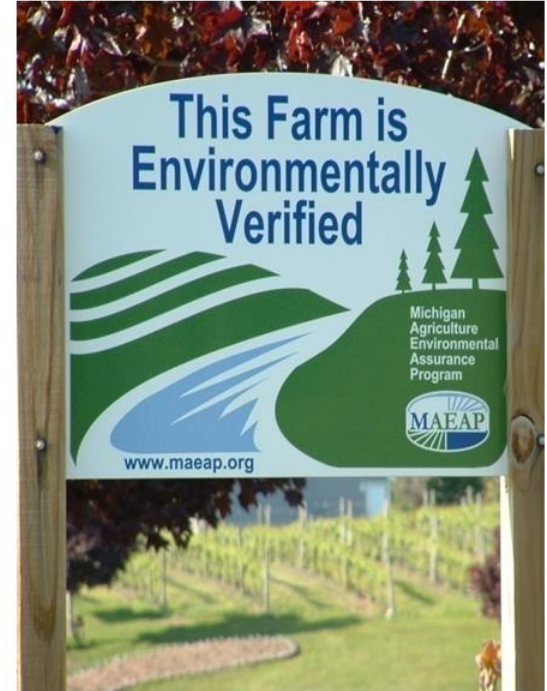
## Outreach Efforts



Community Programs  
at the Boardman River  
Nature Center



Public Land Management



Private Land Services

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# Boardman River Nature Center



## Ongoing outreach efforts are conducted to sustain the Boardman River Nature Center:

- Community partners—Four organizations that exchange meeting space for volunteer service
- Community members are recruited to assist with programming ideas and to provide programs for a free or reduced cost
- In-house GTCD departments such as MAEAP and Invasive Species Network provide programming
- Other community partners that contribute to programming include:
  - The DNR
  - Local colleges and universities bring classes to BRNC where our staff presents to them and in return their teaching staff provides programming to our audiences
- To stay current with community programming wants/needs, we survey previous program participants for program ideas—ongoing



# Boardman River Nature Center



Ongoing outreach efforts are conducted to sustain the Boardman River Nature Center:

BRNC is marketed as a location for community meeting space

- It is located on 505 acres in a Nature Education Reserve
- It is a unique and desirable location for groups to meet
- Twice yearly Chamber of Commerce programs are held here
- Networking groups meet here
- We market rentals for community meetings, birthday parties, and other public and private events





# Boardman River Nature Center



Ongoing outreach efforts are conducted to sustain the Boardman River Nature Center:

We provide outreach through community presentations to

- Professional groups
- Conservation groups
- Schools and pre-schools
- Retired groups such as retired teachers
- Conferences such as Early childhood education
- Local governing bodies such as Parks and Recreation, Planning Commissions, Townships, etc.





For the past 20 years we have been restoring, monitoring, and providing safe, sustainable access to the Boardman River.

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# Boardman River Stewardship



An additional area of Community Outreach includes Stewardship Outreach

- Volunteers for Boardman River Clean-up
- Volunteers to assist with restoration after dams removal
- Volunteers for invasive species management



# Boardman River Restoration

## Stewardship Outreach after 2012 Brown Bridge Dam Removal



- Brown Bridge restoration is approx.. 191 acres over 2 river miles of cold water trout stream
- Reconnected floodplain and wetland/upland habitats



# Boardman River Restoration



## Stewardship Outreach after 2012 Brown Bridge Dam Removal

Over 100 community volunteers have donated nearly a 1,000 hours of their time to help with restoration and monitoring of the Brown Bridge bottomlands since dam removal in 2012.

Volunteer activities included:

- Repaired access road
- Rescued fish and amphibians during draw down stages of Brown Bridge pond
- Removed invasive species and planted native trees and shrubs in the recently exposed bottomlands



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# Boardman River Nature Center



## Where we are going

- We recently participated in a Peer Consult with Association of Nature Center Administrators (ANCA)
- Their report includes short- and long-term suggestions for programming, exhibits, and trails.
- Guidelines for identification of target markets
- Resources to help guide our initiatives



# Boardman River Nature Center



Management of the Nature Center is ever-changing

There is ongoing:

- Community Outreach
- Funding needs
- Surveying of community needs and wants
- Program development
- Exhibit updates
- Trail improvements



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# Boardman River Nature Center



**The Boardman River Nature Center is an integral part of advancing the mission of the Grand Traverse Conservation District:**

*To inspire exploration, appreciation and conservation of our natural world*





# Contact Info



# THANK YOU!

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