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River Raisin Watershed Council and Loch Erin Property Owners Association Watershed Management Grant

Mary Lowe – Daily Telegram 586.489.8861 MLowe@gannett.com

Philip Kittredge Loch Erin POA and River Raisin Watershed Council board member 248.202.1044 pkittredge@icloud.com

The River Raisin Watershed Council (RRWC) was recently awarded a research and planning grant totaling just over \$100,000 and requiring at least a 10% match in local funds or in-kind contributions. The grant will fund a 2-year study of the Wolf Creek watershed in the area immediately surrounding Loch Erin, and will involve sampling streams, creeks, and ditches for pollutants and contaminants in the Upper Wolf Creek watershed, as well as an agricultural usage survey of the Wolf Creek watershed to its termination at Lake Adrian. The goal of the project is to identify Critical Source Areas (CSA's) and recommend appropriate remedial actions or Best Management Processes (BMP's). With an approved plan in place, additional funding can then be requested to implement the plan's recommendations.

Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) approves and administers these EPA-funded Watershed Management Plans for organizations demonstrating urgent needs. In our case, after experiencing two years of unusual amounts of Blue Green Algae on Loch Erin, the Property Owners Association (POA) decided to study the issue further. With the assistance of a resident very knowledgeable about surface water pollution, water samples were collected at several stream sites feeding Loch Erin. Results indicated high levels of both E.coli and phosphorous at several points. In fact, the E.coli levels in some locations exceeded EGLE guidelines for this area of the watershed.

Results were shared with several local and state agencies, and ultimately, at an October 17, 2019 meeting organized by Senator Dale Zorn, EGLE suggested the Loch Erin POA consider developing a Watershed Management Plan for the area. EGLE indicated funding for this work could potentially be available via a formal request.

After a failed attempt to secure funding in 2020, the association teamed with RRWC and LimnoTech, an Ann Arbor based environmental consulting group with a focus on water quality, to submit the ultimately successful grant request. LimnoTech will provide technical leadership for the project, while the RRWC will provide grant administration and perform the required elements of outreach, training, education, and community awareness of the River Raisin watershed issues. The city of Adrian is supporting the initiative through water sample analysis, and Loch Erin residents will provide support through continued water sample collection in critical areas. Additionally, the Lenawee County Conservation District will be responsible for the agricultural survey portion of the project and other local government agencies have indicated their support as needs may arise.

We feel this project is a great example of bringing together several local organizations and agencies to work on a project beneficial to the entire community and which utilizes their individual strengths to improve the overall health of the River Raisin Watershed. The project is supportive of the Michigan Adaptive Management Plan to Reduce Phosphorus Loading into Lake Erie approved in December 2021 ([Michigan's Adaptive Management Plan to Reduce Phosphorus Loading Into Lake Erie](#)). We would expect

that similar projects along the River Raisin would advance the stated goal of reducing phosphorous loading into Lake Erie by 40%.

About Loch Erin

The Loch Erin Property Owners Association represents a private lake community of 900 homes surrounding the 620-acre manmade lake. The lake is an impoundment on Wolf Creek adjacent to the village of Onsted, Michigan. Construction of the lake started in the late 1970's. The impoundment has served as a reserve supply for the City of Adrian's water supply from Lake Adrian.

About the River Raisin Watershed Council (RRWC)

The RRWC was formed by a legislative act in 1974 and governed by a board appointed by its member municipalities. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit, its mission is to preserve, protect, and partner in stewarding the River and watershed – through watershed education; training; K-12 and family activities; debris clearing, dam removal, and expanding river access; partnering with local, state, and federal organizations in water monitoring, safety, biological, and environmental studies; farming and agriculture initiatives; and working toward an increasingly navigable and healthy River Raisin from its source in Hillsdale County's Goose Creek to its mouth in Monroe. Further information about the RRWC, including membership and making a gift in support of this and other initiatives, is available at www.riverraisin.org.