

# Betsie River, Platte River and Otter Creek, MI



**Dair Creek was re-routed and forked in the late 1800s to support Dair Mill. A dam was also built, impeding stream flow and fish passage.**

*Photo Courtesy Conservation Resource Alliance*



**The restored creek runs through the proper channel. The boards, blocks and concrete dam were removed.**

*Photo Courtesy Conservation Resource Alliance*



**Fish population surveys on Otter Creek reveal a viable population of Coaster brook trout.**

*Photo Courtesy Conservation Resource Alliance*

## Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians

### The Watershed

The Betsie River, Platte River and Otter Creek watersheds together comprise a drainage area of 360 square-miles mostly within Benzie County, Michigan. The predominantly rural watershed offers high-quality water resources that are important to the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. The tribe relies on the rivers and creeks for subsistence fishing, and the abundant natural resources help drive the local economy. The watershed abuts Lake Michigan and is prized for exceptional sport fishing and recreational opportunities. Despite being ranked second among all counties in Michigan for population growth since 1990, the county's per capita income remains near the low end for the entire state.

### Issues

The primary issue affecting streams in the watershed is sedimentation. The soils in the watershed are sandy, and the topography is steeply sloped, causing significant erosion. Watershed assessments indicate that faulty stream crossings, dams, erosion from historical logging activities, and historical channel modifications are leading causes of water quality problems.

### Project Activities

- **River Care Model:** The tribe will follow this model, which integrates local community efforts and resources with state, federal, tribal and regional non-profit strategies to accomplish water quality improvements that are mutual priorities.
- **Restoration of Fish Habitat and Stream Hydrology:** Eight miles of stream will be reconnected to the main stem of the Betsie River, providing cold water spawning habitat for brook trout and brown trout. In addition, an old dam will be removed, road structures modified, and the stream rerouted into its natural channel.



**Betsie River, Platte River and  
Otter Creek Watershed**

**Project Partners:**

- **Conservation Resource Alliance**
- **Michigan Department of Natural Resources**
- **National Park Service**
- **Betsie River Watershed Restoration Committee**
- **Benzie County Road Commission**
- **Benzie Conservation District**

**Leveraged Resources:**

EPA Grant: \$823,500

Match in non-federal funds and in-kind services: \$287,500

**For More Information contact:**

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Chippewa Indians**

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● **Best Management Practices to  
Remove Sediments and Nutrients:**

The Grand Traverse Band will work with the county to install a comprehensive set of practices to manage and divert runoff from a road crossing that contributes 150 tons of excess sediment per year to the Betsie River.

- **Wetlands Restoration:** Along the Platte River, an unused trout farm will be restored to its original wetland condition to eliminate excessive sediment and nutrient inputs and restore the stream flow.



**EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant program is a competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.**

**For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit:  
<http://www.epa.gov/twg>**

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