



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 13, 2012

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GRAND TRAVERSE REGIONAL LAND CONSERVANCY CELEBRATES SUCCESSFUL 2011 PROTECTION EFFORTS

Conservancy protected over 1300 acres of significant natural, scenic, and farm lands
and over six miles of freshwater shoreline in 2011

(Traverse City, MI) The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy made strong advances in 2011 toward its mission of protecting significant natural, scenic and farm lands and advancing stewardship, now and for future generations. GTRLC ended 2011, its 20th year in operation, with another significant year for land conservation.

Eight properties totaling 1,362.5 acres and over six miles of shoreline were permanently protected in 2011, including the former Mountain Jack's property which includes 515' of East Bay frontage and is part of the ongoing Acme Shoreline Park initiative. Additionally, a Conservancy-owned Nature Preserve in Benzie and Manistee Counties will provide access to over 10,000 linear feet of the Betsie River. Four privately owned properties protected with conservation easements feature miles of shoreline on the Lower Manistee River, Lake Michigan and Bennett Creek – an important tributary of the Jordan River – will help protect water quality. Two more local farms complete the suite of conservation for the year and add to the steadily-growing number of active farmland acres permanently protected by the Conservancy. "Our work positively impacts what our community values most - access to our region's majestic shorelines; recreation and other outdoor activities; safe, clean water; a sense of rural character; respect for private property rights; and a healthy economy" says Executive Director, Glen Chown.

Chown also notes: "The protection of a property does not end our efforts. Stewardship activities include treating invasive species like phragmites along our shorelines, and building and maintaining trails – nearly 30 miles worth on our nature preserves and in public parks and natural areas like the Glacial Hills Pathway near Bellaire. We now have 208 conservation easements to monitor annually in partnership with private landowners - nearly half our total protected acreage."

Also notable in 2011 were the 110 guided hikes and educational events, volunteer opportunities (volunteers generously contributed over 3600 hours of their time) and celebrations of shared successes that the Conservancy hosted. In the twenty years that the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy has worked to protect important land and water resources, they've managed to permanently preserve more than 35,500 acres of land and 113 miles of shoreline in Grand Traverse, Benzie, Antrim, Kalkaska and Manistee Counties. "We have an ambitious goal that will leave a lasting legacy for our region," said Chown. "We want the next 20 years to be as productive as the first. We are thankful for the incredible support we receive from our community."

The Conservancy depends on the support of landowners, individual donors, businesses, foundations, volunteers and government to continue to protect public and private land and create and manage the preserves that provide public access to nature in northwest Lower Michigan. Find out more about the Conservancy by visiting their website at www.gtrlc.org.

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