



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 8, 2022

Contact: CityManager@BayCityMI.org

Bay City Takes the Lake Huron Forever Pledge

Bay City is the second Michigan community to join an international effort to protect Lake Huron by implementing stormwater solutions and encouraging community action.

BAY CITY, MICH. – Bay City is committing to the protection of Lake Huron’s water quality by curbing stormwater runoff, planting trees and improving natural areas while inspiring community members to take action.

The Bay City Commission adopted a resolution at its meeting on November 7, 2022, to take the Lake Huron Forever Pledge. They are the second Michigan community to do so after Au Gres in January.

The Lake Huron Forever initiative was developed in 2019 by shoreline community foundations and conservation partners from the United States and Canada to advance water quality protection and sustainable communities on both sides of the lake. Facilitated locally by conservation nonprofit Huron Pines, the initiative supports community efforts to design and implement on-the-ground projects that strengthen the health of residents and natural resources.

“Our community well-being and economic prosperity are tied to Lake Huron,” reads the pledge. “We understand that access to healthy natural resources like fresh air, clean water and public land improve the health and wellness of our entire community. We are committed to understanding the unique connections our residents and visitors have to Bay City and to incorporating their priorities and concerns into our decision making as we continue to lead natural resources protection efforts in our region. We pledge to protect Lake Huron forever.”

More than just a promise to do good for the lake, the pledge outlines the challenges facing the lakeshore community and measures to address them. For Bay City, these include:

- Support and maintain existing programs which promote economic, environmental and social sustainability.
- Reduce stormwater runoff, which can carry pollutants into local waterways. Increase the use of nature-based solutions and innovative approaches to manage stormwater on city property while balancing maintenance needs and aesthetics.
- Improve the quality of natural areas within the City to support biodiversity and wildlife and enhance urban resilience.
- Improve the urban tree canopy to reduce thermal pollution, filter stormwater runoff, manage erosion, improve climate resilience and benefit wildlife habitat.
- Provide a comprehensive recycling program to reduce pollution, conserving energy and natural resources.
- Control the spread of invasive plant species. One of those, *Phragmites australis*, has taken over many sensitive coastal and wetland habitats in the region, obstructing lake views and impacting recreation.
- Prioritize education and engagement with information and stories targeted for the general public of Bay City.

Action steps in Bay City’s Lake Huron Forever pledge include working in partnership with its sister city Goderich, Ontario to engage on a local level and learn from one another. Integrating pledge goals into city recreation and master plans will move both city and Lake Huron Forever goals forward.

“The City of Bay City is looking forward to being an active partner in the Lake Huron Forever initiative,” said City Manager Dana Muscott. “The Saginaw River and surrounding waters are key assets to our community. By taking this pledge, it’s just one way that we can ensure that we are part of the collaborative efforts to continue to protect the natural resources that we have come to rely on.”

Zachary Branigan is Executive Director of the Saginaw Bay Land Conservancy, a longtime partner of the City and Lake Huron Forever.

“Bay City has shown time and again this is a community that respects and elevates nature, and the adoption of the Lake Huron Forever pledge only strengthens that resolve,” Branigan said. “The City has consistently prioritized access to natural features and adopted more gentle approaches to managing its parks and open spaces. Adopting this pledge represents a recognition of the work already underway and a commitment to future action.”

Diane Mahoney is President and CEO of Bay Area Community Foundation, a core partner and funder of the initiative.

“We are grateful to the City of Bay City for proactively protecting our treasured natural resources for future generations,” Mahoney said. “We commend Bay City Commissioners, City Manager Muscott and City staff for taking this bold step to institutionalize our community’s dedication to the important assets of the Saginaw River, the Saginaw Bay Watershed and Lake Huron.”

Huron Pines is facilitating the partner effort to inspire lakeshore communities in Michigan to join the Lake Huron Forever initiative with current funding from Bay Area Community Foundation, Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan and Consumers Energy Foundation.

Huron Pines is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 1973 to conserve and enhance Northern Michigan’s natural resources to ensure healthy water, protected places and vibrant communities. With offices in Gaylord and Alpena, Huron Pines improves economic, environmental, educational and recreational opportunities throughout Northern Michigan. To learn more, visit lakehuronforever.org.

###



Above: Middlegrounds Island teems with wildflowers in July 2022 following local efforts to restore native plant communities and build a trail network there.

Left: A trail at Riverbend West Nature Area, a collaboration between Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy and the City of Bay City to create a passive recreation site overlooking the Saginaw River.