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Lower Boardman River Leadership Team to Facilitate Process to Gather and Respond to Questions about FishPass Project

TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN – *FishPass at the Union Street Dam*, the capstone of a 15-year Boardman River restoration and dam removal project, will be the focus of a two-part public education and information forum during October 2019. The goal of the forum is to ensure that citizens and all interested parties have the facts, information, and answers to their questions regarding the last phase of the comprehensive dam removal and river restoration effort. The first phase of the public forum will seek and document questions from all interests about the project. The second phase will provide answers from the project team.

The mission of FishPass is to provide upstream and downstream passage of Great Lakes fish species while preventing invasive fish species like the Sea Lamprey from moving upstream. It will also replace the deteriorating Union Street Dam with an improved barrier that includes both fish sorting and naturalized river channels. If invasive species like the Sea Lamprey were allowed to reach upstream waters and spawn, there would be devastating impacts on Great Lakes fish populations.

“It is clear that people still have many questions regarding FishPass and the Union Street Dam,” said Brett Fessell, a member of the FishPass Advisory Board and one of the original members of the Boardman River Dams Committee and the succeeding Boardman Implementation Team. “Given the importance, size and complexities of this final step to remove or modify the last of four dams on the Boardman and restore the free-flowing connection between the Boardman and Lake Michigan, we need to ensure all interests understand what is planned and to the greatest extent possible have all of their questions answered.”

Fellow Advisory Board member and Implementation Team Chairman, Frank Dituri added, “To initiate the process, there will be opportunities for everyone to simply ask questions about any element of the project. We will then prepare responses and present the questions and

answers to everyone. We anticipate there will be questions that simply cannot be answered at this time and where that is the case, we'll say that too."

The process to secure questions will be coordinated by facilitators from the Lower Boardman River Leadership Team of the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority (DDA). Since June 2019, the DDA has coordinated with the Lower Boardman River Leadership Team to facilitate a process to develop a Unified Plan for the Lower Boardman River.

All questions will be answered by FishPass staff or Advisory Board members on behalf of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. A written report containing the questions and responses will be discussed and made available through a public forum on October 30, 2019 and on the websites of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, Fish Pass, Traverse City DDA, and Lower Boardman River.

Two public forums will be held solely to **invite and document questions** from participants:

Tuesday, **October 15, 2019**: 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
2nd Floor Training Room, Governmental Center
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, Michigan 49684

Tuesday, **October 15, 2019**: 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
2nd Floor Training Room, Governmental Center
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, Michigan 49684

Questions about FishPass and the Union Street Dam will also be sought as follows:

- Through an online FishPass Question Form on the Great Lakes Fishery Commission Fish Pass website: <http://www.glfc.org/fishpass.php>
- Through an online FishPass Questions Form on the Traverse City Downtown Development Authority website: <https://dda.downtowntc.com> and <https://lowerboardman.downtowntc.com>
- By filling out FishPass Questions Forms available now at: Traverse City Downtown Development Authority, 303 E. State Street, Suite C, Traverse City, Michigan 49686

The second public forum will be held to **distribute, provide and discuss responses** to the questions as follows:

Wednesday, **October 30, 2019**: 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Traverse City Opera House
106 E. Front Street
Traverse City, Michigan 49684

Hard copies of the question and answer report will be available on October 30th at the meeting and at the offices and on the websites of the Traverse City DDA, Lower Boardman River, and City of Traverse City. The question and answer report will also be available on the Great Lakes Fishery Commission website.

Those interested in FishPass are encouraged to learn about the project at the Great Lakes Fishery Commission website: www.glfsc.org/fishpass.php. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission was established in 1955 by the Canadian/U.S. Convention on Great Lakes Fisheries. The Commission coordinates fisheries research, controls the invasive sea lamprey and facilitates cooperative fishery management among the state, provincial, tribal and federal agencies.

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