



**For Immediate Release
May 29, 2019**

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GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION UNVEILS “FISHPASS” DESIGN

After months of planning and considerable consultation, innovative project to pass fish and block invasive species is revealed

DETROIT, MICHIGAN—The Great Lakes Fishery Commission unveiled the final design for the innovative “FishPass” project today during its 64th annual meeting, held in Detroit, Michigan. FishPass, which will be located on the Boardman River in Traverse City, Michigan, is a project aimed at solving one of the world’s most difficult fishery management challenges: how to pass fish around barriers and dams while still blocking harmful species like sea lampreys. FishPass is the capstone of a 20-year whole-river restoration project on the Boardman River. Photos from today’s unveiling are overleaf.

Jim McKane, the Commission’s chair, explained: “Tens of thousands of dams fragment habitat throughout the Great Lakes basin. This fragmentation is not always conducive to fishery restoration or management. That said, those dams also block invasive sea lampreys, each one of which will destroy 40 pounds of Great Lakes fish. The Great Lakes Fishery Commission believes technology can be developed to have it both ways: to automatically sort a mixed assemblage of fish so that desirable species can pass an obstruction and destructive species like sea lampreys can be stopped.”

FishPass will be constructed on the Boardman River in downtown Traverse City at the location of the existing, but deteriorating, Union Street Dam. It will consist of a sea lamprey barrier just upstream of the to-be-removed dam, a channel downstream of the sea lamprey barrier to test fish-sorting techniques and technologies, and a natural river channel for recreation and normal river flow. The location also will be an improved city park so that visitors can observe the “living laboratory” that FishPass will provide.

Many of the FishPass Partners were on-hand for today’s unveiling. In addition to members of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, officials present included Jim Carruthers, mayor of Traverse City; Mark Wilson, a councilor for the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians; Marty Coburn, city manager of Traverse City; Gary Whelan, program manager for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources; Frank Dituri, director of public services for Traverse City; Carl Platz, Great Lakes program manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Brett Fessel, a biologist with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians.

“The final design for FishPass reflects the project’s engineering requirements, the agencies’ fishery management goals, and the community’s desires,” said Doug Stang, the Commission’s vice-chair. “The Commission and its partners have held scores of public meetings and workshops over the past few years to ensure the project is sound and is a welcomed addition to Traverse City. The design unveiled today demonstrates we have hit the mark—a project where form meets function and has the potential to change the way fisheries are managed, both in the Great Lakes basin and worldwide.”

The Army Corps of Engineers, in collaboration with the firm AECOM, developed the FishPass design with input from the partners and the community. Construction of FishPass should begin in early 2020. For more information about FishPass, and to see the final design, visit <http://www.glfc.org/fishpass.php>.

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GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION

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Commission Vice-Chair Doug Stang (L) and Commission Chair Jim McKane (R) unveil the final design for FishPass to attendees at the Great Lakes Fishery Commission's 64th annual meeting in Detroit, Michigan. Photos: N. Allen, GLFC (top) and T. Lawrence, GLFC (bottom)