Conservation and Diversity

in the Saginaw Bay Watershed

Final Report

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Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network

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Executive Summary

Conservation, environment, and sustainability (CES) are terms used to define relationships to the land and how we care for the land. These terms are often seen as academic, and tied to the European-American experience. Given the historical context of race, land ownership, and racism in our country, many people of color are often not represented in conservation-related organizations, and projects. This is evident in the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) where many CES projects and organizations are led by individuals of European descent and largely benefit communities with ample natural resources. Thus, the Saginaw Bay WIN sought to identify ways to engage people of color in the communities of Flint and Saginaw to identify priorities and projects that are of importance and valued.

University Outreach at the University of Michigan-Flint identified organizations and individuals representing grassroots groups working and living in both Flint and Saginaw that actively work or aspire to work with people of color around CES. These individuals participated in a survey and an interview and/or focus group to provide guidance to Saginaw Bay WIN on values related to CES, and identify priorities and projects in their respective communities. This project sought to initiate conversations with organizations and serves as a starting point for the conversation. Twenty-four individuals representing twenty-three organizations from Flint, Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland participated in the project. Due to the limitations in sample size and participation with organizational representatives, these results cannot be extrapolated across the watershed. However, it may offer a path forward Saginaw Bay WIN to support organizations focused on building relationships in communities of color.

The results show many active grassroots, nonprofit, and government agencies working on CES in Flint and Saginaw. Grassroots organizations are most effective in working directly with residents while nonprofits and government agencies are most effective at delivering educational and infrastructure-related programs tied to CES. Many government and nonprofit agencies struggle engaging with residents due to their location being outside of the urban areas, lack of funding to provide transportation, or they are not trusted by the community. Nonprofit organizations focused on CES would benefit by partnering with grassroots organizations that are trusted by the communities they seek to engage.

Past planning efforts at the municipal and nonprofit levels over the last ten years prioritize recreational assets, maintenance, and access; as well as amenities that promote quality of life, cultural values, economic opportunity, and measures to conserve and restore the natural environment. Many of these planning efforts engaged or were led by residents in Flint and Saginaw.

Education is important and is seen as a critical first step at engaging residents in both cities, as one respondent noted, "Lots of water in white communities, living around lakes. Like Lake

Fenton. We don't have that here, we grow up in concrete and grass. Let us know what opportunities are there in concrete and grass, urban communities, we don't get to dream about this stuff".

Grassroots organizations in Flint do not make the connection to the Saginaw Bay, as one person noted "Just the name Saginaw Bay WIN means that I would not approach this organization for money... In Flint, we don't connect to 'Saginaw Bay'. If you don't know about watersheds and how they work, you wouldn't necessarily apply to this organization".

Partnerships are essential to success, every organization relies on partnerships to expand programming and reach new audiences, including individuals and groups traditionally underrepresented in CES programs. This is coupled by a strong reliance on volunteers, particularly in the areas of maintenance of vacant lots and parks. Many individuals noted that, "parks go underutilized. Need more things to get people on bikes, using park to promote activities, walking, yoga. Programs that get people to use green spaces."

This is in contrast to the funding landscape in CES that traditionally funds new projects and programs. Organizations working in urban communities typically have access to land but require financial support to provide programming which includes education, transportation, and staffing. Investment in programs that work is preferred over investment in new programs. The amount of time it takes for organizations to build trust in the community takes years, while project funding timelines typically span one year.

Past funding activities by Saginaw Bay WIN were mapped to show distribution across the 22-county watershed, with many projects awarded in Flint and Saginaw. It is not understood how these projects engaged people of color in the planning and implementation process. Further investigation would be required to determine if investments were made in programs or infrastructure.

Overall, all participants were happy that Saginaw Bay WIN was asking what types of priorities and projects are happening in Flint and Saginaw. It is recommended that funding organizations, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations wanting to work with people of color start by listening to them, and that ongoing engagement in the planning and implementation of projects is needed in order for buy-in to be achieved. This study did not effectively engage with the Hispanic population in Flint or Saginaw, it is recommended to follow up with grassroots organizations that work with this population.

Big Picture
- Success
  - Community collaboration, especially for grassroots organizations in Flint area
  - Grassroots organizations are trusted by residents
- Challenges

- ○ Funding for programs that provide experiences that connect people to nature and provide environmental education
  - ○ Access to people within communities of color and green space
  - ○ Transportation is a barrier for many urban residents
  - ○ Understanding importance of and meaning behind recycling
- Key Values
  - ○ Blight elimination
  - ○ Positive youth development
  - ○ Education

Introduction

The University of Michigan-Flint, Office of University Outreach completed a brief study on the conservation, environment, and sustainability priorities in communities of color, specifically looking in urban areas of Flint, Saginaw, Midland, and Bay City. The study combined a review of past planning efforts, an online survey, and in-person interviews and focus groups to answer the following questions:

- How are communities of color within Flint and Saginaw engaged in conservation and sustainability efforts?
- Which organizations are active in this space?
- What priorities, projects, and challenges exist in implementing conservation and sustainability efforts?

The term "communities of color" was utilized throughout the study to denote communities or population centers comprised predominantly of non-white individuals. In the Saginaw Bay watershed, communities of color tend to be concentrated in urban areas. A table containing information for the cities of Flint, Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland detailing 2017 city population estimates including breakdowns by age and sex, and race and hispanic origin was developed based on information from the United States Census Bureau Quick Facts and is available in the Appendix.

The 2017 U.S. Census Bureau population estimates indicated that in the City of Flint, 37.8% of the population identify as White alone, not Hispanic or Latino while 62.2% of the population are individuals who identify as persons of color (54.3% of persons identify as Black or African American and 3.9% as Hispanic or Latino). In the City of Saginaw, 37.3% of the population identify as White alone, not Hispanic or Latino while 62.7% of the population are individuals who identify as persons of color (43.5% of persons identify as Black or African American and 15.1% Hispanic or Latino). Individuals of color are less represented in the cities of Midland where 88.4% of the population identify as White, not Hispanic or Latino and in Bay City where 84.3% of the population identify as White, not Hispanic or Latino.

The 16 major counties within the Saginaw Bay Watershed are home to 1,456,971 people, of which 16% or 233,115 identify as people of color. The most diverse counties in the watershed are Genesee (28%), Saginaw (28%), Isabella (16%), and Gratiot (11%) (US Census, 2016). A detailed table is included in the Appendix.

Review of Planning Efforts

The city of Flint covers 33 square miles and is home to approximately 97,000 people. The city of Flint park system includes 1,881 total acres and 70 recreational facilities; while the city of Saginaw covers 17 square miles and is home to approximately 48,000 people. The city of Saginaw park system includes 615 acres and 55 individual areas.

The histories of Saginaw and Flint are connected in that both grew economically thanks to the migration of African-Americans traveling from the south to work in factories that produced the world's automotive needs. Discrimination, redlining, and urban renewal segregated non-white residents from white residents in both communities, resulting in inequalities in regard to access to employment, transportation, education, and amenities including parks and recreation.

Formal planning processes typically furthered this discrimination and reinforced the un-trusting relationship between planners, government, and minority residents. Efforts in the last 5-10 years have sought to be more inclusive and representative of the residents living in both urban communities and minority residents.

Unfortunately, issues surrounding environment and conservation are dominated by individuals of Western European descent, though it is an issue that impacts everyone transcending many social identities. Therefore, this current study seeks to understand priorities in how people of color connect conservation, environment, and sustainability (CES) efforts into their lives, if they would like additional participation in these crucial conversations, how we can ensure they are inclusive, and more efficient ways to serve minority individuals in urban communities. Within the past 5-10 years, there are examples of research and studies to help understand the connections between people of color and their local environment and land.

A review of existing and historic plans relating to CES within the last ten years was completed for the cities of Flint and Saginaw representing the two major urban and non-white population centers within the 22-county Saginaw Bay Watershed. Based on priorities identified in existing plans, there are no shortage of opportunities or needs in regards to CES projects. There are similar themes of addressing blight due to population loss, crime prevention through environmental design, increasing opportunities for access to parks and recreation, and building and facilitating strong partnerships that aid both cash-strapped cities in sustainable management of outdoor amenities. Government-led plans stressed the reliance on volunteers and grassroots organizations to get the work done. The value of strong resident volunteers and organizations cannot be overstated, as they have stepped in to fill the void left by unfunded government operations. Strong partnerships are also in place with nonprofit organizations,

philanthropy, and corporations to sustain and support the work. A summary of each plan review is included in the Appendix.

Survey & Listening Sessions

Organizations that work in conservation and recreation were invited from the cities of Flint, Saginaw, Midland, and Bay City to complete an online survey and participate in either an individual interview or a small group session. Individuals were contacted through email and phone by University Outreach staff. Saginaw Bay WIN and Outreach staff initially identified organizations to participate that were known to coordinate or advance CES efforts within the study area. Those participants then assisted in recommending additional grassroots level organizations to participate.

Three focus groups were conducted that involved thirteen individuals and four one-one-one interviews were completed for a total of seventeen face-to-face participants. A total of twenty-six people began the survey, but only twenty-two people completed the online survey. The four incomplete responses were excluded from the survey analysis. Of the twenty-two completed survey responses, six participants (27%) had not participated in any of the face-to-face meetings. In total, twenty-four individuals representing twenty-three organizations from Flint, Saginaw, Bay City, and Midland participated in the project.

The survey asked individuals to rate their organization's values as the relate to conservation and to make note of current engagement in communities of color, future projects, and barriers to engaging communities of color in conservation.

Results show participation across multiple sectors including government, nonprofit, grassroots, and philanthropic (Graph 1). Respondents were able to identify within multiple categories (i.e. both nonprofit and grassroots, etc.) The majority of organizations that participated represented nonprofits (63.6% represented by 14 of the organizations that completed the survey).

Graph 1. Types of organization completing online survey
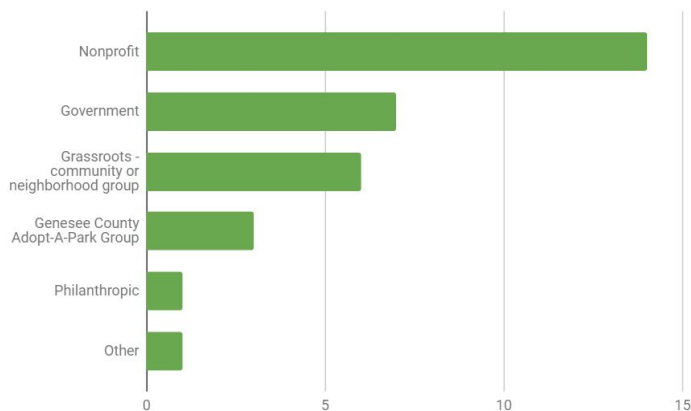
The most important reasons these organizations support projects in communities of color are that they:
- Provide for healthy living and quality of life
- Protect and conserve air quality
- Protect and conserve water quality
- Provide vital agriculture, including locally grown food
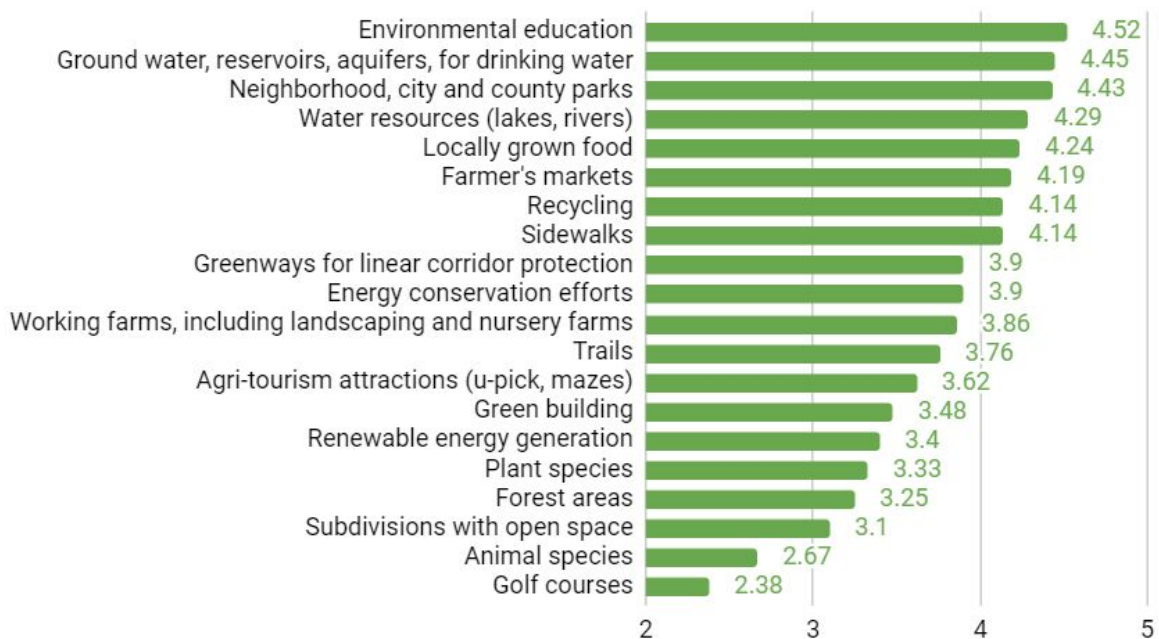- Provide access to outdoor recreation activities

Graph 2. Importance of factors that determine whether a specific conservation or environmental project should occur in the communities of color
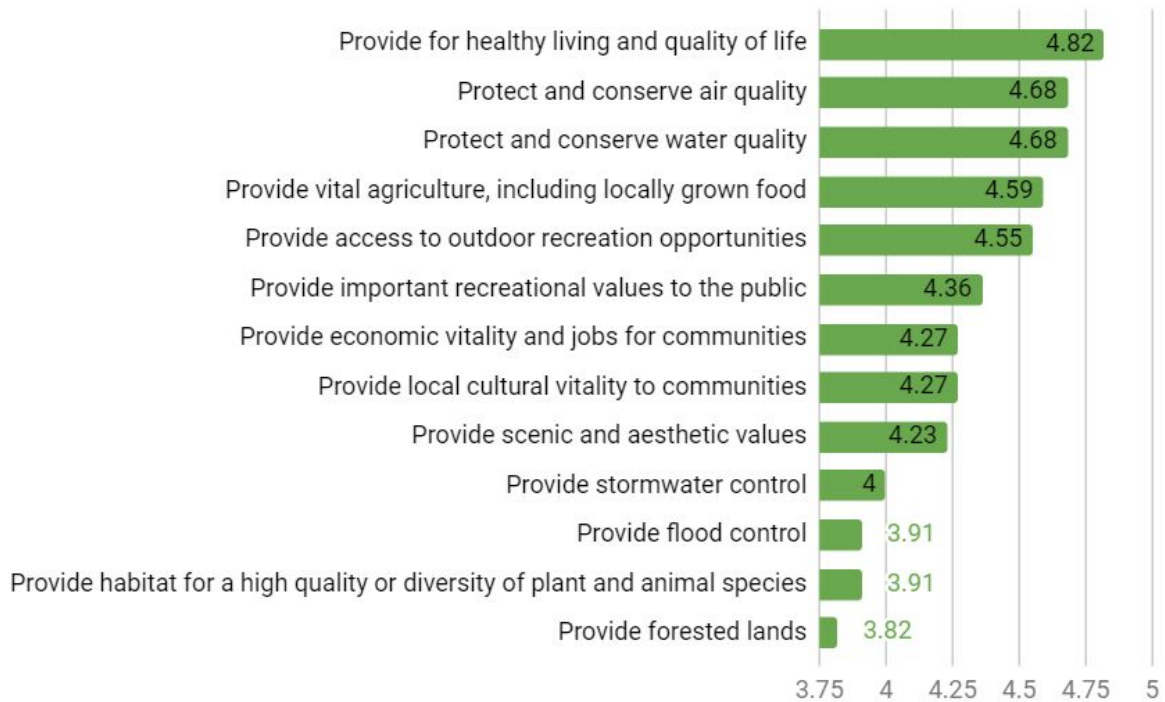
Grassroots organizations rated agriculture and locally grown food, protection of air quality, and healthy living and quality of life, and outdoor recreation as top priorities.

The most disagreement among these organizations was around projects that provide flood control, stormwater control, economic vitality and jobs for communities, local cultural vitality to communities, high quality or diversity of plant and animal species, and scenic and aesthetic value.

Graph 3. Importance of types of efforts or programs

Type	Value
Environmental education	4.52
Ground water, reservoirs, aquifers, for drinking water	4.45
Neighborhood, city and county parks	4.43
Water resources (lakes, rivers)	4.29
Locally grown food	4.24
Farmer's markets	4.19
Recycling	4.14
Sidewalks	4.14
Greenways for linear corridor protection	3.9
Energy conservation efforts	3.9
Working farms, including landscaping and nursery farms	3.86
Trails	3.76
Agri-tourism attractions (u-pick, mazes)	3.62
Green building	3.48
Renewable energy generation	3.4
Plant species	3.33
Forest areas	3.25
Subdivisions with open space	3.1
Animal species	2.67
Golf courses	2.38

Organizations that participated in the survey highlighted current projects that fall into these broader areas:

- Agriculture, Gardening, and Food Security: a few organizations provide technical assistance directly to residents around gardening and agriculture. This includes soil testing, bulk pricing for seeds and plants, funding for greenhouses, and workshops.

- Blight elimination: due to the vacant land available in both Saginaw and Flint organizations and residents have responded by repurposing land for wildlife habitat, specifically for pollinator species in Saginaw, and for agriculture in Flint. Government and quasi-government organizations are implementing Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

- Education and Outreach: grassroots organizations are reaching out to residents and working with the faith-based community on recreation and environmental education. This is done through community conversations, demonstration gardens, providing technical assistance around neighborhood planning, neighborhood cleanups, and information sharing.

- Recreation Programs: recreation programs are supported by residents and are provided in the city parks in both Flint and Saginaw. Funding for programs is provided by county government and philanthropy. Programs are also dependent on volunteers.

- Water Testing: one organization in Flint provides residents with water testing of tap water from a trusted lab.

- Youth focus: working through community centers, Flint youth are educated on the environment and agriculture, and given opportunities to explore careers into natural resources.

- Green infrastructure, Forestry, and Erosion Control: programs offered through government organizations are being implemented in the City of Flint

- Financial support is available to Flint resident-led groups for agriculture, environmental and beautification projects

- Volunteer Opportunities: all organizations working in the conservation field rely on volunteers and provide opportunities for engagement from field days, administrative support, education, and training.

The organizations that responded were asked what future projects, activities, or initiatives they hope to work on that support engaging communities of color in conservation and/or environmental sustainability. Many organizations provided general statements while others provided specific projects. These are summarized below.

- Continue current programming, open to new opportunities and partnerships (5)
- Work on gardens and watershed projects (2)
- Support projects the community identifies
- Get community engagement officer fully operational to build participation in programs
- Improve quality of life in neighborhoods
- Promote green infrastructure and green lifestyles
- Vacant land reuse
- Convert former Saginaw Malleable Iron plant into passive recreation facility
- Expand network of gardens and farms in the City of Flint
- Expand the purchase of local foods by institutions (Flint)
- Commercial and Residential blight removal in the Pierson Road Corridor (Flint)
- Community gardens in Brennan Park and introduce healthy lifestyles (Flint)
- Expand recreation and beautification in Kellar Park (Flint)
- Partnership with NEW Path and single female families (Flint)
- Youth outreach around Historical Black Colleges and Universities, environmental career pathways, apprenticeships and entrepreneurship

In response to an open ended question, survey respondents shared what barriers they encountered when engaging communities of color in conservation and sustainability efforts. The major barriers for organizations are funding availability specific to working in communities of color and staffing capacity. This is followed by organizations that are majority white not being trusted by people of color, or the location or lack of transportation making it difficult for residents to access programs. A summary of the open-ended responses is shown below.

Table 1: Barriers to Engaging Communities of Color in Conservation, Environment and Sustainability Efforts

Barrier	Total Responses
Funding and Staffing Capacity	8
Lack of Trust	4
Location / Access to Transportation	4
Lack of Awareness	2
Buy-in from Institution	1
Generational Gap	1

Organizations ranked the importance of efforts or programs that they operate in communities of color. The highest rated program types included environmental education; groundwater, reservoirs and aquifers for drinking water; neighborhood, city and county parks; water resources; and locally grown food. Grassroots organizations ranked sidewalks, as the most important effort, and included working farms as an important program in communities of color.

Listening Sessions

Through our three focus group sessions and a few individual interviews, we gained a greater perspective on engagement, opportunities, challenges, resource alignment, and support for different conservation, sustainability, environmental projects in Flint and Saginaw in communities of color.

For many organizations, their current engagement with communities of color suffers due to funding and access challenges. Funding can prohibit the connection between the organization and its target population. In addition, some organizations struggle with connecting to non-English speaking communities of color, or to the nature and green space for proper execution of their programming and/or community relations.

The second question during our discussions focused on the opportunities for the advancement of conservation, sustainability, and environmental projects in Flint and Saginaw. Many respondents offered ideas surrounding increasing education/awareness, establishing restoration projects, making infrastructure improvements, and fostering economic development. Other representatives agreed on the importance of strengthening education and raising awareness on conservation, sustainability, and environmental projects in Flint and Saginaw to community members. They suggested many strategies to educate community members on these topics and other related issues, such as through neighborhood presentations or community mailings.

However, during these presentations and on the community mailings, one representative suggested we reform our language used to discuss these topics because the vocabulary may limit comprehension for our target audience, and thus creating an unintentional barrier. Another opportunity to increase education is the Plant-Grow-Fly program, which teaches residents how to support conservation efforts at their homes by planting particular plants to attract pollinators to their communities and neighborhoods. Utilizing hands-on activities and experiential learning efforts to promote conservation, sustainability, and environmental projects for youth and adults help to increase these initiatives in Flint and Saginaw. Primarily, collaboration between organizations or between organizations and residents fosters successful engagement strategies to advance these projects.

By enhancing the physical environment in these communities through restoration projects and infrastructure improvement plans, we can also support conservation, sustainability, and environmental projects. Infrastructure projects include strengthening our blue (water) and green infrastructure to manage flood- and drain waters. Specifically, to reform filtration systems by removing the current concrete foundations and using native plants to filter the storm water before it reaches the watershed. River restoration projects have variable lengths, expenses, and tasks, therefore, will only succeed with proper planning and adequate resources. These types of projects can affect many community stakeholders, which may help to foster collaboration between community groups/organizations. Ideas for restoration projects along the river include building splash parks or different activities, creating spaces for people to sit and picnic, creating bike trails, or erecting boat docks, pop-up shops, and eateries along the river's edge to attract people to the area. Blight elimination is another strategy to improve the infrastructure, such as through a program similar to the Complete Streets program currently happening in Saginaw, which evaluates current street conditions to determine their optimizations for different types of commuters (i.e., drivers, bikers, walkers, etc.).

Conservation, sustainability, and environmental projects could help stimulate the economy as many respondents mentioned during the focus group sessions and the interviews. For example, by raising awareness on these topics, we may recruit people to join the efforts. If we provide opportunities for people to experiment in these areas, they may realize they have an interest, and thus could lead them to pursue careers in green energy, natural resources, agriculture, and pollution control.

Thirdly, we asked focus group participants to identify priorities and challenges to the advancement in their work with communities of color. There was an overwhelming emphasis on promoting education, building capacity, and establishing trusting and productive relationships. First, in order to educate, stakeholders must communicate, but that presents its own challenges. Deciding what and how to educate residents in communities of color is a challenge in its own right. Participants in these conversations may represent different social identities and backgrounds, which can heighten the sensitivity and barriers. Vocabulary surrounding conservation, sustainability, and environment may not be comprehensible to all, though they may be performing activities to promote those initiatives. Therefore, we need to start small and

gradually educate residents, and not overwhelm them at once. Specifically, organizations found that for some residents, they do not have a meaningful understanding of recycling and some even consider it an inconvenience. Starting earlier and promoting environmental literacy in residents and high school students could help to increase education.

The next focus for the conversation regarded the ability of these organizations and groups to align their resources to support communities of color. Many organizations and groups, though admittedly faced with shortcomings, display resiliency, as they are able to collaborate with other organizations and groups to help fulfill their commitments. Community partnerships and collaborations serve as a way to circumvent struggles produced by insufficient resources, capacity, and funding. Currently, there appears to be a lack of support and funding opportunities from projects related to conservation, sustainability, environmental projects, therefore, organizations must rely on internal staff, train current staff, or community collaboration.

Finally, for these organizations and communities groups, they identified ways funders can better support their work in communities of color, such as through consistent funding/resources, increasing education, and promoting collaboration. Community organizations and groups want greater financial investments or endowments to support operational costs, capacity building, and their conservation, sustainability, and environmental projects to have support for multi-year programming, with lessened reporting obligations. Currently, funders do not support many projects focused on conservation, sustainability, and environmental issues, which suggests it is time for a shift in the funding focus. Another investment suggestion includes increasing investment in the promotion education and training on these topics to get more people skilled, and therefore able to better serve communities of color. Finally, funders need to listen the communities they seek to support to offer proper investments, connect appropriate community organizations and residents, and allow for networking opportunities between all identifiable stakeholders.

Conclusions

People of color represent 19% of the population in the Saginaw Bay Watershed, totaling approximately a half million people. Their voice is critical in planning for CES projects as they represent a significant part of the population. Ongoing, intentional engagement with people of color, particularly in Saginaw and Flint, happens at the grassroots level, and to some degree at the city government level. The grassroots nonprofit organizations are trusted by residents and are willing to work with nonprofits focused on CES in order to provide environmental education, and implement programs and projects.

- The Hispanic population represents 15% of the city of Saginaw, this project had no direct interaction with this population and recommends further engagement

- It takes time to build relationships and trust, go into communities with trusted organizations when creating CES programs; listen first

- Organizations and funders need to go beyond education and invest in experiences that connect people to the outdoors (and make it fun)

- Allow for investments that use existing on-the-ground assets to create experiences and connect to people

- People of color are connected to the environment and the outdoors, these connections are often different than the typical CES programs

- Don't assume how people of color want to be engaged in CES (i.e., not everyone wants to go kayaking)

- Nonprofits can partner with grassroots organizations, some organizations that focus on environmental projects are not trusted

- There is a desire among participants to continue inter-city network discussions across organizations doing this work in urban communities, organizations liked the opportunity to share best practices

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Appendix

2017 City Population Estimates

Fact	Note	Midland city, Michigan	Bay City city, Michigan	Saginaw city, Michigan	Flint city, Michigan
Population estimates, July 1, 2017, (V2017)		41,950	33,188	48,677	96,448
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2017)		41,875	34,932	51,496	102,260
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2017, (V2017)		0.2%	-5.0%	-5.5%	-5.7%
Population, Census, April 1, 2010		41,863	34,932	51,508	102,434
Persons under 5 years, percent		5.5%	6.6%	6.7%	7.6%
Persons under 18 years, percent		22.7%	24.0%	25.8%	26.0%
Persons 65 years and over, percent		16.1%	14.1%	12.3%	11.9%
Female persons, percent		52.0%	50.7%	51.7%	51.8%
White alone, percent	(a)	90.3%	90.8%	45.7%	40.4%
Black or African American alone, percent	(a)	2.4%	3.3%	43.5%	54.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	(a)	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Asian alone, percent	(a)	4.0%	0.6%	0.6%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	(a)	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Two or More Races, percent		2.1%	4.1%	5.8%	4.0%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	(b)	2.7%	8.5%	15.1%	3.9%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent		88.4%	84.3%	37.3%	37.8%

Notes
(a) - Includes persons reporting only one race
(b) - Hispanics may be of any race, so also are included in applicable race categories

Population information derived from *United States Census Bureau Quick Facts* for Midland city, Michigan; Bay City city, Michigan; Saginaw city, Michigan; Flint city, Michigan
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/midlandcitymichigan,baycitycitymichigan,saginawcitymichigan,flintcitymichigan/PST045217

2016 County Population Estimates*

Geography	Total Population Estimate	Percent People of Color	Percent White	Percent County in the Watershed
Arenac County	15,327	4.50%	96.60%	99.86%
Bay County	106,107	8.00%	94.60%	99.86%
Clare County	30,608	5.60%	96.40%	56.35%
Genesee County	413,090	28.20%	74.80%	100%
Gladwin County	25,367	3.60%	97.40%	100%
Gratiot County	41,676	10.50%	91.30%	62.71%
Huron County	32,021	3.50%	97.40%	68.04%
Iosco County	25,373	5.20%	96.20%	71.74%
Isabella County	70,574	15.80%	88.50%	99.99%
Lapeer County	88,310	6.00%	95.70%	73.63%
Livingston County	185,841	5.00%	96.50%	42.18%
Mecosta County	43,259	9.20%	93.20%	23.04%
Midland County	83,559	8.30%	93.50%	100%
Montcalm County	62,922	8.00%	94.30%	10.18%
Oakland County	1,235,215	26.80%	75.90%	18.74%
Ogemaw County	21,103	4.00%	96.90%	73.80%
Osceola County	23,172	4.90%	96.50%	4.96%
Roscommon County	23,900	4.80%	96.80%	11.65%
Saginaw County	195,201	28.10%	75.10%	100%
Sanilac County	41,761	4.80%	96.70%	33.92%
Shiawassee County	68,800	4.80%	96.90%	56.68%
Tuscola County	54,014	4.90%	96.50%	99.99%
Twenty-Two County Total	2,887,200	19.90%	82.60%	

*Some rows total to greater than 100% due the population figures being estimates and the associated margin of error for each estimate.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Plan Summaries

Flint

The Black/Land Project and the City of Flint Master Plan were used to inform the current study. The Black/Land Project seeks to discover and provide a spotlight to conversations surrounding how African-Americans' cultural identities, histories, and experiences connect them to their land in an attempt to foster social change in other communities. In 2013, the City of Flint completed and adopted the first update to its Comprehensive Master Plan since 1977, which outlines goals to help steer Flint towards improvement in many sectors within the community. Together, these sources created a background story to further the current understanding on engaging underserved communities related to conservation and environmental initiatives. A few additional projects and plans that have been created by Flint organizations are also included.

Black/Land Project, 2012-2016

The Black/Land Project seeks to "amplify conversations happening inside black communities about the relationship between black people, land, and place in order to share their powerful traditions of resourcefulness, resilience and regeneration". (Web). As such, the Black/Land Project was engaged in Flint, Michigan in 2012-2013 and again during the water crisis that began in 2014.

The Flint Water Crisis also has financial and humanitarian impacts on Flint residents. In conversations during 2012 and 2013, Black/Land Project members interviewed Flint residents to understand how they arrived in Flint, MI, and their motivation to remain in the area. Many African-Americans arrived as part of the Great Migration from southern states seeking employment, while others had lengthy residence spanning multiple generations. Employment opportunities in the automotive and manufacturing industries enticed many people to travel north, however, we now know these industries bear some responsibility for the toxicity of the Flint River due to their by-products and chemicals seeping into it over the years. Now, many of these industries have relocated to other locations, but the effects of their runoff is still present. Although, for anyone familiar with Flint, there were issues in the community before the public health crisis began, including urban sprawl and population loss. Curing this community will take time, and most want to expedite the process.

For African-Americans traveling here after being pushed off their lands in the South, they refuse to be a victim to forced removal again. They want to stay in Flint, to grow through and beyond the Flint Water Crisis.

Although many people have a connection with land and place, there exists a distinction in how people from certain identity groups establish and maintain connection. Historically, laws and regulations increased barriers to a successful connection with land and place, however, due to

resiliency within the African-American community, they were able to create connection and cultural stamps on their local communities. For example, the Black/Land project determined there were many African-Americans willing to assist with the development of the new Master Plan for the City of Flint by sharing their experiences within the city, and develop ideas for a sustainable future. Guiding questions included:

- *Are black people in your city engaged in the formal community planning processes? Why or why not?*
- *When engaged, do they bring dreams for the future of their community, or are they trapped in historical trauma and only able to recount injustices done in the past?*

This verbalization of past forced relocation of African-Americans for the building of Flint's I-475 and urban renewal led by the City of Flint in the 1970's master planning efforts also shed light on the resistance of engaging in the formal planning process.

Imagine Flint Master Plan, City of Flint, 2013

The Master Plan provides direction and suggestion to lead a city over the next twenty years after its adoption. In 2013, with collaboration between community stakeholders, the City of Flint adopted a new Master Plan to align with current conditions. Each section within the Master Plan outlines a vision, objectives, recommendations, and implementation strategies. Two significant sections in the current Master Plan: Land Use Plan (Section 4) and Environmental Features, Open Space & Parks Plan (Section 7) were reviewed for this study.

Section 4 focuses on developing a Land Use Plan to promote efficient land use and increase attractiveness to the land for community members and potential visitors, while ensuring adequate availability of resources and services. The City of Flint has experienced a sharp decline in population over the years primarily due to the decline of manufacturing industries, which has altered the distribution of people in Flint, with the greatest losses among the northern and eastern sections of the City. The vision in this section of the Master Plan is to transform vacant or blighted properties, develop desirable neighborhoods, and condense productive land uses to align better with the population (p. 33). In summation, it is vital to create attractive and diverse places in the city of Flint to support and accommodate the needs of residents and tourists by transforming vacant/blighted properties, redesigning areas to ensure adequate utilization of the land, redesigning locations around the city to encourage walking as viable transportation, and to to increase open space and green technology throughout the city.

A few of the Land Uses that speak specifically to conservation and recreation include: *Green Neighborhood* a healthy neighborhood with newly and positively re-purposed vacant or underutilized lots, *Community Open Space* represents area where the natural environment is prominent, such as parks and other open spaces, *Green Innovation* are areas with large vacancies that can be repurposed to restore or increase the integrity, character, or productiveness of the area and *Traditional Neighborhood* a cornerstone of the Flint community, with many residential homes, schools, religious centers, community organizations, and parks.

Subarea plans are also being created to help guide land use changes, provide an implementation guide to review financial obligations, time to achieve goal, potential partnerships

within the community, and progress monitoring to achieve objectives and goals outlined in this section.

Section 7 focuses on the Environmental Features, Open Space & Parks. The city seeks to provide access to nature and recreation, optimal air and water quality, and enhance community character. There are seven objectives to help accomplish this vision.

1. Improve the ecological health of the community by focusing on the sprawl and air/water quality.
2. Work with the Flint River and its watershed to transform them into clean areas while increasing their attractiveness and purpose to the community because the Flint River represents more than a waterway, it has deep historical and economic implications to this area.
3. Enhance the blue/green infrastructure surrounding the Flint River to develop a mutual relationship between this area and the city's infrastructure.
4. Offer clean and healthy parks, open spaces, and recreation areas throughout the community.
5. Establish a park management system to ensure parks to assist with maintenance of these spaces, which may encourage community collaboration with non-profit/community groups and community members.
6. Combat climate change and encouraging walking or biking instead of automobiles or public transportation.
7. Engage the community to utilize these spaces within the community, and developing a new citizen's park advisory council that will advocate on behalf of the community.

Ruth Mott Foundation Listening Sessions

The Ruth Mott Foundation conducted listening session as part of their funding strategy to focus on north Flint in 2015 and 2017. These sessions allowed residents to voice what matters most to them. Priority areas for residents living in north Flint are community engagement, youth, economic development, neighborhoods, and blight elimination. The most important of these priorities is youth, and the desire for programs, education, and employment.

Ujima Village

The North Flint Reinvestment Corporation created plans in 2016 for the revitalization of the Pierson Road corridor along the city's northwest area. The plans are well underway with the establishment of a K-8 charter school, early childhood education services, and a food cooperative. The long-term vision is to include mixed-income housing, and neighborhood services.

A study was completed for UM-Flint in an effort to support "the UM-Flint Urban Alternatives House (UAH), a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Platinum certified residential property redevelopment project established in 2010 through a partnership between the Genesee County Land Bank Authority and the University of Michigan-Flint". The study sought to identify and gather input from organizations offering programs and resources that support adoption of sustainability measures to increase community resilience. Organizations and programs in Flint and Genesee County that provided resources or support to advance household level energy efficiency, water conservation, and sustainable or green development practices were identified and their perception of opportunities and barriers to advancing efforts in the region were explored.

Education was identified as a priority, but was seen as both a barrier and an opportunity by the organizations engaged in these efforts. Study participants noted that in both low and moderate income households, individuals lack understanding of the benefits of energy efficiency, water conservation, and sustainable construction. Both at the individual level, and sometimes within organizations, perception of sustainability practices were perceived as being too costly and/or unattainable which can also limit engagement and advancement of household sustainability efforts. Almost all study participants noted that funding for these types of efforts was a barrier. Many organizations were limited in their ability to advance programs focused on household level sustainability due to organizational capacity particularly as related to knowledge base and a limited number of staff to address these types of programs. Within and across organizations, lack of leadership and common vision focused on advancing sustainability was also identified.

Recommendations from the study included ongoing stakeholder engagement with existing efforts and collaborative groups. Key stakeholder groups to connect with included organizations working in the realms of fair housing, natural resource management/water quality, and local food systems.   At the resident level, leveraging trusted organizations connections to the community to support increased resident access to resources. Specifically, "working directly with residents through existing community and neighborhood engagement efforts was an opportunity to increase understanding and build support for household sustainability.   Crafting messages that resonated with residents, working with trusted individuals and community leaders, and providing programs and opportunities that recognized and reduced barriers were identified as important components of education efforts in this area." Additionally, gathering more information directly from residents to inform social marketing and education efforts was recommended. Promotion to and adoption of sustainability objectives by local businesses and public entities was suggested.

Saginaw

The City of Saginaw has three major plans that were identified for review: the City of Saginaw Parks and Recreation plan drafted in 2016, Saginaw County's Recreation plan, and Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy's conservation plan.

Saginaw County Parks and Recreation Plan, 2014-2018

About 25% of Saginaw counties residents reside within the City of Saginaw, the public input for the 2014-2018 County Recreation Plan shows the desire for parks in the City of Saginaw and the need for the county to support programs countywide, not just within the City of Saginaw. The county recreation plan identifies the potential to establish parks and facilities within the City of Saginaw, and developing the rail trail connecting the City of Saginaw to Center Road.

Taking Root in Saginaw, Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy (SBLC), 2014

The Taking Root in Saginaw planning project was undertaken by SBLC, and funded in part by Saginaw Bay WIN, to reach out to new audiences and get engaged with residents and organizations in the City of Saginaw. Analysis of the Taking Root in Saginaw plan by SBLC identified the City of Saginaw dealing with population loss, primarily on the east side of Saginaw where the majority of non-white residents live. The east side of Saginaw is also amenity poor, with less access to schools, parks, and recreation than other parts of the city. SBLC concluded that projects on the Saginaw River would serve all residents and build upon existing efforts to revitalize the city.

This public input and planning process resulted in OUR Saginaw (Outdoor Urban Recreation); modeled after OUR Bay City; the program provides a way to connect outdoor amenities that improve quality of life for residents and protect natural features. The plan identifies that open space and parks do exist in Saginaw, but lack the dedicated programming required to engage residents and visitors in outdoor activities and learning. Projects being implemented by SBLC as a result of Taking Root are establishment of pollinator plots in the City of Saginaw on vacant lands, nature trail near the Children's Zoo at Celebration Square, a riverfront preserve along the Saginaw River and expansion of the City of Saginaw's Riverfront Trail.

City of Saginaw Parks and Recreation Plan, 2014

The City of Saginaw has established a Riverfront Redevelopment Commission, and maintains a website, Riverfront Saginaw, promoting the river and parks as part of the attractions for visitors and residents alike. The city's draft parks and recreation plan (2014) identifies goals that promote the following:

- Sustainable maintenance of parks, including naturalization

- Invest in partnerships with organizations and neighborhoods
- Coordinate efforts of stakeholders and friends groups
- Work with neighborhood park users to plan park improvements and access
- Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (ICPED)
- Improve connectivity between parks and trailways and neighborhoods
- Build on success and momentum of the Saginaw River revitalization

Active Organizations

Flint

*Boys and Girls Club of Greater Flint
*City of Flint - Department of Planning (Parks and Recreation)
*Communities Empowered for Reform Now
Communities First, Inc
*Community Foundation of Greater Flint
*Edible Flint
*Evergreen Community Development Initiative
*Flint Downtown Development Authority
*Flint Development Center
*Flint River Watershed Coalition
*Flint Neighborhoods United
*Friends of Kellar Park
*Keep Genesee County Beautiful - Park Adopters Program
*Genesee County Parks
*Genesee County Conservation District
Genesee County Habitat for Humanity
Genesee County Land Bank
*Greater Holy Temple Church of God in Christ
*Michigan State University Extension
*Neighborhood Engagement Hub
*North Flint Reinvestment Corporation
*Of Impact
Ruth Mott Foundation
*Sylvester Broome Empowerment Village
*Uma Strong Marshall Outreach

Midland

*Chippewa Nature Center

Saginaw

City of Saginaw
*Saginaw Basin Land Conservancy
*Saginaw Children's Zoo

*Saginaw County Parks and Recreation Commission
*Saginaw Conservation District
Saginaw Futures
Saginaw Riverfront Redevelopment Commission

*Denotes a survey, interview or focus group participant

Survey Response Tables

Please rate the importance of the following factors in determining whether a specific conservation or environmental project should occur in the communities of color where you work. Projects that:

Question	Not at all important		Slightly important		Moderately important		Very important		Extremely important		Total
Provide scenic and aesthetic values	4.55%	1	0.00%	0	13.64%	3	31.82%	7	50.00%	11	22
Provide local cultural vitality to communities	4.55%	1	4.55%	1	4.55%	1	31.82%	7	54.55%	12	22
Provide economic vitality and jobs for communities	4.55%	1	9.09%	2	4.55%	1	18.18%	4	63.64%	14	22
Provide habitat for a high quality or diversity of plant and animal species	4.55%	1	0.00%	0	31.82%	7	27.27%	6	36.36%	8	22
Provide for healthy living and quality of life	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.55%	1	9.09%	2	86.36%	19	22
Provide forested lands	0.00%	0	4.55%	1	45.45%	10	13.64%	3	36.36%	8	22
Protect and conserve water quality	0.00%	0	4.55%	1	0.00%	0	18.18%	4	77.27%	17	22
Protect and conserve air quality	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	31.82%	7	68.18%	15	22
Provide vital agriculture, including locally grown food	0.00%	0	4.55%	1	9.09%	2	9.09%	2	77.27%	17	22
Provide important recreational values to the public	4.55%	1	0.00%	0	9.09%	2	27.27%	6	59.09%	13	22
Provide access to outdoor recreation opportunities	0.00%	0	4.55%	1	9.09%	2	13.64%	3	72.73%	16	22
Provide stormwater control	0.00%	0	18.18%	4	13.64%	3	18.18%	4	50.00%	11	22
Provide flood control	4.55%	1	13.64%	3	18.18%	4	13.64%	3	50.00%	11	22

	Not at all important		Slightly important		Moderately important		Very important		Extremely important		Total
Other	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	33.33%	1	0.00%	0	66.67%	2	3

In regards to the communities of color that your organizations serves, please rate the importance of efforts or programs that support the following:

Question	Not at all important		Slightly important		Moderately important		Very important		Extremely important		Total
Plant species	4.76%	1	23.81%	5	23.81%	5	28.57%	6	19.05%	4	21
Animal species	4.76%	1	47.62%	10	28.57%	6	14.29%	3	4.76%	1	21
Forest areas	5.00%	1	20.00%	4	30.00%	6	35.00%	7	10.00%	2	20
Water resources (lakes, rivers)	0.00%	0	4.76%	1	19.05%	4	19.05%	4	57.14%	12	21
Ground water, reservoirs, & aquifers, for drinking water	0.00%	0	10.00%	2	5.00%	1	15.00%	3	70.00%	14	20
Environmental education	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	4.76%	1	38.10%	8	57.14%	12	21
Recycling	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	33.33%	7	19.05%	4	47.62%	10	21
Neighborhood, city and county parks	0.00%	0	4.76%	1	4.76%	1	33.33%	7	57.14%	12	21
Trails	9.52%	2	4.76%	1	23.81%	5	23.81%	5	38.10%	8	21
Sidewalks	9.52%	2	0.00%	0	14.29%	3	19.05%	4	57.14%	12	21
Greenways for linear corridor protection	4.76%	1	4.76%	1	28.57%	6	19.05%	4	42.86%	9	21
Working farms, including landscaping and nursery farms	4.76%	1	14.29%	3	9.52%	2	33.33%	7	38.10%	8	21
Locally grown food	0.00%	0	4.76%	1	19.05%	4	23.81%	5	52.38%	11	21
Farmers' markets	4.76%	1	4.76%	1	14.29%	3	19.05%	4	57.14%	12	21
Agri-tourism attractions (u-pick, mazes)	9.52%	2	9.52%	2	23.81%	5	23.81%	5	33.33%	7	21
Subdivisions with open space	14.29%	3	14.29%	3	38.10%	8	14.29%	3	19.05%	4	21
Golf courses	38.10%	8	23.81%	5	14.29%	3	9.52%	2	14.29%	3	21
Renewable energy generation	10.00%	2	15.00%	3	30.00%	6	15.00%	3	30.00%	6	20

	0.00%	0	33.33%	7	19.05%	4	14.29%	3	33.33%	7	21
Green building	0.00%	0	33.33%	7	19.05%	4	14.29%	3	33.33%	7	21
Energy conservation efforts	0.00%	0	14.29%	3	23.81%	5	19.05%	4	42.86%	9	21

Maps

Saginaw Bay Watershed

Saginaw Bay Watershed Major Waterways

Legend
- City
- Saginaw Bay Watershed

Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network Projects

Note: Number in parentheses refer to
number of projects in that type or area.
City projects are placed in the
location of the Grantee. Action projects
are placed in the project city.

Legend

▲ Action Projects (47)

■ City Projects (101)

▭ Saginaw Bay Watershed Projects (25)

Coastal Projects

■ Huron County Coastal (1)

■ Pinconning Coastal (2)

▨ Pinconning/Standish Coastal (1)

▨ Saginaw Bay Coastal (6)

▭ Saginaw Bay Watershed Coastal (1)

County Projects

Bay (6)

Clare (1)

Genesee (2)

Gratiot (2)

Midland (3)

▨ Two Counties (1)

▭ Three Counties (3)

0   10   20 Miles

N

SB-WIN Location Density of Grantees

Note: Density surface was created using a 10 mile search radius with 101 locations.

Legend

- City
- Saginaw Bay Watershed

Grantee Density

High

Low
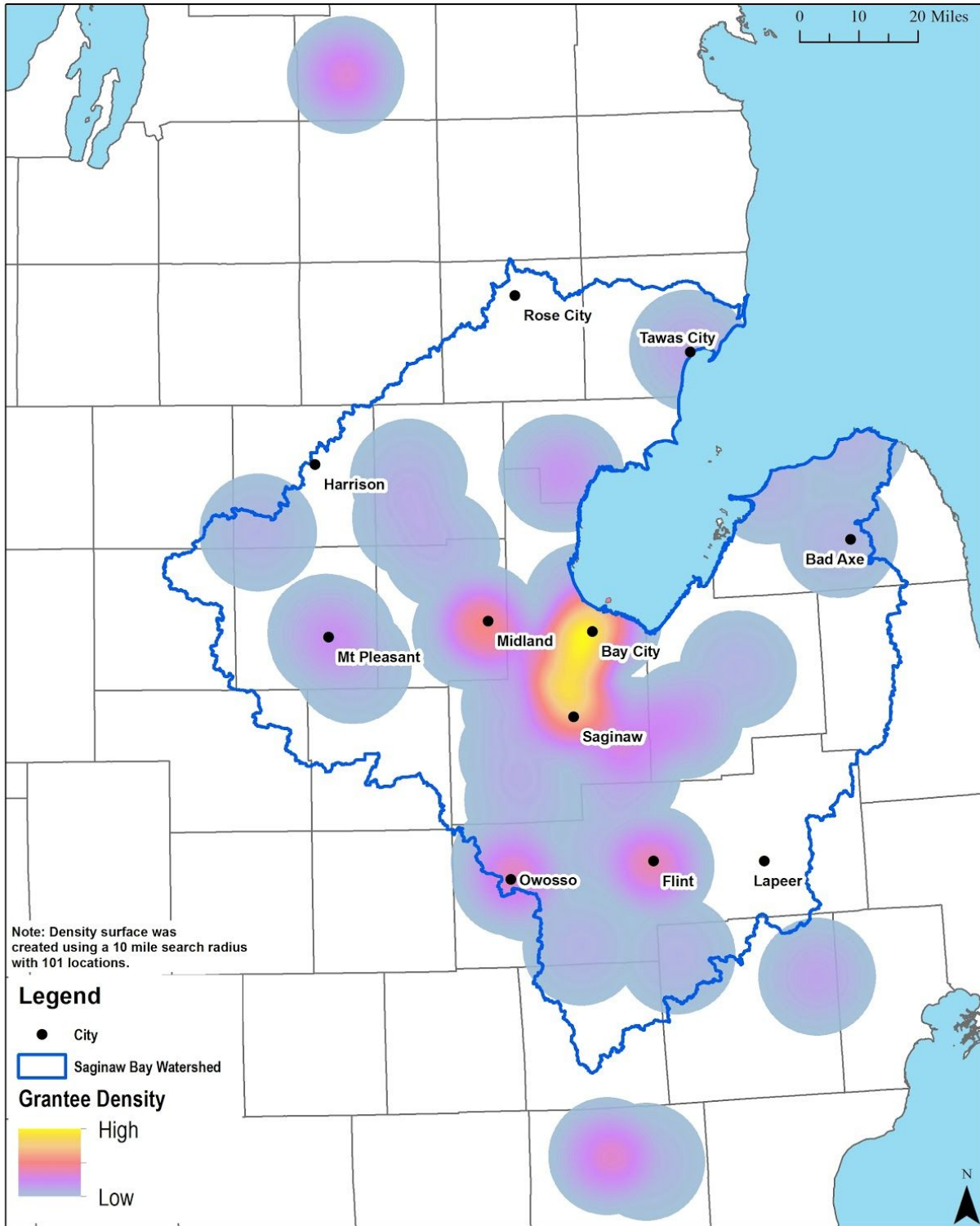
SB-WIN Location Density of Action Projects

Note: Density surface was created using a 10 mile search radius with 47 locations.

Legend

• City

▢ Saginaw Bay Watershed

Action Projects Density

High

Low

30
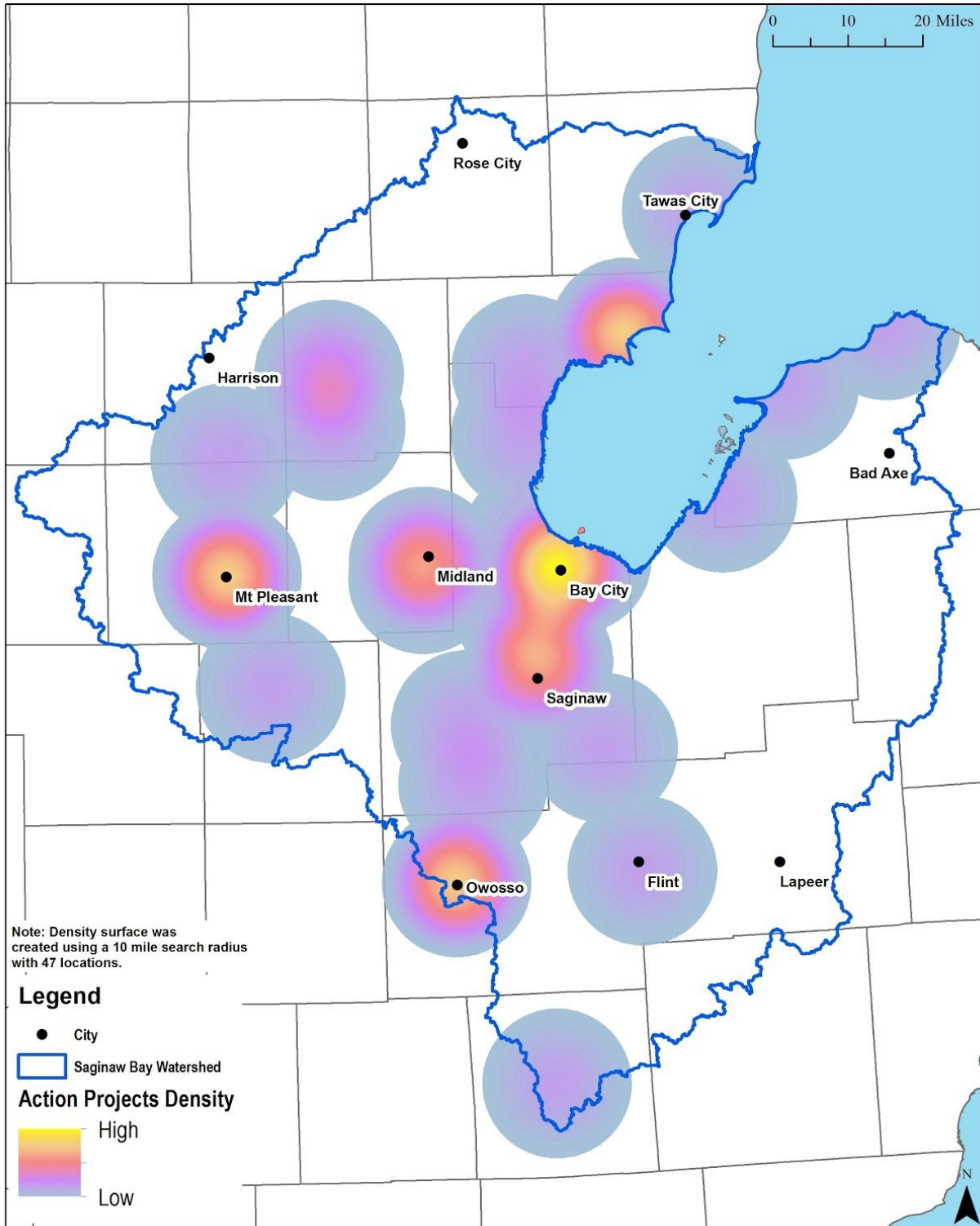
Online Survey

Pre-Survey Message

UM-Flint Outreach has been contracted by the Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network (SB-WIN) to conduct a study that seeks to identify some of the priorities in communities of color related to conservation and environmental efforts.

Your input is important to us. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts in this survey.

Information reported back to SB-WIN will be provided in aggregate and not linked back to specific individuals or organizations.

Name of your organization

_____

Name and title of individual completing the survey on behalf of the organization

_____

Type of organization (check all that apply)

☐ Nonprofit (1)

☐ Government (2)

☐ Grassroots - community or neighborhood group (3)

☐ Genesee County Adopt-A-Park Group (4)

☐ Philanthropic (5)

☐ Other (6) _____

Please rate the importance of the following factors in determining whether a specific conservation or environmental project should occur in the communities of color where you work.

Projects that:

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Provide scenic and aesthetic values (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Provide local cultural vitality to communities (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Provide economic vitality and jobs for communities (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Provide habitat for a high quality or diversity of plant and	○	○	○	○	○

animal species (4)					
Provide for healthy living and quality of life (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Provide forested lands (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Protect and conserve water quality (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Protect and conserve air quality (8)	○	○	○	○	○
Provide vital agriculture, including locally grown food (9)	○	○	○	○	○
Provide important recreational values to the public (10)	○	○	○	○	○
Provide access to outdoor recreation opportunities (11)	○	○	○	○	○
Provide stormwater control (12)	○	○	○	○	○
Provide flood control (13)	○	○	○	○	○
Other (14)	○	○	○	○	○

Are there specific projects, activities, or initiatives that your organization is <u>CURRENTLY</u> working on to support engaging communities of color in conservation and/or environmental sustainability?

_____

_____

Are there specific projects, activities, or initiatives that your organization is hoping to work on <u>IN THE FUTURE</u> to support engaging communities of color in conservation and/or environmental sustainability?

_____

_____

What are your organization's largest barriers to engaging communities of color in conservation and sustainability efforts?

_____

In regards to the communities of color that your organizations serves, please rate the importance of efforts or programs that support the following:

	Not at all important (1)	Slightly important (2)	Moderately important (3)	Very important (4)	Extremely important (5)
Plant species (1)	○	○	○	○	○
Animal species (2)	○	○	○	○	○
Forest areas (3)	○	○	○	○	○
Water resources (lakes, rivers) (4)	○	○	○	○	○
Ground water, reservoirs, & aquifers, for drinking water (5)	○	○	○	○	○
Environmental education (6)	○	○	○	○	○
Recycling (7)	○	○	○	○	○
Neighborhood, city and	○	○	○	○	○

county parks (8)					
Trails (9)	○	○	○	○	○
Sidewalks (10)	○	○	○	○	○
Greenways for linear corridor protection (11)	○	○	○	○	○
Working farms, including landscaping and nursery farms (12)	○	○	○	○	○
Locally grown food (13)	○	○	○	○	○
Farmer's markets (14)	○	○	○	○	○
Agri-tourism attractions (u-pick, mazes) (15)	○	○	○	○	○
Subdivisions with open space (16)	○	○	○	○	○
Golf courses (17)	○	○	○	○	○
Renewable energy generation (18)	○	○	○	○	○
Green building (19)	○	○	○	○	○
Energy conservation efforts (20)	○	○	○	○	○

Q15 Would you be willing to participate in a small group discussion regarding your local priorities related to conservation and environmental sustainability?

Time commitment is approximately 2 hours, and a meal will be provided. Various day and evening times have been identified in June, and you will be contacted to find out what time works best for you.

 Results from this study will be used to provide recommendations to Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network regarding priorities areas for conservation and environmental sustainability to help guide potential investments in local urban areas, but your name and personal information will not be linked to any information provided to Saginaw Bay WIN. Your input is important to helping guide this process.

○ Yes (1)

○ Maybe (2)

○ No (3)

Are there any additional thoughts you would like to share with us?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Interview and Focus Group Questions

1. How would you describe your engagement in communities of color?

2. What opportunities do you see for conservation / sustainability / environmental projects in Flint (or Saginaw)?

3. What would you describe as priorities or challenges in advancing your (conservation / sustainability / environmental) work in communities of color?

4. Could you share with us your experience with aligning resources to support (conservation / sustainability / environmental) projects in communities of color?

5. How can funders better support your (conservation / sustainability / environmental) work in communities of color? Where should investments be made?