

Project Background Information

Great Lakes Community Foundation Environmental Collaborative

When was this started? Is it ongoing?

The Fund's initial investment was made in 1993, to support an explorative meeting. The first grant of \$166,000 was made in 1996 to launch the Collaborative. The Fund made two follow-on grants—\$250,000 in 1998, and \$250,000 in 2001. While Fund support ceased in 2004, environmental programming continues in the 38 partner foundations.

Who initiated the partnership?

Judith Stockdale, then the Fund's Executive Director, developed the Collaborative idea. Rob Collier, at the Council of Michigan Foundations was its champion in the in the Community Foundation world, and was the team leader and fiscal agent for the grants. Sheila Leahy and David Hahn Baker staffed the Collaborative. It is fair to say that the Collaborative emerged from the efforts of these people.

Who are its members?

Community Foundation members include:

Highland Park Community Foundation,
Highland Park, IL
Unity Foundation of LaPorte County, IN
Legacy Foundation, Inc., Merrillville, IN
Alger Regional Community Foundation,
Munising, MI
Bay Area Community Foundation, Bay
City, MI
Berrien Community Foundation, St.
Joseph, MI
Community Foundation of the Holland
Zeeland Area, MI
Community Foundation for Muskegon
County, Muskegon, MI
Community Foundation for Northeast
Michigan, Alpena, MI
Community Foundation for Southeastern
Michigan, Detroit, MI
Grand Traverse Regional Community
Foundation, Traverse City, MI
Huron County Community Foundation,
MI
Keweenaw Community Foundation,
Houghton, MI
Les Cheneaux Community Fund,
Cedarville, MI
Mackinac Island Community Foundation,
Mackinac Island, MI

Manistee County Community Foundation,
Manistee, MI
Marquette Community Foundation,
Marquette, MI
Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area
Community Foundation, Petoskey, MI
Sault Area Community Foundation, Sault
Ste. Marie, MI
Duluth-Superior Area Community
Foundation, Duluth MN
Central New York Community
Foundation, Syracuse, NY
Community Foundation for Greater
Buffalo, Buffalo NY
Northern Chautaugua Community
Foundation, Dunkirk NY
Rochester Area Community Foundation,
Rochester NY
Sandusky-Erie County Community
Foundation, Sandusky OH
Brantford Community Foundation,
Brantford, ON
Burlington Community Foundation,
Burlington ON
Community Foundation of Greater
Kingston, Kingston ON
Community Foundation of Grey Bruce,
Owen Sound, ON

Hamilton Community Foundation,
Hamilton ON
Huron Communities Foundation,
Midland, ON
Niagara Community Foundation, St.
Catharines ON
Sarnia Community Foundation, Sarnia
ON

Toronto Community Foundation,
Toronto ON
Erie Community Foundation, Erie, PA
Milwaukee Foundation, Milwaukee WI
Oshkosh Area Community Foundation,
Oshkosh, WI
Racine Community Foundation, Racine
WI

The Great Lakes Protection Fund, The C.S. Mott Foundation, and the Joyce Foundation provided financial support.

Why was it started? What was the motivation or objective?

The Collaborative emerged because of two complementary opportunities. First, the environment had not been an area of focused fund-raising by Community Foundations. Most had some kind of grant making activity, but little organized effort to attract donors. Second, the regional foundations saw an opportunity to build capacity to solve regionally relevant local problems like brownfield contamination, unchecked development, and watershed problems. The overall objective was to create a network of local environmental programming by engaging community leaders to design and finance it. The Collaborative used financial and program metrics to measure its progress.

Were the objectives achieved?

The Collaborative achieved its overall objective, but fell short on one of its specific programmatic tasks. The Fund's Board of Directors has been delighted by this project. Financially, it was successful beyond our expectations. The Fund had hoped for a four fold return on its investment, and received twice that using the most restrictive accounting assumptions. Over \$4.6 million was raised for local programs, most of this supporting local endowments. If one looks at the public funds that Collaborative members attracted, the Funds investment was multiplied 15 times. Programmatically, the Collaborative recruited the expected number of participants and successfully created 38 local environmental programs. The only shortcoming was not creating a formal web-based learning network.

How much money was involved?

More money was involved in this project than we ever imagined would be! The Fund invested \$666,000 in grant support. The C.S. Mott and Joyce Foundations invested just over a million dollars between them. Locally, over \$4.6 million was raised for endowments during the grant period. It is very likely that more funds have been raised, and that these endowments have appreciated in the market place. The Collaborative also reported that as of summer 2001, another \$4.2 million in government grants had been directed at efforts initiated by the Collaborative.