



**LAKE  
HURON  
FOREVER**

**THE PLEDGE**

Engage communities and activate local solutions to sustain a healthy Lake Huron Forever.

## Lake Huron Forever Pledge

The City of Bay City knows that a healthy Lake Huron means a healthy, strong and vibrant future for our community. As a result, we are committed to keeping the protection of Lake Huron at the forefront of our planning, decision making and resource allocation.

Our community well-being and economic prosperity are tied to Lake Huron. 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 must work together to protect the forests, wetlands and waterways to address threats of pollution and flooding caused by stormwater, proactively plan for the impacts of a changing climate, support native plant restoration and provide corridors for wildlife.

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.

### Our Lake Huron Forever Pledge

- We hereby pledge to create, implement and update a Lake Huron Forever Community Road Map.
- We promise to serve as an example of how to proactively protect Lake Huron by sharing our work with other Lake Huron communities.
- We will allocate resources (time, money, people) to understanding emerging needs and opportunities to protect Lake Huron forever.
- We will commit to and encourage all community organizations and residents to take their own actions to protect Lake Huron, forever.
- We will give back to Lake Huron by examining management practices across municipal departments to identify ways to improve efforts to protect land and water resources.
- We will share our pledge with neighboring community leaders, as well as state, provincial and federal representatives to generate more conversation and positive action for Lake Huron and Lake Huron communities.



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## Our Lake Huron Forever Community Road Map

The City of Bay City has identified several specific issues that are direct threats to the health of the Saginaw River and Lake Huron. With the support of the Lake Huron Forever network of partners, the City will work to address these issues with the following goals and action steps.

### Goals

- **Support and maintain current programs.** To best serve the community, the City must take a strategic and pragmatic approach to supporting economic, environmental and social programs to ensure the long-term sustainability of our efforts. We aim to ensure current and future programs are within our capacity to sustain.
- **Curb Stormwater Runoff.** To improve and protect water quality the City has prioritized reducing and improving the quality of stormwater runoff, which can carry pollutants such as road salt, nutrients and sediment. Our goal is to increase the use of nature-based solutions and innovative approaches to manage stormwater on city property while balancing the maintenance needs and aesthetic considerations of the community. We aim to explore ways to educate, incentivize and empower private landowners to manage their stormwater. Finally, future zoning amendments will consider best management practices for stormwater management.
- **Improve the quality of natural areas.** By integrating natural habitats into the City, we can support biodiversity, wildlife, and enhance urban resilience. Our citizens will benefit from cleaner air and water as well as the health benefits associated with being in nature.
- **Improve our urban tree canopy.** Increasing the number and diversity of trees has multiple benefits including reducing thermal pollution, reducing and filtering stormwater runoff, reducing erosion, improving climate resiliency and improving wildlife habitat. Additionally, a healthy tree canopy is linked to increased property values, attracting and retaining residents and improving aesthetics. The City aims to increase canopy cover overall, improve the diversity of trees throughout the city limits and explore opportunities to support our community in planting and caring for trees.
- **Provide a strong and comprehensive recycling program.** The benefits of recycling goes beyond keeping trash out of our landfills, it reduces air and water pollution, conserves energy and helps keep trash out of our waterways. Recycling products uses less energy, creates less waste and conserves our natural resources than sourcing raw materials (i.e., cutting down trees or mining aluminum) and the processing, manufacturing and transport associated with new products. These impacts go far beyond our city limits. The City of Bay City is dedicated to providing residents with a comprehensive and easily accessible recycling program.



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- **Control the spread of invasive species.** Invasive plant and animal species spread aggressively and cause ecological and economic harm. These species outcompete native species, strain fisheries and decrease property values. In Bay City, the spread of the invasive plant *Phragmites australis* has taken over many sensitive coastal and wetland habitats, obstructed lake views and hindered recreational activities such as swimming and boating. The City commits to continuing to address current efforts and to staying vigilant to new and emerging threats to effectively address this issue.
- **Prioritize Public Education and Engagement.** We aim to increase environmental education efforts targeted for the general public. Sharing information and stories with the Bay City community is an essential aspect of this work.

### Action Steps

1. Support Goderich, ON Sister City by protecting our shared resource. We will review our LHF road map during regular meetings with them and participate in peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
2. Incorporate review and updating of the Pledge in alignment with onboarding of new commissioners to City Commission.
3. Engage with local initiatives such as the Better Branches program (Saginaw Bay Land Conservancy), Redevelopment Ready Community plan and support efforts of Bay City Electric Light & Power to implement the Vegetation Management Plan.
4. Consider integration of LHF Pledge goals in updates and development of relevant city plans such as the Recreation and Master Plans.
5. Evaluate and update current zoning practices to include low-impact development, green infrastructure, naturalized lawn opportunities and improved parking lot practices.
6. Explore incentive programs that promote green infrastructure on private property
7. Tell our story via various media outlets. Update the City's webpage to highlight efforts to protect our water, promote on social media and explore radio and print opportunities.
8. With assistance from Lake Huron Forever partners, the City will install visual representation(s) highlighting the pledge to become a Lake Huron Forever community. This could include a sign as you enter the City, storm drain stamps and/or business window decals.
9. The City will consider and discuss opportunities to raise or allocate funding for Lake Huron Forever programming and projects including considering these goals for grant applications and as line items during budgeting for the various stakeholder departments.



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*Signature*

*Date*

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Kathleen L Newsham, Mayor

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Tema J. Lucero, City Clerk

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