

Misery Bay Initiative Goals

The purpose of this chapter is to set forth goals to guide the effort to preserve and protect the natural resources within the Misery Bay Initiative planning area. The basis of this long range effort is to use a four pronged approach of education, technical assistance, regulation, and acquisition/conservation easements. Previous chapters of this plan provided information on existing conditions such as soils, cover types, natural features and geology; status of planning and zoning; and potential threats to the area. In addition, the Misery Bay Steering Committee participated in a workshop that identified values and assets, issues and concerns, and priority planning areas (a listing of those comments is provided at the end of this chapter.) The combined background studies and committee input was used to establish goals. Before proceeding it is important to address the following question.

Why protect nature in our community?

1. Natural areas enhance the quality of life for residents and help define community identity by connecting residents to the natural landscape.
2. Healthy, functioning natural areas provide recreational opportunities including hiking, hunting, fishing, bird watching, and nature study.
3. Natural landscapes soften the hard edge of urban built-up areas with the greenery of leaves, the many colors of flowers and fruits, the smell of blossoms and the sounds of birds.
4. Parks and open space enhance the economic value of the area. Open lands cost less in services than other uses and add to the value of properties nearby.
5. Natural landscapes have many environmental benefits- they control erosion, help retain stormwater, help clean the air of pollutants, help protect surface water quality, mitigate global warming by absorbing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, and help shelter and cool our homes. All of these services are provided absolutely free.
6. Future generations will enjoy the legacy of today's efforts to protect our natural heritage.
7. Spiritual Values – "A sense of place, a sense of well being, a quiet place to look inward, feeling at one with the earth," there are many ways people express the spiritual values associated with spending time in natural areas.

Overall Ecological Goal

Protect the natural resources, preserve the wildlands character and priority conservation areas, and enhance the overall quality of life while respecting the rights of individual property owners within the Misery Bay Initiative planning area. Towards this end, implement a proactive community-wide resource management program that recognizes people and natural systems can coexist and is based on principles of ecosystem management whereby all of the community's natural systems are protected and managed.

"Ecosystem refers to the relationship between a community of plants and animals and its living and non-living environment. This relationship includes the rain, sun, wind and elements of the atmosphere; the plants and animals, including people, on the land and in the waters; and the soil, geology and water that occur on or in the land. Interacting together, these diverse environmental factors form an ecosystem." Ecosystem management considers all components and the interrelationships of those components

and that altering one component has the potential to affect the entire ecosystem. For example, the destruction of wetlands will in turn negatively impact water quality.

Community-Wide Resource Goals

Wildlife Habitat

Encourage the preservation and management of plant communities that provide critical habitat for resident and migratory wildlife species.

Aquatic Habitat

Support sustainable fisheries in Misery Bay and Thunder Bay by protecting spawning and feeding habitats along with recognizing the connection of near shore terrestrial and wetland areas to maintaining healthy fish stocks.

Forest Lands

Maintain healthy, diverse forest communities and recognize the importance of responsibly managed forests in providing wildlife habitat, forest production, erosion control, water quality protection, and scenic views.

Wetlands

Protect and conserve wetlands for all of their values.

Biodiversity and Coastal Ecosystems

Encourage sustainable and proper management of private and public lands that conserve the area's rich biological diversity and consider Misery Bay resources are interconnected to a much broader coastal landscape.

Priority Conservation Areas

Work towards protecting priority conservation areas to maximize biological diversity and community benefits and as opportunities arise, preserve priority areas using all available techniques such as voluntary conservation, landowner education and technical assistance, landowner stewardship programs, conservation easements, purchase of development rights, conservation open space development design and fee simple purchase.

Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species

Limit the introduction of new and the spread of existing invasive species through landowner education programs and the formation of Neighborhood Action Teams (NAT's)

Riparian Zones and Great Lakes Shorelines

Encourage the retention, enhancement and restoration of natural vegetation buffers adjacent to lakes, streams and wetlands.

Ecological Corridors

Encourage the preservation, enhancement and restoration of critical wildlife habitat and important ecological corridors.

Water Quality Protection

Protect and improve the water quality of inland lakes and streams as well as the Great Lakes by minimizing the impacts of land use changes, supporting scientific based resource management and limiting non-point source pollution from developed areas.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Support continued efforts to document presence of threatened and endangered species and communities and develop strategies to conserve those finite resources.

Recreation

Support continued appropriate and compatible recreational uses on private and public lands and improve recreational opportunities on public lands and waterways.

Landowners

Expand technical assistance, education, and incentives programs to work towards the retention of large tracts of managed forestlands in public and private ownership.

Economy

In recognizing the importance of recreation and tourism, strengthen local economies by developing low impact recreation facilities on public lands (trails, picnic sites, and water access to Misery Bay), supporting efforts of the Thunder Bay Underwater Preserve, and promoting eco-tourism.

Historic and Archeological Resources

Continue to locate and preserve where possible the historic and archeological resources within the land and underwater areas.

Collaborative Actions

Use a collaborative approach to protecting and managing natural systems by forming partnerships with landowners, conservation organizations, businesses, local units of government, and public agencies.

Technical Assistance

Promote a healthy and diverse natural environment by initiating a coordinated landowner technical assistance program with the assistance of agencies, organizations, associations and resource professionals.

Education and Public Awareness

Increase public awareness and encourage landowners and businesses to participate in the implementation of the Misery Bay Initiative through educational programs and community events such as Riverfest, Lighthouse Festival, Maritime Festival, and Brown Trout Festival.

Resource Friendly Land Use Planning and Zoning

Continue to develop strategies in land use planning and zoning that recognize the land's environmental constraints; consider the level of infrastructure both available and needed; and support the concept of sustainable development.

Development

Encourage the conservation open space design development that preserves wetlands, critical wildlife habitat, wetland buffers and riparian buffers while enabling landowners to develop properties consistent with community zoning density levels.

Funding and Implementation

Support implementation of the Misery Bay Initiative with a combination of funding sources which may include grants, state and federal programs, foundations, community general funds, landowners and in-kind services.