



Important Dates & News

The **Obtawaing Biosphere Region (OBR) All-Partnership Meeting** will happen virtually Jan 11, 2024, from 10:00 to 11:00 EST.

On the agenda for this meeting:

- Overview of OBR
- Recap and outcomes of our October meeting
- Address partner questions and clarify partner roles
- Guided discussion and input for the OBR Coastal Resilience planning efforts. These will result in a data-sharing hub and visualization tools for partners, and a resilience plan which includes a prioritized coastal project list for future funding applications and on-the-ground impact

RSVP FOR ALL-PARTNER MEETING

We are looking forward to maintaining the momentum of our successful Fall 2023 partnership meeting and welcome all to attend.

Additionally, the **Biosphere Intern Webinar** is slated to happen Jan 17, 12:00pm EST.

Interns from the Cascade Head, Obtawaing and Mojave and Colorado Deserts Biosphere Collaboratives/Regions will give a recap of their work and reflect on strengths and challenges of youth engagement in Biosphere Regions. They will also discuss the different scopes of their internships as well as the broader mission of the biosphere program.

RSVP FOR INTERN WEBINAR

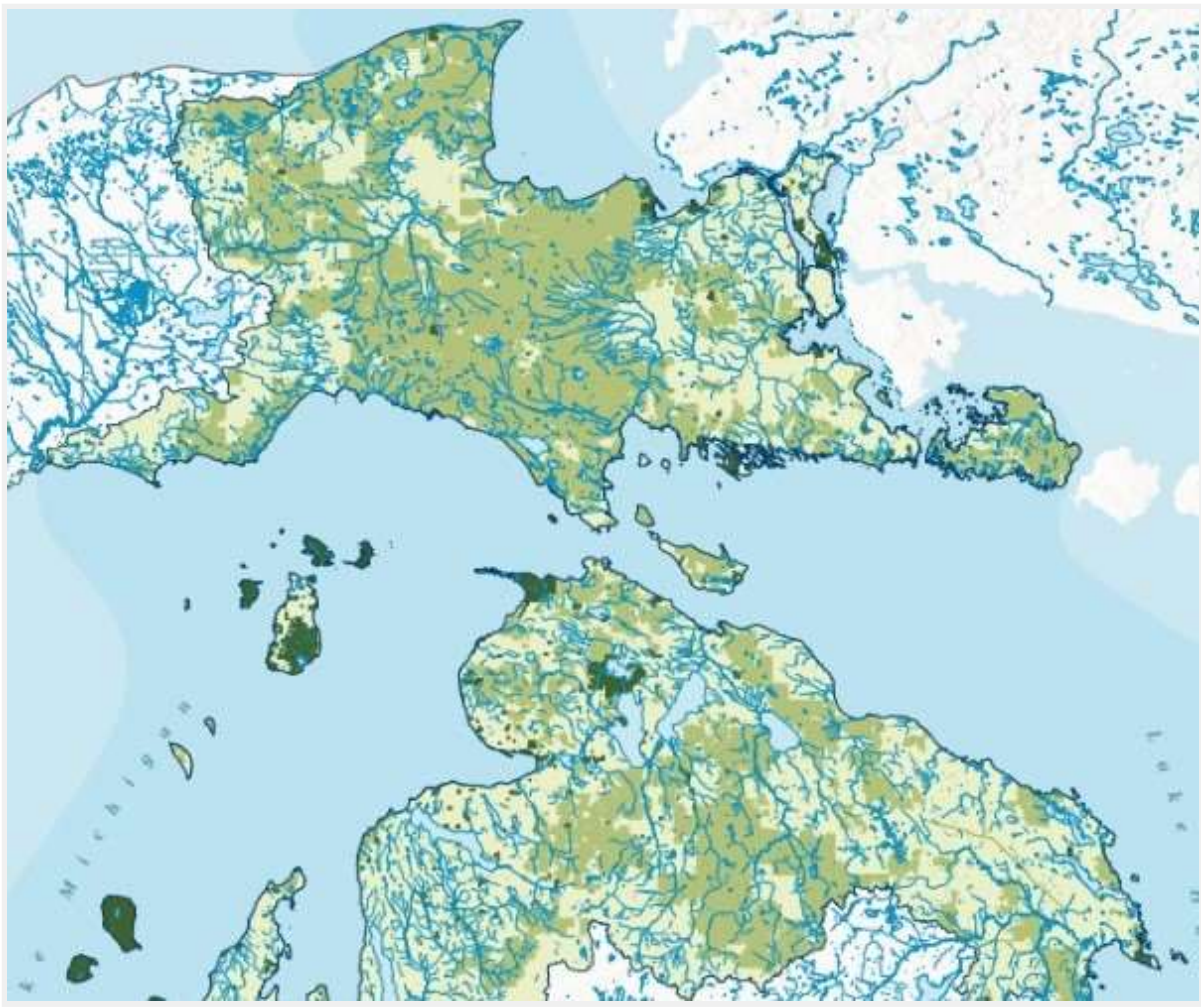


Manar Talab

Manar Talab, previously the Climate Solutions Intern for OBR, has transitioned to a new role in the biosphere as **Partnership Coordinator**. In her new role, Manar will be responsible for coordination support, communications including community presentations and website development, and maintaining connection with the national and international Biosphere network.

Following her work as an intern, Manar will continue working on OBR forest carbon analysis. If you are interested in having Manar present to your organization or community group, please reach out to her at manartalab@gmail.com.

Finally, the **OBR Boundary & Map** is complete. Pictured in part below, the map contains the approximate boundaries of OBR including a description of the biosphere region and its Core Areas, Buffer Areas and Areas of Cooperation (previously called Transition Zones).



The completed OBR map. Click the image for a full-size PDF.

- **Core Areas** are protected biodiversity areas that contribute to ecosystem, species and genetic conservation.
- **Buffer Areas** surround the core zones and use sound ecological practices.
- **Areas of Cooperation** are used for sustainable economic and human activities,

A PDF version can be viewed [here](#). You can also explore the map through the ArcGIS viewer [here](#).

Partner Updates

Complete [this form](#) to highlight one of your projects in a future newsletter!

Beaver Island Sustainability Initiative

The mission of the Beaver Island Sustainability Initiative is to showcase and advance local sustainable solutions, advocating Beaver Island as a model regional leader. Its goals are to promote island produced clean energy, robust local food production and healthy ecosystems paired with cultural and community resilience.

In 2022, Tara's Meadow—a 30-acre, not-for-profit retreat and educational center on Beaver Island—successfully applied for and was awarded the Energy Transitions Partnership Project (ETIPP)

technical assistance grant. The national program is sponsored by the Department of Energy to support energy transitions specifically to islands and remote communities.

Beaver Island was one of only 12 islands, from Maine to Alaska and from Hawaii to Guam, to be awarded the grant that year. The ETIPP energy advisors from the National Renewable Energy Lab and other organizations are committed to helping islands who are dependent on mainland energy to move towards dependable, low carbon and affordable local energy production. To date, the partnership has worked on community education programming, data gathering, baseline analysis as well as a renewable energy resource assessment and alternative analysis.

The partnership is excited to focus on the Strategic Energy Plan development, including an exciting opportunity to weave two important and timely planning initiatives, Beaver Island Master Plan and the ETIPP, into one comprehensive assessment for advanced energy systems and future planning.

Contact Seamus Norgaard, celticbodyprayers@gmail.com for more information.

The Nature Conservancy

The [Family Forest Carbon Program](#) has expanded to include all of the Northwoods (forests of northern Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan) so any qualifying private forest owners within the OBR are encouraged to consider enrolling. Some in the northern Lower Peninsula have already enrolled.

The TNC restoration team has been working closely with [Three Shores CISMA](#), helping out with their invasive species surveys and treatment primarily at Maxton Plains Preserve on Drummond Island, focusing on alvar restoration, with additional work at our other eastern U.P. preserves. We will continue to work with them to conduct surveys for hemlock woolly adelgid throughout the winter and spring. We also removed non-native Scots pine from TNC's Gerstacker Preserve.



An early rendering of the St. Ignace East Moran Bay Ecological Enhancements Project (credit: LimnoTech).

Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Tracing the shoreline from DeTour Village in the Upper Peninsula down to Bay City, the [Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative](#) is working with nine communities, in collaboration with fantastic partners like NEMCOG and Huron Pines, to plan and secure funding for coastal resilience projects.

This work is through their [Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative](#) which aims to mitigate staff capacity and grant planning barriers that local governments face when it comes to addressing issues like flooding, water quality, erosion and crumbling infrastructure. In early January, another fully funded, no-cost opportunity (the [Initiative for Resilient Great Lakes Coasts](#)) will be available to local communities looking for coastal resilience support. You can register for the informational kickoff webinar Jan 17, 2024 [here](#).



Members of Huron Pines AmeriCorps install sand fencing during a dune habitat restoration project in Alpena this summer as part of the Lake Huron Forever initiative.

Highlighting Community-Driven Conservation Within OBR

The community of Alpena has committed to the protection of Lake Huron's water quality while inspiring community members to action.

The Township, City and County of Alpena leadership each adopted resolutions in August to take the Lake Huron Forever (LHF) Pledge. Collectively they are the third Michigan community to do so after Au Gres and Bay City, and the first within the OBR to join the movement. More than a promise to do good for the lake, the [Pledge](#) outlines individual and shared challenges facing the three communities and identifies actions to address them. They include steps to curb stormwater runoff, protect sensitive natural areas, control the spread of invasive species and promote opportunities for public stewardship education and input, among others.

The [Lake Huron Forever initiative](#) supports community efforts to design and implement on-the-ground projects which benefit the health of residents and natural resources. The initiative is supported by shoreline community foundations and conservation partners from the U.S. and Canada including Bay Area Community Foundation, Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan, Community Foundation Grey Bruce, Huron Pines and Saginaw Bay Watershed Initiative Network. Financial assistance for this project is also provided by the Michigan Coastal Management Program, Water Resources Division, EGLE, with funding through the National Coastal Zone Management Program.

Little Traverse Conservancy

Little Traverse Conservancy is **permanently protecting more land** in the OBR region that is both culturally and ecologically significant to the unique fabric of this beautiful area.

Highlights of the new properties include the largest undeveloped & unprotected stretch of Lake Michigan shoreline between Harbor Springs and Charlevoix, and Great Lakes marsh habitat in the Les Cheneaux islands community in the eastern Upper Peninsula.

Contact Derek Shiels at derek@landtrust.org for more information.

Grant Opportunities

If you would like to explore grant opportunities or spread the word on a grant opportunity you would like to share with OBR partners, [visit this spreadsheet](#).



Obtawainig Biosphere Region is centrally located in Northern Michigan and lies at the convergence of two peninsulas and three Great Lakes. This region is recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a globally significant ecological and cultural landscape.

Our partners work cooperatively in a non-regulatory and non-political capacity to address ecological and landscape conservation, cultural conservation, social and environmental justice and sustainable economic development.