

Great Lakes Fishery Commission – FishPass



Position: Public Affairs Specialist

Location: Traverse City, MI

Background: The bi-directional selective fish passage (FishPass; <https://www.glfc.org/fishpass.php>) project at the Boardman/Ottaway River's Union Street Dam in Traverse City, MI is a multi-agency collaboration aimed at providing up- and down-stream passage of desirable fishes while simultaneously blocking or removing undesirable and invasive fishes. FishPass is a multifaceted project that is prominently located in downtown Traverse City and, therefore, prominently featured to its many residents and visitors. The project will have broad effects on how the existing site is accessed and used. The community has a strong desire to integrate the river into the fabric of the city. FishPass provides an excellent opportunity to support community values among other critical ecosystem and socio-economic values, such as: 1) enhancing access and use of the site for education, wayfinding, and recreation; 2) improving public understanding of the threat from invasive species; 3) informing the public on the role of human landscape alterations on fisheries and communities; and 4) promoting engagement regarding broad objectives for the Boardman/Ottaway River, ecosystem management, and city planning.

FishPass is currently under construction, and on-site selective fish passage research is expected to begin by 2027. In preparation for the opening of FishPass, the FishPass Advisory Board has prioritized the need to increase community outreach and education opportunities and ensure that Anishinaabek culture (past and present) is reflected in broader education and placemaking elements at FishPass.

Responsibilities: The FishPass Public Affairs Specials (PAS) will be responsible for being the first point-of-contact for all visitors (including external researchers, media, school programs, tour groups, and the general public) to FishPass and will assist in the implementation of an existing FishPass Outreach and Education Plan. The PAS will be knowledgeable about the river, its ecology, the history of the site and its people, and FishPass and will effectively communicate that information to visitors. The PAS will lead and coordinate all tours of FishPass and collaborate with FishPass partner agencies to develop interpretive materials such as signage, webcasts, and brochures, develop and implement curricula for educational programs, develop and implement citizen-science activities, coordinate and provide teaching and learning opportunities for local school programs, and to coordinate and deliver group tours of the site.

Qualifications: The ideal candidate must have a broad background in communications, education, and/or outreach. Knowledge of fishery biology/ecology, Great Lakes fisheries, invasive species, river restoration, and local knowledge including of Indigenous Peoples and cultures is preferred. Candidates must possess exceptional verbal and written communication skills, with a proven record of public engagement and public speaking, including science communication, and be skillful in interpretive natural history and ecology.

Applicants are encouraged to submit a cover letter addressing competencies in the above qualifications, CV or resume, and names and contact information for three references to Dan Zielinski (dzielinski@glfc.org) by November 30, 2024. The PAS will start at a GS-9 (salary \$59,966-71,959 plus benefits, dependent on experience). The anticipated start date for the position is January 1, 2025 or sooner. The PAS will be stationed at the Great Lakes Fishery Commission office at 310 W. Front Street Traverse City, Michigan. Learn more about the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and FishPass [here](#).



**Great Lakes Fishery
Commission**

**POSITION DESCRIPTION
GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION
Public Affairs Specialist
(Equivalent GS-1035-09)**

I. Introduction

FishPass is the capstone of a ~20y restoration project on the Boardman (Ottaway) River, Traverse City, Michigan, re-connecting the river with Lake Michigan. FishPass will replace the aging Union Street Dam with a new, complete barrier to all fish that will have the ability to sort and selectively pass desirable fishes while blocking harmful invaders like sea lampreys (<http://www.glfcc.org/fishpass.php>).

The Public Affairs Specialist position is implemented through a Memorandum of Agreement on FishPass operations between the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (Commission), the City of Traverse City (City), the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians (GTB), and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MIDNR). The position reflects the partnerships associated with FishPass and their commitment to its successful operations.

Under direction of the Commission's Principal Engineer/Scientist with broad guidance from the FishPass Advisory Board and direct collaboration with the Commission's Communication Director, the Public Affairs Specialist will be responsible for engaging key stake- and rights-holders, being the first point-of-contact for all visitors to the FishPass site, assisting in the implementation and periodic update of the FishPass Outreach and Education Plan. Potential audiences will include external researchers, media, school programs, tour groups, elected officials, public officials, and the public. Incumbent will maintain the public facing elements of FishPass as outlined in the FishPass Operation and Maintenance Plan. Incumbent will be knowledgeable about the river, its ecology, connectivity, restoration, local history, and culture and FishPass, and will effectively communicate that information to diverse audiences. Incumbent will lead and coordinate tours of FishPass and use a combination of verbal, written, and digital media to communicate information about FishPass. Incumbent will prepare routine briefings about FishPass activities, assist in the preparation of press releases, maintain the FishPass website, and regularly develop content for social media platforms (e.g., Facebook and X (formerly Twitter)). Incumbent will respond to public inquiries about the project and communicate any concerns or issues with the Principal Engineer/Scientist.

Incumbent will assist in maintaining specific standard and operating procedures and maintaining records for the public facing elements of FishPass. Incumbent will routinely liaise with the MIDNR, City, and GTB staff hosting related public Affairs and outreach activities approximate to FishPass.

The duty station for the position is Traverse City, Michigan.

II. Major Duties and Responsibilities

Specific duties that will form the basis of a position workplan are provided in Appendix I.

Public Affairs – Responsible for engaging all non-research visitors to FishPass, ensuring safe Affairs onsite, and delivering information relating to the river, river ecology, the history of the site and its people, and FishPass. Generally, maintains or coordinates maintenance of the public facing elements of FishPass as outlined in the Operation and Maintenance Plan. Coordinates response to public and media inquiries. Liaises with the MIDNR, City, and GTB staff hosting related public Affairs and outreach activities approximate to FishPass. Under the supervision of the Principal Engineer/Scientist, organizes events and briefings with elected and other public officials, and responds to inquiries from those audiences.

Outreach and Education – Assists in the implementation and periodic update of the FishPass Outreach and Education Plan. Coordinates with the FishPass Advisory Board to generate outreach and education materials for FishPass including, but not limited to, videos, fact sheets, social media content, etc. Collaborates with FishPass partner agencies (City of Traverse City, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Geological Survey) to: develop interpretive materials such as signage, webcasts, and brochures; develop and implement curricula for local and regional educational programs; coordinate and provide teaching and learning opportunities for local school programs; and, coordinate and conduct group tours of the site. Represents FishPass and liaises with local partners and pertinent organizations (e.g., Michigan Sea Grant, Inland Seas, etc.) Participates in outreach at large and small events under the direction of the Commission's Communications Director.

Communications – Together with the FishPass Advisory Board, generates new content to maintain the FishPass website, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) platforms. Maintains FishPass general e-mail account. Coordinates and implements monthly communications team planning calls as required. The incumbent will coordinate responses to all public inquiries about the project and communicate any concerns or issues with the communications team. An incumbent must possess the ability to interact with the press and coordinate among partners responses to press inquiries. Attends meetings on behalf of FishPass.

Appendix I. Specific Duties

This position performs specific tasks to accomplish the major duties listed above in addition to other duties as assigned.

Public Affairs

- Engage all visitors to FishPass.
- Deliver information relating to the river, river ecology, the history of the site and its people, and FishPass.
- Maintain or coordinate maintenance of the public-facing elements of the FishPass research, outreach, and education facility including video monitors, signage, bulletin boards, video cameras, etc.
- Convene safety briefings for non-research visitors via the FishPass Operations and Maintenance Plan and maintain a record for safety training and safety equipment testing.
- Assists the Principal Engineer/Scientist in the writing and yearly maintenance of specific standard operating procedures related to public-facing elements.
- Coordinate response to public inquiries.
- Liaise with the MIDNR, City, and GTB staff hosting related public Affairs and outreach activities approximate to FishPass.

Outreach and Education

- Collaborate with the Principal Engineer/Scientist with broad guidance by the FishPass Advisory Board to maintain, update, and implement the FishPass Outreach and Education Plan.
- With guidance from the FishPass Advisory Board, generate outreach and education materials including, but not limited to, videos, fact sheets, social media content, etc.
- Work with the Communications Director and FishPass Advisory Board to collaborate with FishPass partner agencies to develop interpretive materials including signage, webcasts, and brochures.
- Assist in developing and implementing curricula for educational programs.
- Coordinate and provide teaching and learning opportunities for local school programs.
- Coordinate and deliver group tours of the site.
- Facilitate opportunities for citizen science and community volunteer groups to care for FishPass infrastructure (i.e., rain gardens).
- Serve as local primary point-of-contact for FishPass involving local interaction with stakeholders, public, and city Commission.
- Contributes to a work environment that encourages knowledge of, respect for, and development of skills to engage with those of other cultures or backgrounds.
- Undertake cultural training and be familiar with the culture of the local Indigenous communities.
- Ensure non-research visitors to FishPass are adequately briefed on safety and engage with the site and scientists in an appropriate manner consistent with the health and safety standards established by the Operations and Maintenance Plan.
- Represents FishPass and maintains liaison with local partners and related organizations.

Communications

- Together with the Communications Director and FishPass Advisory Board, we generate new content to maintain the Fish Pass website, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) platforms.
- Coordinate responses to all public inquiries about the project and communicate any concerns or issues.
- Coordinates and implements monthly communications and brief team on activities and needs.
- Coordinate with local communications and outreach and education partners including, but not limited to Michigan Sea Grant and Northwestern Michigan College.
- Provide project updates at specified intervals and facilitate information exchange to all FishPass project partners, funders, and regulators.
- Coordinate, facilitate, and promote cooperation among local states, tribal, federal, and provincial agencies, and academic institutions to implement FishPass. Provide regular updates to project partners.
- Participate in weekly FishPass staff meetings.
- Participate in and report at bi-annual meetings of the FishPass Advisory Board.

Other duties

- Assist or lead on non-recurring projects as directed in support of the Commission's vision statements and the Joint Strategic Plan.
- Assist with regular operation and maintenance tasks of public-facing elements at the discretion of the Principal Engineer/Scientist.
- Assists the Principal Engineer/Scientist in the writing and yearly maintenance of specific standard operating procedures and maintain records for safety training and safety equipment testing related to public-facing elements and non-researcher visitors.