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**FLOW Awarded NMEAC John Nelson Water Steward Award**

**TRAVERSE CITY-** On April 25, 2014, Northern Michigan Environmental Action Council (NMEAC) honored FLOW with the *John Nelson Water Steward Award* at their Annual Environmentalist of the Year Celebration. This award recognizes organizations for their water stewardship efforts. Its namesake, John Nelson, is the Grand Traverse Baykeeper, whose extraordinary leadership protects the waters through informed citizen and government engagement.

2014 marks NMEAC's 26<sup>th</sup> year recognizing individuals and organizations who effectively advocate environmental awareness and protection in Northern Michigan. NMEAC was established in 1980 and is the region's oldest grassroots environmental advocacy organization, influencing five county regions throughout Northwestern Michigan. The all-volunteer organization continues to operate under the mission: "Preserving the natural environment through citizen action and education."

<http://www.nmeac.org/>

"There was nobody more deserving than Jim Olson and Liz Kirkwood for the John Nelson Water Steward Award. The amount of time FLOW spends mentoring and inspiring our community is priceless. They are a true powerhouse team!" says June Thaden, a member of the board of directors for NMEAC.

FLOW's mission is to advance public trust solutions to save the Great Lakes. To address the basin-wide systemic threats facing the Great Lakes, FLOW educates decision-makers and communities about the *public trust doctrine* and the *commons* as ways to protect our majestic Great Lakes.

Under the public trust, water is protected as a shared resource for the benefit of current and future generations. Our government's job is to protect the water for everyone as a trustee. And citizens can assert their rights if our common waters are not being adequately protected as a shared resource and legacy for future generations.

"It is such an honor to receive NMEAC's John Nelson Water Steward Award, named after our revered Grand Traverse Baykeeper who serves as the eyes, ears, and voice of this beautiful bay," remarks Executive Director, Liz Kirkwood. "Like John Nelson and his stewardship work connecting citizens and decision-makers, FLOW works with local governments and high-level decision-makers to develop long-term policy solutions that protect our waters as a commons," she says.

FLOW's current programs include: (1) extreme energy transport and the Line 5 pipeline under the Straits of Mackinac; (2) local government ordinances to protect against air, water, and land impacts of fracking in Michigan; and (3) legal strategies to address nutrient pollution in Lake Erie and beyond. FLOW collaborates with local, regional, national and international organizations to promote policy changes and deepen public awareness through policy papers, presentations, and public events. This fall, FLOW will host the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in Traverse City.

FLOW is grateful to organizations like NMEAC, which provide a platform to build important partnership coalitions and to work together to address key environmental issues.

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*FLOW is the Great Lakes Basin's only public trust policy and education 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our mission is to advance public trust solutions to save the Great Lakes.*