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## Community Foundations Release Plan to Support Resilient Communities: Seeks community input and engagement

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Menominee, MI – The M&M Area Community Foundation (MMACF) has joined four other Community Foundations in the Lake Superior/Upper Peninsula region to release an action plan designed to protect the water resources of the region by limiting the impact of extreme weather events. The “Resilient Future Project” seeks to build a community of civic and municipal leaders with the vision and drive to identify and implement strategies to better prepare for severe storm events.

The MMACF invites community participation in a short 6 question survey related to this action plan. The survey is available at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9ZQK9MM>. The survey will close on Wednesday, February 13.

The devastating effects of severe weather events have brought the importance of the Lakes and their fragility into sharp focus. Few communities however, are prepared to address the challenge. Instead, limited local resources are being drained to manage the devastating effects of the problem. Unfortunately, many Great Lakes communities have to fend for themselves in their attempts to respond to these challenges.

The MMACF, together with Community Foundation of Marquette County, Community Foundation of the Upper Peninsula and Delta County, Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation and Keweenaw Community Foundation recognize that we share the same mission in improving the health and wellbeing of our Great Lakes communities and together are forging a single coordinated response to help communities adapt to extreme weather events. Our common interest should help motivate the region toward a more resilient future. Community Foundations, with the aid of sound research, the support and guidance of citizens, municipal and civic leaders, will join forces to address these challenges.

A resilient future for the Great Lakes may mean the expansion of effective flood defenses such as wetlands, retention basins or, changing policies to insure we protect natural floodplains. Government cannot do this alone. Engaged and committed citizens, businesses, non-profit organizations and civic groups will be essential to success. It is hoped these groups will implement their own adaptations; setting examples and serving as leaders for others in the region. The action plan will support the assessment of impacts, vulnerabilities and risks, as well as a plan for remediation, greater resilience, resources acquisition and implementation, followed by sound monitoring and evaluation.

Beginning in 2019, five communities have agreed to commence the process: Duluth, MN, and Houghton, Marquette, Menominee, and Les Cheneaux, all in Michigan. Another five communities will join the second phase of the project at a later date.

The Community Foundations are securing a \$300,000 seed grant from Great Lakes Protection Fund, Ralph Wilson Foundation and Kresge Foundation, along with an additional \$200,000 match, to help kick-start the work. The Foundations have also put in place a team of qualified people to provide the human and technical resources needed to support each community.

In 2019, the five Community Foundations will launch the “Resilient Future Project” that will seek to establish a region-wide commitment to resilience. They will secure and finance a team of resiliency experts from University of Minnesota Sea Grant Program, Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Sea Grant and Superior Watershed Partnership and Land Trust to work directly with local leaders to help them assess their current state of resilience to weather related risks and identify a workable and strategic plan to assess risk and improve their resilience, while learning and sharing commonalities. Local leaders will rally public support as well as institutional and financial resource to move on their goals for greater resilience.

Dave Rankin, Executive Director of the Great Lakes Protection Fund said “We are inspired to see Community Foundations in the Lake Superior/Upper Peninsula region coming together to define the projects they need most to secure their own water future. They are new voices who can be a force for change. Water is critical to every community, especially in the Great Lakes

region, and regional foundations can be powerful catalysts for change. Water is everything to this region. We look forward to seeing their progress in building the capacity of the region to become leaders in resiliency planning and action.”

Rob Collier, former CEO and President of the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF) noted “Community Foundations are anchors, and often serve as silent partners working tirelessly in communities. This initiative helps Community Foundations lead the way for collaborative water progress.”

The Lake Superior/Upper Peninsula region is one of six regional teams surrounding the Great Lakes in the United States and Canada in the Great Lakes One Water Partnership. The effort is shepherded by the CMF and designed to help communities around the Great Lakes region develop and implement projects that will secure the region’s water future.