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For Immediate Release

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT TO EXPLORE THE SHORES IN MANISTEE COUNTY

Manistee, Michigan - If you know of a special place on a lake, stream, Lake Michigan, wetland or other water body in Manistee County, you have until February 1, 2010 to nominate that site for a new program that is gaining steam: Explore the Shores.

The purpose of the program that now includes eight locations is to provide a series of places in the County that provide exciting, hands-on opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to learn about water stewardship and explore nature while recreating, including access to the County's world-class fishery. The vision of Explore the Shores is to make Manistee County a premier destination for people to use and explore its rich and varied shores. The program is particularly focused on helping people with special needs access and use the County's water resources and supporting tourism. The ten year goal of Explore the Shores is to have a system of 50 sites throughout the County that attract 1 million new visitors by 2020.

Nominations for Explore the Shores sites can fall into two categories: places on water that need improvements and financial assistance to qualify them as Explore the Shores sites; and places that need no further improvements but warrant being included and promoted in the program.

Explore the Shores sites must be located on water and have or be improved to have: universal design so that people of all abilities can use and enjoy the site; opportunities for people to learn about water to support stewardship; and provide access for people of all needs and abilities to recreate.

A Leadership Team consisting of diverse interests will review nominations and make recommendations on site priorities for 2010 and 2011. For those sites needing improvements and funding, the Alliance for Economic Success (AES) will devote their best efforts to seeking funding from public and private funding sources. Grants totaling \$339,000 were just awarded to Manistee County Community Foundation (MCCF) to fund three new Explore the Shores sites, two on the Manistee River and one on Lake Michigan near the Bar Lake outlet in Manistee Township. Sites that were nominated for consideration in 2009 will automatically be considered by the Leadership Team for 2010 and 2011. MCCF has contracted with the AES to help administer the program.

In addition to developing four new sites where funding has been received and identifying new sites through the nominations process, a web site will also be created in 2010 to promote the program.

Organizations represented on the Leadership Team include Alliance for Economic Success, Manistee County Community Foundation, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians,

U. S. Forest Service, Great Lakes Fishery Trust, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Sea Grant, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, Manistee County Government, Michigan Easter Seals, National Association of the Physically Handicapped, Manistee County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Manistee County Sport Fishing Association, Manistee Charter Boat Association and others. The program is also supported by the offices of U. S. Senator Carl Levin, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow and U. S. Congressman Pete Hoekstra. Organizations interested in participating on the leadership team should contact the AES at 231-723-4325.

A complete copy of the nomination form and nomination instructions is available at the AES web site at www.allianceforeconomicsuccess.com. Copies of the form and instructions are also available by contacting the AES at 231-723-4325 or cathy@allianceforeconomicsuccess.com.

Attached to this news release is a pdf file that contains the new logo for Explore the Shores that was developed by the Leadership Team.