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Mr. Jeff Gray, Superintendent
RE: Management Plan Review
Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary
500 W. Fletcher Street
Alpena, MI 49707

6 June 2012

Dear Jeff and Sanctuary Staff:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments on the recently published 'Notice of Intent,' which appeared in the Federal Register in April. We are pleased to join the growing list of elected officials, user groups, non-profit organizations, and user groups that have already lent their support for the proposed boundary expansion of the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary to include the waters off of two adjacent counties, Alcona and Presque Isle, in Northeast Lower Michigan and continue out the international border with Canada.

The Nature Conservancy is an international non-profit organization, and our mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. The Nature Conservancy has identified the Presque Isle Shoreline, a coastal area that largely encompasses the landward boundary of the proposed Sanctuary expansion and some of the adjacent nearshore waters, as an important biodiversity conservation area. The Nature Conservancy was also integrally engaged in the development of a Lake Huron Biodiversity Conservation Strategy as part of our increased focus on Great Lakes conservation. The Sanctuary is a key partner in Lake Huron management and has been an asset in these discussions. We value our collaboration to date with the Sanctuary, and hope to expand it in the future.

We applaud the Sanctuary's efforts in raising awareness and appreciation for the Great Lakes generally, and Lake Huron and Thunder Bay more specifically. The Sanctuary's proposed expansion will only enhance the Sanctuary's role in Lake Huron management and, given its success to date and wide-spread support within the communities it serves, seems an appropriate scale for future operations.

Again, we commend the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary's immense contributions to date and would support an increased role, commensurate with the expanded boundary.

Sincerely,



Helen Taylor
Michigan Chapter State Director

Michigan's Main Office
101 East Grand River
Lansing, MI 48906

West Michigan
3728 West River Dr., NE
Comstock Park, MI 49321

Upper Peninsula
101 South Front Street Ste. 105
Marquette, MI 49855

Chicago
8 South Michigan Ave., Ste. 2301
Chicago, IL 60603

tel [517] 316-0300
fax [517] 316-9886

tel [616] 785-7055
fax [616] 785-7065

tel [906] 225-0399
fax [906] 225-6731

tel [312] 759-8017
fax [312] 759-8409