

Board and Staff

Executive Director

Deana Jerdee – Deana is the first executive director of Paddle Antrim. She grew up in Illinois before setting out to explore the western states. She enjoyed eight years working for Washington State in water resources policy and planning while exploring the waterways of the Pacific Northwest. She also spent three years coordinating a non-profit in California's Mojave Desert which focused on environmental and economic development projects before returning to the Midwest.

Board of Directors

Matthew Drake, President - COO of Short's Brewing Company

Mark Irwin, Vice President – Agent of Fischer Insurance Agency

Patti Savant, Treasurer – Executive Director of the Bellaire Chamber of Commerce

Mary Faculak, Secretary - President/CEO of the East Jordan Chamber of Commerce

Megan Olds, Director At Large – President of Parallel Solutions, LLC

Tom Shelder, Director At Large – Financial Advisor of Edward Jones & President of the Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce

Dianna Robinson, Director At Large – Administrator of the Antrim Conservation District

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Background

Paddle Antrim is a non-profit corporation established in 2014 in Antrim County Michigan, a rural county in the Northwestern Lower Michigan. This area includes the Elk River Chain of Lakes, a 72-mile waterway which empties into the Grand Traverse Bay of Lake Michigan and includes the turquoise waters of Torch Lake.

Paddle Antrim's mission is to protect our water resources by using paddle sports to connect people to our waterways. Through stewardship, education, improved water trail access, and promotion of our waterways, we will increase water resources protection and enhance the economic vitality of the region.

Paddle Antrim managed by a 7-person volunteer Board of Directors that is made up of each chamber of commerce and local business and natural resource leaders.

Focus Areas

Stewardship – protecting and preserving our water resources

Education and Outreach – educating the community and visitors how to protect our water resources and how to enjoy the waters safety in a non-impactful way.

Water Trail Leadership – leading efforts to develop a water trail on the Chain of Lakes in Antrim County.

Projects

Paddle Antrim Festival – Paddle Antrim hosts a non-competitive 2-day kayak paddle over 42 miles through the Chain of Lakes every year in September.

Ripple Effect Grant Program – Paddle Antrim gives back to other organizations working on projects which align with their mission and vision for the area bi-annually through their Ripple Effect Grant Program.

Chain of Lakes Water Trail – Paddle Antrim is leading the efforts to develop a water trail on the Chain of Lakes which will provide great recreation, conservation opportunities and increase the economic vitality of the region.

