



The River Guardian

Spring 2018

ARPOA Directors

David Smith, President; Gary Vetter, Vice President; Carol Vidrio, Treasurer; Judy Walle, Secretary & Newsletter Editor; Julie Gibbs, Membership Director; Boyd Dillon, Joe Hemming, Howard Johnson, Micki Levin, Steve Poullos, Pat Schmid and Greg Stansbury.

From the President

A common phrase heard along the river goes, "If you don't like the weather in Michigan, wait a few minutes... it'll change." Well, I've been waiting more than a few minutes and the snow is still here. The calendar says it's spring but I guess the weather doesn't pay attention to calendars.



Photo courtesy of Pat Schmid

As a 501 c-3 non-profit, the ARPOA can't participate in any lobbying but we can advocate for the river if it supports our mission. Right now in Lansing a number of bills are moving through the legislative process that have the potential to harm the Au Sable River and therefore, could benefit from your advocacy. Thanks to Tom Baird (director and former president of the Anglers of the Au Sable) for the list found in a separate article in this newsletter. Note that while the bill numbers are

accurate, the titles are not the ones given by the sponsors.

If you vote in Michigan, please call your state representative and senator and urge them to vote to protect the river.

On a brighter note, stay tuned for some events coming later this summer. Our Annual Meeting (and Wine and Cheese Gathering) will be July 14. Also there will be some purple loosestrife eradication events in early August. This year will be the eighth year of holding these volunteer events. Plan to show up and help make a difference.

See you on the river! David

Treasurer's Update

Carol Vidrio, Treasurer

Thank you for your continued support of the Au Sable River Property Owners Association. Without you, we could not preserve and protect the Au Sable River.

As you know, our fiscal year begins on August 1st of every year. If you have not yet renewed for the 2017/2018 fiscal year or would like to make an additional donation, please do so by visiting our website at www.arpoa-mi.org to pay with PayPal or send us a check via mail to PO Box 15, Grayling, Michigan 49738. Your dues and donations are tax deductible per IRS 501(C)3 regulations.

We are always open to any suggestions our members have as to how you would like us to utilize your donations. You may leave any questions or comments by e-mailing us at arpoa.mi@gmail.com or visit our website at www.arpoa-mi.org.

Thank you, again, for your support!

Fish Farm Update

Joe Hemming, Board Member

As you might recall, Anglers of the Au Sable (Anglers) is contesting the current operation of the fish farm at the old Grayling fish hatchery in two different venues.

First, is the Administrative Law hearing in Lansing contesting the permit issued by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) allowing the operation of the fish farm. After 18 days of hearings and back and forth filing of briefs by all parties, the Proposal for Final Decision was sent by the Administrative Law Judge to DEQ Director Heidi Grether for a final decision. Director Grether can modify the permit issued by the DEQ, leave the permit unchanged or throw out the permit in its entirety. The decision is entirely up to Director Grether. At this point, the matter rests with Director Grether as we await her final decision on the permit.

It is still our hope that Director Grether will recognize that discharging pollutants into the Au Sable River is not acceptable under state law when the technology does exist to allow the hatchery to operate without polluting the river.

There was also a separate court action where Anglers filed a complaint in Crawford Circuit Court against Harrietta Hills Fish Farm. This matter is moving forward. On April 5, a pretrial was held with Judge Mertz of the Crawford County Circuit Court. A Pretrial Order was entered ordering that discovery be completed by both sides by October 2 of this year. During this period of time, both sides will name their expert witnesses, depositions will be taken and necessary documentation will be obtained in order to proceed to trial. The parties through their attorneys will then confer with Judge Mertz to schedule a trial date. This lawsuit alleges that the operation of the fish farm pollutes and impairs the Au Sable River and will likely continue to pollute and impair the river, all contrary to the Michigan Environmental Protection Act (MEPA). The operation of the fish farm will also likely cause or contribute to violation of water quality standards, will cause the Au Sable River to fall below dissolved oxygen limits required by administrative rules and will likely increase the risk of whirling disease in the river, again all contrary to MEPA. In addition the complaint also alleges violation of the Public Trust Doctrine whereby members of the public are prevented from exercising their right to fish in the East Branch due to the fences maintained by Harrietta Hills Fish Farm surrounding the hatchery.

As always, Anglers greatly appreciates all the support that has been given by ARPOA in this critical fight. Anglers looks forward to the continued support of

ARPOA as this fight goes on. The operation of this fish farm is one of the biggest threats the Au Sable River has ever seen. Anglers will continue in its mission of preserving and protecting the Au Sable River. For the continued support of ARPOA in this fight, Anglers thanks you.

Until next time.

Cedars of the Au Sable Update

Howard Johnson, Project Chairman

On September 16, 2017, sixty-five river property owners planted 800 northern white-cedar seedlings in an effort to preserve and protect the cold-water fishery of the Au Sable and Manistee River watersheds. Now in its twenty-first year, the Cedars for the Au Sable project encourages river property owners to replant their native northern white-cedar seedlings along the river's edge to help maintain the delicate balance of the river's ecological system. Since the beginning of this project in 1997 by the Au Sable River Property Owners Association (ARPOA), over 21,000 northern white-cedar seedlings have been planted and protected in enclosures.

Volunteer members of the Au Sable River Property Owners Association assisting with this year's distribution included: Rodney Ney, Marie Harrington, Dave Smith, Boyd & Shirley Dillon, Julie and Jim Gibbs, Pat and Peter Schmid, Steve Witt, Mike McIntosh, Karen Harrison, Barb & Gary Vetter, Carol Vidrio, Arlene Stremming, Tony Molis and Chairman Howard N. Johnson. Ivan Witt, Registered Forester, Forestry Consultants, Inc. and Patrick Mohney, DNR Unit Manager, Gladwin FMU provided technical assistance.

Plantings and caring of existing cedars continued within the Mason Tract by the Anglers of the Au Sable, Mason – Griffith Founders Chapter (Grayling) of Trout Unlimited, William B. Mershon Chapter (Saginaw) of Trout Unlimited, Sierra Club, Headwaters Chapter (Gaylord) of Trout Unlimited and Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited. This is part of the on-going Mason Tract Northern White-cedar Reforestation Project which planted and protected 700 cedar seedlings within the Mason Tract. On September 9, 2017 - during the Anglers of the Au Sable River Clean-up, seventeen volunteers worked at the Hanger site within the Mason Tract maintaining cedar enclosures and installing larger fencing. Fifteen maturing cedars were protected with 6-ft cages at this site.

The Upper Manistee River Northern White-cedar Restoration Project has completed its seventh year in the

Deward area. Two additional plantings occurred this year; both on September 16, 2017. Angers of the Au Sable volunteers, led by Jim Shifflet, planted 50 new seedlings within their site on the west side of the Manistee River and the Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited, led by Eric Anderson, planted 50 new seedlings within their site. A total of 808 cedars are growing and protected in the Deward Area.

The Upper Au Sable River Northern White-cedar Restoration Project has completed its first year. The Mason - Griffith Founders Chapter of Trout Unlimited, led by Bob Andrus, planted 50 new seedlings within the Williams Tract on May 13, 2017. The site was marked for planting by DNR Forester Joan Charlebois. Standard commercial seedlings were used for this year's planting, however in 2018 and subsequent years, seed stock gathered from the local river area will be used. A comparison of the sites will be tracked in the coming years.

Many additional donations have been made to the project during the year from supporters. Major donations were received from the Rotary Club of Roscommon, Challenge Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Michigan Fly Fishing Club, and Scientific Anglers. Also, Riverdale Mills Corporation; manufactures of the black PVC fencing we use to protect the growing cedars, have made their product available to the project at special pricing.

Project chairman Johnson announced that a program to further protect the maturing northern white-cedars that have been planted in previous years has been prepared. Past project participants may purchase the larger enclosures at McLean's Ace Hardware in Grayling when their seedlings out-grow their existing small enclosures. This taller enclosure is black PVC coated fencing material that will make the enclosure inconspicuous at the river's edge. The cost of this larger enclosure, along with three additional wooden stakes, is \$8.00 each. This expense is partially subsidized by project supporters, Riverdale Mills Corporation, and McLean's Ace Hardware.

To order planting kits for this summer, please contact project chairman Howard N. Johnson at 989-280-0381, hjohnson@aol.com, or visit the web site: www.cedarsfortheausable.org for more information or to make a donation to the project.

The actual cost for all the material in the planting kit is substantially more than the asking price. The purchase price is subsidized by: the Michigan Fly Fishing Club, Rotary Club of Roscommon, Riverdale Mills Corporation,

Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation, Trout and Salmon Foundation, The Hal & Jean Glassen Memorial Foundation, Scientific Anglers, AJD Forest Products, Anglers of the Au Sable (Grayling), Mason – Griffith Founders Chapter (Grayling) of Trout Unlimited, William B. Mershon Chapter (Saginaw) of Trout Unlimited, Paul H. Young Chapter (Detroit) of Trout Unlimited, Headwaters Chapter (Gaylord) of Trout Unlimited, Challenge Chapter (Bloomfield Hills) of Trout Unlimited, Leon P. Martuch (Midland), Kalamazoo Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Ann Arbor Area Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Upper Manistee River Association, Au Sable North Branch Area Association, Grayrock Rodmakers, Au Sable River Watershed Restoration Committee, and Mr. Craig Hinkle, Re/Max

Bills in Lansing that threaten the Au Sable

Fox Guarding the DEQ Henhouse Bills (SB 652-654)

Hand over final authority for rulemaking and permitting at the DEQ to unelected boards stacked with industry representatives.

Drain the Streams Bill (HB 5638)

Allows private companies and agricultural operations to pump groundwater even if the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool predicts adverse impacts.

Invasive Species Welcome Here - Ballast Water Blowout Bill (HB 5095)

Rolls back ballast water protection standards in Michigan waters.

Aquaculture Deregulation Bills (SB 681-683)

Shift authority over all aquaculture to MDARD, "promote" aquaculture, permit net pens in Great Lakes, change riparian rights, adversely affect Indian treaty rights, provides for rules to exempt facilities from oversight.

This list is courtesy of Tom Baird.

Come join us in August for a Purple Loosestrife Removal Party!

We are looking for at least 24 members to enjoy a gorgeous canoe ride down the Au Sable River on a beautiful summer day from McMasters Bridge to Parmalee and help us to remove as many purple loosestrife plants as we can.

We have a special guest who has graciously volunteered his time to put together a feast that we shall not forget, and of course we shall have libations to quench your thirst as well.

More details to follow . . .

ARPOA website

New ARPOA website launches at the end of April! Check it out!

Looking for copies of old newsletters or more information on the Au Sable River Property Owners Association visit our website at www.arpoa-mi.org or join us on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/arpoa>.

You are invited to join the ARPOA and help other caring property owners preserve our special river environment.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

River Address _____

City / State / Zip _____

Phone Number (s) _____

Email address _____

Do you prefer email newsletter Yes _____ No _____

Please print neatly

Annual Dues

Individual / Family	\$35.00
Club / Corporate	\$75.00
Sustaining	\$100.00

Renewal date is August 1

Clip and mail with your check (payable to ARPOA) to:
ARPOA • P.O. Box 15 • Grayling, MI 49738