



The River Guardian

Fall 2018

ARPOA Directors

David Smith, President; Carol Vidrio, Treasurer; Judy Walle, Secretary and Newsletter Editor; Boyd Dillon, Julie Gibbs, Howard Johnson, Micki Levin, Steve Poulos, Pat Schmid, and Greg Stansbury.

From the President

Those of you at the Wine and Cheese/Annual Meeting heard me give a summary of the Perfluoroalkyl Sulfonate (PFAS) situation here in northern Michigan and how, after being told of PFAS dangers six years ago, the DEQ ignored the warning and continues to base health risks on outdated levels.

Now the Michigan Department of Public Health has no plans to do anything for residents of Oscoda (home of the now closed Wurtsmith Air Force Base). This does not bode well for Grayling residents living near the Grayling Army Airfield.

The ARPOA will monitor this tragedy and keep you informed. Check the website (arpoa-mi.org) for updates.

On a much brighter note, the Association had the most successful treatment of purple loosestrife in a number of years. See the article in this issue. The river was floated from Grayling to Parmalee Bridge and dozens of volunteers dug and bagged loosestrife the whole way. These efforts are making a difference and keeping this aggressive invasive from out-competing native plants. One example of this is that the first year of the project, three canoes set out from the old Rays and were full before getting to the expressway. This year, volunteers got to Burton's Landing and had a lot but not nearly as much.

The heartiest of congratulations go to the Anglers of the Au Sable for the surprising conclusion to the fish farm battle. Be sure to read Anglers' President (and former ARPOA director) Joe Hemming's article in this newsletter. The river (and all of us) will be better off without the potential for harm from the fish farm.

See you on the river.
David

Annual Meeting

The ARPOA 2017/2018 Annual Meeting was held at Gates Au Sable Lodge on July 21, 2018. 60 members attended.

President David Smith welcomed everyone to the event



and read the Association's Mission Statement. He then thanked Josh and Katie Greenberg for graciously making space available for the gathering. He also thanked Director Pat Schmid for getting and serving the refreshments and Directors Carol Vidrio and Julie Gibbs for handling registration.

The business meeting was called to order and after dispensing with the regular order of business, Howard Johnson was elected to a two year term and Julie Gibbs, Pat Schmid, Micki Levin, and David Smith were reelected for three year terms. The meeting was then adjourned.

Thomas Buhr, founder of the 70 Degree Pledge (agree not to release fish if water temperatures exceed 70 degrees), was introduced. Thomas is finalizing an updated edition of The Old Au Sable and would like to interview anyone with historical information about the Au Sable River.

Howard Johnson, Director and founder of Cedars for the Au Sable, spoke briefly about the project now in its 22nd year.

David Smith gave a short presentation on purple loosestrife and described how it is different from blue vervain, a native plant. He then demonstrated how to correctly remove purple loosestrife. He finished by inviting attendees to participate in two volunteer events to remove the aggressive invasive.

David also gave an update on the Grayling fish farm (see the article in this newsletter) and a summary of the PFAS situation in the watershed.

Membership and Treasurer's Update

Carol Vidiro, Treasurer

DUES ARE DUE

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 2018/2019 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!

DO YOU SHOP ON AMAZON?

If you do, here is a great way to donate to the Au Sable River Property Owners Association. Just log on to <http://smile.amazon.com> and choose us. Amazon automatically donates 0.5% of the purchase of eligible products to our organization.

Fish Farm Legal Update

Joe Hemming, Pres. Anglers of the Au Sable

Around the first of May, 2018, the DEQ Director Heidi Grether approved the permit for the fish farm consistent with Administrative Law Judge Pulter's findings. The only modification was adding monitoring for whirling disease in and below the fish farm. Anglers have appealed this decision by Director Grether.

Anglers in Crawford Circuit Court filed a separate lawsuit on the grounds that the operation of this fish farm

violates the Michigan Environmental Protection Act as well as the Public Trust Doctrine.

The circuit court had previously dismissed Anglers' argument that the operation of this fish farm violated the public use and public fishing restrictions contained within the deed when the state deeded the hatchery to Crawford County. The court indicated that these deed restrictions were in fact being violated by the operation of this fish farm, but that it was up to the State of Michigan, and not Anglers, to enforce these deed restrictions. To date, the state has taken no action to enforce these deed restrictions.

At this point, Anglers is involved in the discovery process with the fish farm as this case moves towards trial.

Both sides have exchanged their expert witness list.

All discovery is to be completed by October 2, 2018. At which time there will be a status conference with the court to schedule a trial date.

Latest Update

As most of you have probably heard by now, Anglers of the Au Sable's 4-year-long legal battle over the fish farm at the Grayling Fish Hatchery has come to an end. Anglers will pay Harrietta Hills \$160,000. In exchange, Harrietta Hills will terminate/withdraw its MPDES Permit as well as aquaculture and stocking permits for the Grayling Fish Hatchery. Going forward, Harrietta Hills also agrees not to engage in any aquaculture activities within the Au Sable watershed.

The lynchpin for this agreement was Crawford County agreeing to assign the 20-year lease previously given to Harrietta Hills to Anglers of the Au Sable. Much thanks goes to the Board of Commissioners for Crawford County; because of the transfer of the lease agreement, the hatchery now begins a new chapter in its life.

Going forward, Anglers will be making the old Grayling Hatchery something very special as an educational outreach facility. A new non-profit entity formed by the Anglers, Grayling Hatchery, Inc., will operate and keep open the Grayling Hatchery between Memorial Day and Labor Day starting next year. Trout will be placed in the fish runs during that time for the public to view. Working with professionals, the hatchery will be operated in a manner that is not harmful to the river while maintaining the health of the fish, resulting in fewer trout in the runs going forward.

Ultimately, the hope is that the Grayling Hatchery would be able to have in its fish runs the Arctic Grayling fish, for which the city of Grayling was named. Now that's exciting!

It's been a long and hard fought battle by Anglers to protect our Au Sable River. None of that could have happened without the passionate support and backing of the membership of Anglers, not to mention other people and organizations including ARPOA stepping up to help. Much thanks goes to ARPOA for contributing money to this fight. We were all in this together in fighting to preserve and protect the Au Sable River. Mission accomplished!

And something I thought I would never say, "See you at the hatchery next summer!"

In other news...

For Immediate Release, July 20, 2018

For More Information Contact: Joe Hemming:
248-310-8935

Grayling hatchery fish farm infested with disease; carcinogen used for treatment likely now in Au Sable River!

Families warned about fishing in children's fly fishing zone downstream in East Branch

State officials have informed Anglers of the Au Sable that at least 2,000 fish have died at the improperly-sited Harrietta Hills Fish Hatchery on the East Branch of the Au Sable, and the facility was treated with formalin in an attempt to stop the disease outbreak believed to have caused the die-off.

Because the fish farm is a flow-through facility – where water flows in from the river, through the fish-rearing area and then right back into the river – there is a high likelihood that formalin is in Au Sable. Formalin is derived from formaldehyde, a known cancer-causing agent. That is a particular concern because of the youth fishing area just downstream from the fish farm on the East Branch of the Au Sable.

"We wanted to alert the public to this potential public health issue caused by the Grayling hatchery. Anglers is strongly opposed to the operation and planned growth of the hatchery, and has warned state officials about the potential of this kind of problem," said Joe Hemming, president of Anglers of the Au Sable. "We are very concerned that the hatchery has introduced this disease to native fish, and ask state officials to inform the public what they are doing to prevent its spread."

The Department of Environmental Quality earlier this year issued the fish farm a permit to pollute the Au Sable with fish effluent over the objections of Anglers and others. Because the hatchery water flows into a children's only fly fishing segment of the river, Anglers

urges the DEQ to insist that Dan Vogler, owner of the fish farm, post signs saying the water is being chemically treated.

Anglers now is fighting the fish farm in Crawford Circuit Court, arguing that the permit was issued in violation of the Michigan Environmental Protection Act and will result in additional pollution and fish diseases in one of the nation's top trout rivers, along with the likelihood of escapement of farm fish into a naturally reproducing fishery.

The fish reportedly were infected with ich, a disease evidenced by white spots on fish. Guides and others on the river are asked to keep an eye open for the disease and inform local fly shops, who can pass on the information to the state Department of Natural Resources.

Anglers of the Au Sable is more than 1,200 men and women from across the nation, created to preserve, protect and enhance the Au Sable River System for future generations of fly fishers.

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE REMOVAL 2018

Carol Vidiro

Thank you to those who participated in our annual Purple Loosestrife Removal project this year!



We want to especially thank David Smith, Marie Harrington, Julie Gibbs, Boyd Dillon, Pat Schmid, Howard

Johnson, Greg Stansbury,



Steve Poulious, John and Laurie Hallman, Scott and Tina Foster, Jim and Sarah Lawless, Jim Shiflett, John Bloyer, Andy and Pam Richards, and Alex Sasyk! We also want to give a special shout out to Steve and Carolyn Skalnek and Rick Vidrio for the wonderful BBQ after our McMasters



to Parmalee run!

Hand pulling purple loosestrife is labor intensive and we truly appreciate the hard work our members contribute. In all, our organization pulled over 1,000 plants between Grayling and Parmalee! This is an ongoing battle, but one we are making great strides in controlling.



We hope that you will consider joining us next year to help stop the invasion!

New Property Owners

Micki Levin, Board Member

Hello to newcomer property owners on the Au Sable River. We have a new "welcome wagon" of sorts. We have gathered names of new buyers for 2018 and you

can expect a visit from Micki Levin who bares gifts and information about the river. If you are new to the river and not yet a member of the Au Sable River Property Owners Association, please let us know. Welcome to all new owners and please join our association.

Protecting Our River

Boyd Dillon, Board Member

We are lucky to live on the Au Sable River. We get to see beautiful sunrises and sunsets. World class fishing is right out our door. We have a place that we can share with our friends and family like no other. To be honest living on the river does have its drawn backs too. High taxes, government restrictions, spring's high water and fall's low water. Even with all the drawbacks there is no place we would rather be.

There is one drawback that we must deal with and that is dealing with the recreational public. For the most part people who paddle past our homes love the river as much as we do. But then there are those who see the Au Sable River as their personal play ground. In a previous article I talked about hearing canoe paddlers talk about how on the river there were no rules and they could do anything they wanted. Most of these people are just loud and more than slightly drunk. Our law enforcement people are trying to do something about this problem. In a recent article in the Oscoda Herald Newspaper the writer refers to a patrol on the Au Sable River where "the CO's contacted many families floating and kayaking the river. Some kayakers were issued citations for not having a personal flotation device on board." The article went on to say that during another group patrol on the Au Sable "thirty eight citations and five arrests were made on the river during the five hour patrol. Most of the violations were for failing to possess personal flotation devices, minor in possession of alcohol, littering, and possession of marijuana.

As law enforcement's eyes and ears we must be on the lookout for law breakers and report them to the authorities so they can be dealt with before some gets hurt or dies.

ARPOA website

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>.