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THE RIVER GUARDIAN

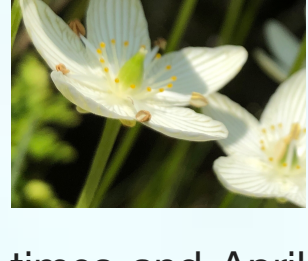
SPRING 2021

From the President

David Smith

The river is looking a lot brighter these days.

Daylight Saving Time shifts more sunlight to later in the day allowing for outdoor activity at more convenient times. The weather is changing with highs in early April forecasted to be in the low and mid 70's. Water temperatures are rising from the 30's a month ago to the 40's now and the 50's soon. And Covid vaccinations are increasing every day.



Fisherman float by just about every month of the year but the rising temperatures means more waders. Numbers of paddlers going by are also increasing. For 2021, I promised myself I'd kayak every month of the year. In January and February, I went for one chilly (and short) trip each month. In March, it was three times and April has seen one trip already, one planned for this afternoon, and quite a few more expected. The number of people I encounter on the trips has gone from none to eight, again with quite a few more expected.

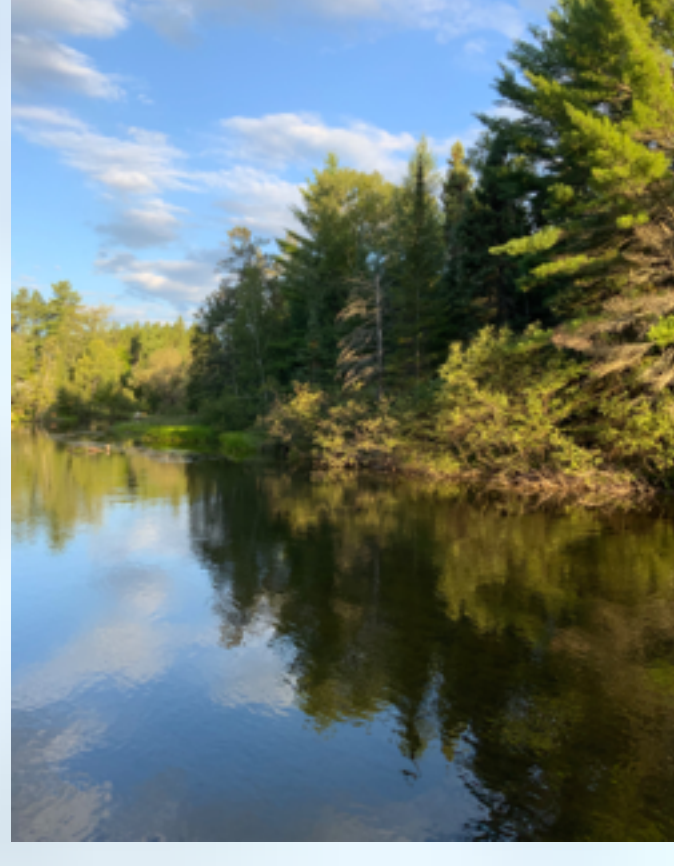
This past weekend we hosted some of our fully vaccinated friends for dinner. It was the first time since February 2020. It was wonderful! The company was fantastic and the food was good too. We both look forward to catching up after the 13-month void.

Vaccinations will (hopefully) also have an effect on the river. Assuming the current surge being experienced in Michigan ends soon, volunteer events should slowly begin to reappear. Cedar plantings and invasive treatment both took a hit during the quarantine...it's pretty difficult to work in groups and still socially distance. I look forward to that changing. Also, the Canoe Marathon for 2021 is on. This huge event is good for the town of Grayling and brings a lot of exposure to the Au Sable River. Finally, it's looking more and more likely that some version of an in-person ARPOA Annual Meeting in July will be possible. This is important for Association business but it's also a time for members to connect with other members that are on different stretches of the system. I'm really looking forward to seeing many of you at the meeting.

Our newsletter is also evolving with new sections to keep you informed. This issue introduces Know Your River Regs with a focus on fire code, and links and information to keep you informed about the presence of PFAS in the river and ongoing mitigation efforts.

Keep on keeping safe and I'll see you on the river.

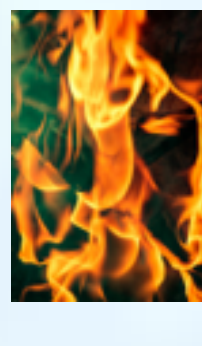
David



NEW!

Know Your River Regs

Each newsletter, we will focus on a few of the river regulations that affect the way we live and play on the Au Sable River. If there's a topic you are especially interested in, please reach out to us at arpoa.mi@gmail.com.



Fire Season is almost upon us! Now is the time to brush up on Au Sable River regulations regarding any burning on private property. For more information, call any of the seven [Crawford County Fire Departments and Fire Stations](#) to learn more about the 2,000-plus fire-related regulations. Here's just a few:

- Burning of household trash and yard debris is discouraged, but allowed if it is done in an approved incineration container. Containers of masonry or metal with a metal with a covering device with openings no larger than 3/4". Area of 10' diameter must be cleared around the incinerator with a water hose or water buckets available.
- Any open burning requires a burning permit.
- Make sure your fire is out before you leave it and never leave a fire unattended.
- Do not burn demolition lumber or milled lumber pieces nor burn materials that emit noxious odors.
- Property owners are responsible for any damage caused by fire started by them on their property.

The Purple Loosestrife Project: A Brief History

In 2009, the ARPOA Board committed to a five-year program to address purple loosestrife, an aggressive invasive plant, on the Au Sable Mainstream. The effort started with an inventory from Grayling to McMasters Bridge. In 2010, volunteers, in partnership with the DNR and Huron Pines, began digging and bagging purple loosestrife for disposal. The inventory was extended to Parmalee Bridge and then further, in 2013, to the mouth of the river in Oscoda. Very little purple loosestrife was found between Mio and Foote Dam.

In 2011, the first major volunteer event was held and in 2012, purple loosestrife leaf-eating beetles were raised and released in areas with the densest populations of plants. Digging efforts continued. The Au Sable River Watershed Committee joined the partnership to battle invasives in the watershed and funded the release tens of thousands of beetles on the Mainstream and South Branch over several years.

Every year since at least one volunteer event has been held to remove purple loosestrife, disposing hundreds of industrial bags full of roots and stems. Education of the public also became a priority. 2021 will be the twelfth year of a five-year project and there doesn't appear to be an end in sight. The original hope of eradication has realistically changed to control. Thanks to dedicated ARPOA volunteers, the number of plants is less every year, making all the hard work very well worthwhile. Look for more facts and information about purple loosestrife in our next newsletter and join us for our 2021 removal events!



Cedars for the Au Sable Project Update

Howard N. Johnson, Director



Last March, the ARPOA Board of Directors canceled the 2020 Cedars for the Au Sable project due to pandemic safety concerns. The CFAS committee now believes the September 2021 cedar seedling distribution can be accomplished safely while adhering to CDC social distancing and mask wearing requirements.

Cedar Day is being planned for Saturday, September 18, 2021. Letters will be mailed in June to all Au Sable and Manistee river property owners so they may order their fall cedar planting kits. As we get closer, I'll reach out to volunteers for help with distribution.

Many of our annual supporters are not able to provide funds for this year's project because of canceled fundraising events. Fortunately, we had a successful Christmas Cedar promotion that raised \$750, and we are pursuing several new grant opportunities.

Although we did not have Cedar Day in 2020, we are continuing to provide 6-ft enclosures at McLean's Ace Hardware in Grayling to protect your maturing cedars.



Masked fence cutters behind McLean's Ace Hardware. Volunteers included Steve Poulios, Sara Lawless, Marie Harrington, Boyd Dillon, Jim Lawless, Mark Rais, Howard Johnson, Margot Surridge, and David Smith.

River Users' Etiquette Signs-Watch for Them!

ARPOA has approved a project to create and install river user's etiquette signs at public landings and launch areas, local canoe liveries and river access road-ends on both the Main and South Branch of the Au Sable River. The message on the signs will promote proper river user's conduct, the respect of private property and sober river use.

The project was developed with the support of the Crawford County Road Commission, MDNR-Parks and Recreation Division, the City of Grayling, Village of Roscommon, and local canoe livery operators in both Grayling and Roscommon. Final approval from property owners hosting the signs is pending. We hope to begin installation in May 2021.

Be a River Guardian

Spring is here and many are getting out to enjoy this wonderful time of year on the water. The river is always in flux and winter adds to the changes. As you travel your home waters, or anywhere in the system, if you see something that needs investigating, let us know. Issues may include invasives, obstructions to navigation, erosion, unpermitted structures in or out of the stream, etc.

Or better yet, sign up as an ARPOA River Guardian! We initiated the project years ago to monitor the health and status of the river.

Volunteers float their section of river at least twice a year and report to the project leader. The information is shared with the appropriate agency for further investigation. [Click here](#) to choose your stretch of river and help us take care of the Au Sable!

NEW! Update on PFAS Contamination on the Au Sable

As many of you know, the Au Sable River system has been contaminated by a suite of chemicals known as Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS.

What are PFAS? PFAS (perfluoroalkyl) are a large group (approximately 5000+) of fluorinated organic manufactured chemicals used globally in a number of industries since the 1940's. These chemicals have strong carbon-fluorine bonds meaning they are very stable, very slow to biodegrade and hence persistent in the environment. They are mobile in the groundwater, tending to move to the surface (surfactants), and are hydrophobic (repels water) and oleophobic (repels oil, grease and fat).

In 2010, the State of Michigan discovered that the the lower Au Sable was contaminated near Oscoda. In 2017, it discovered that groundwater contaminated by PFAS was migrating from the facilities at Camp Grayling. Municipal water supply testing and analysis by the Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) is ongoing, as are efforts at remediation. Visit our [website](#) for more information on the impact of PFAS and watch for periodic updates pertaining to the PFAS issue in ARPOA newsletters.



PFAS foam on the river. Click to learn more.

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.

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/ARPOA.AMI/>.



ARPOA BOARD: David Smith, President; Micki Levin, Vice President; Margot Surridge, Treasurer; Julie Gibbs, Web Director; Howard Johnson, Cedars for the Au Sable; Steve Poulios, River Guardians; Boyd Dillon, David Long, John Blakemore, Adolph "Dolph" Greenberg.

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