



THE NORTH BRANCH

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE AU SABLE NORTH BRANCH AREA FOUNDATION

Spring 2022

Protecting the North Branch for over 77 years

Photo by Jeanette Roe

From the Chairman's Desk

Every two years your Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation elects a new Chair to lead our organization. This "term limit" is built into our bylaws.

Now more than halfway through my stint as Chair, I appreciate the value of rotating this leadership role. Each new Chair has the opportunity to put a bit of their "spin" on enhancing the work of the Foundation. Yet we get a fresh approach on a regular basis.

Fortunately, the Board is a very strong team, so we have a deep "bench", all dedicated to improving our River and the enjoyment of it for all of us. The bylaws also require serving as Vice Chair for two years before succeeding to the Chair. In this way the transitions are seamless.

My transition was particularly smooth from my vantage because the prior Chair, Mike Inman, kept me in the loop while he was running things, then met with me to explain his approach to the role and he has provided good counsel during my term.

Yet I have come to realize a key strength for our organization have been services for several years now of Robert Weed as Secretary and Marjie Warner as Treasurer.

Bob does much more that keep our minutes. He handles our website, the email blasts and postcard notices, our newsletter, anchors the photo contest, keeps us on track and more.

Marjie is the frontline on our key duty as a Board – our fiduciary responsibility for donor funds. It is much more than tracking the donations, paying our bills and keeping track of it all. She reports on our finances timely and in a format that is key to the Board making better decisions for using and investing the monies entrusted to the Foundation.

We can have the Chair role rotate because these two volunteers provide crucial stability and leadership.

We can have the Chair role rotate because these two volunteers provide crucial stability and leadership.

As I wrote these words, the recent passing of Connie Schrieber, our past treasurer, came to mind, for her long service and dedication to our Foundation and most of all for her love of the River. She is missed very much, but we are a stronger group because of her work and guidance.

Please check out the dedicated article in this issue for more on Connie's contributions to the River and the Foundation.

Invasive Species on the North Branch

by Bill Anderson

Last August, volunteers assisted Huron Pines in removing Purple Loosestrife (PLS) from the North Branch from Dam 4 to the confluence with the Mainstream. These volunteers pulled, cut, and removed PLS over a 2-day period, filling many garbage bags with seeds and stems. The most effective method in removing this invasive plant is by spraying herbicides. However, the spraying of herbicides could only be performed on those properties where we received a signed permission form from the property owner.

This summer, on **August 16 and 17** we will once again have a blitz in removing PLS from above the Lovells Twin Bridge site, to as far downstream as we can go in two days. And once again, Huron Pines will be mailing forms to North Branch property owners to sign and grant us permission to use herbicides on their properties. Please be assured that when applying herbicides to the plants we use just enough to kill the plant and are careful to not allow the herbicide to fall onto other vegetation. Most of the time the herbicide is applied by wiping the plant with a saturated cloth.

The permission forms will be mailed out by Huron Pines in late May and if you receive one, please consider returning it as soon as possible to allow us to plan accordingly. There is one other invasive plant which we will be looking for and removing if found along the streambank. The plant is Japanese Barberry and even though some nurseries inventory this plant, it is an invasive and spreads easily taking over other vegetation.

We are hopeful to hear from volunteers who are willing to assist us in this effort on one or both of the days of the blitz. If you can help, please email me at waanderson49@gmail.com.

Lastly, I would like to thank the volunteers who assisted in the Blitz last summer.

They are: Jeff Traver, David Oeming, Marjie and Larry Warner, Glen Eberly and George Shaw.

We could not have achieved such good results without your help.



Purple Loosestrife, an invasive species that grows near water. Mature plants grow many stems in a clump up to five feet in diameter and two to six feet high.



Japanese Barberry is a deciduous shrub with green leaves that turn red in the autumn. It is easily recognized by its spiny stems.

Donor Appreciation Reception to be Held Saturday, July 9 in Lovells

Last year we changed our Annual Dinner to a reception due to difficulties in finding a caterer. Although we were disappointed that we could not continue the dinner format, everyone seemed to enjoy the chance to mingle with board members and friends. Plus, Steve Sendek gave an excellent presentation on the North Branch that was informative and interesting. In fact, the new format was so well received that we are continuing it this year. Once again, we are hosting a reception for all our donors, friends and neighbors. As we did last year, we will provide beverages, soft drinks and appetizers along with the ability to talk to board members about our activities and plans. There will again be a speaker who will talk about the North Branch, the river we all love.

The reception will be held **Saturday, July 9 at 6:00 p.m.** We have reserved both the Lovells Township Hall and the Pavilion, so it should be a comfortable venue regardless of the weather. And, most importantly, the event will be free to attend (although we will gladly accept donations). Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Remembering Connie Schrieber by Glen Eberly

We lost Connie in early March. I have heard and read many complimentary words about this amazing woman, but the one that really hits home is, "If you met her, you liked her. If you knew her, you loved her." What a beautiful and appropriate sentiment! A few memories from her numerous friends are shared below.

"Connie was a force, she was a leader, she made a difference. Her bright mind and quick wit benefitted everyone she touched. Her contribution to conservation was huge through her leadership roles at our organization, Huron Pines, and Lovells Historical Society. Connie also chaired the Lovells Book Club. But, she seemed happiest as an intrepid paddler, surrounded by friends, when floating her beloved North Branch in a kayak on one of the numerous "Floats" that she and husband Eric hosted - usually ending with a party at their quintessential log cabin. We miss you, Connie!! "

Glen and Martha Eberly

"Connie was truly an amazing woman and a good friend! One of her many leadership roles was to be our designated book club leader while always being entertaining and clever. She invariably would be somewhat late to the luncheon before book club as she was making a new dish to pass or something she was baking took too much time. Connie was witty, positive, creative and spoke her mind.

She knew where she stood and was caring and compassionate. We ladies would have wine for lunch and sometimes were a little silly. Connie would giggle and say with a quick wit and smile, "I only had two glasses of wine." She was always fun to be with! You are greatly missed, my friend!"

Marcia Boyd

"We all know about Connie's direct and significant contributions she made as the Chair of Huron Pines and as long time Treasurer of the Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation. The area we all love is better for her involvement. For me, however I will always remember her for her capable and enthusiastic support of kayaking. Many folks felt comfortable knowing that Connie was on the trip and was willing and able to help anyone who got tangled up or waterlogged. And you always knew where she was. Bright color boat with non-matching paddle and highly visible jacket. And the best part was that the trip she was involved in often led to the foot of Morley Road and a great post-paddle party. She will be missed!"

John Dallas

"Although I only knew Connie for five years, she had a tremendous impact on me. When we met, I instantly liked her ...as I got to know her, I respected and admired her ...as time passed, I loved her as my friend.



Continued on Page 4

Remembering Connie Schrieber (continued from page 3)

Connie was my hero. Although I was only four years older, we grew up in different decades, me in the 1950's and Connie in the 1960's, however, we were cultural worlds apart. I dreamed of going to college and having a career but didn't have the foresight to make it happen until much later in my life. I imagine Connie said, "I'm going", and she did.

Connie became an accountant, then a CPA, then created her own accounting business. Connie ran the Boston Marathon four consecutive years and just for good measure, ran two more Marathons in Michigan. Connie loved nature and all out-of-doors activities, she volunteered for good causes and tackled everything she did with the same vigor and determination she used to plan her life. I never thought Connie was in competition with anyone other than herself; she set worthy goals, developed a plan, and set her sights on the success she achieved, never boasting, always giving.

Connie has left a big hole in our community and an even bigger hole in our hearts."

Marcy McKinney

Winter 2022 Ross Scholarship Recipient - Tyler Becker

The William (Bill) Ross Memorial Scholarship was established in memory of Bill Ross from Lovells, Michigan through the generosity of his many friends and the Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation.

This scholarship gives first preference to students residing in Lovells Township and second preference to students living in Crawford County. Many people knew Bill for his love of the Au Sable River and his conservation efforts and it was felt that this scholarship was a perfect way to recognize him for all he did for people in the area. The scholarship recipient for the winter term at Kirtland Community College is Tyler Becker, majoring in Cardiac Sonography.

"My name is Tyler Becker and I'd like to express my sincerest thanks for the William (Bill) Ross Memorial Scholarship! I'm a resident in Grayling and am presently in my final year of the cardiac sonography program. My plan post-graduation is to find employment as an adult cardiac sonographer and eventually pursue a role in sonography administration. Your generosity has greatly reduced the financial burden for the upcoming semester and assisted me in meeting these future goals. For that, I emphatically thank you once again"

From Janet Ross (Bill's widow):

"We are so grateful that this scholarship has been created in Bill's memory and that this will help individuals from our area to get assistance in pursuing their education that will lead to jobs they will enjoy."

We appreciate your tax deductible donations that make our work possible. We can also accept credit card donations on the web site. Please use the form below to help us maintain and improve our North Branch

Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation

www.ausablenorthbranch.org

Here is my (our) contribution to support the Foundation:

Name: _____ Contribution Amount: _____

Address: _____ In Memory/Honor of: _____

E-mail: _____

Please return to:

Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation - c/o Marjie Warner P.O. Box 2524 Grayling, MI 49738

Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)3 not for profit.

Trout Habitat Improvement Project by Neil Wallace

The vote was unanimous. Well, at least of those Board members voting. Four ASNBAF Board members abstained from voting for the Foundation to contribute \$5,000 to the 2022 North Branch Habitat Project by the Anglers of the AuSable. Why? Because they are on the Anglers Habitat Committee. Is this a conflict of interest or as Glen Eberly would say: a “confluence of interest”?

The key is for the third year in a row, the Anglers are investing significantly to improve the habitat in our River. This year’s project is estimated to cost \$61,500. This is a part of the Angler’s plan to invest at least \$50,000 each year for ten years, to improve habitat in the Au Sable.

You may know that the last two years the Anglers did extensive habitat work in the North Branch, first above, and then below, Dam Four. Even though I was one of the Board who abstained from this vote, I think it is obvious this is a wise investment of Foundation monies in our River.

The best way to describe this year’s project is excerpts from the description used to obtain the necessary permits:

Overall, the purpose is: “to restore and improve biological function within the river channel of the upper North Branch of the Au Sable River” ...”by adding, removing, and revising various types of instream fish habitat structures.”

The first part is Black Hole to Sheep Ranch: “This project, which covers approximately two river miles, will include approximately 180 various new and reconfigured fish habitat structures. These structures are designed to provide both adult and juvenile cover, thermal refuge, and improved spawning habitat. These additional habitat structures will improve the survival of all age classes of trout, increase trout populations and eventually lead to improved trout fishing opportunities.”

The second phase, which will be done during the same first work season, is to install 16 structures below the confluence with Big Creek. The purpose of this work is to determine if the structures that we have successfully used in the upper river will withstand the greatly different environmental conditions experienced in this river reach. These 16 structures will be monitored to determine how well they withstand the higher flows and severe ice conditions. This information will be used for future habitat restoration project planning.

I like that this suggests even more North Branch projects in the future!

The application continues with: “The fish habitat structures are designed as much as possible to mimic and look like natural tree falls into the river channel and natural accumulations from moving transported woody debris... We have repaired the structures that were pushed out of the water by ice in the winter once and they are showing signs of needing repair again. These structures will be replaced with newly designed structures that are secured using our new anchoring system. In addition, we will be modifying other existing structures that are not performing as originally designed.”

We believe this project is an effective and cost-efficient method for improving habitat and increasing the trout population.

The Foundation’s contribution to these projects was not expected by the Anglers, but was very welcomed. It may be that the Foundation will do larger contributions in the future. I can’t say because I am not only a member of Anglers Habitat Committee, but also co-chair of its fund-raising committee.

But we would like to know what you think.



2022 Photo Contest

The photo contest is back again this year! We are keeping the same rules as 2021. Our categories will remain: **Wildlife**, **Scenery** (which is basically everything that isn't Wildlife) and **Youth** (anyone 18 or under in 2022). We will be awarding prizes in all three categories (\$100 gift certificate to Gates Lodge & Fly Shop). We are asking that contestants submit no more than two photos per category. The contest is open to everyone. However, members of the Foundation Board of Directors and their immediate family members are not eligible to win prizes. Please send your entries to Northbranchphotos@gmail.com. All entries must be received by August 1, 2021. We will announce winners and award prizes at our Annual Meeting. Watch our next newsletter, or our web site, for any additional information.



Photo by Scot Jacot

Additional Donors

We inadvertently left some people off the list of donors in the Fall/Winter newsletter but we really appreciate their support!

Dave Bremer

Brian and Erin Considine

Glen and Martha Eberly, in memory of Jim Knox

Kristin Howland

Sue and Mike Inman

Thomas Mudd

Gary Neumann

Barbara Patek

Upcoming Events

Lovells Township Historical Society

"Artisans of the Au Sable" displays and events May - September at Lovells Historical Museum. Times and details are available on the LTHS website: www.LTHSMuseums.org

ASNBAF Donor Appreciation Reception

Saturday, July 9, 2022 Lovells Twp. Hall 6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

ASNBAF & Huron Pines Invasive Species Removal Project

Tuesday, August 16 and Wednesday, August 17

31st Annual Bridge Walk Foundation Annual Meeting and Annual Dinner

Saturday, August 20, 2022 For additional details please visit lovellstowship.com

Officers

Neil Wallace, Chairman
248-891-5446
Bill Anderson, Vice Chairman
219-771-9178
Marjie Warner, Treasurer
313-663-1331
Bob Weed, Secretary
248-310-6884

Directors

Greg Bierl	616-843-5277
Eric Bankhead	989-348-6704
Glen Eberly	989-348-3084
Andy Grant	989-545-2137
Mike Inman	312-446-7244
Steve Johnson	989-344-1053
Gary Neumann	989-348-9848
John Porteous	317-403-2891
Tom Wessels	231-271-6151

Mission Statement: To preserve, protect and enhance the natural endowments of the watershed of the North Branch of the Au Sable River for the benefit of wild fish and game and public enjoyment and appreciation.

