



THE NORTH BRANCH

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE AU SABLE NORTH BRANCH AREA FOUNDATION

Fall/Winter 2017



From the President's Desk

Where did this year go? There must be something to that old adage that time seemingly speeds up with every advancing year. As I write this, the first frost has touched the foliage in our neck of the woods, and is beginning to usher forth what I have always considered to be the most beautiful season of the year. Fall, for all its brevity, provides a kaleidoscope of colors which endow us with such an enjoyable backdrop to the many outdoor activities which our Au Sable region beckons us with.

This year, the Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation has continued to grow as an organization. We have had wonderful donor support for which we are both thankful and appreciative. Your financial support will help keep our Foundation fiscally strong and empower us to devote funding to causes which will continue to safeguard our natural resources. We have also taken positive steps to mature as an organization by addressing some needed administrative issues. We now, for the first time in our history, have purchased insurance policies to safeguard and provide stability to the Foundation's assets and resources. In addition, we have amended and clarified our By-Laws, Members Statement, and are currently reviewing our Mission Statement to allow us to better define our role in the continued protection of our watershed's natural resources.

Next Spring, we hope to participate in a Grouse Habitat project in association with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. This project will involve our funding and planting of mast producing trees and shrubs primarily for the benefit of grouse and woodcock, but turkey and deer will also be benefited. In subsequent years, these plantings will provide both cover and nutrition to these species.



Finally, we have begun a review process of our North Branch Au Sable Watershed Action Plan which was originally prepared for us several years ago to identify and prioritize pollution sources and other threats to the river's drainage basin, and to recommend strategies to combat these threats. Some of these threats have already been remediated and addressed between that time and now, but others have not. Once our review is complete, we can then move forward with the prioritizing and planning of additional work and projects which will further protect and benefit our watershed.

In closing, I wish to thank you for your support in our Foundation's work. I wholeheartedly wish you health and happiness for the new year to come. My best - stay well

North Branch Watershed Restoration Work 2017

by Glen Eberly

West Branch of Big Creek

The upper reaches of West Branch of Big Creek had been seriously degraded by beaver burrowing and channeling due to neglect over the past 25 years.

In 2016, ANBAF pledged \$10,000 to Mason Griffith TU to assist with a \$40,000 restoration project. About 28 beaver dams were removed and restoration work was done in 2016 and is currently being finished. Beaver dam removal was completed by Board Member Steve Johnson and a group of volunteers. All this work is being done above CO612. Only \$5,000 was called for by Mason Griffith TU for this project. The project is currently being completed to below the power line near CO612.



Further assessments will be done to determine what action should be taken below CO612. The long range intent is to re-store West Branch of Big Creek all the way to the confluence with the North Branch. A huge sand load exists below CO612 reaching nearly to Big Creek Lodge.

Au Sable North Branch - CO 612 Bridge to Burchi Property

In cooperation with DNR Fisheries Biologist, Neal Godby, the North Branch was mapped in 2015 from CO612 to the Burchi property. Mapping was done by Steve Johnson and Glen Eberly of ANBAF, Terry Lyons from Anglers of the Au Sable and Gerry Lake of Mason Griffith Chapter TU. Steve Sendek and Neal Godby planned the restoration work, consisting of para logs, "A" rafts, log rafts and brush bundles. These structures (35 - 38 planned) are to provide spawning cover and move sand from gravel for spawning and insect production. The structures were planned for location on 20 different properties. Land owners were advised of the project scope and objectives and permission was requested to allow the restoration work. Great cooperation resulted with all 20 property owners granting permission and they donated most of the needed material (dead and live trees) from their properties. Restoration was completed this past August.

The work was funded, approximately \$40,000, by Anglers of the Au Sable, who are doing extensive restoration work on the North Branch.



North Branch Watershed Restoration Work 2017 (continued)

Restoration Work 2018 and 2019

Mapping has been completed and approximately 100 structures are being planned to extend restoration work from Burchi down to Dr. Gary Meade's property. Anglers will request permits this fall for work to start in May of 2018. Another 12 property owners must consent to the project and provide material. Anglers is seeking funding for this stretch from state agencies and private organizations.

The next stretch of the North Branch considered for restoration passes through the Ludwig property (High Banks Lodge) and Ochs' (Brook Trout Bend). This stretch runs from High Banks to just below Dam 4. A preliminary assessment trip, done in August on this reach, shows significant opportunity for restoration by adding approximately 120 structures. A detailed mapping of the reach and structure location plan will be developed for permitting and for property owner approval. This work will be planned for 2019.

Wildlife Habitat Project by Michael Inman

Your board will be participating in, and partially funding, a partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to plant and protect trees and shrubs in the Lovells area during the Spring of 2018. This project's aim is to rehabilitate lands in the North Branch of the Au Sable River watershed area for the benefit of wildlife, specifically, grouse, woodcock, turkey and deer.

The boundaries we are considering are the military range to the west, south to 612, north to County Line Rd. and east to Twin Bridge Road. Phase One of the project will involve the planting and fencing of 50-100 trees to be placed on the edges of selected openings.

After the initial plantings and over the coming years additional work will be done to build soils that will support a wildlife cover crop. We plan to schedule a volunteer day in the Spring of 2018 to be coordinated by the board and DNR wildlife management representative Tim Riley. The Foundation and the DNR are sharing costs on a 50-50 basis and both groups will provide volunteer labor. Please watch our web site for further updates.



A Study of the Legacy and Emerging Organic Chemicals in the North Branch of the Au Sable River (NBASR) Using Passive Semipermeable Membrane Devices

by Gary Neumann, Lovells Township Supervisor

In response to MI DNR, local angler and assorted environmental group concerns with trout population declines in the NBASR, the U.S. Geological Service (USGS) will conduct a study to evaluate the presence and concentration of organic contaminants in the river. This study will utilize devices and samplers that will be placed in the river in late spring of 2018. The four tentative locations for the devices and samplers are at Bent Tree Drive and The Ford Road in Otsego County, and at Twin Bridge and Kellogg's Bridge in Lovells Township.

The devices and samplers that will collect the desired data remain in the river for approximately 30 days. These devices and samplers are unique in that they are capable of collecting chemicals over time, providing a much broader picture of what is in the river versus a one time "snap shot" type water sample taken from the river. The data that is collected will be screened for ethers, hydrocarbons, PCBs, and for both legacy and current use pesticides and herbicides. The USGS will publish the results of this study during the summer of 2019.

The total cost of this study is \$51,500.00, of which 50% is the responsibility of the Mason-Griffith Chapter of Trout Unlimited (MGCTU) and their partners. The remaining cost is a cooperative funding match by the USGS. The Foundation is partnering with MGCTU and will be providing financial support for this project. Due to its governmental entity status, Lovells Township is participating as a funding cooperator and will, quarterly, transfer funds from MGCTU to the USGS.

Web Site Photo Contest

Are you inspired by the sights of the North Branch and do you enjoy taking and sharing photos? We are looking for photos for our web site (www.ausablenorthbranch.org) and during July 2018, we will be awarding prizes for the best photos submitted. If you have photos to share, please send them to: northbranchphotos@gmail.com

We appreciate the donations that make our work possible. We can now accept donations by credit cards and Pay Pal on the web site. Please consider using our web site, or 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: _____
_____	_____
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Please return to:

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

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

Trouble in River City by Eric Bankhead

Trouble starts with 'T' and that rhymes with 'B' and that stands for BEAVER!!!

Once again we have a large population of Beaver on the North Branch. Mainly due to lack of trapping. Pelts are almost worthless on the commercial market, so little to no trapping has been done over the last few years. It's hard, cold, work to walk in to the area, find the dens along the river bank, set and check traps frequently. In the past the Foundation has spent little on Beaver trapping as there was some value in the pelts for the trapper. This trapping season the Foundation is looking to pay for a trapper to reduce the population.

If you have Beaver activity on your property and know where the den may be, contact your River Keeper and we'll see if we can get the buggers. See our web site AuSableNorthBranch.org, 'River Keeper Program' page for contact information on your Reach

Thanks to your contributions so we can fund this endeavor.



Damage from beavers that occurred this summer

Record Turnout at 2017 Foundation Annual Dinner

Over 70 people attended the annual dinner at Fuller's North Branch Outing Club, in July. The weather was perfect and allowed the group to mingle outside and on the porch during the social hour. Neighbors and friends caught up on cabin maintenance, remodeling efforts, new canoes or kayaks, and of course...fishing tales (both true and exaggerated).

Judy Fuller and her staff did their usual excellent job preparing and serving the dinner so that everyone enjoyed good food and good company. If you have not attended the dinner before please mark your calendars for July (we will announce the date in the Spring newsletter) and if you have attended, we look forward to seeing you again in 2018.



Newsletter Changes

As you have already noticed, we are now mailing the newsletter in envelopes to minimize handling damage. Included on the envelope is a date, below your name, that indicates the date of the last donation received from you. We appreciate your support and hope this information is useful to you. If you have any articles, ideas, comments or suggestions, please send them to Bob Weed: robertweed70@yahoo.com

A BIG Thank You to Our 2017 Supporters!

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Neil Wallace	248-891-5446
Robert Weed	989-348-5793
Tom Wessels	231-271-6151

UPCOMING EVENTS

North Branch AuSable 2018 Trout Opener

April 28 Lovells Township

ASNBAF Board Meetings

First meeting:
 Saturday, April 14 9am-11am

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.

