



THE NORTH BRANCH

A NEWSLETTER FROM AU SABLE NORTH BRANCH AREA FOUNDATION

Spring 2024

Protecting the North Branch for over 79 years

Photo by Christel Schwarz

From the Chairman's Desk

Legislation recently passed in Michigan establishes standards and timelines for “clean energy”. According to these standards, by 2040, Michigan will produce all its energy from “clean sources”.

When I think of “clean” energy sources, I think of wind, solar, hydroelectric, even nuclear - things that don’t produce carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases. I had no idea that natural gas combustion could also be considered “clean”, as long as at least 95% of the carbon dioxide emissions were somehow captured and prevented from entering the atmosphere.

On April 9, 2024, Neil Wallace and I - as directors of ASNBAF - were invited to participate, along with many other representatives of MI DNR, Anglers of the Au Sable, Mason Griffiths TU, GVSU, Gates Lodge, etc., in the inaugural meeting of the Upper Au Sable River Citizens Fishery Advisory Committee. The stated purpose of this committee is to “provide recommendations and direction into the fishery goals... and management plans for the Upper Au Sable River.” Committee members are also charged with being a “conduit for information exchange to the public” (hence, this piece). The committee is co-chaired by Terry Lyons of Anglers of the Au Sable, and Matt Klungle of MI DNR.

At this meeting that we heard a proposal from Matt Fry, of the DNR’s Minerals Extraction division. The proposal was for a “carbon sequestration” project along the upper North Branch. According to Mr. Fry’s presentation, Tondur (an energy generation company) and Core Energy (an oil and gas exploration company) would like to jointly build an 80 Megawatt natural gas-fired power generator on a 15 acre site in Chester Township, southeast of Gaylord, about 2 miles from the North Branch. This power plant would be able to capture 95% of its carbon emissions and pipe them a mile deep into the earth’s crust, either to help force out more oil and natural gas (in a process called “enhanced recovery”), or simply to store - or sequester - it underground where it would supposedly remain permanently and have no future impact on our climate.

Interestingly, this proposal would also require 1.3 million gallons of groundwater per day to cool the plant. Again, according to Mr. Fry’s presentation, none of this (heated) water would be returned to the watershed, but instead would simply be evaporated into the atmosphere.

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From the Chairman's Desk

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Adding an element of urgency to the plan, according to Mr. Fry, was the fact that an "option agreement" was due April 18, a mere 9 days after our meeting. As I understood the presentation, this option agreement is the first step in a typically lengthy process but would potentially give Tondue and Core Energy access to Michigan's power grid.

So, at this point, assuming I've accurately understood what I heard, and have written clearly, you know everything I do about this carbon sequestration project, which is frankly not much.

I freely confess my ignorance about carbon sequestration. Up until the April 9th meeting, I knew nothing about it. But based on what I've heard so far, I have some concerns:

- The apparent urgency of getting an "option agreement" by April 18th (only 9 days after the CAC meeting in which we were first informed about the proposal!);
- The apparent economic interests of Tondue, Core Energy, and MI DNR (in the form of lease and tax revenues) that seem to be the driving forces behind this proposal;
- The amount of groundwater potentially permanently removed (i.e. evaporated) from the watershed. 1.3 million gallons per day is equivalent to (if my calculations are correct) a flow of about 2 cfs - not an insignificant amount for the North Branch, especially that far upstream;
- The level of expressed uncertainty about, and lack of confidence in, the water withdrawal predictive models that are being used; and finally
- The form in which the carbon will be sequestered, which additional compounds might be sequestered along with it, and whether, once sequestered, it will stay put. Are there past examples of carbon sequestration or enhanced recovery that would show potential risks / benefits?

Admittedly, more questions than answers. But I think we would all do well to keep our eyes and ears open as we learn more about this project. I'm sure this is not the last we'll hear of it.

Willian (Bill) Ross Memorial Scholarship

The recipient of the William (Bill) Ross Memorial Scholarship for the Winter 2024 Semester at Kirtland Community College is Adyan Almaliki.

Adyan lives in Grayling and is in her first year with KCC. She is studying in the Cardiac Sonography program and is thoroughly enjoying her classes.

Adyan shares what this scholarship means to her:

"I want to thank you for offering me the William (Bill) Ross Memorial Scholarship. I greatly appreciate that I have received this scholarship from you. It is an honor and will help me continue in my Cardiac Sonography program. It is heartwarming to see people offer the opportunity of financial aid to students who want to see a brighter future. I am grateful for your generosity and that you believe in me. I will continue to work hard to better myself so I can have a bright future."



Purple Loosestrife Removal August 14-15

For several years volunteers from the AuSable North Branch Area Foundation have been involved in the eradication and control of Purple Loosestrife (PLS) on the North Branch. This joint effort to control PLS, an invasive plant, has been spearheaded by Huron Pines and on August 14 and 15 we will once again be taking on this project.

I would like to thank the many volunteers who have given their time over the past several years as well as Huron Pines for their partnership and effort in controlling PLS on the North Branch. In 2023 the volunteers were: **Gary Roesler, Lee Bender, Lyle Kearns, John Blakemore, Kathy Lareau and Jeff Traver.**

We will need about 8 volunteers again this year to spend part of one day floating a section of the river along with Huron Pines staff.



The activity would include identifying PLS and removing the plant. The best way of removing and killing the plant is by swiping it with a herbicide. We can only do that if we have written permission from the property owner to do so. Otherwise we can only remove the flower and attempt to pull the plant out by its roots. This option usually results in the plant returning next season.

If you are a property owner and have not recently signed a permission form, I urge you to do so when one arrives by mail or by a volunteer delivering one in person. The herbicide is applied sparingly by swiping the plant with wetted fabric. Our experience is that there is no collateral damage to surrounding plants or to the river.

If you are interested in volunteering for this project please contact Bill Anderson at **219-771-9178** or **waanderson49@gmail.com**

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.

Donor Appreciation Reception to be Held Saturday, July 13

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 and we again will have cedar seedlings (donated by Cedars for the Au Sable) to award as door prizes.

The reception will be held Saturday, July 13 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. We really look forward to seeing you there!

2024 Photo Contest

We are again holding a photo contest. Please see our web site www.ausablenorthbranch.org for details on rules and how to enter.

Upcoming Events

Lovells Township Historical Society

"Salute to local Conservation Organizations" displays and events **May - September** at Lovells Historical Museum. Times and details are available on the LTHS website: www.LTHSMuseums.org

ASNBAF Annual Reception

Saturday **July 13, 2024** Lovells Township Pavillion

Lovells Township Historical Society

Beaver, Beer and Banjo Fundraiser

Saturday, **July 20, 2024** Lovells Riverside Tavern See Historical Society Face Book page for more details

33rd Annual Bridge Walk - Lovells

Saturday, **August 17, 2024** Lovells Township Pavilion

For additional details please visit: www.lovellstownship.com/category/lovells-bridge-walk

ASNBAF Annual Meeting (public welcome and encouraged to attend)

Saturday, **August 31, 2024** Lovells Township Hall, 10:00 a.m. - noon

Annual River Clean-up with Anglers of the Au Sable

Saturday, **September 7, 2024** Gates Au Sable Lodge 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

For additional information: <https://gateslodge.com/events>

Officers

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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.

