

2015
 Regular Coalition Meetings
 January 22
 April 23
 July 23
 At 10:00 AM
 Greenbush Township Hall



Working Together to
 Restore and Protect
 Our Natural
 Resources

PRVEL Partnership with AuSable River Watershed SOGL Program Steering Committee Update From Huron Pines Reports

The Au Sable River Watershed is well-known and well-loved locally, regionally and nationally. There are many groups interested in the well-being of the river, and those groups came together for this project, signing a pledge of support, both financial and technical, for Au Sable River restoration projects that would benefit more than single local sites. Out of this pledge came the Au Sable River Steering Committee—a group of experts that provide local and scientific expertise to direct project prioritization and activities.

Using our science-based prioritization approach with input from local experts, this project will include on-the-ground efforts to improve the watershed through:

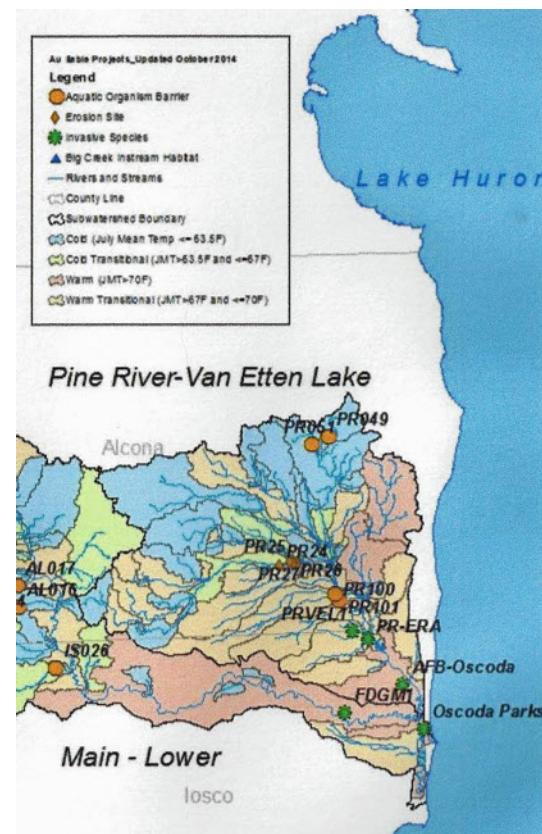
- Road/stream crossing improvements
- Invasive Species Removal
- Small Dam Removal
- Instream Habitat
- Streambank stabilization
- Natural Shoreline Restoration
- Native Plantings
- Habitat Restoration/Enhancement

These projects will occur throughout the watershed, grouped in ways that compound benefits and leverage project funds from multiple partners.

With funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation-Sustain Our Great Lakes program, this project presents an opportunity to take conservation action by completing high-impact and prioritized restoration that address both historic and current natural resource issues.

If all of the pending funding comes through and design cost estimates are accurate (these can change slightly depending on engineering and how bids come in from contractors), the remaining total project need will be \$32,000. If additional funding is received, we can add more sites and extend the project scope and duration.

The great news is that we have nearly 90% of the total project funding in place. The remaining non-federal funding is the critical component needed to utilize the federal funding that is committed.



PRVEL Watershed Projects

Erosion Control —The Steering Committee voted erosion control on the South Branch of the Pine River (PR29) as a priority for sediment reduction

Continued on page 6

Pine River Watershed Invasive Species Monitoring

By Doug Jager

Invasive plants along the Pine River affect the ecological well being of the river and Van Etten Lake. Left alone they will have a detrimental effect to the native plants that support the wildlife in the area.

Last summer, PRVEL began a new project on an 80 acre parcel of DNR land that was identified by the DNR as an environmental research area (ERA) on the south end of the Pine River. The DNR requested that we survey the area and remove any invasive plants that we found or report the GPS locations of plants that required the use of herbicides.

Armed with information provided by the DNR and Huron Pines, PRVEL volunteers made several trips up the Pine River into the area. We walked along the river banks and inland through some dense foliage, over and under fallen trees. Anyone that enjoys the natural beauty of this

place we call home would be in awe of this land. Some of the pictures we took can be found on our Face Book page. We were very successful in getting to a majority of the locations. We were unable to gain access to some locations because they had become deep marsh areas due to the heavy rains we had last spring/summer. We were able to remove thousands of invasive plants such as mullein, sweet clover, spotted knapweed to name a few.

This summer we will be back at it again but we would like to get more VOLUNTEERS to help us with this endeavor. We only have a small window of time during the months of May to August. We would like to plan an event day if we have enough volunteers and have fun with this project.

MAY MACRO SAMPLING PLANNED

The planned dates for the Spring sampling are:

5/13/15 (Wed.)

5/16/15 (Sat.)

Alternate dates in case of high water or bad weather 5/19, 20 or 21

WE WANT YOU!



Trying to keep abreast of any changes and/or problems within the watershed is a task that requires more than one or two people. The River Keepers program has been instituted to allow PRVEL a better chance to do just that and be pro-active in our efforts to restore and protect the land and water within our area, counting on the information provided by the volunteers.

Please consider being a River Keeper and contact Carole Plunkey at caroleplunkey@charter.net or call 739-8717 for more details.

Stream Temperature Monitoring Summary for 2014

(in cooperation with Michigan DNR, Tim Cwalinski)

Improving and protecting the cold water fishery in the Pine River has been a major goal of the Watershed Coalition since its inception. Working with representatives from the Michigan Dept of Natural Resources, PRVEL board members have been learning more about temperature monitoring to ensure water temps remain suitable for fish (e.g. trout) and other aquatic species.

By deploying data loggers at multiple locations in streams, it is possible to identify factors contributing to stream temp increases and hopefully take appropriate measures before there is damage to the ecosystem.

Several temp loggers were put in place this past season at specific locations within the river system, and then were collected in the Fall. Data is collected hourly from these devices, and charts can then be formulated to assess the results by using computer software. The conclusions gathered led to the following summary by the DNR fisheries biologist, Tim Cwalinski:



"...it was a very cold summer and influenced the typical stream temperatures lower in northern Michigan. This was true for all our rivers. Thus, the Pine River watershed temps look really good for summer trout survival this year, but some of these streams are likely much warmer in a typical summer. That is why we should continue the long term monitoring. You do have some nice streams in that watershed."

The PRVEL board has given strong support for such a monitoring program and have discussed adding several sites along the river to give better coverage. This would require purchasing additional loggers, which is costly (about \$120 each), but worthwhile. In order to make this happen then, PRVEL has applied for a grant to cover the cost and are awaiting approval. (See Norcross Grant article)

Watershed Wildlife Watch - Wild Turkey

The wild turkey is one of the largest birds in North America. An adult male can grow up to 4 ft long from his beak to his tail. Wild turkeys live in open fields and woods and nest on the ground, but often can be seen flying over short distances.

Turkeys prefer to eat insects, grasses, nuts, and berries and are sometimes seen by bird-feeders, picking at whatever falls to the ground. They live in Michigan year round, moving from grasslands and forest clearings that have lots of high protein insects for their young in the summer, to more covered areas such as stands of mast producing trees (with acorns, nuts) in winter.

Wild turkeys are a game species for our state and their numbers have increased enough to support two hunting seasons yearly, Spring and Fall. They had virtually disappeared from Michigan by 1900, probably due to loss of habitat and

unregulated hunting, but are now found in most counties of the state. They are sustained in the northern part of the state in part by winter feeding.

Did you know that a group of turkeys is called a "rafter"? Babies are called poult.



PRVEL Applies for Grant to Fund Program Materials

By Carole Plunkey

In our efforts to monitor our streams better to understand conditions, trends, changes, problems, etc, the PRVEL Board has been studying the benefit of purchasing temperature loggers (in addition to the ones currently used by the DNR) and stream level gauges. Both pieces of equipment are costly, and the gauges will need permits from the state. Since these costs fall outside of our budget, the decision was made to seek funding through a grant request.



Norcross Wildlife Foundation

Andy Beebe, a forester for the Conservation District, assisted the board in getting information on the [Norcross Wildlife Foundation](#) and a grant application requesting \$2,500 has been completed and sent to the Foundation for consideration.

A reply is expected in the near future, which will then be followed by an approximate date that their Board will review the request. Hopefully, if approved, PRVEL will be able to utilize this new equipment as early as this Spring.

State proposes to add water soldier to prohibited plant list

From the December 31st Oscoda Press

LANSING - The Commission of Michigan Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) may soon add water soldier to the state's list of prohibited aquatic plant species. The commission will be reviewing an official order at its Jan. 21 meeting. (*the results of the meeting are not yet available*)



Michigan has a Prohibited and Restricted Species statute preventing the possession of listed invasive species. The list already includes most of the species on the "Least Wanted Species" list. One exception is a plant commonly known as water soldier, which has recently been found invading the Trent-Severn waterway in Ontario.

Water soldier is an invasive aquatic plant native to Europe and northwest Asia. This species forms dense mats of floating vegetation which can hinder recreational activities such as boating, fishing and swimming.

The sharp serrated edges of water soldier leaves can cut swimmers and people who handle the plant. In addition, the dense floating mats can crowd out native vegetation and have potential to alter water chemistry which may have adverse effects on the environment, according to MARD officials.

Since water soldier only occurs at one location in North America, prohibiting the sale of this plant will help assure it does not become established in Michigan.

The MARD commission is responsible for adding plant and insect species to the official prohibited and restricted species list, in consultation with the Natural Resources Commission.

Prevention of new invasive species and stopping the spread of existing invasive species are considered vital for limiting the impacts on Michigan's ecology, economy and natural resources. For more information, visit the invasive species website at www.michigan.gov/invasivespecies.

2015 Erosion Control Plan on the South Branch of the Pine River, Alcona County, MI

From US Forest Service and Huron Pines Reports

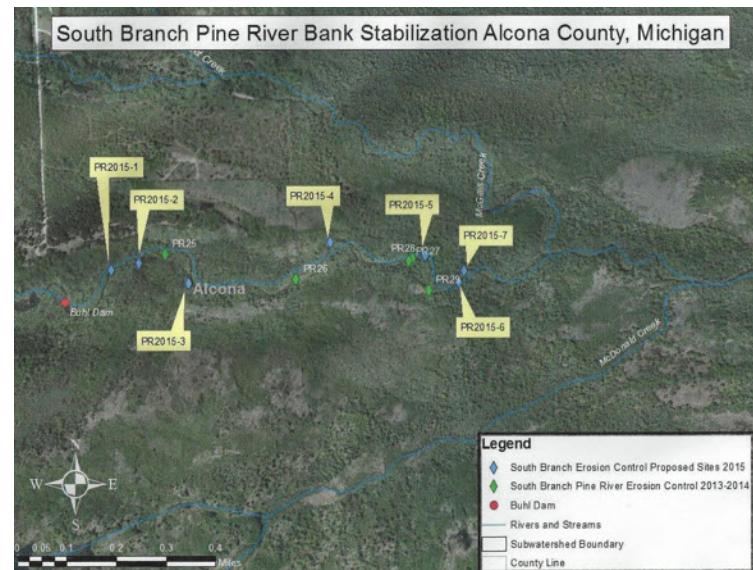
During the 2014 field season, Huron Pines cooperated with the Forest Service to stabilize six eroding banks along the South Branch of the Pine River (PR24-29 on included map). This added to the stabilization work provided under a similar cooperative agreement in 2013 to improve four sites.

In 2015, Huron Pines will continue to stabilize eroding banks in the vicinity of the previous work below Buhl Dam (PR2015-1 through 7 on included map). These seven sites were identified during the 2014 field season while completing site stabilization work. Stabilization of the erosion sites will reduce sediment delivery and improve downstream aquatic habitat. The U.S. Forest Service granted \$10,000 to Huron Pines to be allocated toward erosion control in the Pine River Watershed in 2015.



SITE PR2015-3

Currently, these erosion sites are impairing aquatic habitat by contributing to sediment delivery and degrading downstream aquatic habitat. The project will reduce sediment delivery and improve aquatic habitat through the implementation of best management practices



(BMPs) to correct erosion issues. Logs (trees) and brush will be taken from nearby uplands (minimum of 200 ft. from stream bank) and placed along the riverbank at selected area locations. All disturbed soil, including excess from sloping and areas where native sod will be cut, will be raked out and reseeded.

This project provides for the reduction of sediment delivery and improvement of natural stream channel function and aquatic habitat by stabilization of eroding streambanks using BMPs along the Pine River, Alcona County.



SITE PR2015-7

AuSable Project continued from page 1

efforts through this project. Capitalizing on this effort, the U.S. Forest Service proposed additional sites as described in the article on page 5.

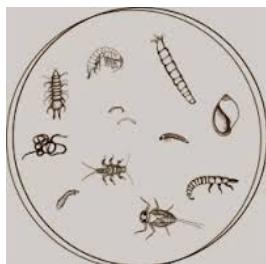
Road/Stream Crossings –Other projects on the priority list scheduled for design, plan preparation, permitting, and construction in 2015 include 4 road/stream crossings which will reconnect stream miles for fish passage and result in a reduction of erosion and sediment loadings carried by the streams.

These sites are:

- PR049 East Branch Pine River/McConnel Rd.
- PR051 East Branch Pine River Tributary/Trask Lake Rd.
- PR100 Gray Creek/Alvin Rd.
- PR101 Duval Creek/Goddar Rd.

Invasive Species Control - Invasive species treatment was implemented at the corner of F-41 and Kings Corner road. This site will be monitored for follow-up treatment if needed in 2015. Monitoring will also continue on the Pine River ecological reference area 80 acre site (PR-ERA) with treatment as related in the related story on page 2.

Buhl Dam – Through the prioritization process for this effort, we have encouraged the addition of projects in order to sustain the momentum created into future years. A perfect example of this is investigating the feasibility of removing Buhl Dam, which was brought to our attention by the local DNR Fisheries Biologist. Buhl Dam is an old structure located on the South Branch of the Pine River in Alcona County. The structure no longer serves a purpose for water management, is a barrier to fish passage and located on Forest Service property. Huron Pines recently submitted a grant to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fish Passage Program to provide funding for the initial planning stages for the removal of this structure. While this project was not on our initial priority list, it is a great project that addresses restoration of resource function and working with proactive partners.



Just some of the interesting creatures that can be found in our streams.

Join us for our next sampling event in May

Our 2014 Treasury Report

January 1, 2014 Balance	\$4,680.67
Income	
Donations	\$3,042.00
Interest	6.60
Subtotal -	\$3,048.60
Program Expenses	
Meetings	241.20
Coliform Sampling	119.68
P/TSS Sampling	89.35
Invasives Project	22.04
AuSable Project	1,000.00
Fishing Tournament	200.00
Subtotal -	\$1,672.27
Administration Expenses	
Chamber of Commerce Dues	300.00
Iosco, Alcona Co Plat Books	51.00
Post Office Box rental	68.00
Supplies and Newsletter	31.45
MI Nonprofit Incorporation	20.00
Brochures and Flyer	138.50
Subtotal -	\$608.95
December 31, 2014 Balance	\$5448.05

Michigan Lakes and Stream Associations

54th Annual Conference

Boyne Mountain Resort

Boyne Falls, Michigan

May 1st & 2nd, 2015

Consider attending to network with other Lake and Stream Association members and to learn the latest on watershed issues.

For more information visit their web site:

www.mylsa.org

The Pine River/Van Etten Lake Phosphorus/Total Solids Report

Two samples were taken over the summer from each of the smaller tributaries and four samples were collected monthly from the Pine River and the Van Etten River (Lower Van Etten Creek) below the dam. A summary of the estimated quantities of phosphorus (P) and total suspended solids (TSS) contributed to the lake by the Pine River and the other tributaries are shown in Figures 1 and 2. The estimated quantity calculations are based on the geometric mean estimates as the quantities estimated during relatively infrequent high flow periods tend to skew the arithmetic mean to the high side.

The data continue to show more P and TSS entering the

lake from the rivers and streams than leaving via the Van Etten River. The estimated amount of P entering the lake was **59.0 lbs/day**, 82 percent more than the four year mean, and the amount of TSS was **17.36 tons/day**, 121 percent more than the four year mean. The amounts of P and TSS contributed to the lake by the Pine River continue to be significantly greater than the combined contribution from the other tributaries. The estimated loads from the Pine River may be overstated for 2014 partly because of less frequent sampling over the lower flow periods. The measurement of flows is planned for 2015 to improve the accuracy of the stage/flow curves.

FIGURE 1 ESTIMATED ANNUAL PHOSPHORUS LOADS

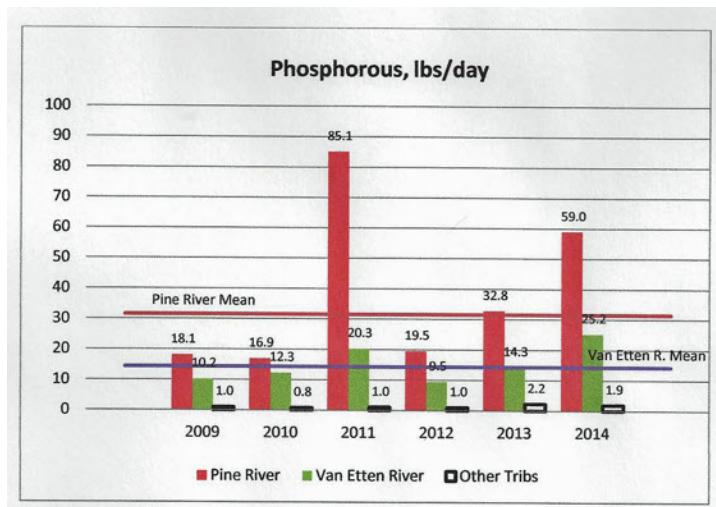
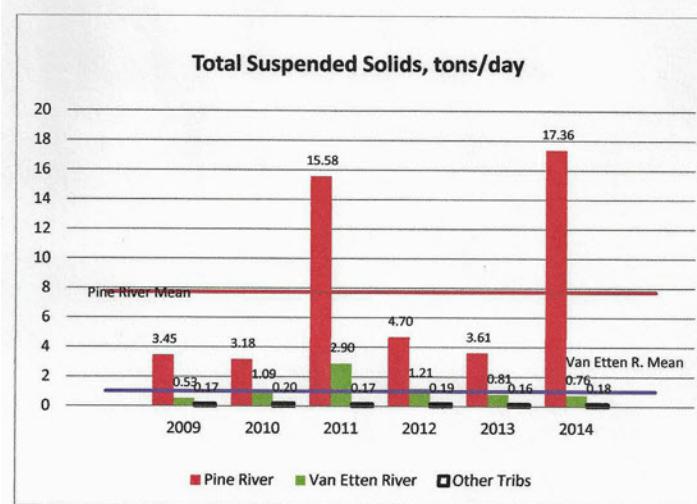


FIGURE 2 ESTIMATED ANNUAL TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS LOADS



PRVEL Coalition Board

Chair - Carole Plunkey
Recorder - Doug Jager
Treasurer - Dan Stock
Scott Lingo
Arnie Leriche
Sheila Phillips

caroleplunkey@charter.net
dj62852@charter.net
dstock4239@charter.net
scott@targetrealestate.com
aleriche526@gmail.com
srplincoln@juno.com

Non-Voting Advisors

US Forest Service
USDA-NRCS
US Fish & Wildlife

Huron Pines RC&D
DNR/Fisheries
DEQ/Water Quality

If you would like to receive this newsletter as an electronic file in pdf format, send your e-mail Dan Stock at the address above.

Spread the Word!!

In an effort to make our organization more recognized in the area and beyond, the board has taken the following actions:



1. created a Facebook page
at www.facebook.com/pineriverwatershed
2. joined the Chamber of Commerce in both Iosco and Alcona counties
3. updated our PRVEL brochure for use in fundraising

4. Updated our power-point presentation for ongoing community education
5. Created a membership solicitation letter to garner financial support

We ask all of you to help us in this push to become a more visible entity within the two counties we watch over and let other people know who we are and what we're trying to accomplish through your own contacts. As always, we welcome any feedback on how we can improve our outreach and need your support to keep the momentum going.

Yes! I wish to support the water resource improvement efforts in the Pine River Van Etten Lake Watershed with my tax deductible contribution.

Please make your check payable to PRVEL Watershed Coalition and send to:

**PRVEL Watershed Coalition
PO Box 680
Oscoda, MI 48750**

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____