

Regular Coalition Meetings

2020
Possibly October 8
2021
January 14
April 8
At 10:00 AM
Harrisville Library



Working Together to
Restore and Protect
Our Natural
Resources

A Message From Our New Chairman

Hello PRVEL,

Russell here, the newly elected chair of the watershed coalition. With Carole's help, the help of the Board, and the help of everyone involved, I hope to continue the positive work that has been accomplished in the watershed. Carole's leadership in PRVEL has been foundational, and inspiring. The sustained devotion of the board to clean water is exemplary. With all of us working together bright days lay ahead.

The cautions required under COVID 19 make it difficult to meet safely. Perhaps arranging a meeting outside is acceptable. For the time being we will have to use emails. Please let us know if you are interested in attending an outside meeting where distancing is easy, and the air is fresh. We could

easily bring a grill along for cooking up a quick treat, or more.

We're exploring ideas for small watershed activities. It may be possible to have an ongoing shoreline demonstration project. It would be easy to drive close to. Almost like a shoreline garden for native plants. It would be a good learning setting for everyone. Please let us know if you are interested in helping out. A grill might even show up for a quick treat, or more.

Thanks! Russell

Jrusswill@gmail.com

The list below is a fine reminder of our future challenges, and accomplishments.

- 1) **Our next meeting is planned for October 8 at 10 am – Harrisville Library – dependent on COVID 19 recommendations**
- 2) Elections for board positions were supposed to be at our April meeting – The two people currently on the board up for re-election have agreed to serve until the October meeting, when an election can be held – nominations from membership are always welcomed and can be submitted to Russell prior to the meeting.
- 3) Temp loggers for stream readings are in place for summer season – the results will be tabulated by EGLE fisheries division

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A Little PRVEL History: From Then Til Now
1999 – 2020

In order to keep newcomers to the area informed and remind long-standing supporters of PRVEL of the importance of monitoring our watershed, a little history might be appropriate.

In 1999, a grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (now EGLE) was awarded to Huron Pines conservation agency (HP) to study influences of the Pine River and its large watershed on its impoundment, Van Etten Lake, especially in regards to water quality. One of the recommendations from that study was to establish a watershed management plan to better monitor what was actually happening within that 187,000 acres of land and water. An informal group of interested people began to meet to discuss how best to implement such a plan (completed in 2003 with Rick Myrick acting as Project Manager and revised in 2008) and with the help of staff from HP, became first, a steering committee, and then an official non-profit 501(c)(3) group, the Pine River Van Etten Lake Watershed Coalition – PRVEL (2013)

Working from that plan over the years (and with essential funding from other sources like HP and USFS), we've been able to complete several stream bank erosion restorations, including assisting private land owners to improve their stream banks and/or plant trees/shrubbery, improve road/stream crossings (in partnership with Alcona Road Commission), eradicate invasive species at different sites within the watershed, improve our monitoring techniques, and gather data on things like water quality, stream flow and temperature, health of the

streams in regards to fish populations, and partner with our fellow conservation agencies in small dam removals.

With support from local people interested in protecting and preserving their beautiful surroundings in Alcona and Iosco Counties, and partner agencies, willing to assist small groups such as ours, PRVEL can continue to set an

example of what can be accomplished when those with shared interests in nature conservation work together to bring about positive outcomes.

A Quick Reference to Completed Projects follows (based on inventories from 2008):

Road/Stream Crossings:

- 5 out of 6 severe sites
- 9 out of 39 moderate sites
- 1 out of 2 minor sites

Streambank Erosion Restoration:

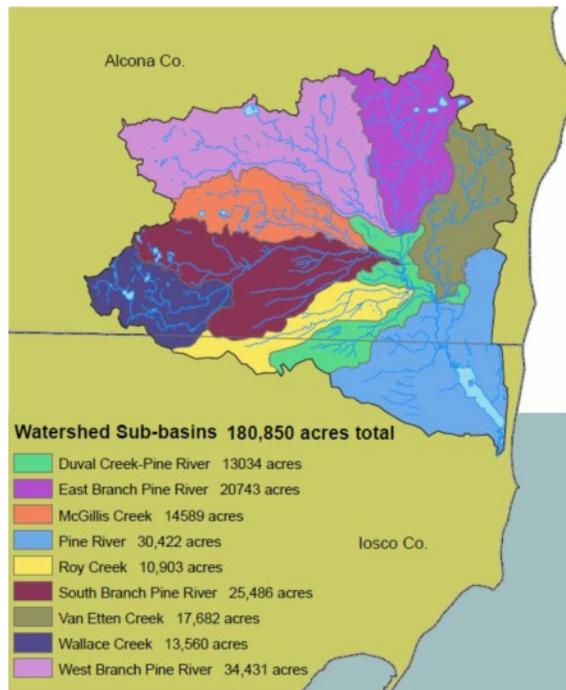
- 1 out of 4 severe sites
- 17 out of 28 moderate sites
- 0 out of 11 minor sites
- 2 private property + tree planting

Dam Removals:

- Old Buhl dam – USFS property – Alcona County
- Ramus dam – private property – Alcona County

Invasive Species Eradication:

- Lincoln Lake – community project – phragmites
- 80 acre site Pine River – main branch – variety of species (annual monitoring)
- Riverbend Park – Oscoda – phragmites, honeysuckle, other invasives
- Van Etten Lake (YWCA camp) – phragmites
- Van Etten Creek – private property – phragmites



Message from our New President, continued from page 1

- 4) Spring Macro-invertebrate sampling was canceled due to COVID 19 restrictions – sampling will possibly be done by volunteers in September (weather permitting) unless virus restrictions prohibit gatherings. The next macro sampling by EGLE personnel is due in 2022
- 5) PRVEL awarded generous grant from Au Sable Watershed group to purchase field microscope and specialized gloves for water sampling
- 6) Invasive species monitoring and eradication still a priority for PRVEL projects – partnering with Huron Pines to address possible projects pending funding
- 7) PRVEL board members to receive specialized training in stream bank assessments pending COVID 19 restrictions
- 8) Encourage all PRVEL members to get out in the watershed and take pictures of wildlife, check streams for water levels (send in gauge readings via cell phone), and inform any board member of potential problems within the watershed (pollution, dumping, fish kills, excessive algae, etc)
- 9) Visit FB page (facebook.com/pineriverwatershed) and “like” and share with friends – visit the Van Etten Lake Association website (vanettenlake.org) and click on “watershed” to stay informed.

Volunteers Wanted



The River Keepers program is aimed at establishing a better monitoring system to cover the large area encompassed within the watershed. Individuals volunteering for this program are being asked to watch out for things that could be problematic or might require some action to be taken, but also to report back natural occurrences like animal sightings or quality of fishing/hunting.

Thank you to all of our current volunteers – your efforts are greatly appreciated and essential to keeping abreast of conditions within the watershed.

Please consider being a River Keeper and contact Carole Plunkey at caroleplunkey@charter.net for more details.

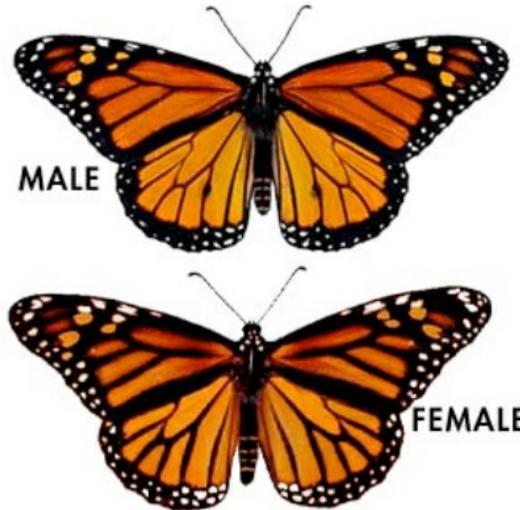
WATERSHED WILDLIFE WATCH Monarch Butterfly



Courtesy: www.monarchwatch.org

Back in July, the Alcona County Review front page featured pictures of a Monarch butterfly and caterpillar shot by a local resident at Reid Lake, which lies within our watershed (check it out if you haven't been to this little treasure South of M-72 near Barton City). Most people recognize the black, orange, and white markings of this beautiful creature, often spotted in gardens, fields, pastures, or roadside parks – wherever there are nectar plants or in season, host plants for their larvae (primarily milkweed). Although larvae only eat milkweed, adult butterflies feed on the nectar

of many plants, including: asters, coneflowers, blazing stars, goldenrod, and lilacs – all good choices for your yard if you want to “invite” them into your outdoor spaces (along with milkweed). Well known for their lengthy migrations in September and October, up to 500,000 monarchs begin their journey to warmer climates in Western California, Mexico, and Florida, arriving at their roosting sites in November, to return north in March.



Courtesy: www.monarchwatch.org

INVASIVE PLANT SPOTLIGHT Japanese knotweed



should concern everyone.

Currently one of the invasive species that is receiving increased focus is *Fallopia japonica*. Most people refer to the plant using the common name

Invasive species are an issue of concern in Michigan, and in our watershed. They tend to crowd out native plants and animals from well adapted ecosystems. The ecology of our watershed essentially controls water quality, which

Japanese knotweed, although many common names exist. The plant has attractive white lacey looking white flowers. The plants seen in our watershed appear to be 6 – 8 feet high. Blooming can occur in August and September. The stems stand through the winter and look reddish green. A quick web search reveals many good websites with pictures, and documents for more information.

Japanese knotweed has a very robust root system and is tough to control. Once it gets established it usually takes years to make headway in its removal. The plant seems to do well in many areas and we should realize that if it is along a water course it could spread easily. Parts of the plant can root and grow quickly into new infestation sites.

Many years ago, the plant was considered beneficial and was planted in many places. As you become more familiar with its appearance you will likely begin to notice it in more than a few places. It does have some ornamental appeal which could

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Stay Connected to Nature With Huron Pines

Huron Pines understands how important it is to stay connected to each other and the outdoors during the current crisis, so they have developed some resources to help find easy ways to experience nature while following the appropriate guidelines to protect personal and environmental health.

This spring Huron Pines rethought its approach to environmental education and outreach. They traditionally rely on community events, field days or classroom visits to connect people to nature and help them learn more about their unique natural environments. With schools closed and everyone asked to stay home and stay safe, they knew that getting outside would be more important than ever for many Michiganders.

So they created some lessons and activities to help us connect to nature from our own back yard or even from inside our own home. The programs were aired in April and

May but can still be accessed on-line at <https://huronpines.org/stay-connected/>.

"Connecting to Nature" features a different conservation topic viewable in 30-minute sessions and is presented by various Huron Pines staffers and Huron Pines AmeriCorps member Jennifer Klemm. Each lesson concludes with its own outdoor activity, moving learning beyond the computer by taking it outside. Of the nine lessons, those on Ticks, Invasive Species and Reading the River may be most pertinent to our watershed.

Reading the River, May 21, 2020

What can banks, bends, riffles and runs tell us about fish?



As the program was a resounding success, Huron Pines is already analyzing feedback from the many evaluations they received to improve and expand the series in the future. Be on the lookout for more online learning from Huron Pines this winter.

Japanese Knotweed Continued from page 4



explain why it is in residential areas. According to the literature the plant has many uses, that could also explain its widespread occurrence.

The most successful control efforts involve the use of herbicides applied over a course of years. At times conservation organizations receive grant funding to help landowners with control work. If you have this problem plant on your property you would be wise to undertake control actions. At the minimum please report the location of the plant to us.

Information describing control techniques is easy to find on the web for motivated landowners, and curious people in general. If you would like assistance in identification or where to go for more information please let us know.

However accomplished, the management and control of Japanese knotweed is more than worthwhile. You will be taking an important step in improving the ecology of the watershed.

Thank You for Caring!

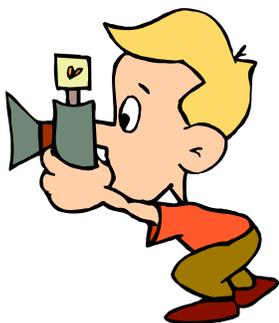
Nutrient Contributions to Van Etten Lake by Source

Nutrients and sediments can enter Van Etten Lake through stream input, overland flow, ground water seepage and within lake processes. The sampling program is designed to assess input from the Pine River, Huron (Sims) Creek, Phalen Creek, Coppler Creek, Hill Creek (west of the Pine on County Line Road) and Dry Creek (near Colbath Road) and other sources. They all add nutrients and sediments directly to Van Etten Lake. The total contribution from each stream depends on the concentration of nutrient or sediment in the stream and the rate of stream flow (discharge). The contribution from each stream, called "load", is calculated as pounds or kilograms per day. Streams with high concentrations and high discharge will contribute the most nutrients and sediments to the lake. The Pine River is the primary source of nutrients and

sediments. By also measuring the water that flows out of the lake for nutrients and sediments, the total contribution (or deduction) from non-stream related sources (runoff, seepage and within-lake processes) can be estimated. Most of the sediments entering the lake are carried by the inlet streams following storm events. After stream water enters the lake, sediment quickly settles to the bottom as the velocity decreases. Many of the settling particles have phosphorous and nitrogen bound to their surface. These attached nutrients become part of the stored nutrient pool at the bottom of the lake. The current estimate of phosphorus and total suspended solids contributions by source to the lake from all sources are summarized in the tables below.

ESTIMATED SOLIDS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LAKE	Tons/Yr
Pine River	2,584
Other stream tributaries to the lake	102
Shoreline runoff	145
Settlement	2,477
Out from the lake	354

PHOSPHOROUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LAKE BY SOURCE		Est lbs/yr
Pine River	55%	3,557
Other tribs	10%	657
Septic	19%	1,264
Lawn/Woods Runoff	3%	219
Waterfowl	5%	351
Internal recycle	6%	365
Rain	1%	84
	100%	6,497



PRVEL watershed and wildlife pictures are needed for our Facebook page. Please send what you have to Scott Lingo at scott@targetrealestate.com. You will be given credit for your submittals.

Note: Quarterly meetings for PRVEL occur in January, April, July, and October each year on the second Thursday of those months from 10am – noon at the Harrisville Library. (October meeting dependent on mandates from library and/or governor regarding COVID 19 restrictions – members will be notified)

PRVEL Coalition Board

Chair - Russell Williams	jrusswill@gmail.com
Secretary - Deb Miller	higgins.deborah@sbcglobal.net
Treasurer - Dan Stock	dstock4239@charter.net
Scott Lingo	scott@targetrealestate.com
Carole Plunkey	caroleplunkey@charter.net

Non-Voting Advisors

US Forest Service	Huron Pines RC&D
USDA-NRCS	DNR/Fisheries
US Fish & Wildlife	EGLE/Water Quality

How Can I Volunteer for PRVEL?

Our conservation group is comprised totally of volunteers, all working together to make things happen for the benefit of the watershed. Please step forward and make 2020 the year you help us make a difference in your neck of the woods.

Ways you can volunteer:

- Macro invertebrate sampling program – Spring and Fall
- Monitoring fishery – place temp loggers
- Invasive species monitoring
- Water quality monitoring
- River Keepers/monitor watershed out in the field
- Write articles for the newsletter
- Serve on the watershed board of directors

Contact any board member for program details

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 _____