

2022 Regular Coalition Meetings

April 14

July 14

Oct 13

Alcona Conservation Office  
US 23, Harrisville, MI



Working Together to  
Restore and Protect  
Our Natural  
Resources

Chairpersons Report  
By Russell Williams

Things are forming up for a good 2022 for the PRVEL Watershed Coalition. Coordination is building between the PRVEL and the Alcona Conservation District (ACD). In my role as the Forestry Assistance Program (FAP) Forester for both Alcona & Iosco Conservation Districts and the Chair of PRVEL I am always looking for ways organizational efforts can be coordinated.

The new Conservation District operations grant from the State has opened up some possibilities that previously didn't exist. At the last ACD board meeting, a motion was passed to start a pilot program to deal with some of the autumn olive in the county. The initial vision for the program is to provide a small scale targeted brush cutting service for landowners that are working with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) on invasive brush management. A forestry clearing saw will be purchased with grant funds and ACD staff will operate the saw. The landowner would be responsible for treating each cut stump with herbicide to prevent sprouting. Autumn olive and other species of invasive plants are an increasing challenge in the watershed and this new program has potential to improve the situation for some sites.

The Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) now has the option to select the Pine River Van Etten Lake Watershed Coalition in the project drop down menu when reporting an

invasive species occurrence. Additionally, both the Alcona Conservation District and the Iosco Conservation District have been added to the drop down menu. Reporting the occurrence of an invasive species is a vital step in managing the problem. We can all have a role in reporting what we see and it is a great way for everyone to get involved without too much effort. Go to the MISIN website, <https://www.misin.msu.edu>, to learn more about invasives and how to report them – and remember to choose your organization in the project drop down menu.

The grant that we applied for to plant some trees along Van Etten Creek to establish a riparian buffer zone is still out for review at the state level – we hope to hear soon if the project is funded. If we don't get the grant then there may still be a possibility of a smaller scale planting using alternative local funding.

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) is a voluntary pollution prevention program that has many benefits for landowners and the water quality of the greater watershed. The program is run locally by the Conservation District. There are verification options for a variety of land use and land cover types. Spread the word far and wide about the MAEAP for clean soil and water.

## **SIX DONORS SUPPORT PRVEL GOALS; DOUG JAGER WINS DRAWING**

For the past several years PRVEL fundraising efforts have centered on the annual Giving Tuesday campaign. This past year the board opted for a different approach. We sent letters to those known to us as having an interest in the watershed requesting a donation. We offered a chance for them to win a prize by being entered into a drawing. For each \$25 donated, supporters were given one chance at winning a \$25 gift card.

Six donors contributed a total of \$250. This did not include donations from board members. It did include a donation from Doug Jager, formerly an

active member locally and head of PRVEL's invasive species program. Other donors were: Dan Banks, Alan and Cynthia McGowen, Greg and Vicky Cole, Fred and Diane Alati, and the Seiferlein/Hubbell family.

The PRVEL board wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the 2021 fundraising effort for their support of PRVEL's projects and programs. Congratulations to Doug Jager for his drawing win and our appreciation for his contributions, financial and otherwise, to the PRVEL mission.

## **MISIN and MAEAP**

MIDWEST INVASIVE SPECIES NETWORK - <https://www.misin.msu.edu/>

The Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) is a regional effort to develop and provide early detection and response resources for invasive species. Our goal is to assist both experts and citizen scientists in the detection and identification of invasive species in support of successful management. This effort is being led by researchers with the Michigan State University Department of Entomology laboratory for Applied Spatial Ecology and Technical Services in conjunction with a growing consortium of supporting partners.

The MISIN smartphone app provides a mobile solution for the capture of invasive species field observation data. You can play an important role in the early detection and rapid response to new invasive threats in your area by contributing invasive species observations to the MISIN database.

MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM - <https://maeap.org/>

The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program is an innovative, proactive program that helps farms of all sizes and all commodities voluntarily prevent or minimize agricultural pollution risks.

Started in 1998, MAEAP is a voluntary program that recognizes farmers who are top stewards of their land. MAEAP helps farmers adopt cost-effective practices that reduce erosion and runoff into ponds, streams, and rivers. This, in turn, helps farmers comply with state and federal laws. The program includes four steps:

1. Attend an education workshop
2. Invite a local MAEAP technician to tour your farm
3. Implement practices recommended by the technician
4. Earn recognition for your work

MAEAP recognition can be earned in one or more of four areas: Farmstead; Cropping; Livestock; and Forest, Wetlands, & Habitat. Farmers who earn MAEAP recognition will receive a sign to place on their farm.

MAEAP is open to all Michigan farmers. You can start MAEAP at any time. Farmers who start or receive recognition by certain dates will be at an advantage for cost share, grants, and other assistance programs.

**E. COLI SAMPLING UPDATE**  
 by Dan Steck, Water Quality Monitor

Samples were taken on six dates from six locations on the Pine River system in 2021. A summary of the results are included in Table 1. Five base locations were sampled this year; the Pine River at the county line, the East/West Branch at Tait, the West and South Branches and Van Etten Creek at Pine River Trail. Samples were also collected on three occasions from Van Etten Creek at Dellar Road.

**Table 1 - Pine River Watershed E. coli Monitoring**

Location	2020				2021				11 Yr Results				
	Site No.	No.	Mean #/100 ml	Max. #/100 ml	Min	No.	Mean #/100 ml	Max. #/100 ml	Min	No.	Mean #/100 ml	Max. #/100 ml	Min
Pine River and Tributaries													
Pine River @ County Line	1	7	38	280	0	6	189	460	80	60	92	460	80
So Br Pine @ Cruzen	4	7	30	220	0	6	104	380	20	60	41	380	20
Van Etten Crk @ Barlow	11	7	91	550	10	6	127	330	50	60	95	660	50
Van Etten Crk @ Dellar	18					3	168	370	80	3	168	370	80
E./W. Br Pine @ F-30	31	7	69	180	20					49	64	460	20
E. Br Pine River @ Tait	32					6	56	300	0	11	98	340	0
W. Br Pine @ Cruzen	41	7	23	140	0	6	134	440	20	47	47	440	20
Home tap water		7	0			6	0			60	0		

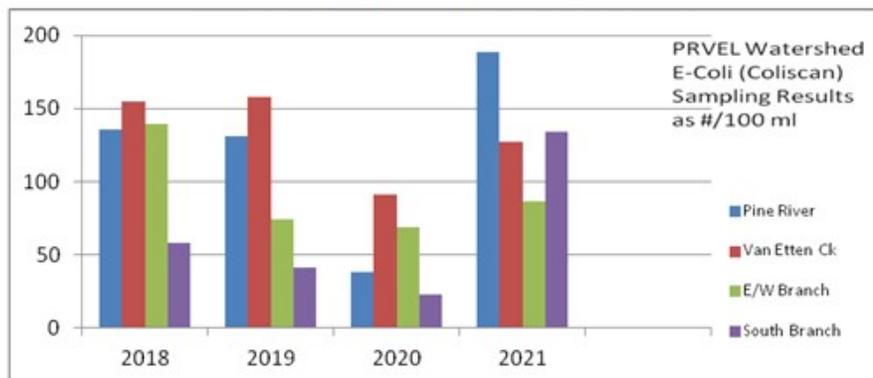
No. and # = Number

All results are expressed as CFU (colony forming units)/100ml

All samples incubated for 48 hours @ 95 +/- 3 deg. F

1. The geometric means for four of the six sites sampled in 2021 were higher than 130 CFU/100 ml state standards for swimming waters and one site, All of the sampling sites exceeded the 300 CFU/100 ml single sample concentration for the same standard on at least one occasion following heavy rains..
2. The bacteriological quality of the streams sampled in the watershed continues to be acceptable with no indicators of gross pollution.
3. A continuation of the sampling program at these base sampling points is planned for 2022.

**FIGURE 1**  
**TRENDS FOR FOUR SAMPLING SITES**



## Monitoring the Status of the Pine River Fishery

For several seasons now, PRVEL has been partnering with the DNR fisheries division in monitoring streams within our watershed for temperature readings. This endeavor helps in determining what, if any, fish are able to survive in a particular stream, trends within certain streams, and if resident fish are a relevant species to our river system.

One of the latest reports (August 2021) from DNR fisheries biologist, Tim Cwalinski, gave the following summary for the east branch of the Pine in Alcona County (condensed form):

The East Branch Pine River is a cold to cool water small river in Alcona County, Michigan. It begins from a series of small streams near the town of Lincoln and flows southerly through private land to its confluence with the West Branch Pine River at F-30. The Pine River drainage flows through Van Etten Lake and eventually into the lower Au Sable River. The riparian corridor of the stream is rolling forest and farmland. It is a designated Michigan trout stream throughout its length and regulated by Type 1 State of Michigan trout regulations (daily trout bag limit of 5 fish, all tackle types allowed, fishing season last Saturday in April through September; minimum size limits of 7", 8", and 10" for brook, brown, and rainbow trout, respectively).

Known stocking records for the East Branch Pine River date back to 1937. Fingerling or yearling brook trout were stocked in the river (unknown locations) from 1937 through 1943, while small numbers of legal sized brook trout were stocked from 1945 through 1964. Legal sized rainbow trout were stocked from 1946 through 1951, and 1955. Legal sized brown trout were stocked in 1951, and from 1953 through 1955.

Seventeen species of fish were collected in the 2021 Tait Road station (Table 6). Species diversity was much greater at the Tait Road station (17 species) compared to the upstream McConnell Road station in 2017 (10 species). This would be expected. Trout numbers were significantly reduced though at Tait Road compared to upstream. This could be explained by poorer habitat and increased water temperatures. Seven adult brook trout were collected at Tait Road in 800 feet of survey reach, ranging in length from 7-10 inches and represented by ages 1-2. Four juvenile rainbow trout (steelhead) were also captured. The most common species were creek chub and mottled sculpin.

Table 6.-Species collected in an 800-foot reach of the East Branch Pine River at Tait Road on August 26, 2021.

Species	Number	Length Range (in)
Creek chub	164	0-7
Mottled sculpin	94	0-4
White sucker	37	1-12
Central mudminnow	30	1-4
Johnny darter	26	1-2
Northern brook lamprey	23	4-6
Common shiner	19	1-4
Blacknose dace	12	1-3
Blackside darter	11	2-4
Logperch	9	4-5
Green sunfish	8	1-4
Brook trout	7	7-10
Largemouth bass	7	1-2
Rainbow trout	4	3-8
Northern hog sucker	1	8
Pumpkinseed	1	2
Yellow perch	1	

**WATERSHED WILDLIFE WATCH  
ANIMAL TRACKS**

If you're like a lot of folks in this time of pandemic quarantines and restrictions on social activities, you might consider special things you could do right in your own neighborhood to take advantage of the unexpected "free time". Often these activities can improve your mood and/or ease your mind of unwanted stress.

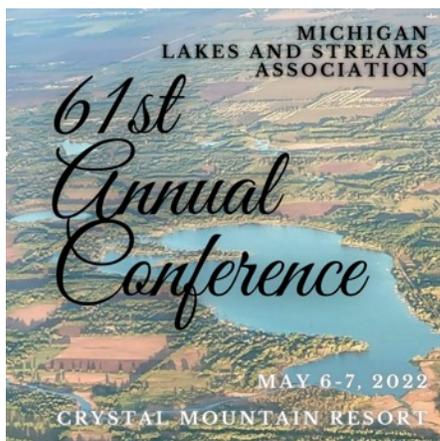
One suggestion that is both fun and informative is getting outdoors and looking for animal tracks. This is made easier by searching in the snow, as tracks are more readily seen than when they are in sand or mud. Trying to figure out what kind of animal might have left their mark is like solving a puzzle and can provide fun for the whole family.

There are many online sites that offer booklets or charts on animal tracks and even some specific to Michigan. You'll be looking for the overall size and shape of the track, along with zeroing in on the toes, hooves, or claw marks of the animal. It might be helpful to take a photo of the track to help in identification when you get home and even keep a journal of all your sitings.



What animal track is this?  
Courtesy of MI DNR

There are many wildlife watching opportunities in and around our community (e.g. state lands, recreational areas, off-road trails, etc) so put on your warm clothes and set out for an adventure!



**OUR 2020 TREASURY REPORT**

January 1, 2021 Balance	\$5,951.45
Income	
Donations, General	980.00
VELA	500.00
Giving Tuesday	0.00
Grants	0.00
Interest	3.59
Subtotal -	\$1,483.59
Program Expenses	
Meetings	0.00
Newspaper Ads	0.00
Macro Sampling	0.00
Temperature Logging	697.10
Coliform Sampling	140.22
Crowd Hydrology	0.00
Invasive Program	0.00
P/TSS Sampling	410.85
River Clearance	0.00
River Keepers	0.00
Administration Expenses	
Chamber Dues	180.00
Giving Tuesday	0.00
Supplies, Newsletter	77.01
MI Nonprofit Fee	20.00
PO Box Rental	76.00
Subtotal -	\$1,601.18
December 31, 2021 Balance	\$5,857.76

**Mark Your Calendars!**

Michigan Lake and Streams Association  
61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference  
May 6 and 7, 2022  
will be in person this year  
For more information visit the ML&SA  
61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference web page at  
<https://www.mymlsa.org>

PRVEL Coalition Board

Chair - Russell Williams	<a href="mailto:jrusswill@gmail.com">jrusswill@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer - Dan Stock	<a href="mailto:dstock4239@charter.net">dstock4239@charter.net</a>
Secretary - Deb Miller	<a href="mailto:millerdb613@gmail.com">millerdb613@gmail.com</a>
Scott Lingo	<a href="mailto:scott@targetrealestate.com">scott@targetrealestate.com</a>
Carole Plunkey	<a href="mailto:caroleplunkey@charter.net">caroleplunkey@charter.net</a>

Non-Voting Advisors

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

**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 2022 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
- River Keepers/monitor watershed out in the field
- Write articles for the newsletter
- Serve on the watershed board of directors
- Project workers – out in the field (seasonal)
- Fund raising – bring ideas to attention of

Contact via email as shown above

- Deborah Miller
- Scott Lingo
- Carole Plunkey
- Dan Stock
- Carole Plunkey
- Carole Plunkey
- any board member

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 \_\_\_\_\_