



# THE NORTH BRANCH

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE AU SABLE NORTH BRANCH AREA FOUNDATION

Fall Winter 2015/2016

## From the Presidents Desk

by: Glen Eberly

As we close out 2015, I'd like to tell you about what this fine organization has accomplished. This has been done with the help of a very dedicated and capable Board of Directors and valuable support from our many property owners and visitors to this very special North Branch Watershed.

From our founding in 1943, the ASNBAF has pioneered work in erosion control, beaver management on cold water streams, sediment management, large woody debris placement, invasive species (Purple Loosestrife) management, water temperature testing and maintaining river access for canoeing, kayaking and fishing. We also established a very effective River Keeper Program that has proved to be a model for other watershed groups.

Recently, we have focused on restoration of this fine cold water fishery through partnership with other conservation organizations such as Anglers of the Au Sable, numerous Trout Unlimited Chapters, and Huron Pines. Projects are currently underway to provide spawning habitat for brook trout and to clear sand off of precious gravel for spawning and insect production. This work is being done on both the North Branch and on the West Branch of Big Creek, a high quality brook trout fishery that had been neglected for many years.

### In 2015

- We completed our \$30,000 commitment to Huron Pines for Au Sable River Restoration work (including North Branch projects) by payment of our third and final \$10,000 installment.
- A commitment of \$10,000 (two \$5,000 payments) was made to The Mason Griffith TU Chapter for Big Creek Restoration.
- We completely restored the river access site at Morley Road and repaired the Dam Four Access Site.
- Eighteen volunteers spent 126 hours and destroyed 3,242 Purple Loosestrife plants.
- We placed signage at access sites for user groups.
- We cleared the navigable access on the North Branch in six different locations. Blockage was caused by normal tree fall incidents.
- We identified and helped facilitate the restoration of a clear cut zoning infraction on the North Branch.

### In 2016, we will:

- Continue the expansive North Branch and Big Creek Restoration projects.
- Initiate, in cooperation with the Michigan DNR, a water quality testing program to measure the PH factor in our watershed.
- Continue our war on Purple Loosestrife.
- Assist in scientific mapping of the North Branch from Lovells Bridge to Eaman's Landing.
- Develop a beaver management plan for the upper reaches of Big Creek, to prevent a repeat of the potential long term destruction to this stream that caused serious damage in the past 30 years.
- Fight the real threat to our watershed by "fish farming" on the East Branch of the Au Sable River along with Anglers of the Au Sable and TU Chapters.



Morley Road Access Site

Thank you all, and take pride in making an impact in accomplishing our mission: To preserve, protect and enhance the natural endowments of the North Branch of the Au Sable River watershed for the benefit of wild fish and game and public enjoyment and appreciation.

## North Branch Restoration Update

by Glen Eberly

The upper reaches of our beloved river received some very much needed habitat material this past summer. Over two miles of the "Blue Water Property" just over the line into Otsego County now has over 100 spawning logs and other structures to provide the much needed cover in this valuable nursery area for trout reproduction.

Beaver dams were removed years ago. This opened the upper reaches to trout passage. The stream bed has large stretches of great spawning gravel that are now accessible to spawning trout (especially Brook Trout). Property owner cooperation is critical for all our restoration work which is carried out on private land. Most of the land through which our North Branch runs is private and Blue Water Property owners were most cooperative. Another 100 structures are being planned for this same stretch next year along with moving down stream on the same property adding more structures and log cover. The physical work is being done by Northpoint Fisheries Management, owned and managed by Steve Sendek, a retired DNR Fisheries Biologist. Steve also helped develop the restoration plan with the DNR and Anglers of the Au Sable.

A review of the Blue Water restoration work was carried out in August with representatives of DNR Fisheries Div., DEQ Permitting Dept., DNR Natural Rivers Dept., along with Anglers of the Au Sable and ASNBAF volunteers. The assessment of the work was most positive with results already evident.

The first two years of this Restoration Project were funded by Anglers of the Au Sable and a DNR Habitat Improvement Account Fund, investing \$60,000 in 2013 and \$70,000 in 2014 in our North Branch Watershed. A similar amount was spent in 2015 and projected funding of nearly \$250,000 will be invested by Anglers of the Au Sable through the year 2022, as the project reaches Kellogg Bridge. The overall plan is to restore our North Branch to the confluence with the Main Branch and river mapping of our lower river will be carried out in the future. Our own Steve Johnson is providing vital computer expertise to convert river data to maps for restoration planning and the permitting process.

As stated previously, the objective on this restoration work is to provide spawning cover and move sediment from gravel to provide spawning habitat and important insect production. While focusing on fish habitat restoration, work is being done without impeding navigation by kayak and canoe, recreation enjoyed by so many of our residents and visitors to the North Branch.



Bob Weed

### Meet a new board member—Bob Weed

Robert (Bob) Weed has a cabin in the Scott's Lodge Subdivision. Like many of the people in our area he initially started coming to the North Branch in his youth and has appreciated all its advantages for many decades. He and his wife Susan took over the family cabin in 2000 and enjoy every minute of it.

Bob likes anything that involves the river: fishing, canoeing, kayaking or just watching it flow by. Even though he retired early in 2015, he is still active in automotive and sustainability issues and is looking forward to becoming more involved with environmental projects in the Au Sable watershed. Bob and Susan have two grown children and four adorable grandchildren and are looking forward to showing them all the advantages of the North Branch.

### A loss to the North Branch—Bill Gregory

The AuSable North Branch Area Foundation board of directors wish to express their sympathy and extend their prayers to the family and friends of Bill Gregory, a former board member and long time AuSable North Branch resident.

Bill passed away on October 7, 2015 at the age of 85 after a brief illness.

We remember and honor Bill for his avid and selfless commitment to the protection of our river resource.



Bill Gregory

## River Keep Update

by: Eric Bankhead



Tree fall blocking the river.

**Mark your calendar for the  
North Branch Annual Dinner  
Saturday  
July 9, 2016**

The 6th year of the North Branch River Keepers Program is coming to season's end. This summer keepers have been active fighting Purple Loosestrife and on the lookout for any potential issues that may be detrimental to the river. Reports of tree falls and blockages have been remediated at Lovells Bridge, twice this season; those BIG WILLOWS are getting old and keep falling in the river. Also, tree falls and low sweepers were moved to create safe boat passage below Kellogg Bridge and just up from the Morley Road Access.

All river maintenance was paid for by your donations, Thanks for Your Concern for the River.

See our website '[AuSableNorthBranch.com](http://AuSableNorthBranch.com)', 'River Keeper Program' page for contact information on your Reach.

## Single-Stream Recycling at Lovells Begins! By Gary Neumann, Township Supervisor

On July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Lovells Township inaugurated its new "single-stream" recycling program. It is called single-stream because there is no separating of the recyclable material – it all goes into the same large container! The separating is done when the material arrives at the state of the art recycle center owned and operated by American Waste.

You can put #1 through #7 plastics, any color glass, tin cans, cardboard, any kind of paper, metal and styrofoam into the large green container you'll find at each of Lovells Townships' Transfer Stations. Of course, rinsing of the recyclables that need it (milk jugs, tin cans, etc.) is appreciat-



Gary Neumann

## Cedars on the North Branch

by Howard Johnson

Marlene Swiss; along with her husband Michael, neighbors and fellow property owners along the North Branch of the Au Sable donated over fifty native cedar seedlings to the "Cedars for the Au Sable" project for planting this fall.

Marlene and her "helpers" harvested the emerging native cedars from the local riverbank, put each in its own growing pot; and cared for them until they were large enough for replanting along the river. The cedar seedlings are now 12 to 24 inches in height.

"The cedar seedlings will now be planted and protected on the North Branch and other branches of both the Au Sable and the Manistee rivers", says Howard N. Johnson, chairman of the "Cedars for the Au Sable" project. Marlene's cedar seedlings together with the more than 20,000 already planted on the two rivers, have begun the reforestation of our native Northern White-cedars. Cedar trees are important to maintain the cool water of the river and provide fish cover for the trout. as well as reducing soil erosion.

The Au Sable Area Foundation has supported the "Cedars for the Au Sable" project for many years and is very proud of our area residents for their help providing the native cedar seedlings.

Marlene and her volunteers plan to continue collecting the little cedars and make them available to the "Cedars for the Au Sable" project. If you would like to begin your own cedar collection, please contact Howard at [hjohnson @aol.com](mailto:hjohnson@aol.com) or 989-280-0381.



Marlene's Cedars

## We "Thank" our Contributors

Bruce and Carol Carman  
 Susan Cooper  
 Benjamin Duby  
 Bill and Pat Duncanson  
 Glen and Martha Eberly  
 Chip and Betsy Erwin  
 Paul and Linda Feldman  
 Gretchen Fergason  
 Scott and Cindy Hill  
 Mike and Sue Inman  
 Anton Kalbli  
 Gary Neumann  
 Duane and Nancy Peterson  
 Keith and Wendy Petherick  
 Andy Stenglein  
 Keith and Peggy Traver  
 Johna and Shirley VanDam  
 Garrett and Bonnie Walworth  
 Bob and Susan Weed

**They make our projects possible!!**



**Volunteers on the Morley Access Site Project**

## Website

by Bill Ross

Our Foundation now has a website. We will continue to publish our twice yearly newsletter but the website will allow us to communicate with you on a more regular basis. The website address is [AuSableNorthBranch.com](http://AuSableNorthBranch.com). It contains photos, event information and reports from our River Keeper Program. In the future it will contain information on projects and programs we support.

Our site is in the development stages and we need your help. Please take a minute to visit the site and review our efforts. Let us know what you like or dislike and what you would like to see that is not currently available. We need photos so send them and your comments to Debi Anderson at:

[debbieA20@aol.com](mailto:debbieA20@aol.com).

With your continued help and support we will continue to make the Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation better helping to preserve, protect and enhance the natural endowments of the Au Sable River Watershed for the benefit of wild fish and game and public enjoyment and appreciation.



# Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation

955 Morley Road, Grayling, MI 49738

Here is my (our) contribution to support the Foundation:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to:  
 Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation  
 c/o Connie Schrieber  
 955 Morley Road  
 Grayling, MI 49738

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Remediation of the Natural Vegetative Strip Violation on the North Branch of the Au Sable River by: Gary Neumann Lovells Township Supervisor

The Spring/Summer issue of The North Branch contained a status update on this violation. I am pleased to report that on September 4<sup>th</sup> the remediation of the site was completed to the satisfaction of Lovells Township. The contractor that performed the work was Barker Creek Nursery of Williamsburg, MI. Only native trees and bushes were used in the remediation, and an automatic watering system for those trees and bushes was also installed.

To the right are “before and after” pictures of the site; they portray a dramatic contrast by any measure! With approximately \$3000 in legal fees it was costly to the township. However, and to their credit, the township board recognized early on that the Lovells Township Zoning Ordinance simply had to be defended. Feel free to contact me (989-348-9215 on T/W/T from 9 AM to 3 PM) should you have any questions or concerns.



**Before**



**After**

## Morley Road Access Restoration - June 27, 2015

by: Glen Eberly

The plan to restore a deteriorated access site at the end of Morley Road on the Au Sable North Branch was developed in 2014 and the job was completed on June 27, 2015. Permits were required from Michigan DEQ, DNR - Natural Rivers Dept. and Crawford County Road commission. The Township also had to approve the plan. The property is actually owned by Bonnie Marsh and she and George Shaw, Secretary of ASNBAF, were very supportive in our effort to fix the access.



**Morley Road Volunteers**

On June 27th, we had eighteen volunteers on site to restore the access site. They came from Challenge Chapter TU, Mason-Griffith Chapter TU, and our own ASNBAF. We were fortunate to have Kenny Reed, of Huron Pines, serve as our on site Project Manager.

Materials for the project were donated by Crawford County Road Commission, Huron Pines and ASNBAF Board Member, Steve Johnson. River resident, Larry Hulka provided a Kubota Tractor which saved much time and back work. Work started at 8:30AM and was completed by 2:00PM.

A pizza and salad lunch was provided by ASNBAF and a desert treat (Death by Chocolate) was prepared on site in a Dutch oven by Challenge Chapter TU member, David Gregg. Total cost for the project was \$170.18. This project is a perfect example of the work your ASNBAF provides to enhance the quality of the Au Sable North Branch experience.

**Thanks to all who participated.**

## Purple Loosestrife (PL) War - 2015 by Debi Anderson

The harsh winter seemed to have little negative effect on PL as it roared back strong on many stretches of our beloved North Branch this spring and summer. Some previous heavy areas are relatively PL free, thanks to the good work of our PL Team.

Again this year, we thank our dedicated core of 19 PL Warriors who volunteer to attack PL on their own time and provide their own materials. While some volunteers cover specific reaches of our North Branch, others are nomadic in their fight. Together, this year, they compiled an impressive 126 volunteer hours on the stream and removed or killed 3,242 plants. This was the highest plant count since we began the war in 2008!

Our volunteers this year were: Debbi and Bill Anderson, Eric Bankhead and Connie Schrieber, John and Jane Dallas, Bill and Pat Duncanson, Glen and Martha Eberly, Bob Grant, Gary Neumann, Bill and Janet Ross, George Shaw and Bonnie Marsh, Larry and Marge Warner, and Tom Wessel. When you see them around town or on the river, give them a big thank you for their good work!

No doubt PL will have another meeting this winter to set up their sinister game plan for 2016, but take comfort in the fact that your PL Warriors will be ready for them again in the coming year. The Michigan DNR has offered to attack any very large plots of PL that we may identify in 2016. So be vigilant and advise me of any early sightings of big areas of PL.



The Attendees



**Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation Annual Meeting took place on Saturday, August 28, 2015**



**Above President Glen Eberly and Secretary George Shaw.**

**To the left Marjie Werner, Board Member, Tom Baird, Guest Speaker and John Dallas former Board Member.**

Thanks to all the volunteers!

## Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation

955 Morley Road • Grayling • MI 49738

**Officers—**

**Glen Eberly, President**  
989-348-3084

**Bob Grant, Vice President**  
989-348-7574

**Connie Schrieber, Treasurer**  
989-348-6704

**George Shaw, Secretary**  
989-316-2224

**Bill Ross, Past President**  
989-348-7130

**Directors—**

**Debi Anderson** 219-242-1900  
**Eric Bankhead** 989-348-6704  
**John Dallas** 989-348-6662  
**Bill Duncanson** 989-348-9364  
**Mike Inman** 989-348-2922  
**Steve Johnson** 989-344-1053  
**Gary Neumann** 989-348-9848  
**Jerry Rucker** 989-348-8738  
**Jim Shiflett** 517-930-0622  
**Marjie Warner** 313-663-1331  
**Neil Wallace** 248-891-5446  
**Robert Weed** 989-348-5793  
**Tom Wessels** 231-271-6151



**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.**