

Huron Pines

www.huronpines.org

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Huron Pines conserves the forests, lakes, and streams of Northeast Michigan. We achieve this mission by bringing people together and coordinating on-the-ground stewardship projects.

Executive Director's Report



Executive Director
Brad Jensen

For those of you already familiar with Huron Pines and the work we do, I would like to tell you about several changes our Board is making to improve our service to the public. The first is a renewed emphasis on what we do best – watershed management. Whether completing stream enhancement projects, restoring areas that have been impacted by pollution, or working to inform resource managers, landowners and local officials about best practices for protecting water quality, we're focused on doing the best possible job with our water resource programs. Our second major emphasis, based on more recent experience in helping local organizations, has led to the creation of our Environmental Leadership Program. Over the next few years, we hope to expand our service assisting nonprofit groups and watershed coalitions with reaching their own goals. We understand that good conservation work is best accomplished with groups working effectively to help protect their local lakes, streams, and other natural areas. Look for more information on our Leadership Program in the coming months.

When it comes to helping organizations become self sustaining, we are also heeding our own advice. To that end, our organization is taking the steps needed to ensure that Huron Pines is effective for many years to come. Some of the changes are subtle, such as dropping the rather lengthy name we used in the past and sticking with the shorter version – Huron Pines. Others are larger in scale, such as becoming more independent from our original sponsor, the USDA-NRCS, as part of our growth process. As a nonprofit organization, it is important that we are solely accountable to our members and that our decisions are guided by those we serve — you.

We have also hired our own restoration crew, which gives us the flexibility to do more restoration projects than ever before across our 11-county service area. We recently expanded our Board of Directors in the areas of volunteer coordination, fund raising and financial management. Many of the changes at our organization are spurred on by the recognized need for effective watershed management throughout our region, as well as shifts in traditional sources of financial support. But with change comes opportunity, and embracing these opportunities will make our organization stronger in the long run.

If you haven't received our newsletter before, we invite you to take a look and learn about some of the things Huron Pines is doing to conserve the forests, lakes and streams in Northeast Michigan. Our support comes from donations, contractual services, grants, and contributions from people like you. Joining as a member of Huron Pines helps ensure that our natural resources are getting the attention they deserve. What's more, new members will receive a complimentary one-year subscription to *Michigan's Streamside Journal*, one of the best sources for good stories on hunting, fishing and the outdoors. We are very excited about the future and the results that, with your help, can be achieved.

Thank You, Volunteers!

- ◆ Bob Andrus, Chairman of the Au Sable River Watershed Restoration Committee, for helping with the Huron Pines informational booth at the Midwest Fly Fishing Expo in March
- ◆ Carol Rose, for her efforts in compiling landowner contact information for the Pigeon River Habitat Initiative
- ◆ Glenda Grix, Margie Thomson, JoAnn Smith and Heidi Fetz, who spent a day stuffing mailings
- ◆ Tom Wellman, Grayling City Council, and Steve Southard, Stormwater Committee Chairman, for their efforts to inventory stormwater rain garden sites
- ◆ Lovells Hook and Trigger Club for sponsoring the Au Sable River Riparian Workshop, and to Heidi Fetz for providing delicious baked goods

A special thanks to Barb Fleming, for her service as Huron Pines treasurer and as a board member for 11 years. Barb is enjoying retirement at her farm near Gaylord.

When it rains and water runs off roads, picking up oils, greases, sediment and other materials, the water not only pollutes any rivers or streams it enters, but it creates another problem. Rapid runoff causes water levels to fluctuate more than they naturally would. This leads to downstream erosion and increased sedimentation, more turbid water, warmer water temperatures, and an overall loss in habitat quality. The great streams in Northeast Michigan, like the Au Sable River, are naturally very stable because they are fed by groundwater. Groundwater naturally entering these streams is clear, cold, and clean. Runoff from roads, parking lots, and other impervious surfaces is perhaps the biggest type of pollution threat.

While Huron Pines works on many projects to minimize runoff and treat it where possible, making sure problems are not created in the first place is essential. For that reason, we view the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) as a partner in protecting water resources. By elevating the issue of river protection, alerting officials to the vulnerability of high quality stream systems, and incorporating context-sensitive design standards, pollution can be minimized.

Last fall, MDOT put out a preliminary plan for managing stormwater runoff as part of their statewide permit application. Huron Pines took the time to review the plan and offered the following key recommendations:

- 1) In areas where transportation projects are located near high quality streams, greater emphasis must be placed on managing runoff. Coldwater streams, fed by groundwater, are especially sensitive to increased levels of runoff. By contrast, rivers classified as “impaired” already receive special treatment. It makes just as much sense to apply special standards to the best of Michigan streams, before they become impaired.
- 2) More needs to be done to give local river and watershed groups the opportunity to review and comment on projects at the beginning of the planning process. This will help ensure better projects and save time and money.

We are pleased to say that MDOT was very receptive to our comments and is working to notify groups that they are willing to take the above two actions. Their management plan can be found on the web at:

www.michigan.gov/stormwatermgt

A statewide stormwater permit application from MDOT is not the kind of thing that makes front page news, but since we have a lot of highways in this state there is a great opportunity to reduce the amount of polluted runoff entering our rivers from them. It's important that the issue of preventive stormwater management be better recognized by the conservation community. MDOT received only four comments on their statewide stormwater management plan, including those from Huron Pines. Please visit the MDOT web site and learn more about how *your* local watershed group can be involved.



Pro-active management of stormwater runoff can reduce pollution from drains like this.

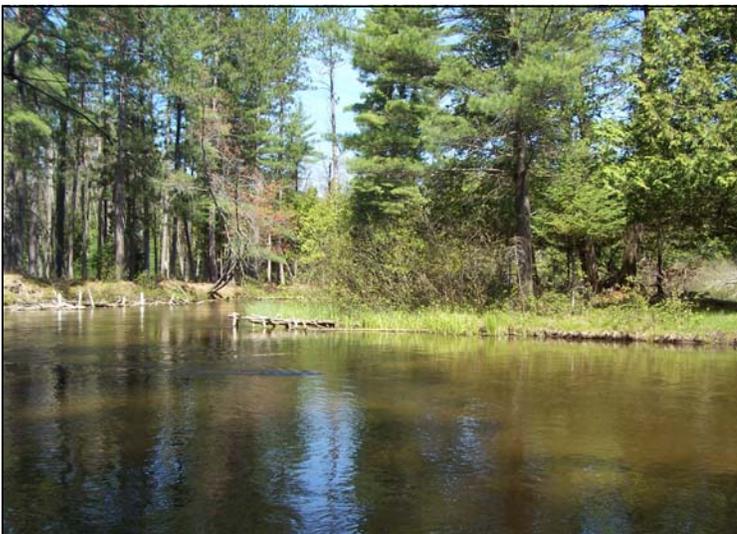
Stream Restoration in Northern Michigan

In recent years, some have questioned the need for restoration work within our high quality watersheds. Why do we need to manage high quality waters? What needs to be restored? These are some of the questions posed to restoration and watershed groups in northern Michigan. In recent years, the term *Stream Restoration* has been used to describe all resource projects within the riparian corridor. Whether you are improving instream habitat or improving the conditions of a road-stream crossing, the work has been considered restoration. Let's define some key terms:

- **Restoration**— to return to the naturally existing condition.
- **Enhancement**— to make greater in value, appearance, or effectiveness.
- **Improvement**— a condition superior to an earlier condition.

When defining these terms it is easy to see questions that surround the word *restoration*. The majority of the projects administered by Huron Pines fall into the *improvement* or *enhancement* category. The objective of our work is *not* to restore the existing conditions to pre-European settlement, instead, we strive to improve upon the existing conditions in an attempt to maximize the ecological diversity and integrity of our waters.

The logging era at the turn of the 19th century had the most profound impact on northern Michigan watersheds. The trees within the forests and riparian corridors were harvested and the rivers were cleared for unobstructed transportation of saw logs to downstream lumber mills. This intense extraction process left the rivers susceptible to high levels of erosion and sedimentation. Many rivers became wider, more swallow, and warmer as a result of the increased sediment load. The nature of our rivers makes it difficult for them to recover from such drastic changes.



Northern Michigan streams are some of the most stable in the world. This does not mean that our rivers and streams are not constantly changing, because they are. Rivers are dynamic systems and the stream channel is constantly moving, creating new meanders, and increasing the instream habitat diversity. What people are referring to when they mention that our rivers are stable is that the flow and temperature stay relatively consistent all year long. This is due to the fact that the predominant soil is sand, reducing the amount of runoff discharge, and that our rivers are groundwater fed. However, the same characteristics that provide the optimum environment for coldwater fisheries also influence the amount of sediment the river

can move. A stable river system does not have the energy needed to flush excess sediment, from road-stream crossings or streambank erosion sites, out of its system. This stream stability is one of the main reasons for stream restoration, enhancement or improvement.

Northeast Michigan is home to high quality, unique coldwater fisheries which demand special attention. Huron Pines has been working to protect and enhance Northeast Michigan's coldwater fisheries since 1973. Program areas include instream habitat improvement, road-stream crossing improvement, streambank erosion control, and stormwater management. These program areas and related projects are vital to the continued health of our high quality waters.



Erosion and Sedimentation Control

Most Watershed Management Plans identify sediment as the major pollutant for high quality streams. Streambank erosion and road stream-crossings are the major contributors of sediment in most northern Michigan streams. Development pressure is one of the primary causes of streambank erosion. Loss of greenbelt buffers, improper setbacks, and poorly designed access sites continue to weaken streambanks and make them susceptible to erosive activities. Huron Pines works with project partners to identify erosion sites, develop the necessary plans to remedy the existing problems, educate landowners and implement a restoration plan.

Stormwater Management

Huron Pines works with local municipalities to reduce the amount of sediment-laden runoff that enters coldwater streams in northern Michigan. Using a variety of techniques, stormwater management projects control water from rain events close to where it falls on the ground to eliminate the direct discharge of stormwater runoff from the land to water bodies.

Low Impact Development techniques use natural drainage to help address the problem at its source. The basic principles behind natural drainage include maintaining natural vegetation wherever possible, intercepting rainfall with tree canopy, detaining water close to where it falls, and directing water to depression areas. End-of-the-pipe treatment is needed in some areas, but the use of low impact, natural drainage addresses the problem at its source.



Installation of oil and grit separator to reduce nonpoint source discharge into the Au Sable River.

Instream Habitat Improvement

Large Woody Debris (LWD) is an integral component of a healthy aquatic ecosystem. LWD provides habitat diversity; cover for fish; habitat for invertebrates, reptiles, and other components of the aquatic food chain; adds nutrients to the aquatic system; and protects streambanks during high flow events. LWD was once common among most northern Michigan rivers and streams. However, historical land use practices and current development activities have denuded streams of large woody debris structures.

Huron Pines works with the State of Michigan, US Forest Service, watershed groups, and conservation organizations to enhance Northeast Michigan rivers with Large Woody Debris. LWD complexes are formed with the use of a construction helicopter and experienced river crew.

Instream enhancement projects like this take a considerable amount of coordination and project management. Just like any other work to be completed in close proximity to Michigan surface waters, certain permits are required in order to perform the work. Huron Pines has obtained the necessary permits for work to go forward on the Main Branch and North Branch of the Au Sable River this summer. If you are interested in participating in this project please contact Kris Bruestle at Huron Pines.

Large Woody Debris found within the Little Oqueoc River in Presque Isle County.



Serving Northeast Michigan

Huron Pines

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Executive Board

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Lisha Ramsdell
Watershed Coordinator
Ken Reed
Restoration Crew Leader
Jill Scarzo
Program Assistant
Dan Sikarskie
Pigeon River Habitat Specialist

New Staff

We're pleased to welcome Ken Reed to the staff as Restoration Crew Leader. Ken has worked with Huron Pines for over 20 years controlling streambank erosion and improving instream habitat on the Au Sable and Manistee Rivers. His knowledge and experience will be utilized supervising our summer restoration crew, which is as busy as ever, and in marking wetlands, restoring upland areas, and installing rain gardens.

New Board Member

With the retirement of Barb Fleming as treasurer, we are pleased to announce that Connie Schrieber has filled that role.

Connie has been involved with numerous Huron Pines projects in the past and serves as treasurer for the North Branch Property Owner's Association—a key partner for Huron Pines in the Au Sable River Watershed.



Connie is a Certified Public Accountant who works for a variety of clients and splits her time between the North Branch of the Au Sable River and the Brighton and Battle Creek areas. She does enjoy northern Michigan and, in 2004, decided it was time to move her home office base to Lovells. Finding room to work was no problem in Lovells – Connie's office is simply a converted log shed which was originally used for canoe storage.

Connie and her husband, Eric Bankhead, love to spend time on the river and in the woods. In addition to working with her clients across the state and her volunteer service for both Huron Pines and the North Branch Association, she also teaches accounting at Kirtland Community College.



Welcome Baby Bruestle

We would like to welcome the newest member of the Huron Pines family — Teagen Kristopher Bruestle was born January 29, 2006 to Huron Pines Restoration Ecologist Kris and his wife Renee, an Environmental Educator at Little Traverse Land Conservancy.

Teagen weighed in at 8.1 pounds and was 21 inches long at birth. We would like to extend our congratulations to Kris and Renee and look forward to watching Teagen grow. Here's to a bright future for our newest little conservationist.

Huron Pines has many generous sponsors who help us make an impact. Thank you to the following Members and Project Contributors since our winter newsletter. We're only successful because of the commitment of our supporters.

New and Renewing Members

Sustainers \$500-\$999

Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited
James E. Kure, M.D. and Gail F. Dawson, M.D.
Ronald and Kristen Sorgenfrei
David and Carol Waltz

Partners \$100-\$499

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Crawford-Roscommon Conservation District
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County of Oscoda
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Hammond Bay Area Anglers Association
Wesley and Debra Hills
William and Marietta Kusey
Ogemaw Conservation District
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Jean Howard
Montmorency County Conservation Club
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Other Contributors

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Raymond and Frances Hoobler
Rodney and Cara Kannisto
Ronald Raynak
Neil Satovsky
John and Shirley Schultz
Tom and Beatrice Seeley
Ronald Swiss
Mark and Deborah Lee Weber
Virginia and Mark Williams

Project Contributors

Biotechnical Erosion Control Project

Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Fletcher Pond

Montmorency Conservation District

Grayling Stormwater Project

City of Grayling
County of Crawford
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Michigan Fly Fishing Club
Trout Bum Bar-B-Q

Huron Pines

Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited
for Annual Meeting Costs
Bruce Patrick & Grayling Fish Hatchery Committee
for much-needed materials storage space

Large Woody Debris Project

Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Michigan Fly Fishing Club

Ocqueoc River Watershed

Citizens National Bank
First Federal Community Foundation
Lafarge North America
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality
Onaway Area Community Schools:
Mrs. James 5th grade "Politics Group"
Onaway Community Federal Credit Union
Wade Trim

Otsego Lake Watershed Project

Otsego County Community Foundation

Pigeon River Habitat Initiative

Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Pine River Van Etten Lake

Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan
Frederick J. and Sharon R. Fabris
Dan and Jeanne Stock

Annual Meeting Highlights

Many thanks to Rich Bowman, Executive Director of the Michigan Council of Trout Unlimited, for delivering the keynote address at our Annual Meeting. He handed out a Natural Resources Suggested Reading List we thought would be of interest (see sidebar).

Our discussion panel featured representatives from state and federal agencies on the topic "What does the future hold for conservation projects in northern Michigan? What are the needs in the region and how do those compare with priorities at the state and federal level?" We appreciate the participation of Dave Borgeson, MDNR Fisheries Division, Susan Erickson, MDEQ Environmental Science and Services Division, Heather Rawlings, USF&WS, Aaron Lauster, USDA-NRCS, and Rich Bowman, MCTU for giving their various perspectives.

The Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited was presented with the Huron Pines Award, accepted by Bob Thorsen, President. The Paul H. Young Chapter has supported the Grayling Stormwater Project, instream habitat improvement on the Au Sable, and the Pine Drive Road-Stream Crossing on the South Branch Au Sable and holds two work weekends per year. Especially important is their effort to work with us to develop a coordinated long-term plan of stream restoration and enhancement projects.

- *Wilderness & The American Mind*, Roderick Frazier Nash, Yale University Press, 2001
 - *The Land Nobody Wanted*, Michigan State College Special Bulletin 332, April, 1945 (copies available from Huron Pines office)
 - *Planning a Wilderness*, James Kates, University of Minnesota Press, 2001
 - *Human Nature*, James Trefil, Times Books/Henry Holt & Co., 2004
 - *Fresh Water*, E.C. Pielou, The University of Chicago Press, 1998
- Website Resources:
www.conbio.org The Society for Conservation Biology, "Conservation in Practice" and "Journal of Conservation Biology"
www.aibs.org American Institute of Biological Sciences, "BioScience"

Notice to riverfront landowners: If you have questions about streambank erosion, trees in the river, or other river concerns but aren't sure who to ask, feel free to call 989/344-0753 ext. 21. Jill, our Program Assistant, can help point you in the right direction.

This organization is an equal opportunity provider.

Huron Pines is a nonprofit, non-governmental, 501(c)(3) organization serving Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, Crawford, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle and Roscommon counties.



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