



LITTLE RIVER NEWS

SPRING/SUMMER 2013

MEMBERS: MARK YOUR CALENDARS — THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON JULY 6TH AT 10 AM IN SKINNER PARK IN IRONS.

2013 marks the seventeenth annual meeting for the membership of the Little Manistee Watershed Conservation Council. From rather modest beginnings in response to the failure of the Luther dam in 1986, the Council has developed into a unique and influential voice in Michigan's conservation arena. Partnering with other watershed organizations, conservation alliances, and state and local agencies, the LMWCC has accomplished much in its relatively brief existence due in great part to the tireless and selfless efforts of committed individuals. So our gathering in July is not just an opportunity get details about the Council's activities; it is a chance to say, "Thank you," to those who give so much to keep our river the pristine resource that it is.

As usual the Council's Trustees will present status reports on our various projects, programs, and goals. Our guest speaker will be Amy Beyer, director of Conservation Resource Alliance, an indispensable partner in the Council's on-going work.

The annual raffle will feature a pair of kayaks and paddling gear as the first prize, a \$300 gift certificate from Wolverine Worldwide, and a guided fishing trip courtesy of Schmidt's Outfitters of Wellston. There will also be a bucket raffle including items such as a new Orvis T-3 seven weight fly rod – perfect for steelheading – and a dozen hand tied flies. So buy some tickets!

At the conclusion of the meeting a barbecue lunch, provided by the Indian Club will be served to all members and their guest.

The following was posted on the website of the *Alliance for Economic Success* in Manistee on December 7, 2011:

**\$300,000 GRANT FOR NEW FISHERIES AND STEWARDSHIP CENTER AT LITTLE
MANISTEE WEIR**

Grant Supports Continued Expansion of Explore the Shores Program

STRONACH, MICHIGAN - The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund has approved a \$300,000 grant to create opportunities for thousands of people of all ages, needs and abilities to learn about Michigan's world-class fishery and the importance of water stewardship at a special place on the Little Manistee River in Manistee County.

Funds will be used to develop recreational and educational facilities at the Little Manistee River weir that is managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Fisheries Division on a 102 acre DNR-owned site in Manistee County in Stronach Township. The weir and egg taking operation supply salmon and steelhead eggs to hatcheries throughout Michigan. The weir and egg taking operation is a primary source of steelhead eggs for the steelhead fishery throughout the entire Great Lakes basin. Thousands of visitors, including hundreds of school children visit the site each year despite the absence of facilities to support visitation.

Funds will be used to:

- Construct a universally accessible viewing platform directly below the weir for visitors to view thousands of migrating salmon and trout.
- Develop a universally accessible interpretive trail system to support guided and self-guided tours of the weir and egg-taking operation
- Construct public restroom facilities.

The development of the site was identified by the Manistee-based **Explore the Shores** program as a high priority. The vision of the Explore the Shores program is to bring 1 million visitors of all ages, needs and abilities to the County by the year 2020 to access and enjoy the County's bounty of water resources. Explore the Shores was developed with the support of the National and Michigan Easter Seals organization as an outgrowth of Envision Manistee County and is coordinated through a diverse team of local, state and federal organizations, governments and agencies. *(Continued on page 3.)*

"This project will let the world understand what thousands of people, including many school-age children, already know," said Todd Kalish of DNR's Fisheries Division who submitted the grant application that was drafted for the DNR by the Manistee-based Alliance for Economic Success. "The Little Manistee Weir is one of the most vital resources we have for sustaining populations of both Chinook salmon and steelhead. Visitors to the weir will experience enhanced amenities to enjoy viewing how we process eggs from salmon and steelhead to the benefit of a Great Lakes fishery that provides billions of dollars of economic benefits to the Great Lakes region. We have one of the finest salmon and steelhead fisheries in the world and it's important for people to understand why this is the case."

"This is terrific news for Manistee County school kids and for students and teachers throughout the Great Lakes," said Kevin Postma who teaches Advanced Placement Science at Manistee Area Public Schools. "Our students and thousands of others visit the weir annually for many purposes, including learning about the life cycle of migratory fish species and the importance of the Little Manistee River to the Great Lakes fishery."

"This project hits the bullseye of our priorities for Michigan," Kalish said. "The facilities will provide thousands with a positive experience and an opportunity to learn about our fishery and high class trout streams. It will also serve to encourage understanding and appreciation for fishing and hopefully get more people out on the water. Finally, the project will leverage our existing facilities and operations to provide economic benefits for Michigan and Manistee. This will become a destination for visitors worldwide."

"Manistee County can rightfully lay claim as the place 'where life meets water,'" said Cyndy Fuller, Executive Director of the Alliance for Economic Success. "This is a great example of how we can work collaboratively with partners to realize the full potential of the place we occupy. We could not be more pleased to have had a hand in developing and supporting this proposal in partnership with the DNR's Fisheries Division. We look forward to seeking additional resources to continue to support development of the site in a mutually acceptable way, including providing universal access for anglers, canoers and kayakers to enjoy the Little Manistee. Our thanks to the Land Trust and DNR Fisheries Division for investing in a project that will positively impact our quality of life and economic well-being."

About the Project

The development of the Little Manistee Fisheries and Stewardship Center encompasses four phases:

1.1. Upgrades to Weir and Egg Taking Operations (*Continued on page 4.*)

The DNR has allocated about \$130,000 in funding to make many of the improvements in the weir and egg taking facilities that were identified in their 2010 report: "Status and Recommended Updates - Little Manistee Weir."

The improvements involve the weir and egg taking operation, including the concrete raceways, ponds, buildings, facility appearance, power systems and other components.

1.2. Development of Center for Fisheries and Stewardship

This phase includes the most significant, visible and needed components to support public use of the site that will be accomplished with the \$300,000 grant, including:

Interpretive and Educational Trail featuring universal design and access that will take visitors in and around the weir and egg taking operations with displays and signage, including auditory features to support both guided and self-guided visitation.

A Viewing Platform, made of environmentally-friendly, durable materials will be built immediately below the weir for visitors to view the large runs of migrating salmon and trout. The platform and trail to the platform will feature universal design and access.

Displays and signage will enable visitors to learn about the migration of salmon and trout species.

A restroom facility that accommodates all ADA requirements and features universal design will be built in close proximity to the parking, trail and viewing areas.

1.3. Build Out -Center for Fisheries and Stewardship

The Alliance for Economic Success will partner with the DNR in seeking sources of public and private funds to complete site development that is intended to include:

- An interpretive/educational gazebo
- Universally accessible canoe/kayak launching facilities
- Universally accessible pathways upstream and downstream to support education and various forms of recreation, including sport angling
- Paved, uniform parking, including designated spaces for handicapper parking and space for bus loading and unloading
- A below ground viewing chamber to provide a unique and exceptional opportunity for viewing the salmon and trout migration
- Signage to help visitors find the site

For information on the *Alliance for Economic Success* please turn to page 6.

COUNCIL NEWS

Your trustees, in particular **Armas Soorus**, are in the process of completing a “Working Plan” which details the focus of the Council’s efforts. Topics range from a list of on-going and stream-side projects to be targeted, a marketing strategy, identification of funding sources, and ideas for increasing and energizing membership. It also includes a summary of the Council’s annual efforts to monitor the health of the watershed. The plan will be available on the LMWCC website.

Tom Bastion and **Joyce Durdell** with volunteers conducted the annual Macro-invertebrate Assessment (Bug Survey) on Thursday May 16. Results will be published in the Fall/Winter newsletter.

Tom Bastion will conduct the Water Quality survey on Monday the 8th of July. Anyone interested in assisting should meet at the Irons Café at 8 AM.

There will be a work project on May 25th to reinforce the structures completed last summer at Indian Bridge. This will entail adding trees to help collect sediment behind the installed wing dams. Contact **Todd McClain** 616-706-1442 to volunteer.

The Council is currently evaluating the erosion control work done at Fox Bridge to determine if additional remediation needs to be done. The area in the vicinity of the Carrieville DNR Campground is being assessed for erosion control needs.

Conservation Resource Alliance has completed an erosion and habitat survey of the river from M-37 to 9 mile bridge. The completed survey will be used to identify areas in need of bank stabilization and habitat improvement. The survey in map form with GPS coordinates can be viewed on the **CRA** website. A link can be found at www.LMWCC.org.

The trustees have agreed to examine on a case-by-case basis all members’ requests for DNR permitting assistance for work to be undertaken on private property. This includes a decision on the appropriateness of the Council assuming the costs of permit fees.

The resignation of long-time trustee, **Roger Buckingham**, has left the Council searching for an individual/individuals to assume the leadership of the SWAT program. **The Barefoot Paddlers** organization has volunteered, and their offer is being considered by the Trustees.



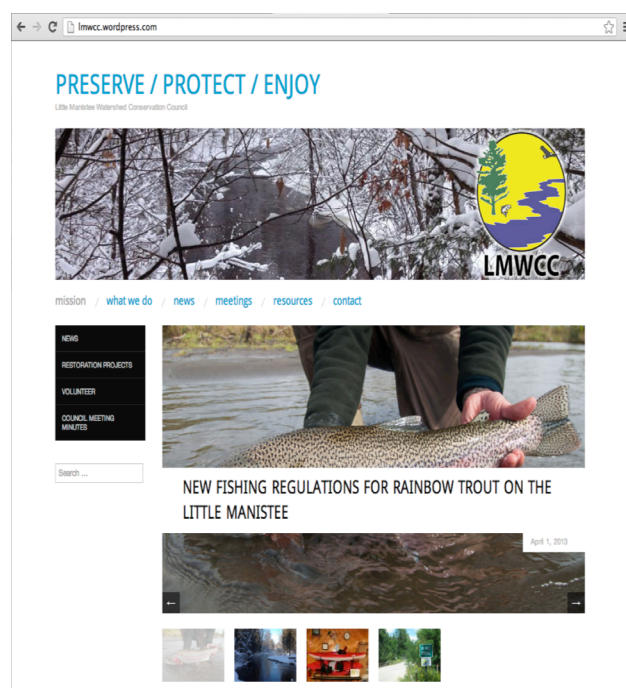
Signs like this as well as hats and T-shirts with the LMWCC logo will be for sale at the annual meeting.

COUNCIL NEWS Continued

Our wonderful website manager, **Anna Jo Rogers** writes: I am happy to announce the Board of Trustees has approved to go ahead with some big changes to the LMWCC.org website. I have been working to update the look and feel of our site, as well as change the web platform the content is managed in. We are moving from the old content management system, Joomla, and updating to a more widely used free platform called Wordpress.

Changes include a new look and feel, easier navigation, more streamlined updates and many more options for future growth, as well as more information available to members and interested conservationists.

If you are a member who has interacted with the old or new website recently and would like to share some thoughts on changes, or if you are familiar with content management and would like to help out as a web manager, I welcome emails for consideration. I am also always looking for great photos of all things LMWCC to showcase. Thank you!



A screen shot of the up-dated website:
www.LMWCC.org Check it Out!

The Alliance for Economic Success

The Alliance for Economic Success (AES) is an economic development organization servicing Manistee County and the surrounding areas. It defines economic development as *improving the economic well-being and quality of life of businesses and employees in the community.*

NEWS AROUND THE GREAT LAKES

WEIR DATA

The weir was put into operation on April 1st, and the pumps were turned off on the 29th. On April 13th a power failure shut down the pumps for two days, and as a result 211 steelhead were lost in the main raceway. Those fish were biosampled by the DNR and then distributed to the Manistee Lions Club and the Community Kitchen in Manistee.

This year 3,369 fish were passed upstream after 4,186, 893 eggs were harvested. This was the latest date that eggs have been taken at the weir facility following 2012 which marked the earliest such date. Last year 4,818 fish were passed through the weir, and the average number of spring steelhead processed at the weir is 4,496.

LAKE LEVELS

As of April 25, Lake Michigan had risen 9 inches but still remains seven inches below its level of last year. In November of 2012 the lake level reached an all-time record low for November just an inch above its historic low set in 1964.

Each one inch change in Lake Michigan's level is the equivalent of 390 billion gallons of water.

U.S. CANADIAN ACCORD

In September the governments of Canada and the U.S. signed an agreement to curb pollutants and limit the infestation of invasive aquatic species in the Great Lakes. The accord sets goals to address

the Asian carp threat, curb phosphorus run-off, and cut toxic chemical pollution.

THE BADGER

An amendment to the U.S. Coast Guard funding budget that would have prevented the EPA from forcing the car ferry to clean up its discharges was stripped from that bill late last year. The amendment supported by Republican representatives Bill Huizenga and Dan Benishek of Michigan and Tom Petri of Wisconsin would have allowed the ship to continue polluting the lake indefinitely.

Each year the ferry discharges 509 tons of coal ash — waste concentrated with arsenic, lead, mercury, and other toxins — into Lake Michigan. The amount far exceeds the 89 tons of coal, limestone, and iron waste discharged into the lake each year by all Great Lakes freighters combined. In 2008 the Badger's owners agreed with the EPA to remedy the pollution problem by 2012. Last summer they asked for a five year extension. Without an EPA water permit, the car ferry will not be able to operate this summer.

NATURAL GAS

The Energy Information Administration identified a major shale gas play (formation) under most of the land mass of the lower peninsula of the state of Michigan.

The trustees thought it would be helpful for members to know all the council does and who is responsible for making sure it gets done.

Tasks requiring completion by Trustees and Members of LMWCC

TASK	WHEN TO BE DONE	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE
Volunteers	N/A	Todd McClain
SWAT Team	N/A	Pending selection
Project Manager/Asst	Monthly Updates	Tim Phillips/Armas Soorus
Legal	As Needed	Gordon Lewis
Meeting Agenda	Monthly	President
Meeting Minutes/Annual Report	Monthly	Evelyn Furman
Treasure Report	Monthly/Annually	Dan Sernick
LMWCC Joint Partnership	3 per Year	President
Bug Survey	Annual-May	Tom Bastion
H2O Quality	Annual-July	Tom Bastion
Membership List/Annual Dues	Annual- by May	Greg Block
Newsletter/Mail Newsletter	Semi –Annual Fall/Spring	David Spruance/Jim Squier
Website Manager	As Needed	Anna Jo Rogers
Educational Services	As Needed/School Year	Evelyn Furman
River Stewardship	Annual Review/Update by July	Gordon Lewis
Annual Membership Solicit	Jan	Jim Squier/Gordon Lewis
Grant Writer	As Required	Gene Means
Marketing Plan	Annually – Feb	Armas Soorus/ Dan Sernick
Annual Meeting -Scheduling/Room		
Reservation/Picnic	Jan/Feb review monthly until July	Trustees
Agenda-Speaker/s	Mar	President/Trustees
Raffle Ticket Oversight	Feb & Annual Meeting	Jim Squier/ John Gorys
Prize ID/Acquisition	Trustees by April/June	Trustees

YOUR TRUSTEES

Tim Phillips	President
Jim Squier	Vice president
Evelyn Furman	Recording secretary
Dan Sernick	Treasurer
Greg Block	Membership
Armas Soorus	Marketing
Gordon Lewis	River stewards
David Spruance	Newsletter
John Gorys	Emeritus
Kaye McDonald	Emeritus
Dave Gendler	

MISSION STATEMENT

Is to bring together persons and organizations who have an interest in the resource conservation and restoration of the Little Manistee River and its watershed. Our goals are to restore, protect, and preserve the natural character of the watershed by communicating resource problems and then offering and implementing problem resolution. We are a state chartered non-profit, tax-exempt organization. All contributions are tax deductible under §501{3} of the IRS code. Our business is conducted by a council of trustees elected by the membership. All positions are voluntary, non-compensated.

OTHER COMMITTEE**CHAIRS**

Tom Bastion	Water Quality
Todd McClain	Volunteers
Gene Means	Grants
Anna Jo Rogers	Web Master

Hope to see everyone at Skinner Park on July 6 at 10 AM for an informative members' meeting raffle drawing, bucket raffle, and lunch provided courtesy of members of the Indian Club.

Little Manistee Watershed Conservation Council
P.O. Box 52
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