



LITTLE RIVER NEWS

SPRING/SUMMER 2014

MEMBERS: MARK YOUR CALENDARS — THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD ON JULY 12TH AT 10 AM IN SKINNER PARK IN IRONS.



FIRST PRIZE IN THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL MEETING RAFFLE

See full story on the annual meeting on page #2.

ANNUAL MEETING, JULY 12TH

This year's annual meeting, the Council's 18th, will be held at 10 AM at Skinner Park in Irons. As always the trustees will present a "State-of the Council" with each trustee discussing his or her area of responsibility. Our speaker will be Kristen Thomas, an aquatic biologist from Trout Unlimited. This summer Kristen and her TU interns are conducting a habitat survey of the river from King's Highway down to the weir. They will also be shocking to document fish populations at two designated sites along the river. Kristen can be expected to discuss her methodology in determining viable fish habitat, and this data will enable the Council to focus its resources most effectively in maintaining the river as a high quality fishery.

Following the business part of the meeting, a raffle and silent auction will be held. The grand prize in this year's raffle is an antique sixteen foot long cedar strip canoe hand-crafted in Canada by Huron Indians. (See previous page and below). Second prize is a kayak package, and third is a day of guided fishing courtesy of Schmidt Outfitters in Wellston. Among the prizes in the silent auction will be a selection from Wolverine Worldwide and a hand made portable, oak fly tying box.

Lunch will be provided by members of the Indian Club. Plan to attend. Say hello to old neighbors. Meet new ones. Take the opportunity to thank your trustees and other volunteers who work tirelessly to preserve our wonderful resource. Volunteer!



APRIL HIGH WATER BREACHES THE WEIR

The high water levels in April, caused by heavy snow melt and subsequent rains and run-off made for some tense moments at the weir during the steelhead egg-taking operation. The following is from DNR fisheries biologist, Mark Tonello: “Last week we had record high water levels at the weir. It overtopped the weir and a lot of water was running through the concrete overflow channel to the north of the weir. Eventually, the high flows breached the earthen berm between the weir structure and the overflow channel. For several days, it was just a small flow, but by Sunday evening it pretty much blew out. The majority of the flow of the river was then going through the breach, with very little water going over the weir. One issue with this was the potential for

water levels dropping to where our pumps could no longer pump water through the weir facility. That put all of the fish in the weir at risk. Therefore, we did our entire egg take (approximately 900 pairs) on Monday. We started at 8:30am and the last truckload of eggs left at 1:30am that night. The egg take was successful, and on Tuesday we were able to clear out the rest of the fish from the ponds and lift the weir grates. We handled a total of 2,767 steelhead and 5 coho salmon this spring. Of course those numbers do not reflect the true size of the run, as many fish were seen going over and then around the weir.

As of Tuesday morning, Elmer’s Construction from TC was in there working with heavy equipment to repair the breach with rock, giant sandbags, and steel sheetpile.”



Photo courtesy Jim Squier

COUNCIL NEWS AND NEWS FROM THE LAKES

The Council with assistance from **CRA** has identified a site below the weir for a fish habitat project to be co-sponsored by the Little Manistee Land Owners Association. At the annual meeting in 2012, Howard Vaas, representing the landowner organization, asked the council to match funds — \$1750 — for a habitat improvement project. The trustees, at a subsequent board meeting, approved funds up to \$5000.00, and pending permit approval, work will begin this summer.

Luther Dam has begun leaking. Photographs have been sent to Michigan DEQ. Notice crack in center



of photo.

At its April meeting, the board of trustees voted to have **The Council** join the **American River Association**, and in May it was agreed to become a member of **Conservation Resource Alliance**.

LMWCC needs donated items for the silent auction and bucket raffle at this year's annual meeting. We are interested in rustic and outdoor oriented furnishings and decorations, and outdoor sporting equipment, particularly fly fishing gear, but hunting and water sports equipment would also be welcomed. If you have items you are willing to donate, please contact Vice President of the Council, Jim Squier at 989-274-4187. All donated items are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

The Council is always in need of volunteers to serve as trustees. Specifically we need someone to serve as Membership Coordinator and someone to head the SWAT program. Trustees meet on the first Saturday of each month excepting January, and we encourage each of you to get involved.

COUNCIL CALENDAR

MAY 10-15 Aquatic macroinvertebrate study

JULY 7 Water quality survey

JULY 12 ANNUAL MEETING

JULY 15 – 24 USF&WS lampricide treatment

SUMMER 2014 TU survey, on-going

COUNCIL NEWS continued from page #4

THE COUNCIL would like to thank the Jorgensen family foundation for its most generous gift of \$10,000.00 to assist in our on-going efforts to preserve and protect the Little Manistee River.

NATE WINKLER of CRA has recently completed an erosion survey of the river. Coupled with the TU survey to be done this summer, the Council will have a comprehensive base-line profile of the river to serve as a guideline for directing and evaluating our efforts moving forward.

ASIAN CARP — The federal government will spend \$51.5 million this year in their efforts to prevent the encroachment of carp into the Great Lakes. Plans include increased trapping and field-testing pheromones designed to lure carp to traps. Also surveillance of the electronic barriers below Chicago will be stepped up. While carp DNA has been detected around the Great Lakes, it has been ten years since an actual adult fish was found in the warm, shallow waters of Lake Erie. This year's expenditure will bring the federal government's investment in meeting this on-going challenge to 156.5 million dollars in the last three years.

WEIR ACTIVITY — See page three for specifics on the high water event. The 2,767 steelhead processed this spring cannot include fish that eluded capture due to the spate. Last year 3,367 steelhead were processed, and the annual average is 4,918 per year.

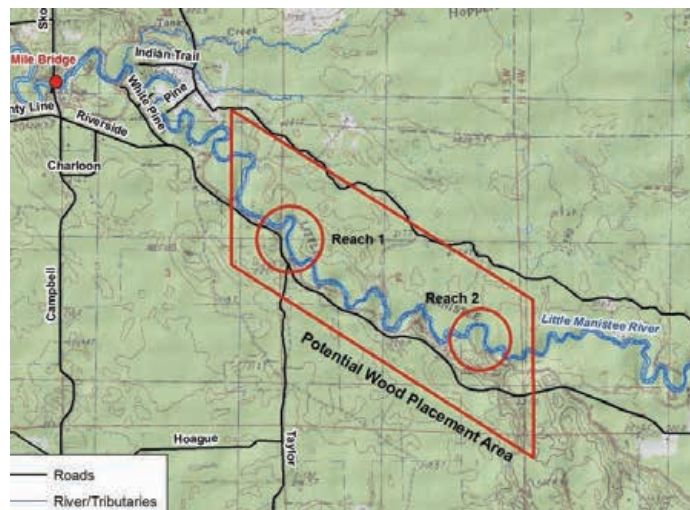
The Manistee Alliance for Economic Success has announced that construction of the new visitor center will begin this summer. Plans include: an improved parking area, up-graded restrooms, and the installation of a 20x60 foot observation platform below the weir, enabling visitors to watch the activities of the salmon and steelhead staging for their up-stream runs.

WET-LANDS — The eight-state Great Lakes region - extending from western New York to eastern Minnesota - was the only section of the U.S. where coastal wetland acreage increased during a five-year period when scientists took extensive measurements with satellites and field photography.

LAKE MICHIGAN — As of April 15, the water levels in Lake Michigan/ Huron were thirteen inches higher than at the same time last year.

CRA PROJECT TO GET UNDERWAY THIS SUMMER

In May of 2013 **Conservation Resource Alliance** was awarded a \$65000.00 grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to complete a channel restoration project on the Little Manistee River. In December of that year the trustees agreed to supplement that with funding of up to \$15000.00. Having completed a survey of the river **Nate Winkler** of CRA has identified a site above 9 Mile Bridge for the project. In February of this year, Nate requested a grant of \$25000.00

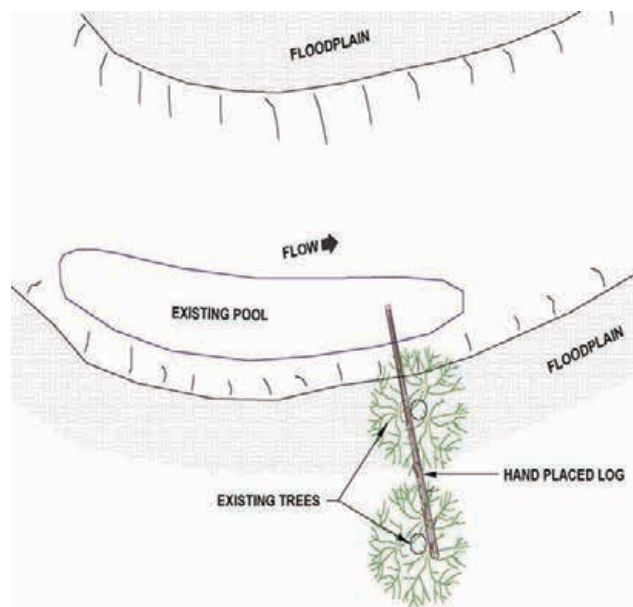


The project site above 9 Mile

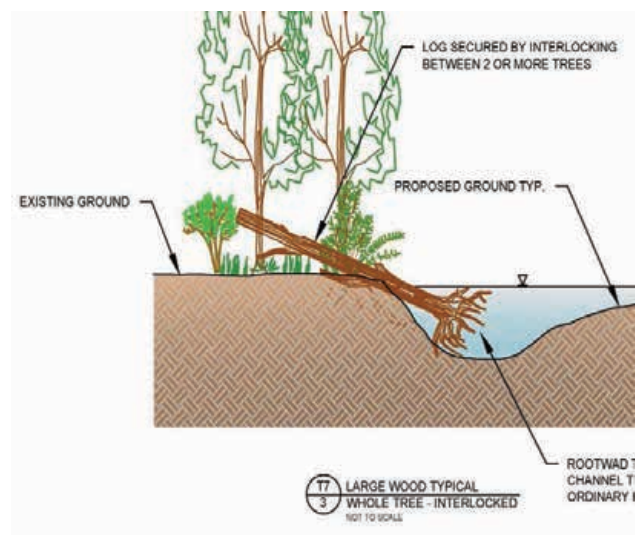
from the Michigan DNR, but that grant request was denied. Work is to begin this summer pending completion of the permitting process. The project will consist of the placement of wood, whole trees as well as constructed wood logjams, along the river banks to narrow, deepen, and increase the velocity of the river's flow. This will facilitate the transport of sand and other sediment from the rather broad and flat project area, In turn improving water quality as well as fish habitat. Following is a brief summary of the nature of the work to be completed as described by CRA in conjunction with Inter-Fleuve.

Whole trees will be placed in-channel with the intent of allowing the river to distribute, assemble, and configure them. Trees distributed by the river will lodge in areas to create habitat that cannot be reached with heavy equipment or hand crews, extending the treatment area and emulating natural processes. Although they will be unballasted and mobile, trees are anticipated to lodge at the downstream end of meander bends and within shallow sections of the channel. For the Little Manistee River logs with a length of 30 feet will be used which is slightly longer than half the bankfull width of the river. Whole tree additions should have lengths of 30 feet to minimize risk of transport to downstream infrastructure, and root wads with diameters between 5 and 6 feet will prevent transport during base flows but will not be so large that they occlude channel flow.

Continued on page #7



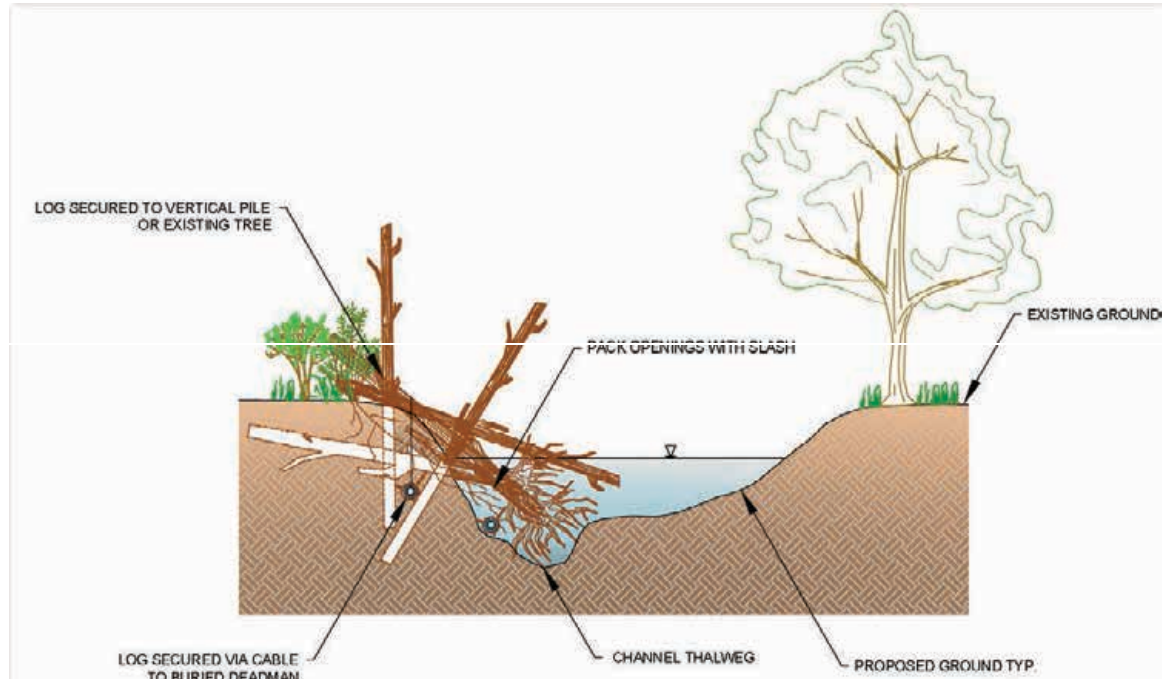
Example of a tree wedged between two existing trees on the floodplain. The force exerted on the log due to the river flow should keep the log pinned in place.



Cross section of the tree in the above illustration.

In addition to the whole tree additions and selective tree drops, we plan to construct engineered log jams (ELJ). These features are desirable as they have the potential to induce the greatest amount of scour, create more complexity, and accumulate more debris to create larger jams.

Vertical log piles will be driven into the stream bed or bank. The log piles, however, will simply be driven in such a way as to impede lateral downstream movement by forcing other logs to become wedged between the vertical pieces.



Typical log jam configuration

Because The Little Manistee River has the habitat to produce large numbers of wild resident trout, steelhead, and salmon, the DNR has recommended focusing management efforts on protecting and improving habitat. Part of those fish habitat improvement efforts include maintaining woody debris in the channel to provide overhead cover, physical habitat partitioning, and habitat complexity, especially in more homogeneous sand bed reaches such as dominate the designated project site. This project seeks to further supplement the existing woody debris in the river to the benefit of multiple age classes of game and forage fish, macro-invertebrates and primary producers, as well as to provide basking logs for various turtle species found in the watershed.

The project reach runs through a checkerboard of ownership including private and federal lands and falls within the boundaries of the Manistee National Forest. Ownership on the north side of the river is primarily that of the U.S. Forest Service. Private homes and cabins are scattered atop bluffs on the south side. The majority of the streamside bluffs appear stable. The river was found to be meandering into only a couple of bluffs where no homes were located. The extreme downstream end of the reach just above the 9 Mile Bridge also has a number of residences on both sides of the channel.

YOUR TRUSTEES

Tim Phillips	President
Jim Squier	Vice president
Evelyn Furman	Recording secretary
Dan Sernick	Treasurer
Joyce Durdell	Water Quality
Armas Soorus	Marketing
Gordon Lewis	River stewards
David Spruance	Newsletter
John Gorys	Emeritus
Kaye McDonald	Emeritus

OTHER COMMITTEE**CHAIRS**

Gene Means	Grants
Anna Jo Rogers	Web Master

Check out our new-look, up-dated, and informative web site: www.lmwcc.org. Many thanks to our wonderful web master, Anna Jo Rogers for her efforts on our behalf.

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.

Hope to see everyone at Skinner Park in Irons on July 12 at 10 AM for what should be an informative members' meeting followed by a raffle drawing, silent auction, and bucket raffle. Lunch will be provided courtesy of members of the Indian Club.



Little Manistee Watershed Conservation Council
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