

LITTLE RIVER NEWS

FALL/WINTER 2013

***MAY THE BEAUTIES OF THE SEASON FLOW IN YOU
AND AROUND YOU THROUGHOUT THE COMING YEAR***



THE YEAR IN REVIEW

2012 was a productive year for your council, as we explore new and more sophisticated means of caring for and protecting the resource we all value. As announced at the annual meeting in July, Conservation Resource Alliance has been awarded a grant of \$65,000 by the USFWS to undertake a channel restoration project on The Little Manistee. CRA has completed a survey of the river to identify the most appropriate site for this work. In addition your trustees have approved

funding for a fish habitat survey from King's Highway to the weir to be completed by a team from Michigan Trout Unlimited. Part of this survey will include an appraisal of fish populations at two locations. The data collected from both of these studies will provide us with valuable information to assist in determining what, where, and how our efforts and resources should be focused. Knowing the relationship between available habitat and

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population, coupled with the data collected in our annual macro invertebrate study will ensure our ability to maintain a healthy wild fish population in an environment increasingly conducive to its sustainability.

The work at Indian Bridge was completed this fall. Unfortunately a lack of volunteers in August necessitated that we hire a contractor for the final phase. As has been stated so often in these pages and at our annual meetings, volunteers are the life-blood of our organization, and without them we tap financial resources that could be applied in other areas of the river.

This spring maintenance work will be undertaken at the Syers Creek site. We are awaiting permits from the DNR.

Council member and past president, Dave McIntire has informed the board that the EPA has selected The Little Manistee River as part of its National Rivers and Streams Assessment program, and surveys are to be conducted every five years. A 400 meter stretch was sampled for water chemistry and electro-shocked for fish collection. (See pictures below).

The annual meeting in July was well attended; ninety-five members were present as opposed to seventy-seven at last year's meeting, and \$3812 was raised compared to \$2949 last year. We would like to thank O'Keefe's Reef in Irons; Dublin Store, Wolverine Worldwide; Jay's Sporting Goods in Clare; Nomad Anglers; Dave Bilecki of Grand Rapids and Schmidt Outfitters in Wellston for their donations to the annual meeting this past July as well as members who made contributions to the Silent Auction and Bucket Raffle.

The financial situation of the Council remains solid. The trustees are already planning for the next annual meeting scheduled for July 12, 2014. The first prize in next year's raffle will be an antique cedar strip canoe hand crafted by members of the Huron tribe in Canada.

We continue to monitor the progress of projects undertaken by private landowners and will assist members who ask with the permitting process for work to be done on their property.



Water Quality Survey — July 8, 2013

COLLECTION SITE	E.COLI	pH	AMMONIA	NITRATE	PHOSPHORUS	DISSOLVED O2	CHLORIDE	NITRITE
Luther Dam	156.5	8.1	<0.05	<1	0.202	7.8	6	<0.05
LM above Fairbanks Cr.	248.1	8.1	<0.05	<1	0.027	7.8	<5	<0.05
Fairbanks Cr. below M-63								
LM above Twin Cr.								
Twin Creek								
LM above Syers Cr.	178.2	8	<0.05	<1	0.15	7.7	8	<0.05
Syers Cr.								
@Spencer Bridge	201.4	8	<0.05	<1	0.069	7.6	8	<0.05
@Johnson Bridge	121.1	8	<0.05	<1	0.043	7.8	6	<0.05
@DeWitt's Bridge								
@Poggensee Bridge	461.1	8	<0.05	<1	0.02	7.7	6	<0.05
LM above Cool Cr.	160.7	8	<0.05	<1	0.036	7.8	6	<0.05
Cool Cr. above Stronach								
Stronach Cr. above CoolCr.								
Cool Cr. @Cool Lake								
Cool Cr. @ 12 Mile								
Cool Cr. @ Hamilton Rd.	285.1	8.1	<0.05	<1	0.02	7.6	<5	<0.05
@ 9 Mile Bridge	1119.9	8.1	<0.05	<1	0.038	7.8	7	<0.05
@ 6 Mile Bridge	816.4	8.1	<0.05	<1	0.074	7.7	6	<0.05
@ DNR Weir	727	8.1	<0.05	<1	0	7.7	5	<0.05
@ Stronach Rd.	579.4	8.1	<0.05	<1	0.049	7.8	5	<0.05

As is evident from the chart above, the *e.coli* numbers from 9 Mile Bridge down to Stronach Road are excessively high. A later sampling done on the 7th of August found those readings considerably lower and consistent with historical numbers. Also the dissolved oxygen content in the water on the July sampling date were low, but later testing in August found those to be higher and more in keeping with historical averages. There is a direct correlation between dissolved oxygen in the water and air temperature, and as July 8 was a cool day, it was expected those readings would have been higher. The other numbers indicate a very healthy river. A discussion of the chemical compounds in water and their effect on the health of a stream can be found on the Council web site.

On the following page are the results of the annual macro invertebrate survey.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR — 17TH ANNUAL
MEETING OF LMWCC MEMBERSHIP**

JULY 12TH, 2014 AT 10 AM

SKINNER PARK, IRONS MICHIGAN

LUNCH TO FOLLOW THE BUSINESS MEETING

Macro Invertebrate Survey Results

COLLECTION SITE	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	AVERAGE
Below Queen's Hwy.	44.9	35	36.9	36.4	27.1	36.1	42	37
Old Grade Campground	48.6		35.4		34.6	55.6	54	45.6
Johnson Bridge	19.5	30.5	31.9	36.8		33.2	45	32.9
DeWitt's Bridge	23.7	35.1	28.4	30.3	36.2	33.5	43	32.9
Poggensee Bridge		33		27.9	50.5	22.9	36	34
Cool Creek	47.2	22.5	32.1			47.8	22	34.3
Bear Track Campground	25.2	18	23	27.7	26.8	37.5	46	29.1
9 Mile Bridge	35	5	35.8	39.1	46	26.1	43	33.3
Bowman's (Cross Hole)	45	24.5	30.8	26	46.8	31.7	28	34.7
Average/Year/Site	36.1	24.5	31.8	32	38.3	34.8	39.9	34.7

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN:

EXCELLENT >48
GOOD 34 – 47
FAIR 19 – 33
POOR <19



Collection team at work



Collection tray

PHOTOS FROM ANNUAL MEETING — JULY 6, 2013



First prize in the raffle



Bucket raffle items



Some of those in attendance



President Tim Phillips addresses the group



Guest speaker, Amy Byers of CRA



Nate Winkler, CRA biologist

IN THE NEWS

ITEMS FROM IN AND AROUND THE GREAT LAKES

The Council Trustees have agreed to match the funds donated by the **Little Manistee River Association** to install a fish habitat island structure(s) below the weir. At the annual meeting in 2011, Howard Vass, President of the association, presented Tim Phillips a check for \$1750 asking that the funds be matched by the LMWCC and used for habitat restoration. The money was placed in the **Howard Roberts Memorial Fund** awaiting the selection of an appropriate site for the project. The Council is now working with **CRA**, following the completion of their river survey, to make that determination.

Owners of the **Badger**, the last coal-powered steam ferry on the Great Lakes are being forced by federal officials to reduce the discharge of mercury-laden coal ash into Lake Michigan. Under terms of the settlement, the ship will be required for the 2014 season to burn coal that produces less ash and contains half the mercury of the fuel currently being used. Failure to end ash dumping completely by the end of 2014 will result in fines of \$6000 a day. The owners of the car ferry negotiated a deal with the EPA in 2008, but the ship has continued dumping 509 tons of coal ash into Lake Michigan each sailing season since then.

In September the U. S. and Canada signed an agreement to protect the Great Lakes by agreeing to curb phosphorus run-off and cut other toxic chemical pollution. They also agreed to set goals for the containment of aquatic invasive species such as Asian carp.

While **water levels** in the Great Lakes have rebounded this year — 20 inch increase from April through August. Lake Michigan rose 9 inches in the month of April alone, but levels in Lake Michigan-Huron remain 18 inches below their long-term averages. It is expected that by the end of the year Lake Superior's water level will reach its historical level for the first time in a decade, and the water level of Lake Michigan-Huron is 13 inches higher than a year ago.

In July the Pere Marquette Watershed Council held their annual fund-raising banquet. It was attended by over 100 members and guests and raised nearly \$5500. In comparison **the LMWCC annual meeting** on the sixth of July was attended by 95 members and raised \$3800. Not bad for the Little River!

Kristin Thomas, the Trout Unlimited aquatic ecologist who will conduct the habitat and population survey of the river from King's Highway to the weir next year has agreed to speak at the annual meeting on the 12th of July, 2014. Kristin will inform the membership of the status of her work as well as the preliminary findings gathered by her team.

LMWCC T-SHIRTS and HATS are available at discounted prices: \$15 for shirts, \$12 for each hat. These hats were on display at the annual meeting in July. For those who are interested in purchasing a hat or t-shirt contact the Council at the email address posted on the web site.

**Little Manistee River Weir
Trout and Salmon Counted Spring and Fall
Historical Data 1968-2013**

Year	Spring Steelhead	Chinook	Coho	Fall Steelhead	Fall Brown Trout
1968	1,640	11,230	60,248	1,322	28
1969	996	26,288	25,186	3,043	36
1970	1,405	34,190	108,400	7,411	123
1971	5,031	21,213	59,123	7,622	69
1972	7,403	24,994	2,314	3,561	5
1973	6,588	16,476	11,872	1,926	48
1974	3,684	24,156	6,129	3,488	161
1975	7,183	29,228	15,863	6,121	238
1976	1,874	16,159	24,505	578	106
1977	10,480	11,136	25,255	2,031	98
1978	7,240	20,230	23,696	320	51
1979	3,540	22,925	27,925	640	100
1980	4,505	15,761	50,004	1,111	28
1981	6,307	11,811	14,656	849	101
1982	4,100	14,358	18,458	347	62
1983	5,091	39,359	26,968	3,100	43
1984	7,950	32,632	33,982	1,909	141
1985	6,517	34,006	15,256	6,356	177
1986	7,036	22,131	16,724	4,720	99
1987	6,315	31,841	15,101	1,450	48
1988	8,432	12,519	4,467	1,050	27
1989	5,102	18,338	14,023	1,130	29
1990	4,411	19,499	10,030	1,521	55
1991	6,109	21,067	12,300	3,666	113
1992	4,597	15,866	13,441	3,054	104
1993	6,156	12,911	18,096	1,702	118
1994	4,411	11,886	562	2,849	126
1995	3,553	13,004	394	351	31
1996	9,057	17,090	2,572	5,249	174
1997	7,096	15,433	781	915	123
1998	4,005	7,170	1,463	888	28
1999	4,484	18,621	519	662	39

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2001	7,029	18,279	911	2,262	59
2002	6,290	19,385	538	120	38
2003	3,209	14,419	616	1,404	43
2004	2,571	15,618	1,102	1,074	60
2005	3,483	11,075	2,100	665	53
2006	2,949	12,772	238	417	56
2007	2,880	10,946	303	738	50
2008	3,441	5,169	172	406	58
2009	4,191	8,274	126	343	86
2010	1,961	5,776	203	91	32
2011	3,196	14,124	1,815	901	40
2012	4,818	12,327	1,333	283	103
2013	3,667	6,427	1,021	988	80
TOTAL	226,219	811,148	671,391	90,953	3,561
Average	4,918	17,634	14,595	1,977	77

A statement from the DNR about the operations of the weir:

Our Chinook salmon target has ranged between 5 and 7 million eggs in the last few years. Chinook salmon have been averaging about 4,000 eggs/female over the last few years, so that would be roughly 1,250 pairs that we spawned to get our eggs. Ten years ago when the salmon were larger, we could get 5,000 eggs/female, but that number has dropped as the size of the fish has dropped in the last decade.

For steelhead, the target is usually right around 4 million eggs. The steelhead in recent years have averaged about 4200 eggs/female, so we're spawning between 900 and 1000 pairs to get enough eggs.

Spring Steelhead

The weir is normally put in place sometime during the first two weeks of March, depending on weather. The weir remains in place until the quota of steelhead eggs is reached. This usually occurs by the middle of April, but may run later depending on weather. While the weir is in place, all fish passage is blocked. During egg-take operations, unripe "green" steelhead are usually counted and passed upstream, to sustain the "wild" Little Manistee River steelhead run. Once the quota of eggs is reached, the weir grates are removed, allowing steelhead to jump the dam and proceed upstream.

Fall Salmon

The weir is usually put in place on, or about August 15th, and removed on, or about November 15th. While the weir is in place, all fish passage is blocked. Chinook salmon eggs are taken usually during the first two weeks of October. All steelhead and brown trout that show up at the weir during the fall are counted and passed upstream.

LMWCC STRATEGIC PLAN (GOALS) FOR 2014

ANNUAL EVENTS:

- **Bug Survey** — Joyce Durdel and team
- **Water Quality Survey** — Joyce Durdel and team
- **Private projects:** Continue monitoring and assisting owners with the permitting process.
- **Membership:** Pursue the mass mailings to riparian owners begun last year — Gordon Lewis
- **Annual Meeting:** Scheduled for 10 AM, July 12 at Skinner Park, Irons.
 - Secure necessary permits, print raffle tickets, etc.
 - Procure raffle prizes and solicit donations for the auction.
 - Kristin Thomas, TU biologist, has agreed to speak
- **Salmon-in-the-Classroom:** LMWCC will continue supporting the program in the KND elementary school, and assist in finding a new teacher for the program — Evelyn Furman
- **Newsletter:** To be published and distributed twice a year — June/December — David Spruance
- **SWAT** — Tony Lang heads the SWAT group.
- **Fundraising:** Continue to explore fundraising options
 - LMWCC signs and hats and T-shirts to be sold at the annual meeting.
 - Determine possibilities for sources for funds to match CRA's \$65,000 grant from U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Identify organizations as potential underwriters for projects.
- **Web Site:** Make sure that all significant information for members and outside parties is available on the Council's web site — Anna Rogers

2014 EVENTS:

- Identify location for the “Howard Vass” project; apply for necessary permits; use matching funds (\$1750) for completion of the project.
- Complete the follow-up maintenance work on Syers Creek.
- Review work completed at Fox Bridge to determine need for reinforcements.
- Study the river survey completed by CRA to determine sites in need of our attention and efforts.
- Work with CRA in identifying a ½ mile stretch of river in which to implement the Channel Restoration project funded by a \$65,00 grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- TU aquatic ecologist, Kristin Thomas, to conduct a fish habitat and population survey over two years. Funds allocated for the project covering the river from King’s Highway to the Weir.
- Up-date and circulate the “Informational Pamphlet.”
- Develop a strategy for recruiting river-front property owners to join the organization.
- Continue work to develop marketing plan to broaden the public profile of the organization.

Since the Council Trustees completed and adopted the Organizational Overview document in January of 2012, they have been committed to drafting a list of annual goals. This process has helped to guide discussions at monthly board meetings, focus attention on the most pressing needs of preserving and protecting the river, as well as monitor responsible expenditures of existing financial resources. Beginning in this issue, those annual goals will be published for members to see exactly what and how your trustees are doing in their attempts to best serve the needs of the river and to represent your interests as members of the Council. As in all things, the trustees are guided by **The 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.