



# ***LITTLE RIVER NEWS***

FALL/WINTER 2018

**WISHING A JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON TO ALL**

## **WMP NEARS COMPLETION**

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, the consultants at Networks Northwest presented the final draft of the Little Manistee Watershed Management plan at a public meeting to solicit comments from those assembled. This is the culmination of a process that began in the spring of 2015 when the Trustees agreed on the need to establish guidelines for preserving and protecting the unique resource that is the Little Manistee watershed.

Trustees Armas Soorus and Joyce Durdel volunteered to spearhead the process, and their efforts have been Herculean and indefatigable. A steering committee was created, and the first meeting was held

in June of 2015. Since then local public officials, representatives of the MDEQ and DNR, riparian land-owners, and other interested parties have participated in the process. LMWCC established funds with the Manistee County Community Foundation to ensure adequate resources to finance the Plan. The Alliance for Economic Success in Manistee was engaged to represent the fiduciary (**cont. pg. #2**)

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interests of LMWCC. A partnership agreement was circulated and signed by private citizens, public officials and entities, and organizations with an economic interest in the development of the Plan.

The early phases of the process focused primarily on mustering both public and private support for the Plan. Local township officials and county representatives were recruited, and local ordinances and zoning regulations, where they were in place, were examined. Open meetings were held to inform the public of the intent and benefits of creating and ultimately implementing a watershed plan and allay any fears that the purpose of the plan was to impose land use restrictions.

After a diligent and financially responsible search, the steering committee selected Networks Northwest as consultants to draft the Plan. Ed Hoogterp has been the principle writer for Networks Northwest, and Scott Gest has been in charge of compiling the data necessary for a comprehensive document. This includes mapping, identifying the geological structure underlying the watershed, determining historical land use of the area, and creating a survey to solicit input from interested parties. The survey results indicate strong local

support for developing a plan that will protect and preserve the resource, in particular for continued recreational enjoyment. It is clear that LMWCC will serve as the principle steward of the resource and will serve as the primary force for the oversight and implementation of the Plan which can be viewed on the Council's website: [www.lmwcc.org](http://www.lmwcc.org).

**(On page 6 following is a discussion of what each of us as property owners within the watershed can responsibly do to continue protecting the resource we all love).**

Once the final revisions to the Management Plan draft have been made and approved by the Steering Committee and the LMWCC board of Trustees, Networks Northwest will submit the final document to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality for approval which in turn will submit it to The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. That approval process may take up to six months to complete, and then the Little Manistee Watershed Management Plan will take effect and should prove beneficial to the LMWCC in seeking outside funds to continue its work to restore, protect, and preserve our wonderful resource.

While written as a "living document," the Plan will put into place structures that will serve in perpetuity.

## PRESIDENT PHILLIPS' STATE OF THE COUNCIL

This past year we have been very successful in completing our various projects and achieving several goals. Your board of trustees has been very active in pursuing a number of activities which we have discussed at our annual meetings. Membership has increased once again, and it is only through the commitment and strong support of our members that the LMWCC can be effective in preserving, protecting and improving our unique resource - The Little Manistee River.

Our financial status is sound, and in partnership with the Manistee County Community Foundation we have successfully funded the development of our Little Manistee Watershed Management Plan. In developing the plan, two of our board members, Armas Soorus and Joyce Durdel have been the driving force of its coming to fruition. The final product is anticipated to be approved by the board at its December meeting then to be forwarded to MDEQ and U.S. EPA for final governmental acceptance. Once in place, the Plan will provide an outline for future planning as well as support for major funding requests.

This past year we have completed remediation work on all of our severe and moderate erosion sites. We have also completed work on one minor site located on state owned lands. In all, 12 separate sites identified in the



President Tim Phillips

CRA streambank erosion survey of 2014 have been remediated this year. In the last three years we have completed work on all but one privately held property where severe erosion was indicated by our study. This next year we intend to complete work on most, if not all, of the final 10 moderate sites located on privately held lands. The trustees have voted to commission Conservation Resource Alliance to undertake a new streambank erosion study which will update sites where severe and moderate erosion may have developed over the past 5 years.

We have also completed in-stream fish habitat work on 2 sites located in Section III, of the 2015 Trout Unlimited study of areas in need of habitat enhancement. We are looking at two sites, one in Section I and one in Section III, as potential sites for channel restoration projects. As always, our ability to meet annual goals has depended on contributions from several individuals and organizations as well as membership dues and members' participation in our Annual Meeting fund-raising efforts. **(cont. pg. #8)**

## Little Manistee Water Quality Report - July 9, 2018

GLWQL Site ID #	LMMCC Site #	Collection Location	Total Coliform colonies / 100 mL	E. coli colonies / 100 mL	Nitrate mg/L	Nitrite mg/L	Chloride mg/L	Ammonia mg/L	Dissolved Oxygen mg/L	pH in pH units	Phosphorus (T) mg/L	Air Temp. ° F	Water Temp. ° F	Time 24 hr.
		Detection Limits >	0	0	<1	0.05	<10	<0.10	1.00	1.00	0.01			
18070905	1	L.M. Below Luther Dam	>2419.6	201.4	<1.0	<0.05	<10	<0.10	8.7	7.0	0.21	78	57	10:15
18070906	2	L.M. Above Fairbanks Creek	1203.3	133.3	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	8.9	7.4	0.10	75	55	10:27
18070907	6	L.M.@ Hurleys Old M-63	1553.1	98.8	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.5	7.7	<0.05	77	50	10:50
18070908	8	L.M. @ Spencer Bridge	2419.6	99.0	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.4	7.4	<0.05	77	52	11:07
18070909	9	L.M. @ Johnson Bridge	920.8	96.0	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.4	7.4	<0.05	74	58	10:17
18070910	10	L.M. @ Dewits Bridge	1119.9	68.3	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.4	7.4	<0.05	77	59	10:30
18070911	11	L.M. @ Poggensee Bridge	866.4	56.3	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.3	7.1	<0.05	76	60	10:46
18070912	12	L.M. above Cool Creek	1413.6	59.4	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.4	7.4	<0.05	82	61	11:25
18070913	13	Cool Creek @ 18 Mile Bridge	>2419.6	112.6	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	8.6	7.5	<0.05	79	68	11:15
18070914	16	Cool Creek @ Cool Lake	290.6	1.0	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.2	7.5	0.09	76	76	10:00
NIP	18	Cool Creek @ Hamilton Rd.												
18070916	19	L.M. @ 9 Mile Bridge	1203.3	57.6	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.2	7.5	0.08	79	61	11:26
18070917	20	L.M. @ 6 Mile Bridge	1119.9	24.3	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.2	7.5	<0.05	78	61	11:00
18070918	21	L.M. @ DNR Wier	1413.6	37.3	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.4	7.4	0.45	76	60	10:36
18070919	22	L.M. @ Stronach Road	1119.9	78.9	<1.0	NP	NP	<0.10	9.5	7.5	0.08	78	60	10:24
18070920	23	Cool Lake @ Center West Lobe	187.2	<1.0	>1.0	NP	NP	1.97	9.0	7.6	<0.05	76	76	10:00

NOTE: A light rain event occurred approx. 1/2" 4-6 hours prior to this collection. Coliform counts may be increased due to runoff.

NP = Not Performed by Lab > Nitrite omitted on our request; Chloride omitted by lab error

**THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!** T. & S. Phillips, J. & S. Puff, B. & N. Sikkenga, L. Fitz, J. Durdel, L. Trasciatti, D. McKellar

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**MACROINVERTABRATE SURVEYS  
LITTLE MANISTEE RIVER**

LMWCC - May 2007 - October 2018

COLLECTION SITES:	YEAR >	Save Our Streams Volunteer Monitoring Program 2007-2016														MiCorps VSMP - 2016-2018			
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2016	2017	2017	2018	AVG.			
	Day >	5/6	5/23	5/5	5/13	5/7	5/11	5/16	5/31	5/16	5/21	2007-2016	10/22	5/13	10/22	5/20	2016-2018		
Below Queen's Highway		45	35	37	36	27	36	42	36	52	40	39	NS	47	NS	50	49		
Old Grade Campground		49	40	35	36	35	56	54	42	46	44	44	NS	42	NS	35	39		
Indian Bridge	New Site-5/2017												NS	50	37	23	37		
Johnson Bridge		20	31	32	37	NS	33	45	59	51	29	37	NS	30	35	26	36		
Dewitt's Bridge		24	35	28	30	36	34	43	50	43	36	36							
Poggensee Bridge		NS	33	NS	28	51	23	36	22	39	25	32							
Cool Creek above LMR		47	23	32	NS	NS	48	22	35	NS	38	35							
Cool Cr. W of Hamilton Rd.	New Site-10/2016												37	33	36	41	37		
Bear Track Campground		25	18	23	28	27	38	46	43	43	31	32							
9 Mile Bridge (south)		35	5	36	39	46	26	43	42	35	45	35							
Bowman's (Cross Hole)		45	25	31	26	47	32	28	39	NS	NS	34							
6 Mile Bridge NW Access	New Site-5/2015									47	15	31	49	66	23	41	48		
<b>AVERAGE/YEAR/SITE&gt;</b>		<b>36</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>			

STREAM QUALITY SCORE: EXCELLENT= >48; GOOD= 34 - 47; FAIR= 19 - 33; POOR= <19

MiCorps VSMP started 2016 - the selected sites will continue to be monitored using MiCorp Criteria

\*MCD - Refer to Manistee Conservation District's Macroinvertebrate Survey for these sites. (Report posted on lmwcc.org and MCD Annual Report o

NS = not surveyed

## WHAT CAN I DO?

As the consultants at Networks Northwest ready the final draft of the Watershed Management Plan for submission to the MDEQ and USEPA for approval, each of us who owns property in the watershed has a responsibility to lead the way in employing best management practices in our stewardship of the resource. The WMP will specify in great detail what constitutes best management, but as property owners there are many things we can do — and not do — to protect our resource.

Since the ravages of the logging era seriously degraded the river at the heart of the watershed raising water temperatures by eliminating riparian shade, adding tons of sediment that destroyed traditional spawning beds for native fish populations, and scouring the water course into non-historical channels, many factors have helped to bring the river back to life: Natural forces have re-vegetated the corridor. In the 1930's CCC workers created fish habitat structures and re-forested the banks. The LMWCC has been tireless in remediating eroded banks limiting sedimentation of the streambed.

The predominant soils of the watershed are deep, coarse sands left behind by retreating glaciers. These soils are highly permeable to water and drain very quickly. This is positive in that storm run-off is minimal, limiting the introduction of surface pollutants, but sands lack filtering capabilities which

enables contaminants to leach into the groundwater. The biggest potential threat to our groundwater is the preponderance of septic systems throughout the watershed. Poorly maintained systems can leach *e coli* bacteria, among other contaminants, into the groundwater, the major water source of the river, lakes and wetlands of the watershed. Septic systems should be emptied and inspected at a minimum of every ten years. Expanses of lush lawns may look wonderful in suburban areas, but they are incompatible with the natural flora and fauna of the area. The use of fertilizers and pesticides to maintain these unnatural landscapes guarantees the introduction of phosphorus, nitrates and other harmful chemicals into our waters, causing excessive aquatic plant growth. Lowering dissolved oxygen, and raising water temperatures. Proper disposal of paints, motor oil, and other petroleum products is a mandatory component of best management practices. Buried contaminants are a serious threat to the resource.

Maintaining a shaded river corridor is important, particularly in light of the devastation caused by the emerald ash borer and other invasive species. An overhead canopy helps to keep water temperatures from rising to levels harmful to fish and macro-invertebrate species. Check with local forest services or conservation districts and select native species for plantings. Black willow, white birch, black alder, **(cont. pg. 9)**

## LMWCC NEWS AND AROUND THE AREA

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of longtime LMWCC member, Tom Bastion on October 20<sup>th</sup> of this year. Tom's was a quiet presence, yet his love for our river was unmistakable. He assumed responsibility for the Water Quality Survey from John Gorys, and he continued coordinating that program until the demands of caring for his wife, Anne, made him step aside.



He will be missed.

### LAKE MICHIGAN UPDATE

In September the USGS reported that the lake level was one inch higher than it had been the previous year, and water temperatures were down, on average 4 degrees. This follows reports that Lake Michigan levels had reached an all-time historical high this past spring.

### AHGP

LMWCC has once again submitted a proposal to the MDNR for grant money under the Aquatic Habitat Grant Program to use for harvesting dead ash trees between King's Highway and Fox Bridges and using them for constructing fish habitat structures and bank stabilization projects. Last year's request for \$40,000 was rejected. This year LMWCC is seeking \$110,000 for the work. At its meeting on August 4<sup>th</sup>, the board of trustees agreed to commit \$11,000 in matching funds should the grant be awarded.

### AMAZON SMILE

Treasurer Dan Sernick has enrolled LMWCC in Amazon's Smile program. Amazon will donate a percentage of any purchase price to LMWCC for anyone who signs up for the program stipulating LMWCC as beneficiary. With the holiday season upon us, this is a wonderful and passive way to continue your support of LMWCC and its programs.

### TRUSTEES LOOK FORWARD

At the November trustees' meeting, it was agreed that beginning in 2019 the **(cont. pg. 8)**

## LMWCC NEWS CONTINUED

board will create an annual budget detailing not only anticipated expenditures but also anticipated revenues. In the past the board has only predicted expenditures based on an annual business plan which details work projects and projected costs. This will have an impact once the WMP is in place. The board is scheduling a retreat for late January to begin planning for the WMP implementation. Members will be notified of time and place and are encouraged to attend.

### SYERS DAM

The work to remove Syers Dam has been postponed until spring. Permits have been issued, Kanouse Outdoors has been awarded the contract for the removal, and the necessary funds have been secured. LMWCC has contributed \$10,000 for the effort.

Once the weather permits, the de-watering of the back waters will begin.

### NATURAL RIVER

Bryan Bury of the DNR's Natural River program addressed the trustees at their September meeting. (See **page 11** for a detailed discussion of his presentation and its implications for implementing the Watershed Management Plan.

**(President's Message continued from page #3)**

Our SWAT Team has had a busy year clearing trees fallen across the river from Johnsons bridge downstream to 9 Mile bridge. Work to remove the Syers Dam will begin in 2019. The preliminary stages of this project began in 2015. Our annual Water Quality and Macro-invertebrate Studies were completed this past summer, and our Salmon-in-the-Classroom program has recently been expanded to include two different age groups both elementary and middle school in our KND school system.

With the ash tree decimation dead tree removal has been viewed as an ongoing tasking. The board therefore has applied, for a second time, for a major grant from MDNR to convert this type of river obstruction into fish habitat and bank stabilization structures from Kings highway bridge down to Fox Bridge. This year's application is for \$110,000 with LMWCC agreeing to commit \$11,000 as a required matching fund.

And LMWCC is now part of the **Amazon Smile** program. This means that every purchase you make at Amazon will result in a contribution to LMWCC

This is a brief report on what Council has been involved in this past year, but it does not adequately detail the time involved in securing permits and enlisting volunteers, or the man-power hours and the financial resources needed to continue our commitments to **(Continued next page)**



**President's Message (cont.)** protecting and preserving the resource. As you can see most of what the Council does is not just a one-time shot but a year to year on-going effort. Your trustees devote time and energy to make sure the Council's efforts are effective and well-funded. To this end we need everyone's support and assistance in keeping the organization as progressive and vital as it can be. Please feel free to contact any board member or look us up on our web-site [www.lmwcc.org](http://www.lmwcc.org) or on Facebook as well. Get involved you'll like it!!

— Tim Phillips, President LMWCC

**What Can I Do? (cont. from pg. 6)** serviceberry, and various species of spruce, pine, and oak, and northern white cedar are all native to our region. Chokecherries and tag alders are prevalent along the river banks, and in drier elevations sugar and silver maples are found. Not only do trees provide cooling shade to the waters below them, creating cool-water refuges for the fish and other aquatic organisms, their root systems also anchor and stabilize banks, preventing erosion and excess sediment entering the stream.

Maintaining a natural buffer zone along the river's edge is also a highly beneficial practice. Indigenous sedges, reeds, and grasses are important habitat for small mammals, some species of birds, and many types of amphibians and reptiles. Native wildflowers attract birds and butterflies adding animated

variety to streamside vegetation. A buffer zone of at least five feet adds bank stability as well. Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) and cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) both attract, as their names suggest, and are attractive. Many varieties of lilies are indigenous to our area, and most thrive in damp, shaded soils. Species of Joe-Pye-Weed (*Eupatorium sp.*) can be found throughout the river corridor. Check with local conservation districts before planting any species to determine that it is native to our area, and in the spring many area conservation districts offer appropriate plants for sale.

Each autumn trees, grasses, and shrubs lining the river's banks drop their organic material into the stream creating detritus as it decays. This is crucial for maintaining healthy populations of macro-invertebrate species, a critical component of a healthy river's ecosystem. Dead trees, fallen into the river likewise, provide benefits for the river in the form of "woody debris" providing fish habitat and also valuable organic material.

So, if you must cut grass and trim and prune your shrubs and trees be aware of the effects your activities will have on the water at your feet. By all means avoid using fertilizers and pesticides! The more you leave alone, the more natural looking your property will be. And as a speaker at one of our recent annual gatherings stressed: **"Somebody always lives downstream."**  
**Be thoughtful! Be aware!**

## NATURAL RIVER DESIGNATION

At the request of the trustees, Bryan Bury of the DNR's Natural River program discussed, at their September meeting, the structure and requirements of the process in seeking a Natural River designation for the Little Manistee River. The trustees thought that pursuing such a designation would complement the conservation and protections of the river detailed in the Watershed Management Plan. He began by stating that the purpose of the Natural Rivers Act is to "protect river systems with high natural resource values from unwise development," and those protections apply to both public and privately held lands. Since 1972, 16 rivers in the state have been classified Natural Rivers, but none since 2016.

The goals of the act are to:

- 1) promote public health, safety and welfare and prevent economic and ecological damages due to misuse, unwise development, overcrowding and overuse within the natural river district, and to preserve the values of district for the benefit of present and future generations.
- 2) protect, preserve, and enhance the natural river district values for the free-flowing conditions and conserve: aquatic and wildlife resources; ecological, water, floodplain, scenic and aesthetic qualities; boating, historical, and recreational values and uses for the benefit of all.
- 3) provide for residential and other

permitted development that will complement the natural characteristics of the natural river system.

A Natural River designation must be proposed by the DNR, and Bury stated that currently there is no impetus within the agency to make such a proposal for the Little Manistee River. He also stressed that a **Natural River designation does not create a non-developmental zone**. Rather, it puts into place a set of standards, unique to the Little Manistee River, defining "best usage" of the river's corridor within 400 feet of either side of the river's banks. He said the positive aspects of the program are: the establishment of significant authoritative standards governing land use consistent with the objectives of the program. The standards are to exist in perpetuity, and he was insistent that the program has a history of success. The negative aspect of the program is that the DNR does not have the resources for ensuring strict reinforcement of conformity to the land use standards.

The trustees of the LMWCC and a majority of respondents to the survey associated with the Watershed Management Plan are strongly in favor of pursuing a Natural River designation for the Little Manistee. It is seen as a means of reinforcing the protections established by the WMP. We hope to discuss this issue at the annual meeting in July of 2019.

**YOUR TRUSTEES****2018**

Tim Phillips	President
Jim Squier	Vice President
Dan Sernick	Treasurer
Greg Block	
Evelyn Furman	Salmon-in-the-Classroom Emeritus
Dale Downes	Membership
Joyce Durdel	Water Testing & WMP
David Spruance	Secretary Newsletter Grants
Joe Rogers	SWAT
Armas Soorus	WMP
Steve Bishop	
John Gorys	Emeritus
Kaye McDonald	Emeritus
Gordon Lewis	Emeritus

**OTHER NON-TRUSTEE CO-ORDINATORS**

Anna Jo Rogers	Web Site
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**Membership renewal** forms have been sent out to all current and former members. The trustees have voted for the first time in the Council's 20 year history to increase annual dues from \$25 to \$35 for individuals and \$150 for corporate memberships. Please take a moment to renew your annual membership and consider an additional contribution. Remember monies donated to the **Howard Roberts Memorial Fund** are used solely for in-stream improvements and habitat enhancement. And you can now renew at The LMWCC website using Pay Pal. Also please consider what you can do for the Council in non-monetary ways. We always need volunteers to assist with our on-going work.

**OUR MISSION**

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.