



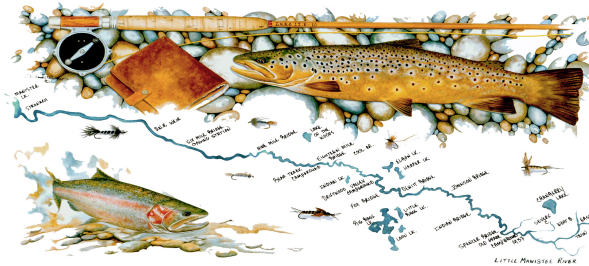
LITTLE RIVER NEWS

SPRING/SUMMER 2025

THIS YEAR’S ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD JULY, 12th AT SKINNER PARK IN IRONS, MICHIGAN. THE MEETING WILL BEGIN AT 10 AM, REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 9:00 AM. MORE INFORMATION INSIDE.

By now all members should have received a “Save the Date” postcard announcing the LMWCC 2025 annual meeting and fund raiser for 2025. It was hard to miss the card with the iconic David Ruimveld color print of the Little Manistee map on the front and the listing of this year’s raffle prizes. The artist has been extremely generous in allowing the Council to use the print as the logo for the 2025 annual meeting, and as an added bonus, a few t-shirts in both ash gray and pale blue with the map on the back, the LMWCC logo on the front and a brown trout running down along the (continued on next page)





“Little Manistee River”- original painting by David Ruimveld - www.davidruimveldstudio.com. All rights reserved

left sleeve will be available for sale at the meeting. There will be a limited number of shirts in both colors in sizes medium, large, and extra large. The cost per shirt is \$45, and due to the lack of wi-fi at Skinner Park, only cash or check can be accepted for all purchases, membership renewals, and donations made at the annual meeting. In addition to the t-shirts offered, the popular bucket raffle will be held. Anyone wanting to make a donation should contact the council at lmwccorg@gmail.com at www.lmwcc.org. Members will receive a letter from the Council closer to the July 12th meeting date and ten tickets for the major raffle prizes. Tickets are \$5 /\$20 for 5. A return envelope for ticket stubs and payment will be provided. This year's prizes are very exciting, and winners do not have to be present to win but will be responsible for pick-up.

- 1.**Two Arkona Fury Sit on Top Kayaks with paddles, PFD's.Value: \$1100. Donated by LMWCC
2. North Rivers Lodge/Gouker Fly Fishing Package for Two:
2 nights lodging & 1-day guided fishing. Value: \$625.
Donated by North Rivers Lodge (Luther, MI) &
Gouker Fly Fishing (Wellston, MI)
3. Iron Fish Distillery VIP Estate Tour for Four. Value \$300
Donated by Iron Fish Distillery (Thompsonville, MI)
- 4.**Traeger Ranger Portable Pellet Smoker. Value \$500.
Donated by CA Carlin
5. Little River Casino & Resort Package for Two:
1 night lodging/\$25 food voucher. Value \$300. Donated by
Little River Casino & Resort (Manistee, MI)
6. Batcke's Manistee River Lodge Package for Two:
1 night lodging & 1-day guided fishing trip (Wellston, MI).
Value: \$685. Donated by Mike and Cattie Batcke
- 7.**Yeti Hopper Two 30 soft sided cooler. Value \$350. Donated
By David and Gayle Spruance

The featured speaker is Zach Peklo, program Coordinator for North Country Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area. He will discuss his findings from a recent survey of the river detailing invasive species and programs available property owners for assistance with eradication. Lunch, as always will be provided by members of the Indian Club. Hope to see you there.

Gayle Spruance Joins LMWCC Board

In February Gayle Spruance joined the LMWCC board of trustees and assumed the position of Membership Coordinator. Her goals are to facilitate maintaining a membership list which can be easily updated, clarifying membership qualifications and renewal procedures, and reaching out to area residents and property owners to increase local participation in the Council.

She began her efforts by removing from the active roster former members who have stopped renewing their memberships for a period of three years and those whose renewal notices have been returned as undeliverable. She is hoping to eliminate the ability to renew memberships at the Annual Meeting as that has proven time-consuming at the meeting and oftentimes has not been recorded and documented accurately.

The LMWCC By-Laws states, “Dues are payable upon becoming a member and **thereafter annually in December.** A member who is in arrears in dues payment for a period of 30 days shall cease to be a member in good standing.” Members are encouraged to renew within 30 days of receiving the renewal notice each December.

Eliminating membership renewal at the Annual Meeting accomplishes two goals: It allows for maintaining a more accurate list which will only have to be updated twice a year as opposed to a continually changing list as renewals straggle in throughout the year. This will ensure all current members in good standing will promptly receive all mailings and notifications from the Council. No longer accepting renewals at the annual meeting will also facilitate registering new members who attend the gathering for the first time.

Gayle not only sent the Save-the-Date postcard to all active members, but 600 riparian owners in the river’s corridor also received the notice in hopes of increasing the Council’s ranks.

In sharing her ideas about membership, Gayle touched upon the need for a web site that was more visually attractive, easier to navigate, and prominently featured ways to join, renew membership, and donate to the organization. After reviewing several western Michigan web design businesses, she proposed to the board the selection of Manistee Web Design and owner Jerry Roberts to upgrade the LMWCC web site. The new site is still found at the original URL, www.lmwcc.org. It is filled with photographs of the river and its watershed; it is easily navigable with all content accessible via the header, and it contains a wealth of information from the history of the organization to results of erosion, habitat, macro-invertebrate, and fish number surveys to annual water quality testing, all archived chronologically for posterity. The web site is now secure which enables individuals to join, renew and donate using credit or debit cards via PayPal. All members are urged to visit the site and feel free to comment through the “Contact Us” link: lmwccorg@gmail.com.

Gayle comes to the LMWCC board with a great deal of experience with non-profit organizations, serving on the executive boards of several Chicago area groups over the years.

She and her family have owned property on the Little Manistee River since 1987, and they have been members of the LMWCC since its inception that same year.

From the Mason-Lake Conservation District

The Mason-Lake Conservation District is doing HWA detection surveys along the Little Manistee River this year, and within 10 miles of the lakeshore anywhere in the county.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Detection Season in Manistee County:

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) is an invasive insect native to eastern Asia that targets Eastern Hemlock trees by feeding on their sap. If left untreated, HWA can kill a tree within 4 to 10 years, threatening the health of hemlock forests, which provide critical habitat for wildlife and play an important role in local ecosystems. Mason-Lake Conservation District has a dedicated crew focused on detecting and treating hemlock woolly adelgid, and they are currently focusing on surveying areas in Manistee County within 10 miles of the lakeshore, especially along creeks and rivers. HWA has not yet been found in Manistee County, but it has been found in northern Mason County and Benzie County.

Through ongoing surveys and winter inspections, the HWA team identifies and treats affected trees for private landowners, helping to slow the spread of this invasive insect and protect the health of local hemlock populations. The insect is identifiable by its small, cottony white ovisacs found on the undersides of tree branches, near the base of the needles. They may appear alone or in clusters and are most visible through late fall and early spring.

What Can You Do?

Check Your Trees: Inspect the undersides of your hemlock branches for white, cottony ovisacs. If you find any, note the location and take a photo, then contact the Manistee or Mason-Lake Conservation District to report. Do not collect sample branches or twigs to prevent spreading HWA. **Request a Free Site Visit:** Contact the Mason-Lake Conservation District to schedule a free site visit. The HWA team will examine your trees for signs of HWA and provide guidance on treatment options, which may be available at no cost through current grant funding. Completed forms can be mailed to the address on the form or emailed to mlcd.hwa@macd.org. **CLICK HERE FOR PERMISSION FORM:** [Hemlock Woolly Adelgid](#).

The obvious sign of a hemlock woolly adelgid infestation is the copious masses of "cottony" white filaments of wax produced by females. These normally persist throughout the season and into the following year even after the insects are dead. The overwintering females are black, oval, soft-bodied, and about 2 mm long. They are concealed under their characteristic white waxy mass.



From the Michigan DNR

The annual collection of steelhead eggs at the Little Manistee River weir in Stronach (Manistee County), Michigan, was tentatively scheduled to begin Tuesday, April 15. The facility is open to the public for up-close viewing during egg-take operations.

Steelhead provide one of Michigan's premier sport fishing opportunities for both open-water fishing on the Great Lakes and tributary stream fishing. Yearling steelhead produced through hatchery operations are stocked in select tributaries of all the Great Lakes.

Since 1968, the Little Manistee River weir has served as the sole source of winter-run steelhead eggs for fish hatcheries in Michigan and the main source for Ohio and Indiana. This year, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources plans to collect 4.5 million eggs. Thompson State Fish Hatchery and Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery will receive 3.7 million of those eggs, and Ohio and Indiana will each receive 400,000 eggs.



DNR egg-take operations begin with the lowering of the weir grates by mid-March. This stops the upstream steelhead migration in the Little Manistee River and diverts the fish into holding ponds. Fish usually ripen during the month of April and egg-take operations begin, continuing until the established egg quota has been reached.

During egg-take operations, unripe or "green" steelhead (those that are not yet ready to reproduce) are held in maturation ponds or counted and passed upstream to sustain the wild Little Manistee River steelhead run. Steelhead that are spawned during operations also are passed upstream, and many eventually return to Lake Michigan, as this species is capable of spawning multiple times. Once the quota of eggs is reached, the weir grates are removed and all remaining fish are allowed to migrate upstream.

Planned spring steelhead egg take dates for this year are April 15, 16, 17, 22 and 23. This is subject to change, based on the ripeness and number of fish present. Eggs will be taken each day between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., and the public is welcome to come view the process.

As of this writing, official numbers of steelhead processed at the weir and numbers of fish passed upstream are unavailable.

NEWS FROM LMWCC AND AROUND THE GREAT LAKES

Federal Firings Threaten Great Lakes' \$5 Billion Fishery

Sweeping layoffs of federal employees have struck the program responsible for controlling the invasive sea lamprey that threatens fish across the Great Lakes, the earth's largest freshwater ecosystem. Among hundreds of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) employees terminated this month were 12 members of the Great Lakes sea lamprey control program, based at field stations in Marquette and Ludington, Michigan. These staffing cuts could have grave consequences for the lakes' native fish population and the \$5 billion fishery they comprise.

Each year, the commission contracts with USFWS to spread pesticide targeting the larvae of lamprey. In Michigan, the fish and wildlife control team distributes a chemical known as TFM in rivers and tributaries where lamprey are known to lay their eggs. Left unchecked, lamprey larvae grow into parasitic adults that wreak havoc on aquatic ecosystems. With a toothy, suction-cup mouth it uses to latch onto other fish, a single lamprey can consume 40 pounds of fish in just one year. "They're nasty little critters, and they do horrific damage to an ecosystem," said Greg McClinchey, director of policy and legislative affairs for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

Cuts to lamprey control in U.S. waters are a threat to fish and fishermen everywhere on the Great Lakes.

US Army Corps grants emergency status for Enbridge Line 5 tunnel

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers granted national energy emergency status, as directed by President Trump, for a tunnel proposed by

Enbridge to encase its Line 5 running beneath the Straits of Mackinac. The corps fast-tracked a key federal permitting process.

The pipeline tunnel is among the first to get an emergency designation after President Donald Trump declared a national energy emergency in a January executive order, and means the Army Corps can fast-track its review of the project.

On May 9, attorneys general from 15 states sued the Trump administration over the "energy emergency," claiming that it bypasses mandatory environment review.

Politics Threaten Carp Project

In February, Illinois governor, J.B.Pritzker authorized a freeze on Illinois funds for the Army Corps of Engineers approved project to prevent the encroachment of Asian Carp into Lake Michigan. Pritzker cited the Trump administration's withholding \$2 billion in federal funds earmarked for the state of Illinois, much of it targeted for the carp project.

At the time of the freeze \$340 million had been spent on the project, but \$117 million in federal grants from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law had been withheld from Illinois. The animosity between the president and the governor is no secret, and Pritzker stated, "...in the interest of saving Illinois tax payers millions of dollars... we would only move forward if given the proper assurance that the federal government would hold up their end of the bargain."

Trump issued an executive order on May 9 supporting the Great Lakes Project. Without it, the freshwater fishery in the Great Lakes, generating an estimated \$6 billion in revenue for the State of Michigan alone, would be decimated by the voracious fish. The project has been planned and developed for years.

Septics and the Law —an Opinion from Michigan Waterfront Alliance — May 1, 2025

For those of us who recognize the immense value of the multi-faceted contributions that our inland lakes and rivers make to Michigan's increasingly 'blue' economy and culture, the failure of our state legislature to enact legislation that would have established a statewide septic system code represents a tragedy of increasingly dire proportions. Strident opposition from county health departments, the real estate industry, and from "don't tread on me" politicians who believe that any form of environmental regulation represents a threat to the exercise of individual liberty, helped ensure that the common sense legislation that was introduced in the last session of our state legislature did not even come up for an up or down vote.

For the Great Lakes state whose vast natural heritage of immensely valuable freshwater resources - our extraordinary inland lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands and groundwater aquifers that contribute billions of dollars of vital services to Michigan's economy - we find ourselves in the embarrassing and increasingly dangerous predicament of being the only state in the United States of America who continues to allow billions of gallons of raw, toxic toilet bowl waste to flow unimpeded into our precious freshwaters each year from hundreds of thousands of dysfunctional septic tanks.

Representing a increasingly dire threat to the health of our citizens and to the innate capacity of our freshwater resources to continue to provide immensely valuable economic and ecological services to Michigan's increasingly blue economy, our collective lack of willingness to enact and enforce a common sense statewide septic system code has already resulted in the fact that many of our rivers and streams host levels of *e-coli* and other pollutants, including PFAS, that represent a serious threat to the health of

momentary contact with the water threatens

The enactment and implementation of a well-funded, common sense statewide septic system code will go a long way to helping resolve the fact that one quarter, or 330,000 of Michigan's 1.3 million septic tanks spill almost six billion gallons of *E. coli* and harmful chemical contaminated wastewater into our freshwater treasures each year due to the fact that they have not been properly maintained or pumped out on a regular basis. The severity of the problem in Michigan is effectively illustrated by the fact that roughly half of our rivers and streams have been contaminated with human fecal matter derived *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) bacteria levels that greatly exceed the minimum concentrations that are known to be responsible for the onset of a dangerous array of debilitating human diseases.

It is also important to note that the overall ecological health and water quality of thousands of our inland lakes is also threatened by the extreme levels of water clarity threatening phosphorus and nitrogen that originates from tens of thousands of near shore residential septic tanks that have not been properly maintained in decades. The increasing frequency of toxic blue-green algae blooms, also known as cyanobacteria, that are observed in Michigan represents a reliable indicator of the increasingly dire need to remedy a situation that allows billions of gallons of toxic raw sewage from 300,000 dysfunctional septic tanks to flow into our precious freshwaters each year.

It is important to point out that the Great Lakes state - Michigan, endowed with a vast treasure of life sustaining freshwater, is the only state in America that has not established a statewide code for regulating the construction, inspection, and periodic maintenance of septic systems.



Little Manistee Watershed Conservation Council

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