

Big Sable River Spring 2013 Report

Welcome to spring in West Michigan. After a March that seemed to have 62 days this year, spring has sprung. The blessing of the cold, wet spring is that water levels are rising. I have noticed significantly more water in the wetlands. The river and lake levels have risen however slightly.

The Big Sable Watershed Restoration Committee feels very fortunate to have some major habitat work progressing on the Big Sable.

Pole Bridge Landing Site #3 is in need of some maintenance work that volunteers have offered to repair once the permit is approved by USFS who is the owner of this property.

Site # 28 located below Schoennher Rd is nearing completion of the NEPA Study required for a permit from the USFS to begin work on this erosion site on the river. Habitat structure will be incorporated into this project to not only stabilize this steep bank but also improve the habitat for macro invertebrates and fish. Funding is secured for this work and we expect to complete this project in 2013.

We will also initiate in stream habitat work from Darr Rd downstream to below US -31 approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. We have contacted riparian owners and have received positive support to move forward with this work. While surveying this section of river we have identified 35 locations where structures would improve the habitat of the river. We won't be able to install structures at all of these locations but will determine which sites would be most beneficial to the river and prioritize the sites with the available funding. We are currently securing agreements with riparian owners before submitting an application to the MDEQ for permitting of this work. We are confident permits can be secured and the work will be completed in 2013 on the majority of the locations identified in this section of river.

We have volunteers who are working to begin a Macro Invertebrate Study on the river. This is a reliable way to monitor the health of the river through the annual survey. This program has been considered and initiated before without becoming established. This is a very important program that deserves to be implemented. We plan on consulting with the Little Manistee River Group who has been very successful conducting this program.

We look forward to participating in the water quality monitoring to be conducted by the Hamlin Lake Preservation Society. The Big Sable is a likely contributor to the high phosphorous levels of Hamlin Lake.

We have placed 6 temperature monitors in the river to record water temperatures of the river from May through September. We completed a temperature study of the entire river in 2003/2004. The data gathered this year will be a comparison study. I would like to thank Mark Tonello for securing the temperature monitors.

On May 10th there were 8,000 Gilchrist Creek strain of brown trout planted in the Big Sable River at the usual locations. Unfortunately this year due to a communication issue the fingerlings were not scatter planted. I would like to thank all volunteers for their efforts who have successfully scatter planted the

fingerlings the previous 10 years. We will learn from this experience and move on. No long term harm to the resource.

It is with regret that I report the passing of 3 staunch supporters of the Big Sable who were very important to us. Wade Stevens, Chuck "Doc" Martin and John Broderick.

John Broderick has donated a vintage Old Town canoe that will be raffled in 2014 to raise funds to continue work on the river.

I would like to welcome the new owners of "Doc's Sauble River Inn" to the BSWRC. Doc Campbell and his family opened the business in late 2012. Stop in and see the changes and enjoy the food. We now have 2 nice establishments close to the river. The Heidi Hof has been a supporter of BSWRC for many years.

Take time to enjoy the great natural resources of West Michigan during the summer of 2013.

Wayne Andersen, Chairman

Big Sable Watershed Restoration Committee