

Big Sable River Watershed Report – October 2012

The Big Sable Watershed Restoration Committee held the annual late summer meeting August 31, 2012. Members of the group participated in a float trip from Schooner Rd to Stephens Rd to look at work completed in recent years and Site #28 that is being planned for field work in 2013.

Mark Tonello, Senior Fisheries Biologist of Cadillac accompanied us on the float trip. Mark had not floated this section of the river since the planning of the work that has been completed in the past 5 years. Mark was very favorable impressed with the changes in stream habitat. The success of the improvement in habitat on this section of river is the result of the support and commitment of the riparian owners.

Lunch at the Meade Township Hall was provided by Janet Andersen. Janet will become District 6 County Commissioner 01/01/2013.

Winners were drawn for the 2012 Canoe Raffle. Roger Dittmar of Manistee was the winner of the 12' Cedar Strip Wooden Canoe crafted and donated by Mike Sobanski. Kent Gage of Freesoil was the winner of the Carved Wooden Brown Trout donated by Dale Goodrich. Junior Ramirez of Ludington was the winner of the Guided Float Trip. This raffle was very successful and netted over \$5,500 that will be used for restoration and enhancement of the Big Sable River. A very special Thank You to Mike Sobanski and Dale Goodrich who have donated their work to the 5 Canoe Raffles that we have conducted.

Topics discussed during the Business Meeting:

Mark Tonello reviewed his observations from the morning float trip. Mark also discussed the recently completed "Status of the Fishery Resource Report for Hamlin Lake". This report is available on line at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Website.

US 31 County Property on Big River – Mason County owns property immediately upstream of US-31 on the Big Sable River. The county is considering options of development for this property. Possibilities being discussed are a gravel parking area, installation of a picnic table and enhancement of the launch area. The option of the property remaining status quo is also being considered.

A defective septic system on riparian property was reported to Wayne Andersen by an anonymous party. Matt Fornea of the Mason County Health Department has resolved the issue and a new septic system has been installed.

Wayne reported that Victory Township is progressing on improvements to Victory Township Park on Upper Hamlin Lake. Walking trails are completed. A design has been approved for an improved boat launch and parking area.

Site #28 located downstream of Schoenheer Rd on United States Forest Service Property is a proposed project for 2013. Planning and permitting for this site are in progress. Conservation Resource Alliance Biologist Chris Pierce is leading this effort. We are hopeful field work will be completed in 2013.

We are planning habitat improvement projects in the form of installing woody debris in other areas of the river. At this time we have no firm plans. We are exploring possibilities.

My personal thanks to County Commissioner Rich Morong who has supported our efforts on the Big Sable River during his years of service.

I would also like to thank all who supported the Big Sable Watershed Restoration Committee in 2012. While I displayed the Raffle Items and sold tickets I had the opportunity to talk to many people who support us because they have heard of our work. Many people expressed their appreciation for the results we have achieved. Many very pleasant conversations with people who truly appreciate the natural resources of this area.

The spring meeting will be Friday, April 26,2013 at Meade Township Hall.

Best Regards

Wayne Andersen, Chairman

Big Sable Watershed Restoration Committee