

2017

Regular Coalition Meetings

April 27

July 27

October 26

At 10:00 AM

Greenbush Township Hall



Working Together to Restore and Protect Our Natural Resources

BUHL DAM REMOVAL PROJECT UPDATE

By John Bailey, Huron Pines

In its current condition, Buhl Dam is an obsolete structure that is acting as a fish passage barrier and is disrupting natural river functions on the South Branch Pine River. Huron Pines plans to remove Buhl Dam and install a fifty-six foot steel I-beam bridge. The existing footbridge is one of the most heavily used points by recreationists, hunters, anglers and hikers for access to the Huron-Manistee National Forest in Alcona County.

This project will not only address safety concerns but will also provide access to national forest lands to those who were previously unable to access the site. Huron Pines has been working very closely with the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Michigan Department of Natural Resources to ensure that this removal works to uphold and promote the standards of a healthy fishery and natural area.

This effort will not only enhance the physical environment but will strengthen partnerships between Huron Pines and community leaders to guide the future protection of natural resources. A large component of the project is engaging youth in the

surrounding areas; Huron Pines will focus on the Buhl Dam removal project in an effort to also connect youth with their environment and national forests by hosting a tree planting day and working with local schools to educate future generations on the importance of healthy ecosystems.

Huron Pines has selected Team Elmers to perform construction and removal activities for the Buhl Dam Removal Project. Currently, all of the funding is in place and the removal of Buhl Dam and the installation of a new footbridge structure will be taking place in early 2017. Upon completion, the removal of Buhl Dam will reconnect 20.22 upstream miles on the South Branch of the Pine River and restore nearly 500 feet of floodplain access.



Huron Pines would like to thank the Pine River Van-Etten Lake Watershed Coalition for its generous donation of volunteer hours and their willingness to promote and protect water quality in their local communities. Huron Pines greatly values this long standing and dynamic partnership!

PRVEL'S TOP PRIORITY ROAD STREAM CROSSING SITE Completed in 2016

The 2001 Pine River Van Etten Lake Watershed Management Plan, developed by our partner, Huron Pines (conservation organization), includes inventories on specific road/stream crossing sites that have been listed as either mild, moderate, or severe in nature. Of the six severe sites, the number one priority selected by the PRVEL board was at Michaud Road and Duval Creek in Alcona County.

Board members, Huron Pines staff, and the Alcona County Road Commission all gave input on

the importance of improving this site, with the knowledge that it might be too cost-prohibitive at the time. But after some re-planning and added funding, the improvement/restoration project was able to be completed this past year.

This is yet another example of how working and planning together with partners having shared goals, can make things happen for the betterment of the watershed.



Before



After

Duval Creek at Michaud Rd completed in 2016

RIVER KEEPERS' UPDATE

We Want You!

The **River Keepers** program is aimed at establishing a better monitoring system to cover the large area encompassed within the watershed. Individuals volunteering for this program are being asked to watch out for things that could be problematic or might require some action to be taken, but also to report back natural occurrences like animal sightings or quality of fishing/hunting.

Thank you to all of our current volunteers – your efforts are greatly appreciated and essential to keeping abreast of conditions within the watershed.

Please consider being a River Keeper and contact Carole Plunkey for more details at:

caroleplunkey@charter.net or 739-8717



STREAM TEMPERATURE MONITORING PROJECT UPDATE

(in cooperation with Michigan DNR, Tim Cwalinski)



With the placement of temperature loggers in several locations along the Pine this past year, new data has been made available to Michigan's Dept of Natural Resources Fisheries Division to better assess the status of our fishery. Temperatures for 2016 were determined to be "pretty normal" for the months tested, and fish shocking surveys "looked good".

Trout were caught in every stream tested (e.g. Wallace, Kurtz, Samyn, McGillis, Roy, West branch Pine) with some juvenile steelhead in a couple of sites.

Volunteers will be needed next season to help place the loggers in the streams and retrieve them in the Fall – contact person is Scott Lingo at

scott@targetrealestate.com.

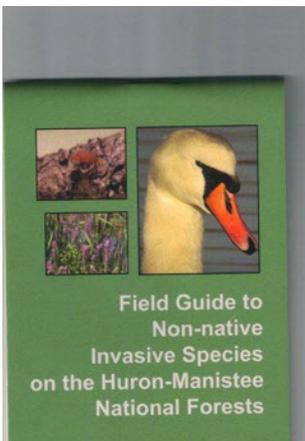


Do you have nature pictures taken within the watershed? If so, please email them to Carole Plunkey at caroleplunkey@charter.net to be included in upcoming newsletters and/or to be placed on our facebook page.

OUR 2016 TREASURY REPORT

January 1, 2016 Balance	\$5,952.23
Income	
Donations	1,545.00
Grants	0.00
Other	
VELA River Clearance	125.00
VELA P/TSS sampling	400.00
Interest	4.77
Subtotal -	\$2,074.77
Program Expenses	
Meetings	123.30
CrowdHydrology	409.98
River Clearance	250.00
Coliform Sampling	207.38
P/TSS Sampling	745.95
Fishing Tournament	100.00
Subtotal -	\$1,836.61
Administration Expenses	
Chamber of Commerce Dues	150.00
Post Office Box rental	70.00
Supplies, Newsletter, postage	62.63
MI Nonprofit Incorporation	20.00
Flyer and brochures	82.82
Subtotal -	\$385.45
December 31, 2016 Balance	\$5,804.94

INVASIVE PLANT MONITORING



Watching out for unwanted non-native invasive plants takes some self-education along with a desire to keep our natural areas just that – natural. With so much area to cover within the watershed, it seems a daunting task to try and locate areas that need to be monitored and/or treated, so in order to get the job done, we need many volunteers to assist – both in finding and reporting problem areas as well

as helping with eradication.

If you have an interest in helping PRVEL with this project, please contact Doug Jager at dj62852@charter.net or Carole Plunkey at caroleplunkey@charter.net and literally "lend a hand." Field guide booklets will be available to assist in identification.

Most of our funding comes from donations from those having an interest in helping us meet our objectives. Please keep us in mind when making your plan for charitable contributions this year.

INVASIVE SPECIES MONITORING OF 80 ACRE ERA SUMMARY

By Doug Jager – Team Leader

As previously reported, the invasive species (IS) monitoring program of the 80 acre DNR owned property just north of Van Etten Lake, has been a priority for PRVEL. The unchecked spread of unwanted IS directly impacts the ecosystem along the river and Van Etten Lake.

Over the past three years, some remarkable results have been observed. The first two years, multiple crews hauled out twenty plus bags of IS that were pulled or dug out. Last June, Lee Scheffler from DNR and I, spent a whole day surveying all eight zones and only removed three bags of invasive plants. Thanks to Consumers Pow-

er for clearing trees along their power lines, we were able to access a small area that was not accessible in past years and removed a fairly small amount of IS.

We will be back at it this spring, and I encourage anyone interested working with me on this project to please contact me. Those of you that have never floated up the Pine would be amazed at the beauty of this area of the river. If you like to canoe or kayak this would be a great volunteer opportunity. It's a lot of fun and also a learning experience.

WANTED VOLUNTEERS: FOR MACRO-INVERTEBRATE (aquatic insects) TRAINING

Sampling our streams for aquatic insect populations is an important part of assessing water quality in the Pine River and its tributaries. PRVEL is looking for more people to step up and volunteer to take the training made available through Mi-Corps (Michigan Clean Water Corps). There are no fees.

Having an interest in nature and preserving the environment makes you a perfect candidate for this training program and you can help PRVEL to achieve our goals. Training includes the procedure for collecting specimens, insect identification, stream habitat analysis, and



field protocols and is offered each year, usually in June or July at different locations. Contact Arnie Leriche @ aleriche526@gmail.com to learn more .

If you prefer to be a volunteer for the sampling program, either collecting specimens in the streams or sorting “bugs” up on the river bank, you can still sign up for this spring's sampling online or by email. Closer to the time (week of May 8 or 15 dependent on conditions) go to our facebook page and sign up there or contact Arnie via email at www.facebook.com/pineriverwatershed

PRVEL BENEFITS FROM GIVING TUESDAY EVENT

In November 2016, the Community Foundation of NE Michigan sponsored a community wide event to allow non-profit organizations to ask for online donations on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving – calling it Giving Tuesday. Not all who applied were accepted, so we were fortunate to be able to participate.

Board members worked quickly to distribute posters, send in promotional articles to the newspapers, mail postcards to selected businesses and individuals, and provide information on our facebook page – all in a fairly short amount of time. Email notifications were also sent out to everyone on the PRVEL member list as well as to Van Etten Lake residents and an



announcement was shown on the Chamber of Commerce weekly eblast.

All this effort resulted in receiving \$510 in donations in just one day (!) so we were very pleased and hope to be able to participate again next year.

It is our hope that as our watershed group continues its programs and projects aimed at monitoring and protecting our natural resources, more people will come forth to support our efforts – even if it isn't just one given day.

Donations can always be mailed to PO Box 680, Oscoda, MI, 48750 with our sincere thanks.

PHOSPHORUS/TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS MONITORING

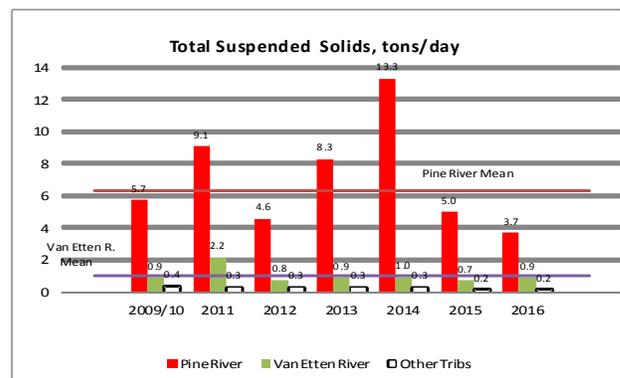
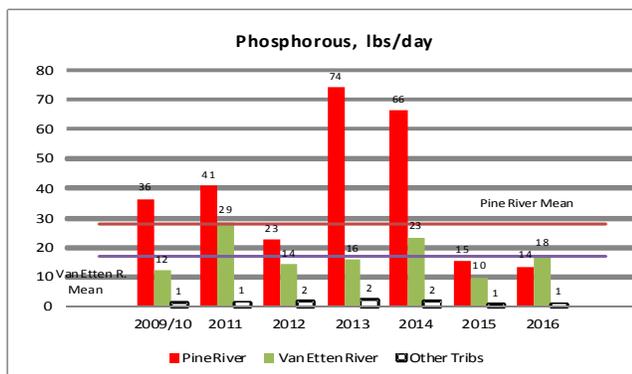
by Dan Steck, Water Quality Monitor

Relatively dry conditions prevailed over the summer of 2016 for a second year. The estimated amount of P (2.46 tons) entering the lake from the Pine River for the year was about 46 percent of the estimated seven year mean amount. This reduction in the P load was not unexpected because of the dry conditions.

The estimated amount of TSS (1343 tons) entering the lake based on the regression method used to develop the estimate was about 57 percent of the seven year mean. This also reflects the relatively dry conditions over the summer. The reported results from the laboratory would have indicated an amount entering the lake of over 239 percent of the seven year mean. An attempt will be made to find a new laboratory to perform the analyses in 2017.

Flow/stage measurements were made on the South Branch of the Pine in 2016 following the installation of a Crowd-Hydrology gauge. More measurements are planned for 2017, there and at the other locations where Crowd-Hydrology gauges have been installed as a flow meter remains available for use.

A proposed change for 2017 will involve the collection of samples from the East Branch, the West Branch and the South Branch of the Pine in addition to the continuation of the sampling of the Pine at the county line, the sampling below the dam and the sampling of Van Etten Creek if approved by the PRVEL Board. The sampling of the other tributaries to Van Etten Lake will be discontinued.



WATERSHED WILDLIFE WATCH American Beaver

The beaver is a large, primarily nocturnal, semi-aquatic rodent with brown oily fur, webbed rear feet, and a paddle-shaped tail. It is an herbivore, preferring leaves, bark, twigs, roots, and aquatic plants as its diet. It is known for building dams, canals, and lodges within waterways, often interfering with river flow and causing unwanted pooling of waters. Colonies can create one or more dams to provide still, deep water to protect against predators, and to float food and building materials.

The beaver population was once more than 60 million strong, but as of 1988 was down to 6-12 million as the result of extensive hunting for their fur, for glands used as medicine and perfume, and

because of the perceived damage done to waterways and forests.



E. COLI SAMPLING UPDATE

Samples were taken monthly from April through October except for June at twelve locations on the Pine River system in 2016. In addition to the sampling of five base locations on the Pine, seven sites were sampled on Van Etten Creek this year.

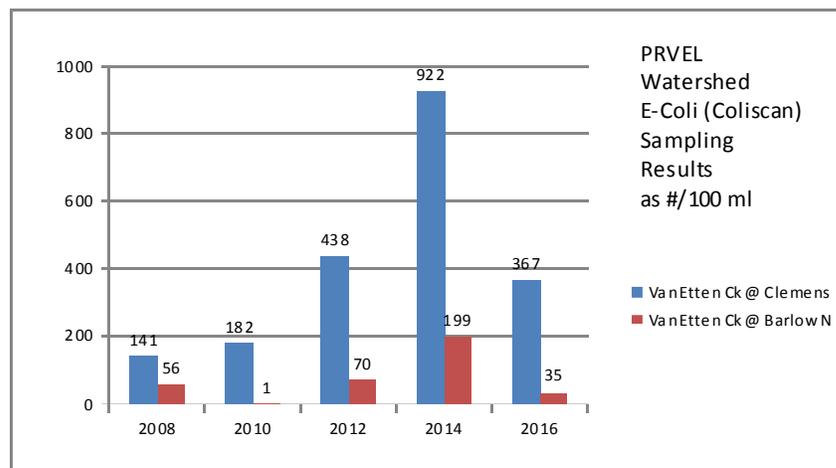
Table 1 - Pine River Watershed E. Coli Monitoring

Location	Site No	2016			10-year Combined Results				
		No	Mean #/100 ml	Max #/100 ml	Min	No.	Mean #/100 ml	Max	Min
Pine River and Tributaries									
Pine River @ County Line	01	5	162	280	50	49	80	3500	1
Pine River @ F-41	02	5	71	200	20	46	69	2400	1
Pine River @ Cruzen Road	04	5	146	240	80	46	64	2600	1
Van Etten Crk @ Barlow Road S.	11	5	47	460	1	45	111	3600	1
E/W Pine River @ F-30	31	5	47	260	1	40	107	3800	1
Van Etten Ck @ Wissmuller	12	5	78	140	60	21	71	300	10
Van Etten Ck @ Barlow Rd N	16	5	35	150	1	29	59	1300	20
Van Etten Ck @ Dellar Rd	18	5	137	260	20	25	122	2500	1
Van Etten Ck @ Clemens Rd	19	5	367	570	100	28	544	10800	1
Van Etten Ck @ M-72 & Colville Rd	21	5	97	160	40	21	56	1200	1
S. Br Pine below Buhl Dam	05	4	52	300	20	8	65	300	20
S. Br Pine above Buhl Dam	06	1	20	20	20	5	39	200	40
S. Br Pine @ Rearing Pond Road	07	3	73	320	20	8	67	340	20

All results are expressed as CFU (colony forming units)/100 ml

Observations

1. The geometric means for four of the twelve of the sites sampled in 2016 were higher than 130 CFU/100 ml state standard for swimming waters and four sites exceeded the 300 CFU/100 ml single sample concentration for the same standard. Only one site, Van Etten Creek at Clemens Rd. exceeded both standards although this site tested lower than its mean for the six years sampled.
2. With the possible exception of Van Etten Creek at Clemens Road, see the graph below, the bacteriological quality of the streams in the watershed continues to be acceptable with no indicators of pollution. The generally lower levels of E. Coli observed this year are thought to be in part due to the dry conditions which existed over the sampling season.
3. A continuation of the sampling program at the same base sampling points and at selected locations on East, West and the South Branch including sampling above and below the Buhl Dam site is planned for 2017.



PRVEL Coalition Board

Chair - Carole Plunkey	caroleplunkey@charter.net
Treasurer - Dan Stock	dstock4239@charter.net
Susan Malski	smallard3@yahoo.com
Scott Lingo	scott@targetrealestate.com
Arnie Leriche	aleriche526@gmail.com

Non-Voting Advisors

US Forest Service	Huron Pines RC&D
USDA-NRCS	DNR/Fisheries
US Fish & Wildlife	DEQ/Water Quality

Is this newsletter informative and useful to you? What would you like to see covered that is not being noted? Please let us know your response by email - caroleplunkey@charter.net

HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER FOR PRVEL?

Our conservation group is comprised totally of volunteers, all working together to make things happen for the benefit of the watershed. Please step forward and make 2016 the year you help us make a difference in your neck of the woods.

Ways you can volunteer:

- Macro invertebrate sampling program – Spring and Fall
Next sampling in May on dates to be announced
- Monitoring fishery – place temp loggers
- River Keepers/monitor watershed out in the field
- Write articles for the newsletter
- Serve on the watershed board of directors
- Project workers – out in the field (seasonal)
- Fund raising – bring ideas to attention of

Contact via email as shown above

- Arnie Leriche
- Scott Lingo
- Carole Plunkey
- Dan Stock
- Carole Plunkey
- Carole Plunkey
- any board member

Yes! I wish to support the water resource improvement efforts in the Pine River Van Etten Lake Watershed with my tax deductible contribution.

Please make your check payable to PRVEL Watershed Coalition and send to:

**PRVEL Watershed Coalition
PO Box 680
Oscoda, MI 48750**

Name _____
Street _____
City _____
State/Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____