

2019

Regular Coalition Meetings

April 11

July 11

October 10

At 10:00 AM

Harrisville Library



Working Together to Restore and Protect Our Natural Resources

2018 Projects Highlight the Importance of Partnerships

By Carole Plunkey, Chair

The two major PRVEL projects undertaken in 2018 were:

1. bank stabilization on the south branch of the Pine (downstream from the old Buhl dam removal site) and
2. participation in the Water Ways event in Harrisville.

Both were accomplished in cooperation with other partners who share our interest in improving and protecting our natural resources.

Huron Pines (HP) and USFS (valued partners for years) followed up on previous soil erosion repair work performed on the South Branch in Alcona County, by restoring an additional 450 ft of river bank through tree revetment work to better secure the shoreline. A few PRVEL volunteers joined the HP work crew to complete the project, which then became a featured article in the Oscoda Press.

Participation in the Water Ways event was accomplished by an invitation from the Harrisville Library in Alcona County to help in planning this unique exhibit which explored the essential role that water plays in our environment and society. PRVEL joined with Brandon Schroeder from the MSU Extension Sea Grant program to host a hands-on exhibit on watersheds and watershed stewardship in December/2018 at the library, enlisting



Huron Pines Crew on the South Branch project

high school students as educators/demonstrators with actual watershed models showing the impact of unwanted substances on watersheds. Attendees were also able to sort through water samples to find aquatic insects, learning about what determines water quality and how that impacts fisheries.

Two other projects remain in the planning stages for road/stream crossing restorations and small dam removal within our watershed, targeted for completion in 2019.



Doug Jager at the Waterways Event

## MICHIGAN'S FORESTRY ASSISTANCE AND QUALIFIED FORESTRY PROGRAMS

The goal of Michigan's Forestry Assistance Program (FAP) is to help family forest owners engage in active forest management. This is accomplished through outreach and free technical assistance. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), conservation districts, other state and federal agencies, and private sector natural resource professionals work together to help family forest owners achieve their goals and get the most from their wooded property.

The FAP consists of 20 conservation district foresters serving 51 counties. FAP foresters do not compete with the private sector. They serve as an initial point of contact for forestry-related natural resource concerns in their community.

The program is funded through General Fund support and restricted funds from the Private Forestland Enhancement Fund that is derived from enrollment in the Qualified Forest Program.

A FAP forester helps the landowner understand how forest management can help accomplish their goals. The landowner is

connected to a service provider and/or government program that best suits their resources and goals. Public sector referrals involve work or assistance directed to an agency or non-governmental organization, usually in the form of program participation for tax savings, financial assistance, technical assistance, or habitat development. Referrals to the private sector often involves finding a professional forester to develop a forest management plan or administer a timber sale. Private sector referrals can also include expert testimony for timber trespass issues, road construction, non-commercial habitat development, and many others.

The purpose of the related Qualified Forest Program (QFP) is to encourage family forest owners to manage their forests in an economically viable and environmentally sustainable manner. Enrolled landowners receive an exemption from certain local school operating taxes and/or exemptions from the "uncapping" of the taxable value of the property after a change in ownership.

Beginning in 2018, the QFP and FAP have sent out letters to potential QFP enrollees by utilizing property tax records. The letter was targeted towards family forest owners that enjoy their forests for recreational values. Interested forest owners are connected with a "Qualified Forester" to create and implement a forest management plan—necessary for enrollment in the QFP.

For additional information, call Kurt Dalman at the USDA/NRCS District 1 office, 989-724-5272

## **Giving Tuesday Event Successful!**

Community Foundation of NE Michigan once again sponsored this online giving event to assist non-profit organizations like PRVEL in obtaining funds for programming and projects. Held annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, Giving Tuesday participants are asked to submit an application for consideration and we are fortunate to have been selected for the third year now.

With more people donating this year than in the past, PRVEL raised \$2,080 on that one day – very gratifying for the PRVEL board and more importantly, very necessary to help sustain our ongoing conservation efforts.

The Oscoda Press featured PRVEL in an article published in November which stated, "In the spirit of philanthropy, the Giving Tuesday program provides an easy and meaningful way for donors to give back to the non-profit groups that work hard to improve their communities through volunteerism in a variety of fields." Community support like this helps PRVEL to be more visible locally and hopefully attract interest in what we are trying to accomplish and perhaps garner more volunteers.

Thank you letters went out to all donors, but we want to again thank all our supporters who contribute in some way – either through donations or volunteerism – to help PRVEL attain our goals.

**E. COLI SAMPLING UPDATE**  
by Dan Steck, Water Quality Monitor

Samples were taken monthly from April through October at six locations on the Pine River system in 2018. The five base locations are: the Pine at the county line, the East, West and South Branches and Van Etten Creek. Two samples were also taken from the Pine at F-30 before the sampling point was relocated to the East Branch at Tait Road.

Table 1 - Pine River Watershed E. Coli Monitoring

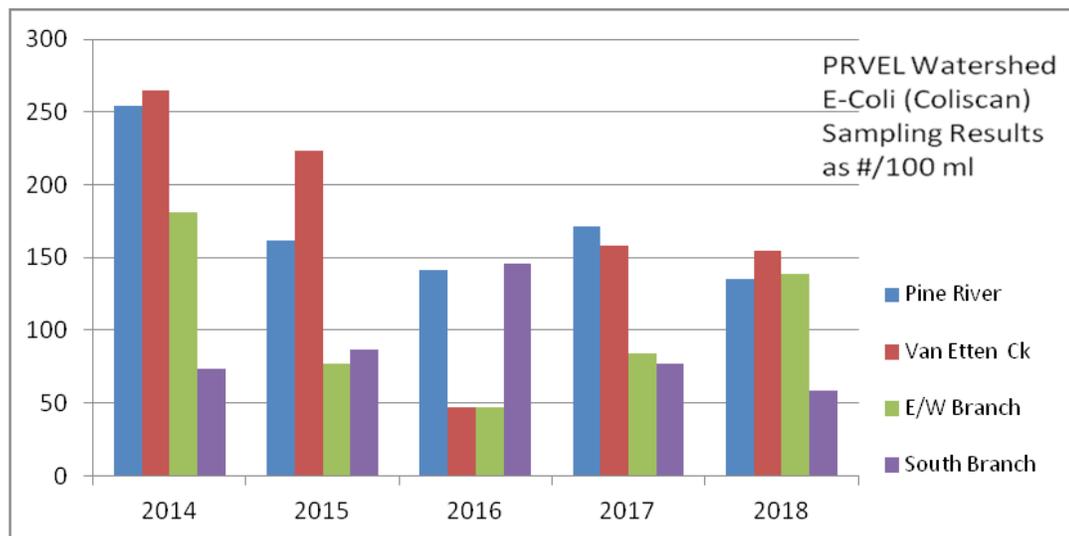
Location	Site No	2018				13-year Combined Results			
		No	Mean	Max	Min	No.	Mean	Max	Min
Pine River and Tributaries		No	Mean	Max	Min	No.	Mean	Max	Min
Pine River @ County Line Road	01	7	135	300	60	63	97	3500	1
South Branch @ Cruzen Road	04	7	58	300	1	60	65	2600	1
Van Etten Creek @ Barlow Road S.	11	7	155	300	60	59	134	3600	1
E/W Pine River @ F-30 Road	31	2	179	200	160	55	107	3800	1
E. Branch of Pine @ Tait Road	32	5	170	340	60	5	170	340	60
W. Br Pine @ Cruzen Road	41	7	89	240	20	36	82	1450	1

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

**Observations**

1. The geometric means for four of the six sites sampled in 2018 had means higher than 130 CFU/100 ml state standard for swimming waters and only one site exceeded the 300 CFU/100 ml single sample concentration for the same standard. These higher results for the annual mean of the 2018 samples are not significantly different from the long term means.
2. The bacteriological quality of the streams in the watershed continues to be acceptable with no indicators of gross pollution.

FIGURE 1  
TRENDS FOR FOUR SAMPLING SITES



## PHOSPHORUS/TOTAL SUSPENDED SOLIDS MONITORING

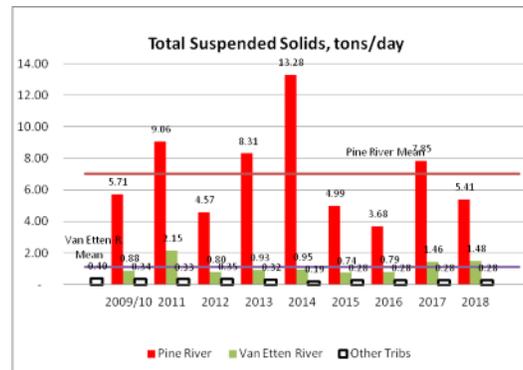
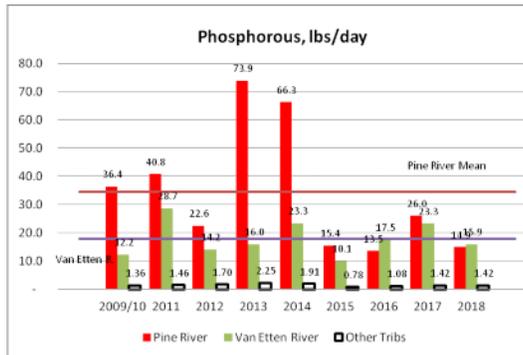
by Dan Stock, Water Quality Monitor

A shift in the focus of the annual sampling was initiated in 2017 as a variation to the sampling started in 2009.

Sampling was started on the South and West branches and the Pine River (E/W) at F-30. Sampling of Van Etten Creek at the corner of Barlow Road and Pine River Trail was completed this year as water levels returned to normal.

The Pine River at the county line and the Van Etten River (Lower Van Etten Creek) where it leaves the lake continued to be monitored to determine the relative impact of upstream and lake shore nutrients and solids.

Samples were collected during both high flow and low flow conditions from April through October from six locations and analyzed for total phosphorous (P) and total suspended solids (TSS).



Water level (stage) measurements were taken at the time of sampling to obtain an estimate of the flow and quantities.

The intent of this sampling is to estimate the relative contribution of each tributary to the total loading at the county line. Gauge measurements taken and recorded at the Crowd Hydrology web sites were also converted to estimated flow rates for purposes of estimating P and TSS loads. Regression analyses were used to estimate the P and TSS loadings for those dates that gauge and flow readings were

taken over the sampling period.

[continued on page 5](#)

### 2018 TRIBUTARY SAMPLING RESULTS

	Flow, Q		Phosphorus, P		Solids, TSS	
	cfs	%	#/Day	%	tons/day	%
So Branch	100	47%	8.0	35%	5.9	38%
East Br by difference	59	27%	9.4	41%	5.8	38%
West Br	46	21%	3.3	15%	2.8	18%
Van Etten Ck	10	5%	2.0	9%	0.9	6%
Pine River @ Co Line	173		17.2		11.7	
Regression estimates			14.9		5.4	
Tributary estimate for balance (not including Duvall)						
	214	124%	22.6	13%	15.3	131%
Van Etten River below Dam	235		67.5		5.1	
Regression estimates			15.9		1.5	
E/W @ F-30	105		12.7		8.6	

**Observations**

The flow, P and TSS in the Pine River at the county line continues to be under reported based on this sampling. Additional flow stage measurements will be taken in 2019 to better refine the flow/stage curves and hopefully improve the estimates.

Based on these estimates, it appears that the percentage contribution of TSS from each tributary is close to the percent estimated flow. However, the contributions of phosphorus from Van Etten Creek and the East Branch, both of which pass through agricultural

areas are higher than would be indicated by their flows.

The P load leaving Van Etten Lake as measured this year exceeded that entering the lake. This seems to happen every few years. However, the late summer sampling results showed elevated concentrations of both P and TSS of unknown origin although it could be related to the change in the sampling point following the installation of the new fence at the dam. If this trend continues in 2019, a source of these higher levels will be sought.

**WATERSHED WILDLIFE WATCH**  
**The River Otter**

This semi-aquatic mammal is found primarily in and along waterways and shorelines, noticeable by its thick, water-repellent coat of brown fur. A member of the weasel family, it builds a burrow close to the water's edge, which typically has many tunnel openings allowing the otter to enter and exit. Weighing anywhere from eleven to thirty pounds, it eats fish and various amphibians/clams/snails. Its body length ranges from 24 to 46 inches, and about a third of this is found in its long, tapered tail.



Photo courtesy of Susan Malski

North American river otters can live up to 25 years, but normally live between 9 to 13 years in the wild. They are active year round, mostly at night with acute smelling and hearing abilities, but are near-sighted, which often leads them within a few feet of boats or people. Their teeth are specialized for lethal bites and crushing objects like hard shells. They are highly mobile and have the capacity to travel up to 26 miles in one day. Litters of "kits" usually number 1-3 offspring and are weaned by three months. The young otters leave their families to venture on their own usually by the first spring after their birth.

**Mark Your Calendars!**

Michigan Lake Stewardship Associations 58th Annual Conference  
"Innovations in Lake Stewardship"  
Friday & Saturday May 3 & 4, 2019  
Crystal Mountain Resort, Thompsonville, MI

For more information visit the ML&SA 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference web page at <https://www.mymlsa.org>

**Benefits of Becoming a Board Member**

PRVEL Board of Director elections take place each April at our general meeting. The by-laws state that the board must have at least five members (but we can have more) each holding a two-year term. The board currently has six members.



Existing members may elect to remain on the board or leave, which would then leave an open position. If all current members wish to remain, any general member may still nominate himself or herself for a board seat.

We encourage any/all of you to consider becoming a board member for the following reasons:

- Get to know more about your local watershed area
- Learn more about what may impact the health of the ecosystems in your “backyard”
- Share your ideas on potential watershed projects
- Lend your personal expertise/skills in areas of interest to aid in board decisions
- Learn how PRVEL fosters partnerships with county/township officials to complete projects
- Network with other conservation agencies to bring about positive environmental changes
- Make a personal impact on maintaining and protecting the environment
- Give back to your local community through active volunteerism

Contact any of the current Board members listed on page 8 for further information if you have an interest.

**OUR 2018 TREASURY REPORT**

January 1, 2018 Balance	\$5890.29
Income	
Donations	2,103.00
VELA	0.00
Grants	0.00
Interest	5.10
Subtotal -	\$2110.10
Program Expenses	
Meetings	
Newspaper Ads	74.64
Macro Sampling	312.71
Temperature Logging	0.00
Coliform Sampling	187.71
Crowd Hydrology	98.20
Invasives Program	0.00
P/TSS Sampling	345.84
River Clearance	0.00
AuSable Project	0.00
River Keepers	0.00
Subtotal -	\$1019.10
Administration Expenses	
Chamber Dues	50.00
Giving Tuesday	110.27
Supplies, Newsletter	28.00
MI Nonprofit Fee	20.00
PO Box Rental	74.00
Audubon Donation	100.00
Subtotal -	\$382.27
December 31, 2018 Balance	\$6599.02

**Macro Sampling Program Update**

This program is designed to sample the river and streams for numbers and species of “bugs” (macroinvertebrates) which are found there in an effort to help determine the health of the stream. Collected data is then entered into a statewide data base maintained by the Great Lakes Commission.

Volunteers are needed for either of two sampling dates in Spring and Fall – you may either be in the water or be on shore working with a team guided by a watershed team leader who will give you instructions – no equipment needed.

Dates for sampling are sent out each season via email to all members and are also available on our facebook page – [facebook/pineriverwatershed](https://www.facebook.com/pineriverwatershed) – or you may contact our team leader directly.

Your support is necessary to keep this vital program alive so please join us in the field as a volunteer and learn while you have fun!

Team leader Arnie Leriche :  
[aleriche526@gmail.com](mailto:aleriche526@gmail.com)

PRVEL Coalition Board

Chair - Carole Plunkey	<a href="mailto:caroleplunkey@charter.net">caroleplunkey@charter.net</a>
Treasurer - Dan Stock	<a href="mailto:dstock4239@charter.net">dstock4239@charter.net</a>
Susan Malski	<a href="mailto:smallard3@yahoo.com">smallard3@yahoo.com</a>
Scott Lingo	<a href="mailto:scott@targetrealestate.com">scott@targetrealestate.com</a>
Arnie Leriche	<a href="mailto:aleriche526@gmail.com">aleriche526@gmail.com</a>
Russell Williams	<a href="mailto:jrusswill@gmail.com">jrusswill@gmail.com</a>

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](mailto: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 2019 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
- 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 the 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 \_\_\_\_\_