



THE NORTH BRANCH

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE AU SABLE NORTH BRANCH AREA FOUNDATION

Spring/Summer 2013

The Jack Pine - Ugly Trees? Maybe Not!

Michigan's jack pine is arguably the toughest tree in North America. It thrives in extremes, adapting to the very conditions that limit the growth of other plants. A number of species such as deer, snowshoe hare, turkey and several threatened and endangered species rely on jack pine forests, barrens and prairies for critical habitat. However, many people only see the twisted forms of older jack pines and wonder where the beauty is.

You need to look a little further than scruffy, dead branches and sharp needles to see what makes the jack pine landscape beautiful. It is true that they grow where nothing else will; the barren, sandy soils make it impossible for maple-beech forests with morels and trilliums that pop up each spring in richer areas. The relatively high altitude of the land in the central part of Northern Michigan, cut through with outwash channels from the last glaciers more than 10,000 years ago, brings extreme heat in summer and cold in winter, further stunting any plants that try to grow. However, these soils and heights are what give us the fabled Au Sable River and all its wonders. Rainwater that hits the sandy soil in the Au Sable River Watershed infiltrates through sometimes hundreds of feet of sand, which cleans and cools it before it seeps out through the cedars into the many streams that form the river. The blue-ribbon trout that you find in your favorite fishing spot wouldn't be there without the sandy soils that only grow jack pine.

Jack Pine
Pinus banksiana



A young Jack Pine



Why do Jack Pines need fire?

Jack Pines are called a 'fire species' because they rely on hot forest fires for reproduction. Most jack pine cones are sealed with a special resin. This resin prevents the cones from drying out and releasing their seeds except under certain conditions. The resin melts at 112 degrees F, a temperature easily reached during a forest fire. After the resin is melted, the cones open, releasing the seeds from within to provide for future growth.

North Branch Foundation Annual Dinner

Enjoy an evening out with your neighbors and friends. The dinner is a chance to meet new people and find out what's going on.

Friends welcome!

Please make reservations with
Debi Anderson by June 4th

344-7477 or DebbieA20@aol.com

or use the coupon on page 3



Saturday, July 6, 2013

6:00 p.m. Meeting and

Greeting

7:00 p.m. Dinner

Fuller's North Branch Outing
Club

\$30.00/person

by Bill Ross

Summer on the river is starting. As you can see from this newsletter your Foundation is and has been busy improving the river experience for our friends and residents.

Before trout opening our riverkeepers identified fallen trees and log jams that moved to block the river. They were all cleared by April 27th, opening weekend. Please help our riverkeepers by letting Eric Bankhead (348-6704 or ebank@33access.com) or your section's riverkeeper know if there is a problem on the river that needs attention.

July 6th is an important date to mark on your calendar - the Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation's annual dinner! This is a time to meet your neighbors, make new friends and learn about the various projects we support. This is also a great opportunity to invite your neighbors and friends on the river to get to know us. We need to expand our membership and your help is appreciated.

Your Foundation has several projects we are supporting this year. We are planning to improve some of the public access sites to help fisherman and floaters get in and out of the river. Huron Pines has submitted a plan for funding several watershed improvements which will help the North Branch. The Foundation has given its support to the project and if the grant request is approved you will be hearing about the plan in the near future.

You will find a coupon in the newsletter to renew your financial support for the Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation. We need your support for the continued improvement of the North Branch Watershed. Please clip the support coupon and send us a contribution today. We are a tax deductible foundation. Enjoy the coming months.



The Sweet Promise of Spring by Debi Anderson

A few days ago I kayaked for the first time in the spring on the North Branch of the Au Sable River. In the past my trips have been in the other three seasons with experiences in every type of weather imaginable. The burning hot sun of summer when you think that it is probably cooler in Florida. The cold and relentless winter wind and temperatures. If you are on the river enough one will always be taken by surprise by a thunderstorm that sneaks up on you with an hour to your vehicle. Each season has its good and bad times. This week I have experienced the sweet promise of spring.

After a long winter in Valparaiso I was looking forward to getting my paddles wet. When I am situated in my kayak for a trip down the river I have a little ritual where I become part of the river. I place my paddle across the kayak then pushing my sleeves up and close my eyes. Then I place my hands in the water and drift into a pleasant quiet place for my mind and body. Even in the 50 degree water my mind and soul feel part of the flow of the river. As soon as my kayak starts to get off path my session is over and I am down to the business of observing the wildlife and the land along the river.

One never knows what you will see, hear or smell in a float. This trip the fragrance in the air was soft and sweet. The temperature was in the low 70's with a good wind in my face most of the trip. The leaves of last fall are gone with only the various spices of pines blowing in the wind.

As the wind swirled around the soft green branches that the sun was warming up I could smell spring. A crisp clean smell that was a mixture of pine and fresh air. Without any buds or leaves on any if the surrounding trees the pines stood tall and majestic while displaying their various shades of green .

Once I was close to the confluence of the North Branch and Big Creek my eyes shifted to the sky hoping to catch a glimpse of the eagles that have made this area their home the past several years. I did not spot any in the sky or the tree tops. As I approached the nest that they have been occupying I saw a mature eagle perched on the edge. There must be eggs in the nest again this year.

With the sweet promise of spring in the air , eggs in the nest and trees ready for their summer foliage, I know it is going to be a great summer on the river.

Enjoy!

Trillium (trillium, wakerobin, tri flower, birthroot) is a genus of about 40–50 species of spring ephemeral perennials, native to temperate regions of North America .

Trillium is one of many plants whose seeds are spread by ants!.

A BEAUTIFUL SIGN OF SPRING!



Lovells Township Questionnaire Results by Gary Neumann, Township Supervisor

Following is the 2013 Lovells Township Questionnaire Results. The questionnaire was sent out early this year in conjunction with the annual mailing of the assessment notices. Assessment notices are sent to all parcel owners; improved parcels, vacant parcels, large and small parcels. There are nearly 2000 parcels in Lovells' township but only 110 responses to the questionnaire were received. Although only 5.5% responded to the survey it does give one an idea of what parcel owners are thinking regarding these subjects.

Below are the questions and responses, reported as a percentage of the total responses received.

1. Historically monthly board meetings have been held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 PM. This past winter (November through March) we "tested" moving the monthly meeting to 10 AM and saw essentially no change in the number of attendees. In your opinion, the ideal time for monthly meetings is: 10 AM 2 PM 7 PM

Responses: 23% for 10 AM, 13% for 2 PM, 33% for 7 PM and 32% abstained.

2. Currently the rental of a dwelling for a period less than 30 days duration is considered a business enterprise and therefore such rentals are only allowed in our Commercial and Business Districts. They are not allowed in our Residential, Recreational & Residential, or Green Belt Districts. Should we continue with this restriction? YES NO

Responses: 48% said YES, 46% said NO and 6% abstained.

3. Recycling (cardboard, newspaper, plastics, etc.) is currently being discussed at the county level. Do you believe we should continue with a recycling program? YES NO If "YES", a reasonable recycling charge per year would be: \$5 \$10 \$15

Responses: 74% said YES, 19% said NO and 7% abstained. As to annual cost: 19% for \$5, 21% for \$10, 28% for \$15, 21% for zero dollars and 11% abstained.

4. Has late night noise (primarily from fireworks) been an issue for you?

YES NO Other noise issues? _____

Responses: 33% said YES, 62% said NO and 5% abstained. Comments regarding noise sources included the military (11 comments) and ATVs/Cycles (8 comments).

5. If possible, would you pay your township taxes with a credit/debit card? YES NO

Responses: 47% said YES, 48% said NO and 5% abstained.

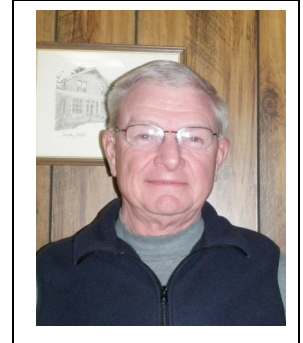
6. Should the township, like the county, sell dog licenses? YES NO Are there any other "services" the township should offer? _____

Responses: 36% said YES, 55% said NO and 9% abstained. No significant comments.

7. In 2012, for most areas in the township, there were two periods when electrical power was lost for up to six days. Should your township hall become a "safe haven" in the event of future electrical power outages? YES NO If yes, do you think it is a good idea for your township to be prepared to operate via a standby generator to provide this "safe haven"? YES NO Additional ideas? _____

Responses: Safe Haven - 58% said YES, 36% said NO and 6% abstained.

Install Standby Generator – 59% said YES, 24% said NO and 17% abstained.



Lovells

North Branch Foundation Now on the Web

The Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation has joined with Lovells Township to have space on their web site. We will be posting copies of our newsletter and putting important announcements on this site. We ask that you check the site regularly for information that may affect and or interest you.

To find us on the web, please go to www.lovellstownship.com. Go to the bottom of the first page and click on the site map icon. This will take you to a new page, look for 'Categories' and under this area click on Foundations. That will take you to the information page for the North Branch Foundation.

"Hot Shots for Headwaters" Sporting Clays Shoot

by John Dallas

Headwaters Land Conservancy, a 20 year-old organization has the mission to protect large tracts of land in Northeast Lower Michigan. To date, they have 79 properties protected with Conservation Easements covering more than 9500 acres and over 29 miles of shoreline. HWLCLC is one of the many groups, including our North Branch Foundation dedicated to improving and preserving the "Up North" experience.

This August 23, HWLC will be hosting our first annual "Hot Shots for Headwaters" Sporting Clays shoot. The event will be held at the Lewiston Sportsmen's League, and will include a 100 bird event along with a catered lunch. Donation is \$100. A number of great prizes have already been secured, with more on the way in. Those registering for the shoot prior to August 10 will be entered in a drawing for a 10 box case of shells.

This is a great chance to meet other conservation-minded individuals, and to start to get ready for Grouse season which will open shortly after our event.

To register, or get more information on the event, contact Headwaters Land Conservancy at 989-731-0573.

Other Activities to look forward to:

**The Lovells Bridge Walk
August**



**Beaver, Beer and Banjo
July**

**Annual Meeting
Saturday
August 31, 2013
10:00 a.m.
Lovells Township Hall**



**...and of course, a summer of kayaking, fishing and
spending time out doors in the great
Au Sable River watershed!!**

Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation

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Mission Statement: To preserve, protect and enhance the natural endowments of the watershed of the North Branch of the Au Sable River for the benefit of wild fish and game and public enjoyment and appreciation.