



THE NORTH BRANCH

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE AU SABLE NORTH BRANCH AREA FOUNDATION

Summer 2021

Protecting the North Branch for over 77 years

From the Chairman's Desk

Of all the Foundation does and tries to do to make our River better, our Riverkeepers Program is, year after year, at the heart of our efforts. The Riverkeepers are our guardian angels.

When a storm blows a tree down blocking passage, they find it, assess it and like magic it is gone. When there are violations of the Natural Rivers Act, like the clear cutting of trees along the River, they spot it or hear of it and make certain the proper authorities are informed. When beavers get busy cutting down trees along the River that provide shade to keep the River cooler, they coordinate the removal. The Riverkeepers are also a key part of our effort to keep in check the invasive purple loosestrife.

These volunteers do all this and so much more, patrolling our River as our eyes looking for problems, making certain our River remains safe and beautiful for all of us to enjoy. And they take reports from anyone who sees similar issues that can adversely affect our River. Check out our website (www.ausablenorthbranch.org/about2) for the contact information of the Riverkeeper covering the specific reach where there is a problem.

For as long as I have known about this program, Eric Bankhead has been the Lead. All issues ultimately come to him to double check and then coordinate the "fix". Eric's work and that of his Riverkeeper team goes largely unnoticed because the "fixes" just seem to happen. These efforts are, however, the most important work the Foundation does day in and day out all year long.

My thanks, our thanks, to each and every one of them for their selfless efforts for us and the River we all love.

The River: Challenging Past, Bright Future



The North Branch has had its share of challenges over the last few years. The DNR had been reporting a decrease in trout populations since the 1990s; fishing guides reported a dramatic decrease in trout caught and observed in spring 2018; there have been high water flows, followed by low water flows, and even some surges of high water. While no one can control the weather, a large number of dedicated individuals and groups have been working tirelessly to improve things.

ASNBAF has partnered with Anglers of the Au Sable (AOTA), Mason Griffith Founders Chapter of TU, Lovells Township and Grand Valley State University by providing funds and volunteers for a number of projects.

Primarily through AOTA, trout structures and other trout habitat are being improved throughout the North Branch. Initial reports from areas where the work has been completed state that more fish are being caught and observed. According to Michigan DNR, the correct and effective placement of woody debris and structures will provide a place for young trout to hide and improve the function of the stream. This includes helping to move sand and sediment that covers the gravel necessary for effective spawning and for insect habitat.

USGS has installed one monitoring station for flow and temperature at Kellogg Bridge. So, if one monitor is good, more will be better. We are partnering with Mason Griffith and Lake Superior State University to install more monitors on the North Branch. These monitors will provide useful data for identifying issues and determining future projects.

Another source of important data will be the studies by Grand Valley State. Professor Mark Luttenton and his students are finishing reports on insect biomass and the survival rates of juvenile trout. Both of these will help us better understand the river and what we can do to help improve it.

As information and reports become available, we will be sharing it with you in our newsletters and on our web site, so stay tuned, and stay involved. We are confident that time on the river will continue to get better.



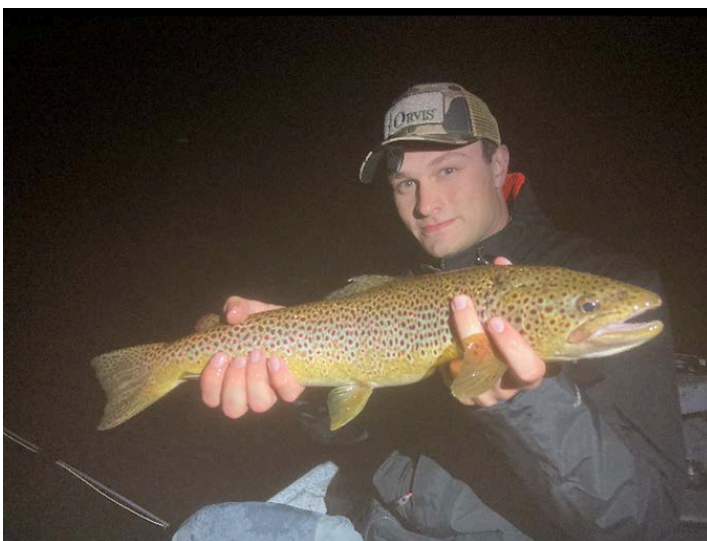
New Directors for the Foundation in 2021

The Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation was fortunate to be able to add two capable and dedicated people to our board of directors. Here is a short introduction of them, in their own words, to let you know about them. Please stop in at our Annual Meeting (see back page of this newsletter) to say hello.

Andy Grant

My name is Andy Grant and I am incredibly excited to be joining the Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation. Growing up, the North Branch has always been a special place to me. Our family cabin on the river provided me with countless years of exploration and joy, which further deepened my love for this area.

After graduating from Michigan State in 2020 and spending the past three summers working at Gates Au Sable Lodge, I decided that I wanted to live in the area full time. In June I accepted a teaching job at Grayling High School and will begin my career this upcoming school year. I look forward to working towards the betterment of this resource that we all hold so dear!



Greg Bierl

I've been fly fishing and exploring the reaches of Crawford County for almost 25 years. A dream was realized when we purchased our cabin on the North Branch three years ago. One of the main things that drew us to the North Branch is the "River Community" and shared passion everyone has about our River. When Bill Anderson approached me about the prospect of joining the Board my response was immediate. I'm honored to be a representative member of ASNAF and will work tirelessly and diligently in furtherance of our mission.

My "day job" is serving as in-house counsel and head of business development at a burgeoning software company that delivers compliance to banks and credit unions.

I have a beautiful wife, Erin, two step-daughters, a three year old son appropriately named "Drake" and a beloved red golden retriever. I'm pretty passionate about everything that I do and some of my interests, better described as component parts of my personality, include fishing, hunting, music, golf, and really anything outdoors.



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 Jamey Matthew Denno
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We appreciate your tax deductible donations that make our work possible. We can also accept credit card donations on the web site. Please use the form below to help us maintain and improve our North Branch

Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation

www.ausablenorthbranch.org

Here is my (our) contribution to support the Foundation:

Name: _____ Contribution Amount: _____
 Address: _____ In Memory/Honor of: _____

 E-mail: _____

Please return to:

Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation - c/o Marjie Warner - PO Box 2524, Grayling, MI 49738

Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)3 not for profit.

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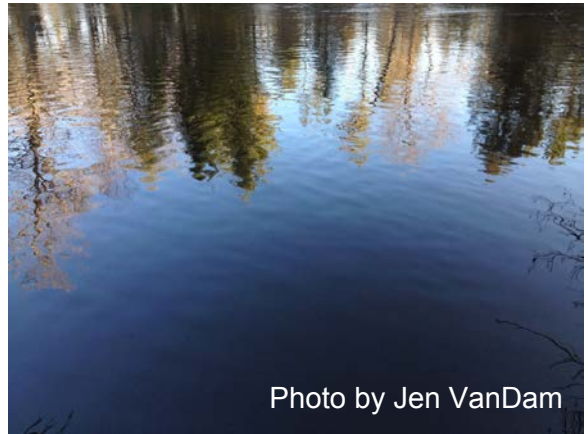


Photo by Jen VanDam

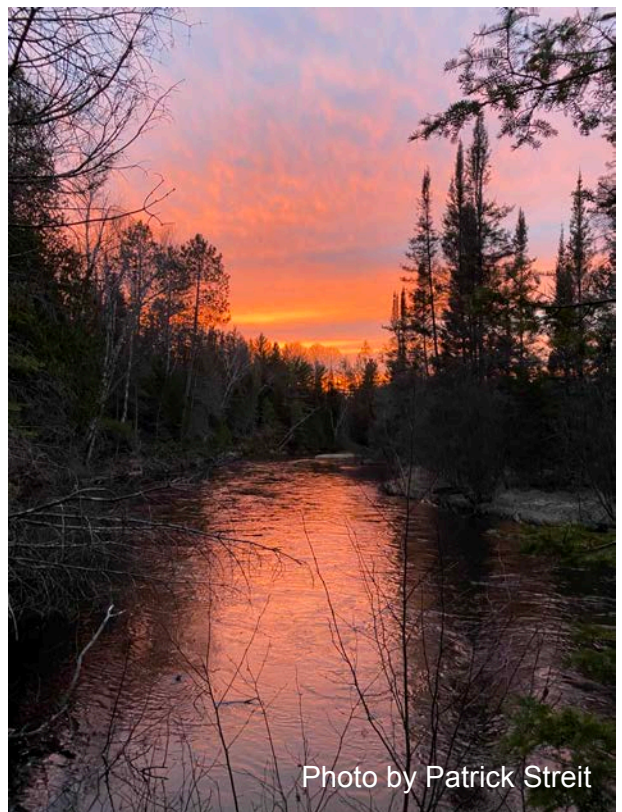


Photo by Patrick Streit

Annual Meeting and Reception for Supporters

Things are finally getting back to normal, but we may not be all the way back yet. So, just to keep everyone safe and healthy, we are changing the format for our Annual Meeting (and foregoing the Annual Dinner...again). We will be hosting a cocktail hour at the **Lovells Township Pavilion** as a way of saying "Thank You!" to all our supporters. We will provide beer, wine, soft drinks and packaged snacks. If you wish, bring a personal appetizer to enjoy at your table.

Steve Sendek will be our featured speaker and will provide an update on the North Branch. The festivities begin at **4:00 p.m. on Saturday, September 4**. We look forward to seeing you there.

Purple Loosestrife Removal Effort

We are partnering with Huron Pines to remove and eradicate Purple Loosestrife on the North Branch. The work will take place over two days, Monday August 16 and Tuesday August 17. We still need a few volunteers, so if you are interested in volunteering and available for either day, please contact Bill Anderson (waanderson49@gmail.com).



Officers

Neil Wallace, Chairman
248-891-5446
Bill Anderson, Vice Chairman
219-771-9178
Marjie Warner, Treasurer
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Directors

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Mike Inman 312-446-7244
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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.

