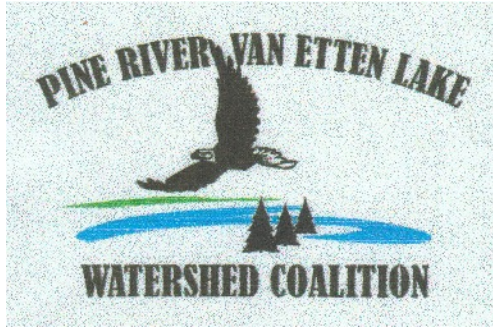


2025 Regular Coalition
Meetings

January 8, 2026
Alcona Conservation Office
US 23, Harrisville, MI
10:00



Working Together to
Restore and Protect
Our Natural
Resources

Coalition Chair's Report
By Russell Williams

PRVEL normally meets on the second Thursday of January, April, July and October at 10 am at the Alcona Conservation District Office located at 320S. State St., Harrisville. All are welcome to attend; there are coffee and snacks for enjoyment.

Monitoring and tending work continues at the riparian buffer planting project along Barlow Rd. near Pine River Trail. If you are interested in helping out with this ongoing effort please let us know.

We are currently brainstorming for a project at Ratliff Park and hope to start some activities soon. If you have any ideas or thoughts, you think could help, let us know. There are some invasive species growing at the park that we could work on, and there might be some room for a short trail, and a demonstration pollinator riparian buffer garden.

Donations are always welcome; without your support we cannot sustain the group. For information please contact Russell Williams, Lead Board Member, at russell.williams@macd.org or try 989-335-8563 talk & text.

Temperature Logger Program Update
By Scott Lingo

Once again the Pine River Van Etten Lake Watershed Coalition has monitored the tributaries of the Pine River this past summer. Temperature loggers were placed at 9 different sites within the watershed to track the stream temperatures from June 1 thru Sept. 1. This year we lost one temperature logger, the logger was attached to a tree and the tree was removed by a contracted company clearing road right of ways.

The loggers have been sent to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for analysis. Once the data has been received from the DNR, we will post the results and compare them with previous years' recorded temperatures. The purpose is to provide additional data for the DNR to monitor the health and well being of our streams and to help with the classification of the streams as warm or cool in nature in Alcona and Iosco Counties. The classifications help indetermining the species of fish that can inhabit the stream.

Macroinvertebrate Sampling: a measure of water quality

By Deborah Miller, PRVEL Sampling Leader



This Year's star
Water Scorpion 'Ranatra'

PRVEL uses a number of methods to measure water quality in the Pine River watershed. One of these methods is macroinvertebrate sampling, which evaluates aquatic health based on the presence and relative

rating of 3.46, excellent on the rating scale, meaning that organic pollution is unlikely. The Pine River Campground site yielded a water quality rating of 4.79, good on the rating scale, indicating the possible presence of some organic pollution. Overall, over the past several years, the sites sampled have been in the good to excellent categories, suggesting a generally healthy aquatic environment.

Volunteers who would like to participate in the sampling process are always welcome. It is a great way to meet other PRVEL supporters, see PRVEL in action and contribute to the ongoing evaluation of our watershed.

abundance of macroinvertebrates (non-microscopic animals without backbones).

In most years PRVEL volunteers perform samplings at two different locations on the Pine River, one in June and one in September. This year the Buhl Road and the Pine River Campground sites were tested. Sampling involves using nets to collect debris from a given segment of the river. The macroinvertebrates are separated from the debris, identified and counted. Based on a formula devised by MiCorps, a value is calculated for the sample as a whole and that value indicates the health of the aquatic environment where the sample was taken.

In 2025, the Buhl site had a water quality



A sample of the invertebrates collected

2024 Phosphorous and Suspended Solids Monitoring Update

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. 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 lakeshore nutrients and solids. Sampling was started in 2017 on the South and West Branches and the Pine River (E/W) at F-30. Starting in 2023, samples have been taken from the East Branch at Tait Road rather from the E/W Branch junction.

The estimated amount of phosphorus - P (19.3 lbs/day) entering the lake from the Pine River for the sampling year 2024 was about 120 percent of the estimated ten-year mean amount. The estimated amount

of total suspended solids - TSS (6.76 tons/day) entering the lake was about 140 percent of the ten-year mean. An estimated contribution from Hill Creek is included in this estimate. Both estimates are based on the regression method approach.

The P and TSS estimated amounts at the outlet from Van Etten Lake at the dam based on the regression analysis were (21.8 lbs/day) 137 percent of the ten-year average and (1.33 tons per day) 163 percent of the ten-year average respectively and within the normally expected range based on historically observed values.

No flow stage curve measurements were made in 2024.

Table 1
2024 Phosphorous and Suspended Solids Monitoring

	Flow, Q		Phosphorus, P		Solids, TSS	
	cfs	%	#/day	%	tons/day	%
So Branch (04)	76	52	7.6	49%	1.23	54%
East Br by difference	36	23	3	20%	3.77	17%
West Branch (41)	25	17	3.8	25%	4.48	20%
Van Etten Creek (11)	12	8	0.9	6%	2.3	10%
Pine River @ Co Line (01)	149		18.9		6.61	
		% of mean	120%		140%	
Tributary estimate for balance (not including Duvall)						
	104	108	15.4	71	22.78	345%
Van Etten River below Dam	99		21.8		1.33	
		% of mean	137%		163%	
E/W at F-30	58		6.9		8.24	

OBSERVATIONS

1. The Pine River is by far the major contributor of P and TSS to the lake. The indications are that the bulk of P and TSS are carried to the lake during spring melt runoff and during rain events.
2. Over the long term, the amounts of P and TSS leaving via the Van Etten River are consistently less than the amounts entering from all sources. The difference is due to a combination of settlement of solids after they enter the lake and uptake of P by aquatic growth which becomes a part of an internal recycle.
3. Limited Total Phosphorus sampling is being conducted in 2025 using the services of the Prein Newhof Laboratory of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

DONORS, PLEASE HELP SUPPORT OUR GOALS

For ten years, beginning in 2015, the Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan and its affiliate foundations hosted Giving Tuesday Northeast Michigan to help local nonprofits participate in the campaign at no cost. To be able to focus on the important work laid out in a new strategic plan, the Community Foundation has concluded its role as host of the Giving Tuesday Northeast Michigan campaign. Beginning in 2025, only nonprofit organizations that partner with the Community Foundation through a fund established on their behalf will be featured on a special Giving Tuesday page. PRVEL will not be one of these organizations

For the past several years PRVEL fundraising efforts have centered on the annual Giving Tuesday campaign. Our participation in this program in 2024 resulted in our receiving donations of \$1,385 to help us with our efforts to preserve and protect the watershed.

The PRVEL board wishes to thank everyone who contributed to our 2024 fund raising effort for their support of PRVEL's projects and programs and we encourage you to make a contribution to help us by mailing a check to PRVEL, P. O. Box 680, Oscoda, Michigan 48750.

WATERSHED WILDLIFE WATCH

Black Bear

Most of us Michiganders have seen a black bear – maybe even in our own yard – and know to give them plenty of room to run the other way. They have enormous appetites and an excellent sense of smell. They can remember the locations of food sources from year to year and can travel great distances to get back to them. There are certain things home owners can do to prevent conflict with these impressive creatures and here are a few:



- never intentionally feed a bear
- remove potential food sources from your yard
- keep pet food inside
- keep garbage in a secured container with a lockable lid until disposal
- keep outdoor picnic tables and grills clean
- when camping, store food in air-tight containers or vehicle trunk
- when hiking, travel in groups and make lots of noise – carry bear spray

If, after all your precautions, you still have problems with bear encounters, contact the DNR offices.

VELA and PRVEL Partnership

Beginning In 1997, the Van Etten Lake Association (VELA) was encouraged by Richard Shoemaker of the then Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for VELA to create an organization to seek a grant to better understand the correlation between the quality of the water coming into VanEtten lake from the Pine river, homeowner influences on that water, and the quality of the water as it leaves the lake (via the dam). An informal group of interested persons including Ken Ratliff, Larry Murphy, Jerry Ward and Pat Copland of VELA, Kelly Duke, USDA Natural Conservation Services, Gary Kellan, Oscoda Township and Ed Roddy, Alcona Township became founding members of the Pine River Van Etten Lake Watershed Coalition (PRVEL), which was officially formed in November, 1999 with the purpose of obtaining a grant. With the assistance of Ms Duke, an EPA 319 watershed Planning grant was applied for and approved in June, 2001 and Richard Myrick, USDA, Alcona Conservation District was hired as the Planning Project Manager later that month. The plan was completed in 2003.

The main purpose of the watershed management plan was to provide for better monitoring of what was happening within the 187,000 acres making up the area feeding into the lake with the understanding that “what happens up the river directly affects the lake”.

Interesting Stats

Watershed size – 187,000 miles

Lake shoreline length – 10.7 miles

Watershed wetlands – 6,404 acres

Lake mean depth – 14 ft.

Pine River miles – 372 miles

Lake maximum depth – 30 ft.

Lakes within the watershed - 10

VanEtten Lake surface area – 1,409 acres



CONSIDER BEING A RIVER KEEPER

Our River Keepers watch out for things that could be problematic or might require some action to be taken to protect the watershed. They also report natural occurrences like animal sightings or the quality of fishing/hunting. The program is aimed at establishing a better monitoring system to cover the large area encompassed within the watershed.

Please consider being a River Keeper and contact Carole Plunkey at caroleplunkey@charter.net

Fall 2025 Newsletter

PRVEL Coalition Board

Chair - Russell Williams

jrusswill@gmail.com

Treasurer - Dan Stock

dstock4239@charter.net

Secretary - Deb Miller

millerdb613@gmail.com

Scott Lingo

scott@targetrealestate.com

Carole Plunkey

caroleplunkey@charter.net

Cynthia McGowen

mcgowen.cynthia@yahoo.com

Non-Voting Advisors

US Forest Service

Huron Pines RC&D

USDA-NRCS

EGLE/Water Division

US Fish & Wildlife

DNR/Fisheries

Alcona and Iosco County Conservation Districts

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 2025 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 attention of

Contact via email
as shown above

- Deborah Miller
- Scott Lingo
- Carole Plunkey
- Dan Stock
- Russell Williams
- Russell Williams
- 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 _____

Pine River Van Etten Lake Watershed Coalition