

2024 Regular Coalition Meetings

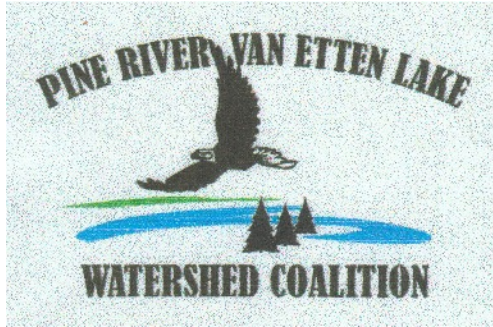
Nov 4

Jan 16, 2025

Alcona Conservation Office

US 23, Harrisville, MI

10:00



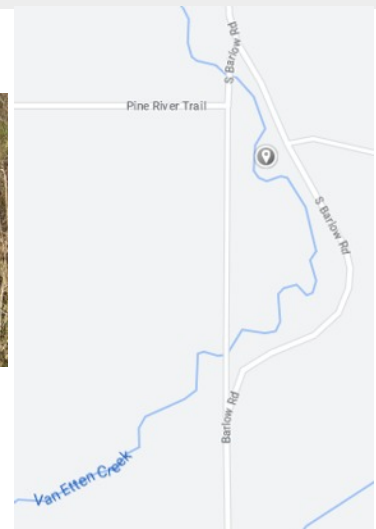
Working Together to
Restore and Protect
Our Natural
Resources

Van Etten Creek Riparian Buffer Project Update By Russell Williams, PRVEL Board Chair

The tree planting project along Van Etten Creek is now in the monitoring phase. The trees - spruce, cedar, and fir, have been growing for more than a year now. The only field activity scheduled for this year is a yet to be completed end of growing season survival survey, planned for later this month. Rain patterns this past summer were fairly regular on site which is favorable. If mortality is found to be excessive then replacements will be planted. The Alcona Conservation District currently has some trees left over from its fall sale that would be suitable if needed.



Yes, there are trees
alive there



The tree planting site

USDA Projects Update By Luca Adelfio, USDA

The 2024 road/stream Crossing Improvement planned for the West Branch of the Pine River at FR 4433 (Dewar Road) is currently in the design phase and is now scheduled for implementation in 2025.

The old CCC ford at the Forest Service Pine River campground (South Branch Pine River) needs an archaeological survey and State Historical Preservation Office consultation before the project can continue, so it is at least a year out.

We have been actively collecting channel darter eDNA samples this summer and we hope the analyses will be completed soon. We also expect to have a report on the channel darter project from Michigan Natural Features Inventory before the end of the calendar year that will be forwarded when received. We are developing an eDNA assay so we can determine presence/absence of this species from a water sample. I have funding in-hand to collect samples at about 25 locations, mostly in the Pine River system, in 2025.

2023 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 lake shore nutrients and solids. Sampling was started in 2017 on the South and West Branches and the Pine River (E/W) at F-30. In 2023, samples were taken from the East Branch at Tait Road rather from the E/W Branch junction. Van Etten Creek was not sampled.

The estimated amount of phosphorus - P (12.5 lbs/day) entering the lake from the Pine River for the

sampling year 2023 was about 45 percent of the estimated ten-year mean amount. The estimated amount of total suspended solids - TSS (3.7 tons/day) entering the lake was about 61 percent of the ten-year mean. 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 (12.7 lbs/day) 74 percent of the ten-year average and (0.5 tons per day) 53 percent of the ten-year average respectively.

Four flow stage curve measurements were made in 2023 with the refurbished flow meter borrowed from Huron Pines.

Table 1
Pine River Tributary Sampling Results

	Flow, Q		Phosphorus, P		Solids, TSS	
	cfs	%	#/day	%	tons/day	%
So Branch (04)	55	52	4	46%	7.12	42%
East Br by difference	16	15	0.7	9%	1.85	11%
West Branch (41)	30	29	3	35%	5.5	33%
Van Etten Creek (11)	4	4	0.9	11%	2.3	14%
Pine River @ Co Line (01)	97		12.5		3.68	
		% of mean	45%		61%	
Tributary estimate for balance (not including Duvall)						
	104	108	8.7	71	16.78	353%
Van Etten River below Dam	99		12.7		0.5	
		% of mean	75%		61%	
E/W at F-30	46		3.8		7.35	

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 2024 using the services of the Prein Newhof Laboratory of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

WILL THE STATE BE SUCCESSFUL THIS YEAR?

House Bills 4479 and 4480 and Senate Bills 299 and 300 were proposed this session of the state legislature in response to the sad fact that Michigan remains the only state in the nation that does not have a statewide septic code. The proposed legislation would mandate routine inspections and essential maintenance for all septic systems. If passed into law, the bills would also establish a database for inspections, a certification system for inspectors and a technical advisory committee to provide recommendations for septic system management.

Similar legislation has been introduced during almost every recent legislative session and has been successfully defeated every time through the combined efforts of a handful of counties that already have active septic codes which work well for them.

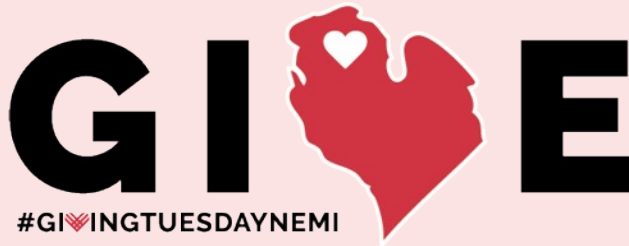
WATERSHED WILDLIFE WATCH

Opossum



Possum vs Opossum. What's the difference? Well, if you look up this critter that is often seen as roadkill, you may be surprised to discover that you've been calling it by the wrong name. Possums are native to Australia, New Zealand, and China, while Opossums live in America and southern Canada. So our Michigan "critter" is an opossum and can be found within our watershed, most often at night.

These marsupials (birth their young in a pouch) are about the size of a house cat and have an elongated snout and long, scaly tail that helps them stabilize their bodies when climbing in trees. They are often seen as a nuisance when they scrounge through garbage or garages looking for food, but will resort to this behavior if they cannot find food within their natural environment (like insects, eggs, plants, carrion, and small reptiles). They are known to "play dead" when threatened by a predator and move out of an area if it cannot provide them with enough food.



GIVING TUESDAY DONORS SUPPORT PRVEL GOALS

For the past several years PRVEL fundraising efforts have centered on the annual Giving Tuesday campaign. Our participation in this program in 2023 resulted in our receiving donations of \$1,305 to help us with our efforts to preserve and protect the watershed.

The PRVEL board wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the 2023 fund raising effort for their support of PRVEL's projects and programs and encourage you to watch for information on the this year's **December 3, 2024** Giving Tuesday campaign.

HULL ISLAND

Yes, Hull Island is in the PRVEL watershed, which extends to where the Lower Van Etten Creek enters the AuSable River.

Huron Pines purchased a 42-acre tract on Hull Island in December, 2023. The property is bordered on the west side by the Lower Van Etten Creek. The purpose of the purchase was for Huron Pines to hold the property for the Charter Township of Oscoda until the township can obtain a trust fund grant. The township will then purchase the property from Huron Pines and manage it in perpetuity as a public park. The effort to protect the Hull Island property as a native preserve reflects Huron Pine's mission of community driven conservation, providing local municipalities with resources for owning and maintaining protected areas for wildlife, water quality and public recreation.



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

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

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 _____