

2024 Regular Coalition Meetings

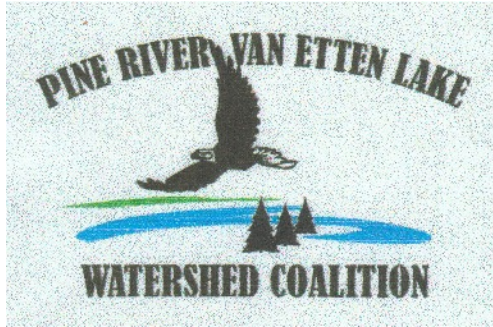
January 11

April 11

July 11

Alcona Conservation Office

US 23, Harrisville, MI



Working Together to
Restore and Protect
Our Natural
Resources

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

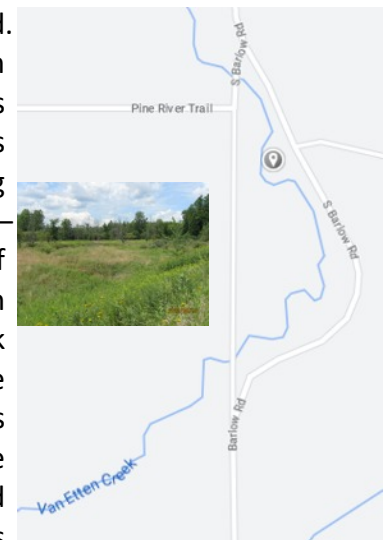
The riparian forest project along Van Etten Creek in Greenbush Township has been progressing through the growing season. The initial planting included: 100 white cedar, 100 white spruce, and 100 balsam fir. The trees were mostly 12 – 18 inches in height and bare root stock. Survival rates appear to be very good - with some losses, mostly balsam fir, occurring during the dry period we had in early summer.

To protect the trees from deer - wire cages

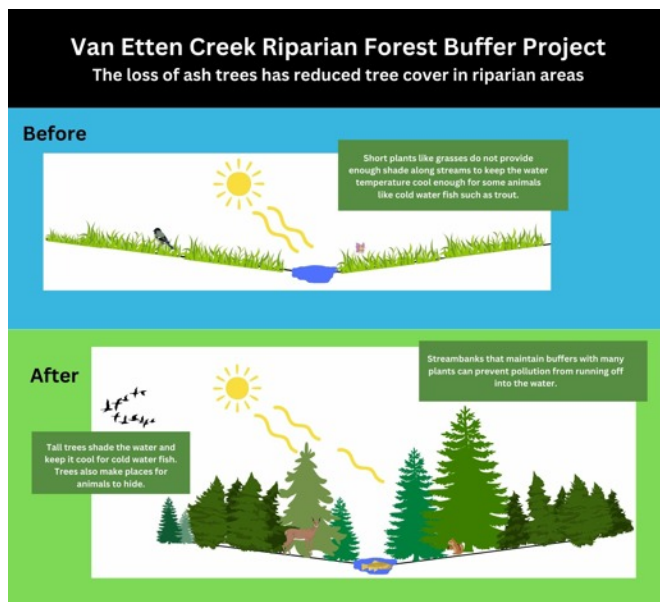
have been installed. Protection from competing herbaceous vegetation was included in the planning phase of the project – but for a variety of reasons – installation was delayed. Field work will get more challenging as temps fall, so we hope to have fiber weed mats needed to provide this protection put in place over the next month.

These dense fiber mats will block growth of adjacent plants which will increase available sun and water for the trees.

We recently received the delivery of an informative sign for the planting site to share some basic explanations of the project. The sign will be located near Barlow Road so those passing by who are curious can read the sign content easily. Work will continue at the site for some years as the trees will require maintenance and monitoring. Thanks to all those who supported the efforts this year – and we hope to see you out there in the future.



The tree planting site



This project has been funded through Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's Nonpoint Source Program.



Planned Road/Stream Crossing Improvement for 2024 West Branch Pine River at FR 4433 (Dewar Road), Alcona County, Michigan

This undersized culvert has washed out repeatedly over the last year due to beaver activity. The washouts have deposited substantial amounts of road fill in the stream, diverting the natural channel. Beaver trapping is ongoing as a temporary solution, but ultimately this culvert needs to be replaced with a larger



Third or fourth Washout
May 2023

structure.

In working partnership with Huron Pines and Alcona County Road Commission, we propose replacing the 4' wide culvert with a 12' wide culvert to accommodate the bankfull channel. We propose restoring the original stream channel and floodplain through the accumulation of road fill that has already been deposited in the channel.

We have received \$50,000 from Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and \$45,000 from Forest Service retained (timber) receipts. Alcona CRC will provide substantial in-kind support. Huron Pines will contract engineering design over the winter (2023-2024) with implementation planned for construction season 2024.

West Branch Pine River is known to support Brook Trout and Channel Darter, an endangered fish species in Michigan.



Project site

Macroinvertebrate Sampling Results Consistent

Macroinvertebrate sampling is one measure that PRVEL uses to evaluate the health of the watershed. Sampling is done twice a year in late spring and late summer/early fall. This involves removing debris and water samples from various branches of the Pine River and counting the macroinvertebrates contained in those samples.

Macroinvertebrates are animals without backbones that are visible to the naked eye, such as insect larvae, worms, etc. Numbers of each organism type are tallied and a formula devised by MiCorp is applied to obtain a score from poor to excellent.

Since 2020, PRVEL's scores have consistently been in the "very good" range, with only one "good score" due to silty conditions and less than ideal sampling. These scores indicate a healthy watershed with only a slight possibility of pollutants.

Participating in macroinvertebrate sampling is one way for PRVEL supporters to assist the organization with its mission of monitoring and protecting the health of the Pine River/Van Etten Lake watershed. It is also an excellent opportunity to become familiar with the natural environment of our area and to meet other PRVEL members. Email notices of upcoming sampling events are generally sent out two weeks before. Hope to see you next spring.

Contact Deb at millerdb613@gmail.com for more information

WATERSHED WILDLIFE WATCH - THE BOBCAT

This wild feline can be found all over North America and can be counted in the millions. Bobcats can be identified by their spots or stripes and brownish-red or buff fur. They have big paws, sharp, black ear tips, and long legs, as well as a short, six- inch stubby tail with a white tip. Because they are mostly nocturnal, they are rarely spotted unless by the use of mounted outdoor cameras. Their primary prey include snowshoe hares, ground birds, rodents, and fawns.



The bobcat's highly developed senses and secretive nature keep it always on the lookout for humans (especially hunters) or other predators, and they make their homes in dense vegetation, hollow trees, or rock crevices. They also do not hibernate and are active all year long. Babies are called kittens and only stay with their mothers for about a year, until they learn from her how to hunt for themselves.

RIVER KEEPERS' UPDATE - WE WANT YOU!



The River Keepers program is aimed at establishing a better monitoring system to cover the large area encompassed within the watershed. Individuals volunteering for this program are being asked to watch out for things that could be problematic or might require some action to be taken, but also to report back natural occurrences like animal sightings or quality of fishing/hunting.

Thank you to all of our current volunteers – your efforts are greatly appreciated and essential to keeping abreast of conditions within the watershed.

Please consider being a River Keeper and contact Carole Plunkey at caroleplunkey@charter.net or 739-8717 for more details.

GIVING TUESDAY GET READY, GET SET, GO!

For the past several years PRVEL fundraising efforts have centered on the annual Giving Tuesday campaign. Our decision to rejoin Giving Tuesday has justified our continued participation in the event again this year on **November 28th**. This will give you the opportunity to support our efforts to restore and protect our watershed environment.

Your online donation can be made by going to cfnem.org and making a contribution to the Pine River/Van Etten Lake Watershed Coalition through the Iosco County Community Foundation.



Hydrilla in Michigan

Hydrilla, a highly aggressive invasive aquatic plant, has been discovered for the first time in Michigan. Hydrilla is a tough plant that is tolerant of a wide range of environmental conditions and can spread by fragments, seeds, underground tubers, and overwintering parts called turions. It also has been documented in southern states growing at rates up to one inch per day, forming dense beds and thick mats in both lakes and streams. As such, hydrilla has the potential to be even worse than Eurasian watermilfoil.

At this time, the hydrilla invasion appears to be confined to a pair of private residential ponds in southwest Michigan. However, surveys will be continued to determine the full extent of its spread. The State has also begun treatment of these invasions.

This discovery should remind us all of the importance of being mindful not to inadvertently spread invasive species from one water body to another in the course of our monitoring activities. This means being sure to thoroughly clean our gear before moving from one water body to the next. We should take the same care when engaging in water-based recreational activities like boating, fishing, swimming, and waterfowl hunting, and if we engage in hobbies like water gardening or aquarium keeping.

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

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 2022 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 _____