



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

February 2008 Station Activities

The Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (NFWCO) is located in Alpena, Michigan and works to meet the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fishery and Ecosystem goals within Lake Huron, Western Lake Erie, and connecting waters of the St. Marys River, St. Clair River, and Detroit River. Activities include Aquatic Species Conservation and Management, Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management, Aquatic Invasive Species Management, Cooperation with Native Americans, Leadership in Science and Technology, Partnerships and Accountability, Public Use, and Workforce Management – all of which are conducted in alignment with the Service Fisheries Program's Vision for the Future. The station is one of many field offices located within Region 3, the Midwest Region.

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

Keeping the Stress Down for Lake Trout Onboard the *M/V Spencer F. Baird*

*Submitted by Scott Koproski
Fishery Biologist*

Lake trout stocking took place for the first time on the newly christened *M/V Spencer F. Baird* in the spring of 2007. As it is with any new vessel, minor problems were identified during field operations. One problem that was encountered during stocking was elevated water temperatures in the lake trout holding tanks. Unlike the *M/V Togue* (the retired stocking vessel), the *M/V Baird* was constructed with the holding tanks mounted on top of the deck. The advantage to this design is that it allows for gravity release of the fish and the tanks to be removed after stocking is completed. However, with the tanks located on the deck, they are subjected to direct sun-light and heat appears to be



During February, Alpena NFWCO Biologists worked to resolve elevated temperature issues for fish stocked from the M/V Spencer F. Baird. Photo credit: Aaron Woldt, USFWS.

transferring to the water. Elevated water temperatures increase the stress lake trout are subjected to while being transported to stocking sites, which is already a stressful event for these fish.

Staff at the Alpena NFWCO, including the crew of the *M/V Baird*, have been discussing options for minimizing the transfer of heat from the tanks to the water within the tanks. Each of the 10 tanks, which hold 1000 gallons of water, is insulated except for the three lids located on top of the tanks. During stocking activities in 2007, crew noticed that on sunny days the lids absorbed so much heat that they could not be touched. It is thought that the heat also transferred to the water from the lids. Fishery Biologists Scott Koproski and Adam Kowalski were charged with painting and insulating the lids in an attempt to alleviate the problem. By painting the lids white (instead of the raw aluminum surface) it is thought that a majority of the heat produced by direct sunlight will be reflected from the surface thus resulting in a more consistent and cooler water temperature. In addition to painting, one tanks had insulation injected into the void between two sheets of raw aluminum on the lid. This one tank will be compared to the remaining nine tanks during stocking activities in 2008 and differences in water temperatures will be recorded. If the tests indicate that the insulated tank kept the water cooler, the remainder of the tanks will be insulated.

This work is another example of Alpena NFWCO commitment to the following Fisheries Vision Priorities: “Partnership and Accountability”, “Aquatic Species Conservation and Management”, and “Cooperation with Native Americans”.

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

Repair of Two Erosion Sites on the Main Branch of the Black River, Vanderbilt, Michigan

*Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist*

Two eroding stream banks were restored on the main branch of the Black River in Montmorency County, Michigan in July 2007. The 50-acre property is owned by a private individual and was recently placed under a permanent protective easement through the Headwaters Land Conservancy. The repair of these erosion sites was coordinated with many partners, and is part of a larger, locally-driven watershed restoration and protection effort. The Alpena NFWCO Partners for Fish and Wildlife Biologist Rawlings was part of a watershed team that identified problem sites, prioritized work actions, secured necessary funding and



Two stream bank erosion sites were restored on the main branch of the Black River in Montmorency County, Michigan. Vegetative plantings will begin this spring. Photo credit: Heather Rawlings, USFWS.

implemented the restoration projects.

A robust brook trout population occurs in Hobbs Creek and the Main Branch of the Black River that run through this property. These waterways are high quality coldwater streams that provide both spawning and rearing habitat for brook trout, a Service Region 3 priority conservation species. Sedimentation into the streams remains the largest pollutant problem and degrades the substrate, reducing habitat quality and rendering it unsuitable for fish spawning. By restoring eroding streambanks this project helped to improve stream quality for brook trout and other aquatic resources.

Two large erosion sites, approximately 500 ft. in length, were present on the property when the landowner purchased it. The weekend of July 21, 2007 approximately 20 volunteers from the Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the Black River Work Crew restored the two erosion sites in a marathon work weekend. The spirit and value of volunteers was evident during the restoration process and demonstrates collaborative conservation. All materials had to be carried down to the creek through a winding path by hand and by wheelbarrow. A combination of biologists, lunger structures, tree revetments, and vegetative plantings were used to stabilize the sites. The days were hot and sunny, but the river was cold, so there were plenty of volunteers offering to get wet. Both sites were completed by the Black River Work Crew the following week. Due to the drought conditions, vegetative plantings will be completed in the spring of 2008.

In addition to the work crew (Montmorency Conservation District) and volunteers (Trout Unlimited, Headwaters Chapter and Montmorency County Conservation Club) that completed the on-site work, this project was supported in part through the North East Michigan Council of Governments, which contributed \$2,000 in labor for the design, permitting, and implementation of the project. Huron Pines Resource, Conservation & Development donated a vast amount of technical expertise and directed the volunteers during the work weekend. This project demonstrates how the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program can engage a wide range of partners and become part of locally-driven conservation efforts.

The Black River, part of the Cheboygan River Watershed, is a Partners for Fish and Wildlife Focus Area. Completion of aquatic habitat restoration projects such as this is consistent with and supportive of the "Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management" priority of the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Huron Pines RC&D Annual Meeting

*Submitted by Heather Rawlings
Fish and Wildlife Biologist*

Biologists Andrea Ania and Heather Rawlings attended the Huron Pines Annual Meeting held in Hillman, Michigan on February 2, 2008. The meeting was held to showcase watershed restoration projects completed in the 2007 field season, partnerships created, and general activities of Huron



Alpena NFWCO Biologists Rawlings and Ania attended the Huron Pines RC&D annual meeting during February. Image credit: Huron Pines RC&D.

Pines. Keynote speaker was Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Chief, Kelley Smith. In lieu of resource agency reports, key agency personnel were requested to remain in the building after the formal meeting for a “meet and greet” session with interested partners. Rawlings and Ania remained after the meeting to discuss restoration initiatives in the Ocqueoc and Sturgeon Rivers. The Alpena NFWCO is working closely with Huron Pines on a number of large projects and initiatives for the 2008 field season.

Approximately 100 resource agency, local government and conservation organization personnel were updated and/or introduced to the Alpena NFWCO’s habitat restoration programs, and grant opportunities offered through the Service. Planning of aquatic habitat restoration projects contributes toward the “Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management” priority of the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future.

Partnerships and Accountability

2008 Ohio Fish Producers Association Meeting

*Submitted by Jim McFee
Fishery Biologist*

On February 11, 2008 Alpena NFWCO Biologist Jim McFee attended the annual Ohio Fish Producers Association meeting. The meeting was held in Oregon, Ohio on the shores of Maumee Bay on Lake Erie. The annual meeting is set aside to discuss various topic concerning the commercial fishing industry and elect officers for the coming year. McFee attend the meeting to present information regarding a potential lake sturgeon tagging project on Lake Erie.

McFee presented the objective of the project and the work that would be required from interested commercial fishers. The project would involve commercial fishers collecting biological data from captured lake sturgeon such as length (total, fork, and commercial), girth, weight and sex (if applicable). In addition to biological data, commercial fishers would be responsible for removing a fin ray for aging and genetic data as well as tagging the fish with both an internal PIT (passive integrated transponder) and external FLOY tag. All information would be recorded on, and the fin ray stored in, an envelope supplied by the Alpena NFWCO. In addition to the envelopes the Alpena NFWCO would supply all equipment needed for this project, including PIT tags, PIT tag reader, syringes, FLOY tags, tagging needles, and a saw for fin removal.

Several commercial fishers showed interest in this project, including a fisher from Michigan and representatives from the Ontario Commercial Fishers. This project is an excellent opportunity to involve user of the resource to collect additional lake sturgeon data and extend the genetic library of open water stocks. At the present time this project is pending approval of funding.

This effort provided a unique opportunity to create new partnerships with both governmental and non-governmental agencies to achieve common Great Lakes management objectives. Maintaining these collaborative relationships allows for the most efficient use of limited human and fiscal resources. This project is consistent with the “Partnerships and Accountability”, “Aquatic Species

Conservation and Management”, and “Leadership in Science and Technology” focus areas of the Fisheries Program’s Vision for the Future.

2008 Science Night at Mason Elementary

*Submitted by Jim McFee
Fishery Biologist*

On February 26, 2008 Alpena NFWCO Biologist Jim McFee took part in the Mason Elementary School science night. The school is located in Grosse Point Woods, Michigan on the shores of Lake St. Clair. Science night consisted of several rooms that more than 100 students and parents could visit. Most rooms had displays and information dealing with physics related topics. The Fish and Wildlife Service room dealt with educating the students and parents about invasive species and control measures.

The night was filled with questions and answers about aquatic nuisance species. A display board filled with information on nuisance species triggered the questions in addition to a DVD on Asian carp. The display board contained information on round goby, Eurasian ruffe, sea lamprey, zebra mussels and Asian carp. The students also had a chance to look at specimens of the invasive species preserved in plastic. These items gave the students a chance to see some of the species first hand, to help them identify them on their next fishing or lake trip. Plenty of literature was also available to take home. The big message of the night was to help stop the spread of these unwanted species by cleaning boats and not dumping bait. This event once again shows how education is one of the strongest tools natural resource professionals can use in dealing with invasive species.

This effort provided a unique opportunity to create new partnerships with both governmental and non-governmental agencies to achieve common Great Lakes management objectives. Maintaining these collaborative relationships allows for the most efficient use of limited human and fiscal resources. This project is consistent with the “Partnerships and Accountability”, “Aquatic Species Conservation and Management”, and “Leadership in Science and Technology” focus areas of the Fisheries Program’s Vision for the Future.

Public Use

Information Added to the Alpena NFWCO Web Site

*Submitted by Anjanette Bowen
Fishery Biologist*

Information was added to the Alpena National Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office’s (NFWCO) web site (<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/alpena>) during February.

The web site provides an overview of station programs and activities conducted in Lake Huron and connecting waters of the St. Marys River and Huron Erie Corridor. Activities include lake trout and lake sturgeon population investigations, treaty fishery management assistance, habitat and

ecosystem restoration, and aquatic invasive species management. The site also houses station reports and fact sheets. The site received an average of 8,000 visitors per month and 40,000 visits per month from July to December 2007.

In February, the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (Partners Program) web page was updated with new fact sheets and information. A new web page was created that highlights individual Partners Program projects. The project page provides narratives for selected projects and includes before and after images.

A Children and Nature web page was also added to the site. It provides information on the Children and Nature Initiative and efforts underway by the Alpena office to conduct a pilot project to help connect children with nature at a local elementary school.

The Alpena NFWCO web site provides information to the public and partners about Service fishery activities in Lake Huron, western Lake Erie, the St. Marys River, and the St. Clair/Detroit River waterway. The site supports the “Public Use” priority of the Fisheries Vision for the Future.



New material was added and updates were made to the Alpena NFWCO web site during February. Image credit: Anjanette Bowen, USFWS.

Workforce Management

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Hosts Scientific Writing Course

*Submitted by Adam Kowalski
Fishery Biologist*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service contracted with Pam Hurley of Hurley Write, Inc. to host a scientific writing workshop February 5 and 6, 2008 in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Several Service personnel were in attendance including Anjie Bowen, Scott Koproski, and Adam Kowalski from Alpena NFWCO. This was a two day workshop with the following objectives: discuss the role of persuasion in writing, analyze the paper’s audience and purpose, create useful writing strategies, describe methods of effective language use, apply various proofreading/editing strategies, and apply effective writing strategies to work related documents.

Day one focused on discussions relating to the idea that writing is persuasive and reviewed the three ways to persuade according to Aristotle. Knowing and understanding your audience was also a large part of day one. Other day one topics included: working through the writing process, critical thinking, using language effectively, reducing expletives and redundancy, creating flow, and use of tables, charts and graphs. Open discussions and reviewing writing examples were also conducted throughout the day to help fortify the lessons.

Day two focused on editing, proofreading, and reviewing documents from others. Writing grants and proposals was also discussed during day two. Other topics covered were writing the individual parts of a scientific paper, writing abstracts, and using outlines. Editing written examples as a group, discussing what needed to be corrected, what was correct, and how the example could be improved over all was addressed in day two.

This was a very good workshop and should improve the writing abilities of all in attendance and improve the quality of work produced. This workshop is consistent with the Service's Fisheries Program Vision for the Future priority of "Workforce Management" by maintaining and supporting an adequately-sized, strategically positioned workforce with state-of-the-art training, equipment, and technologies in their career fields.

For more information about Alpena NFWCO programs and activities contact us at:

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