

The Sturgeon General

www.sturgeonfortomorrow.org
Dedicated to the future of our sturgeon



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New Black River Sturgeon Hatchery produces 1,700 fingerlings

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Tower-Kleber Limited Partnership, Michigan State University and Sturgeon for Tomorrow celebrated the release of 1,700 young sturgeon raised at the Black River Streamside Lake Sturgeon Rearing Facility on Saturday, August 15, 2009.



"The efforts of the people at Tower-Kleber have been extraordinary; they worked through difficult weather conditions and under a very tight schedule to construct the facility in time to produce sturgeon this year," said Dave Borgeson, the Northern Lake Huron Unit manager for the DNR.

Stocking:

-Black Lake	1,500
-Mullett Lake	100
-Burt Lake	100

Sturgeon For Tomorrow with the assistance of the Burt Lake Preservation Association and the Mullett Area Preservation Society contributed \$ 5,300.00 to feed the young sturgeon. "Sturgeon for Tomorrow stepped up huge for us this year by purchasing the food needed to raise this batch of fish," said Dr. Kurt Newman, (former) Lake Huron coordinator for the DNR.



"We're just ecstatic about the new rearing facility," said Brenda Archambo, SFT president. "It will allow us to continue our efforts to restore

the sturgeon population, as well as offer a great opportunity for public outreach and education."

The rearing facility was staffed by MSU personnel, led by Dr. Kim Scribner, Ph.D. candidate Ben Rook of MSU, and DNR researcher Dr. Ed Baker.



Photo: Gil Archambo releases sturgeon into Mullett Lake

200 spawning lake sturgeon tagged in spring 2009

The sturgeon spawning season on the Upper Black River began the end of April and concluded in early June, and those involved with protecting the fish and collecting data have declared the season highly successful.

"Two-hundred (200) sturgeon were netted, tagged and cataloged," said Dr. Kim Scribner, lead sturgeon researcher with MSU.

"Additionally, our research team collected eggs and milt from numerous sturgeon to raise in our newly developed streamside hatchery." Naturally produced larval lake sturgeon were also collected and transferred to the rearing facility for rearing.

Of the 200 sturgeon netted and released during this spring's spawning season, 46 were sturgeon never before captured, while the remainder were recaptures from previous spawning season efforts. This information indicates that new generations of sturgeon are reaching maturity in Black Lake, a sign that the population is slowly recovering.



Photo Courtesy: Ben Rook, MSU

ing.

"The sturgeon effort in Black Lake and on the Black River is one that we all take great pride in," said Dave Borgeson, Northern Lake Huron Management Unit Supervisor for the DNR in Gaylord.

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-Dave Borgeson, Northern Lake Huron Management Unit Supervisor, Fisheries Division DNR Gaylord, MI

From the President...Building on a decade of success



**Brenda Archambo
President**

It is an honor and a great privilege to address and thank all of you for a remarkable 10 years, making SFT one of the greatest conservation organizations on the planet. Together, we have sustained growth, witnessed dedication, passion and steadfastness on our journey to save the sturgeon. We have also observed growing maturity of our organization in its first decade of service. Thank you all!

Our work is paying off. Together, we have served our mission by supporting lake sturgeon recovery efforts, educating, engaging and mobilizing natural resources stewards, restoring sturgeon spawning habitat, and sustained scientific studies in collaboration with our conservation partners.

Our outreach and education programs are expanding. Nearly 1,000 Black Lake lake sturgeon have been tagged, natural reproduction has been quantified, over 27,000 sturgeon fingerlings have been reared and planted throughout the watershed, the new rearing facility/sturgeon hatchery is up

and running, volunteer hours are nearing 4,500 hours annually, and so much more.

SFT programming is a result of strategic planning and staying true to our core values. Identifying purpose, goals, objectives and budgets are fundamental, and carefully evaluated for effectiveness within our capacity for implementation. What we do is planned, orchestrated, and implemented by your Board of Directors, regional cast of volunteers, and collaborators. I believe much of our success is staying focused on our purpose, growing to reach our maximum potential, and sowing seeds that benefit our sturgeon, while building a conservation movement. True success comes only when every generation continues to develop the next generation. I am excited that our programs are also attracting and engaging youth.

Environmentalism is a value that springs from an early childhood experience in nature. Children raised on video games, trips to the shopping mall, and vacations in Disneyland are unlikely to become

defenders of the natural world. When nature itself suffers a deficit, we'll all be in trouble. New research shows that nature can offer powerful therapy for numerous illnesses. Environment-based education dramatically improves standardized test scores, grade-point averages and develops skills in problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making.

We are developing an interpretive program following Department of Education Content Expectations that will be achieved by participants exploration experiences.

As we consider the future, we must continue to be innovative in our approach to conservation, engaging and mobilizing diverse constituencies, facilitating nature experiences, and finding solutions that not only benefit lake sturgeon, but benefit the entire ecosystem.

This coming year, despite economic hard times, we ask you to join us in continued conservation success.

2010 will be a banner year!

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.

~ Native American Proverb

January is Membership Renewal Month

Membership Matters

The future of our lake sturgeon essentially depends on what we do now to defend them. To continue to conserve and protect this majestic creature in our region, Sturgeon For Tomorrow (SFT) calls upon individual members and businesses for your continued commitment and financial support.

Your membership renewal is vital to accomplish the many important programs provided through SFT. Even though we thrive on volunteer leadership, renewals and contributions are vital to our success! We need your membership commitment to accomplish even greater things in the coming year.

**Please renew your membership today .
A membership envelope is enclosed.**

Renew on-line

www.sturgeonfortomorrow.org/membership-registration.php



Your membership renewal is vital to accomplish the many important programs provided through SFT

Please renew your membership today !



Sturgeon For Tomorrow will earn a donation every time you search the internet or shop online!

GoodSearch & GoodShop



By Chris Engle, Staff Writer, Gaylord Herald Times



Black Lake's threatened sturgeon got a helping hand May 9 when Huron Pines AmeriCorps members and volunteers helped protect their Black River spawning habitat through erosion control.

The problem: loose soil tumbling into the river covers up cobblestones essential for sturgeon eggs to attach to when they are laid. No cobblestones equals no sturgeon.



Nearly 60 volunteers gathered at a camp above the river that morning with a daunting task ahead: stop the bank from eroding into the river by replacing topsoil, rolling out hundreds of square feet of landscaping fabric and planting more than 3,000 native plants on the steep slope -- all before the rain moved in. The effort will help keep further erosion from occurring.

Grayling-based nonprofit Huron Pines AmeriCorps teamed up with Sturgeon For Tomorrow, Boy Scout Troop No. 645 of Harrison, Cheboygan 4-H Archers and dozens of volunteers to get the job done in a few hours. The site was one of three receiving

the same treatment funded by \$75,000 from the Great Lakes Commission, National Fish & Wildlife Fund, Huron Pines and Sturgeon For Tomorrow.

Ertel encouraged volunteers who spotted sturgeon to take the time to view the fish but at the same time treat the bank with respect.

"I want people to be excited about why we're here -- for the sturgeon," he said.

A group of campers at the site calling themselves the Sturgeon Guard keep watch for poachers fishing on the closed section of river. Sturgeon For Tomorrow president Brenda Archambo reiterated that point.

"Sturgeon have been around for 136 million years, but in the last century they've

nearly been wiped out," she said.

According to Sturgeon For Tomorrow, the sturgeon of the Black River Watershed is one of the few remaining wild populations not totally dependent on hatchery programs.

For some volunteers the project was all about the fish and their environment.

"Ya gotta love every minute of it," said Derek Getz Cheboygan 4-H Archery, who's been doing these projects for the past eight years and is getting his 22-month-old daughter involved, too. "I want to do something good for the environment."



For others, it was just about being on the river.

"It's so soothing to be on the water," said Carol Rose of Hillman as she planted shrubs on the slope. "It's part of being in Michigan. It defines who we are."

I was offered the opportunity to give back to nature, and I took it. So did 50 or 60 others with a shared goal of helping a rare fish species and, at the same time, helping reverse damage man has dealt its habitat.



"These volunteers did a lot of river bank stabilization and planted over 3,000 native plants at critical areas along the river to help restore eroded sand banks," said Archambo. "All in all, it was a terrific year for the sturgeon and the Black River, and it is very gratifying to see this program grow in so many new and exciting directions."

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Dedicated to the future of our sturgeon

August 12-13 Sturgeon Hatchery Tours welcomes 250 visitors in 4 Hours

Tours of the new streamside rearing facility-sturgeon hatchery on the Upper Black River were well attended. Nearly 250 visitors from around the globe viewed three month old sturgeon in the hatchery, and learned about early life history and how we can all play a role to keep this fish in our lakes.

Sturgeon researchers from the DNR and MSU were on hand and talked about lake sturgeon biology, reproductive ecology and current year's research. Sturgeon for Tomorrow representatives discussed restoration work to improve



Ann Wilson-Feldhauser, volunteer coordinator for the Annual Sturgeon Guarding Program along with her husband Mark (picture below), have a deep and dedicated love for Michigan's natural resources.



Ann retired in 2008 from the Michigan DNR after a career as a communications specialist, working with the Press Secretary and the Office of Communications.

The 2009 Sturgeon Guarding Program, which draws upon volunteers from all over Michigan to protect the sturgeon from poaching saw a banner year and is rallying more help for the spring spawning season in 2010.

"Literally hundreds of volunteers kept watch over the spawning grounds on the Black River, and we are all very grateful for the increasing level of support," said Feldhauser. "We count on that and even more support in the years to come."

"The DNR's Law Enforcement Division is proud to work with so many dedicated volunteers, to protect this very valuable resource," said Sgt. Greg Drogowski, DNR Law Enforcement supervisor, who is responsible for coordinating the DNR's law enforcement efforts with volunteers in the Sturgeon Guarding Program.

Dick and Sylvia Sanford of Cheboygan, "Sturgeon Ambassadors" (pictured right) camped on the river for two weeks. The Sanford's have served as base camp "Sturgeon Ambassadors" for years.



The 2010 SGP is scheduled for April 25 to May 29. Register on line www.sturgeonfortomorrow.org.

Mullett-Burt Lake Sturgeon Assessments

The Michigan DNR and Michigan State University conducted a preliminary large-mesh gillnet survey of Mullett and Burt Lakes during July.

Mullett Lake: In 5 days of sampling, 16 sturgeon were netted. Average length was 36.2" and length range was 23 inches to 42.1 inches.

Burt Lake: In 5 days of sampling, 20 sturgeon were netted. Average length was 39.3" and length range was 21.1 inches to 65.4 inches.

The purpose of the survey was to gain insight into sturgeon distribution within each lake and to provide baseline data that could be used to plan more intensive survey efforts in the next two years.

Proposed New Sturgeon Regulations for the 2010 Black Lake Sturgeon Season

Sturgeon For Tomorrow has been working with DNR Fisheries Division to improve the process for the Black Lake lake sturgeon spearing/angling season that takes place in February each year. Previously, the fishery has been managed through a special drawing where anglers call the local fisheries unit and apply to be one of 25 chosen to participate in the fishery per day. With this limited entry system, however, the season often lasted the maximum number of days, the management of which required a significant investment by DNR Fisheries and Law Enforcement divisions. The limited entry also limited the number of anglers who were able to participate in the fishery. For these reasons, and because we are confident the fishery can be efficiently managed under a different scenario that continues to protect the Black Lake sturgeon population from over-harvest, we propose establishing a shorter season where anglers are allowed to participate at will with certain daily constraints, eliminating the special drawing-based system.

Below are the proposed changes for the 2010 Black Lake Sturgeon Season:

- The spearing and hook-and-line harvest season for lake sturgeon shall be the first Saturday in February through the following Wednesday, inclusive or until the harvest quota has been reached, whichever comes first.
- Fishing for lake sturgeon shall be prohibited from the end of the harvest season through the first Friday in February, inclusive.
- Size Limit: No minimum size limit.
- Harvest Limit: The total harvest by all anglers combined shall not exceed (5) lake sturgeon per year.
- Spearing and hook-and-line fishing for lake sturgeon shall be allowed between 8:00 AM and 2:00 PM on each day that the harvest season remains open as established above.
- Prior to fishing, an angler shall register on site each day and obtain a flag each day. The flag shall be displayed outside the entry-way to the shanty being used, and shall be displayed for the entire time of fishing for lake sturgeon each day. Note: Angler Daily Registration; Onaway State Park, Zollner Road public access (NW side of Black Lake, by former Black Lake Hotel), and Onaway DNR Field Office (M-211).
- A lake sturgeon that is harvested shall be immediately tagged with a validated lake sturgeon harvest tag, immediately registered with DNR personnel, and that lake sturgeon shall be subject to internal examination of reproductive organs by the DNR personnel.

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THANK YOU to the following individuals, organizations and businesses for your generous support at our 11th Annual Banquet September 12, 2009. With your support we will continue to expand lake sturgeon recovery programming. 12th Annual Banquet is September 11, 2010.

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Gil & Brenda Archambo
Rick Ackerberg & Kathy Bezotte
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In Memory of
Clifford Shephard
Sondra Shephard



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