

History of MGFTU Recent River Work

Below is a history of some of MGFTU's recent work on the river. I sincerely hope that you will look at this favorably and find a way to contribute to the current efforts on the Mainstream of the Au Sable

During the past four years MGFTU volunteers have contributed nearly 12,000 volunteer hours and has raised over \$500,000.00 in grants, contributions, and donations to improve our treasured Au Sable and Manistee Rivers and to better the Grayling Community. The following are some of the accomplishments of MGFTU:

- Refurbished and constructed over 1,200 fish habitat improvement structures on the Mainstream of the Au Sable. These structures were initially constructed by the CCC.
- Taken the initiative and assisted other river groups including the DNR in the repair and maintenance of over a dozen access sites on the Au Sable and Manistee Rivers.
- Conducted or assisted with the habitat mapping of over 15 miles of the Mainstream Au Sable and North Branch of the Au Sable.
- Conducted spring and fall benthic macro invertebrate studies at six different locations.
- Conducted fall trout spawning surveys (REDD surveys) on the Headwaters, Mainstream and South Branch of the Au Sable River.
- Monitored water temperatures in the Headwaters, Mainstream, South and East Branches of the Au Sable, as well as the West Branch of Big Creek and their tributaries for multiple years.
- Monitored water quality on the East Branch of the Au Sable River above and below the Grayling fish farm.
- Participated in the control of the invasive species, Purple Loosestrife.
- Participated in the Cedars for the Au Sable program by building cages and planting cedar trees in the Deward Tract on the Upper Manistee River and starting in 2017 on the Williams Tract above Grayling
- Sponsored and participated in youth programs including Trout in the Classroom project at the Grayling and Roscommon Middle Schools. Held an 8-week Middle School Fly Tying Class and assisted with the Middle School Fishing Club. MGFTU sent two youth to the Michigan TU Youth Camp and one youth to the Trout Unlimited Youth Summit in Grayling in 2017.
- Participated in the MITU and Illinois Youth Trout Camps and provided an opportunity for the youth to learn about a river restoration projects and obtain hands on experience. MGFTU members volunteered riverboat trips for the youth.
- Conducted an eight (8) week fly tying class attended by community members. MGFTU conducts two free fly fishing schools at Gates Lodge in Grayling every year.
- Worked with wounded veterans through Bamboo Bend. Bamboo Bend brought eight (8) veterans identified through Project Healing Waters to Grayling in May to build a bamboo fly rod and to be able to share experiences whether making a rod, fishing, or just swapping stories. There are members of MGFTU that serve as instructors for this class. The veterans were afforded opportunities to fish out of an Au Sable Riverboat or a drift boat and many of the volunteers for these fishing opportunities were MGFTU members. At the end of the week of building a bamboo rod, fishing and enjoying Northern Michigan, there was a celebration that was attended by both members of MGFTU and others from the fly fishing community

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A few of the grants received from the MDNR Habitat Improvement Account for stream restoration projects on the Au Sable River system are:

- Williams Tract Fisheries Habitat Improvement Project (2013-2014)
- Pollack Bridge Fisheries Habitat Improvement Project (2015-2016)
- Mainstream Fisheries Habitat Structure Repair (2013-2015)
- West Branch of Big Creek – Lovells Fisheries Habitat Improvement Project (2016-2017)
- Planning Grant to evaluate tributaries to the Au Sable and Upper Manistee Rivers to determine sections that could benefit from stream habitat work (2017).