

Huron-Manistee National Forests Au Sable River Watershed Management

**Michigan Society of American Foresters
Fall Meeting – October 5-6, 2017**

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Wild & Scenic Rivers

5 Managed by the HMNFs:

- Au Sable National Scenic River
- Bear Creek National Scenic River
- Manistee National Recreation River
- Pere Marquette National Scenic River
- Pine National Scenic River



<https://www.rivers.gov/>

Au Sable Natural Scenic River

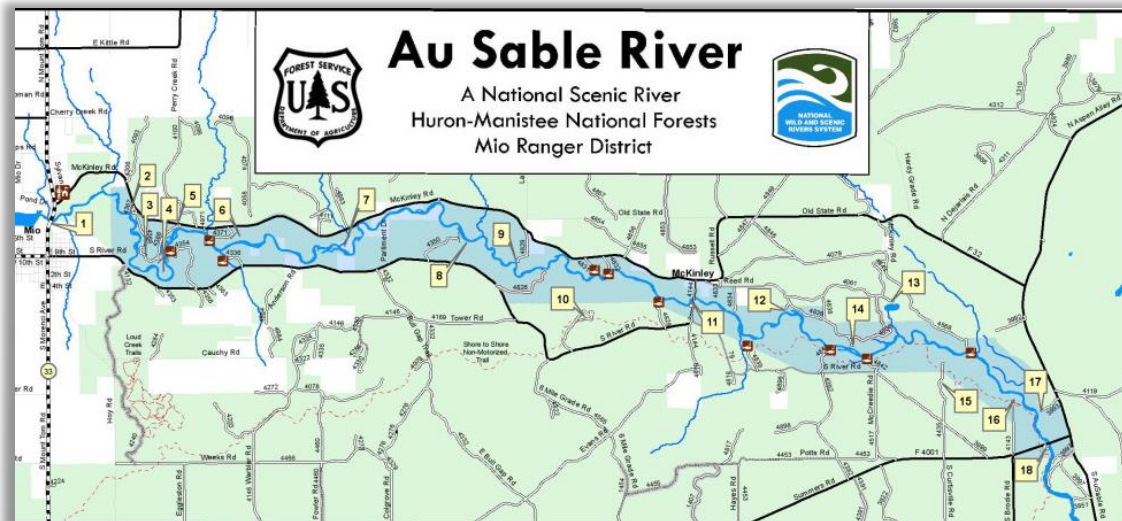
Outstanding Remarkable Values (ORVs):

- Scenic
- Free-flowing
- Archeological-Historical
- Recreation
- Coldwater Fish
- Wildlife/Plant Species

Managing Agency: Huron-Manistee National Forest

Au Sable Natural Scenic River

- **Designated: 1984**
- **Reach:** Main stem from the Mio Pond project boundary downstream to the Alcona Pond project boundary.
- **Classification/Mileage:** Scenic/23.0 miles



Au Sable Natural Scenic River Plan

- Supplements the Forest Plan
- Outlines the rules and goals for the waterway
- These rules work together with local zoning ordinances to protect the rivers from pollution, erosion, over-development, and degradation
 - For Example: How and what we can harvest in the viewshed and corridors.
- Identifies potential projects and improvements



Types of Projects

Fisheries

- Sand traps
 - Reduce sand bedloads caused by erosion.
- Streambank Stabilization
 - Stabilize banks that are eroding into the river.
- Aquatic Organism Passage
 - Remove barriers to fish passage into the tributaries for spawning.
- Large Woody Debris
 - Fish habitat improvement



Buhl Dam – Before (left) and After (right)

Recent Projects

Whirlpool Access Site (2017)

\$130,000

\$100,000 funded through
a Stewardship contract
\$30,000 funded through
Recreation Fee collections

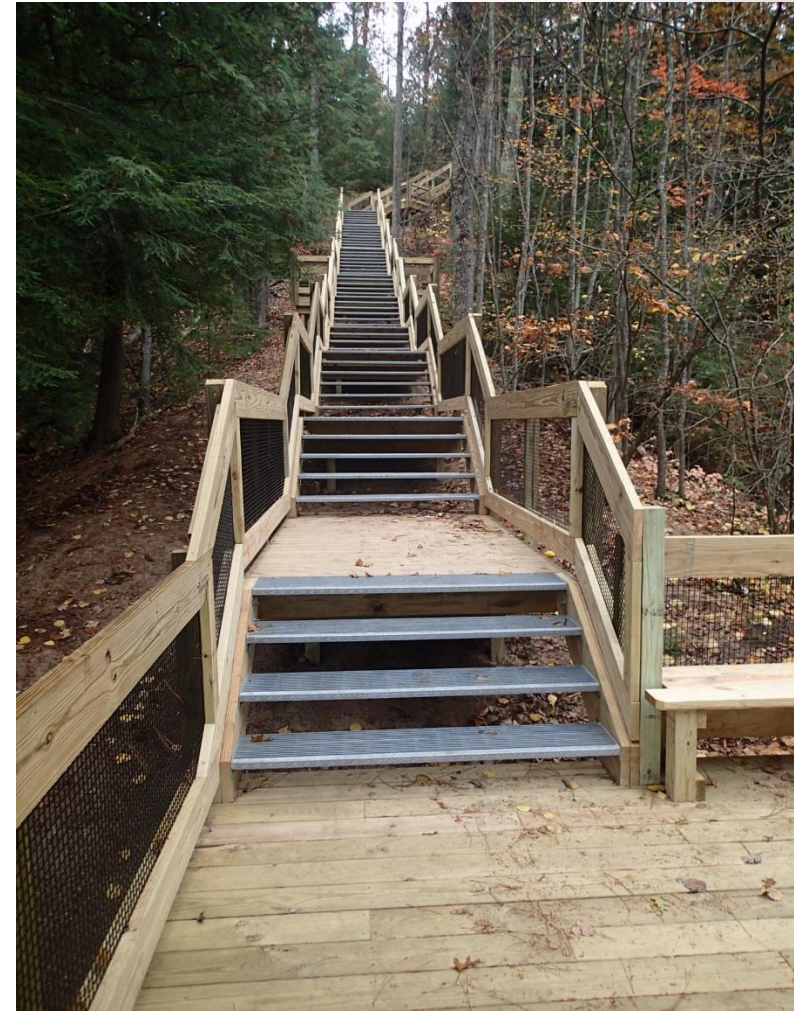


Recent Projects

Lumberman's Monument Stair Reconstruction (2015)

\$200,000

Funded through Timber Pipeline



Funding

- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)
- DNR Habitat Improvement Account (HIA)
- American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
- Internal Special Project Funds (CMLG, HTAP)
- Stewardship, Pipeline

Partnerships



Au Sable Big Water Erosion Control

A multi-year partnership between Huron Pines, the U.S. Forest Service and the Au Sable Big Water Preservation Association to control erosion at recreation sites from Mio dam to Alcona Pond



Top: Volunteers participate in all aspects of project implementation including terrace construction, tree revetment installation, live fascine placement and invasive species removal.
Above: Red Pine Bend site before and after erosion control work.
Below: Volunteers work together to install a tree revetment.

Red Pine Bend Site Improvements:

- 15 red pine trees were harvested locally and secured to the toe of the streambank and provide stabilization and aquatic habitat
- 9 terraces were constructed for erosion control
- 4 live fascines were built and installed along 70 feet of streambank upstream of terraces
- Live fascines and stakes will provide structural support to the streambank and help it revegetate as they take root and grow
- 17 volunteers were engaged in two volunteers events coordinated by Huron Pines and the U.S. Forest Service



Looking Forward

Groundwater Contamination

- Aqueous firefighting foam containing PFCs was used at the Wurtsmith AF base (1924-1991) and leached into the groundwater causing a plume.
- EPA issued health advisory in 2009.
- Extensive sampling began through monitoring wells in 2010.
- In 2011, MDNR fish samples in Clark's Marsh. In 2012, DHHS issues a fish advisory from Foote Dam downstream.
- In 2015, treatment of groundwater leaving the base began to remove the PFCs.

Looking Forward

Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) (Est. 2017)

A forum for addressing issues associated with environmental restoration activities under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) at DoD installations.

Membership

Consists of government and non-government members made up of community leaders and members and a combination of local, state, and federal agencies (**including the Forest Service**).



Looking Forward

Goals

- Review and comment on environmental restoration documents and activities.
- Exchange research from global sources regarding environmental restoration.
- Serve as a community liaison by providing information to the community and receiving input from the community.
- Maximize efficiency and limit expense in completing environmental restoration efforts. Provide positive, solution-focused input to regulators.

Looking Forward

Forest Service will:

- Have an active advisory role on the RAB
- Have a support role as a land management agency through permitting processes and other associated actions
- Be seeking to implement projects that complement other activities associated with this restoration effort

Looking Forward Together

- Continue to strengthen partnerships for completing activities towards a common vision.
- Engage the next generation of participants and leaders in the management of our water resources.
- Emphasize the importance of Northern Michigan watersheds play in the global freshwater supply and the critical role that our Forests play in sustaining them