

SECURING A LEGACY

YDWP Initiates
Planned Giving
Program.
See page 3.



NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

Welcoming John Anderson & Dan Rydholm
to the YDWP Board of Directors.
See pages 10-11.

THE

HOWL

Fall/Winter 2020 - 2021

www.yellowdogwatershed.org

Bi-annual Newsletter
Volume 24, Issue 2

Preserving the Yellow Dog Watershed in its most natural state for the use of the public, now, and for the benefit of future generations.

AN EPIC HIKE TO PINNACLE FALLS

By Tom Hudson, Yellow Dog Member

In 2013 my wife and I started a family tradition of renting a cabin in Big Bay for 10 days. In that same year I learned of the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve. Over the next 6 years I stayed in contact with Rochelle at the YDWP, made the occasional donation, and read about the good work the organization does.

After our 10-day vacation in 2017 I traveled back up to Big Bay for a last weekend chance to fish the Yellow Dog River. I stopped at the YDWP office and met Chauncey for the first time. Somehow the year before the seed was planted in my brain about hiking from Pinnacle Falls downstream about four miles. Chauncey shared with me that he had hiked from Pinnacle Falls downstream on many occasions. There was no trail, just game trails and hiking the river.

Then, in November 2019, YDWP was holding a silent auction. One of the items was a hiking package with Chauncey - starting at Pinnacle Falls and going downstream. To be honest, at this time I had become a little obsessed with the hike (Is it OK to use the two words "little" and "obsessed" in the same sentence?). By some stroke of luck, no one else bid - and I won.

In September 2020 my wife and I were back at our cabin in Big Bay. A few days before the hike I met Chauncey at the Big Bay fire station. He shared with me that it would be a pretty challenging hike, I think the word he used was "daunting". I liked that word, one I would most likely never use. I smiled to my wife: "I am going on a daunting hike!" I think she made a comment inquiring if my life insurance was paid up.

On the appointed day Chauncey was waiting for me at the end of his driveway on the 510 Road. We would drive in and stage his truck at a loca-



Chauncey Moran pictured above and below along sections of the Yellow Dog River between Pinnacle Falls and County Road 510. Photos by Tom Hudson.



tion near the end of our hike. As we turned off on the Toboggan Road and drove back about 2+ miles, the road got smaller and narrower. I was following Chauncey's pickup in my wife's Chevrolet Traverse (This is the part of the story where my wife learns that, while following Chauncey where I had no business driving her Traverse, I hammered the bottom of the vehicle badly).

Chauncey parked his truck at what seemed to be the end of nowhere and directed me to turn my vehicle around. He hopped in, and we were on our way to the starting point - Pinnacle Falls.

Since the ground had recently been shaved off by some tourist in a Chevy Traverse, my vehicle failed to bottom out a second time, and I drove down the mountain along the one-lane deer trail, found the Toboggan Road, pulled out onto the 510 highway, and after a while, the AAA. Left at the sign, a slow meandering drive on the sandy two-track, then left at the fork, and follow the painted signs "Falls -->".

I had an extremely light back pack - more of a light weight book bag. It had a roll of toilet paper, a couple of waters, a fishing reel, fish bait, and a few granola bars. I never knew what all was in Chauncey's pack. It was quite large and looked none too light. I think it had a lot of well-chosen survival-type of equipment.

At the first river crossing, there was a stick in the ground. I pulled it out and followed Chauncey across the river. I was really glad I grabbed the stick, as it was the right size/length for a walking stick, and it was right at the edge of the river. Without it, I definitely would have been face down in the river. When I got to the other side, I commented on my luck. Chauncey chuckled and said he put it there for
(see *An Epic Hike*, page 4)



'Say It' in *The Howl*

The Yellow Dog *Howl* is published bi-annually by The Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve for its members and friends. We welcome your thoughts on environmental issues, stories of the history and legacy of the watershed, or anything you feel is related to our mission. Creative expressions are welcome too: art, poetry, photos, lyrics, etc.

Any comments, suggestions, articles, or artistic statements can be shared with Sarah Heuer at:

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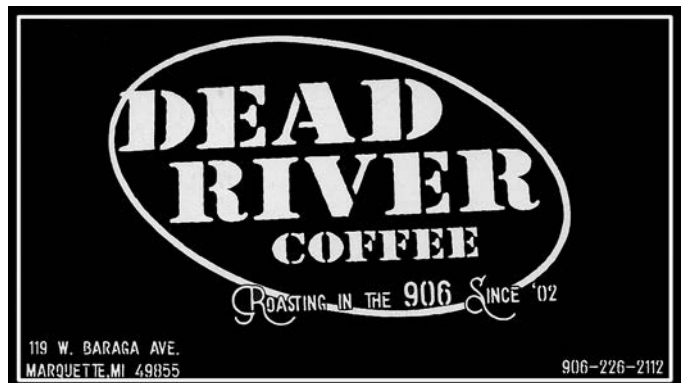
COVID IMPACT ON YDWP & INCREASED TAX DEDUCTION FOR YOUR GIFT

Non-profits around the nation have experienced serious impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve is no exception. We have had to cancel fundraising events, limit volunteer opportunities, and nearly halt our education/outreach programs. Our campaign to produce a study to advocate for federal designation of the full length of the Yellow Dog as a Wild and Scenic River was also interrupted. Yet, at the same time, we have been fortunate to be able to continue work on the ground. Our water monitoring program continues unabated (see page 13), and we have improved the trail system in the Community Forest (see page 7) and Pinnacle Falls. We also have launched a project to address the problems faced by our brook trout population due to climate change, reduced stream connectivity, and sedimentation (see page 5).

In all this, and in the initiatives we plan for coming months, such as advocacy of increased river setbacks for development, the redefinition of the historic Bentley Trail in the Mudjekewis Wildlife Refuge (see page 6), and pursuit of potential land acquisition opportunities, we depend on the support of our donors and members.

For tax year 2020, the CARES Act (in response to COVID-19) includes a provision that will increase the tax-deductibility of your donation to the YDWP. We encourage you to discuss this opportunity with your tax preparer and take advantage of this provision, helping us to weather the storm and enter 2021 in a strong position to continue our work on behalf of the watershed.

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Front page: 'Howling Wolf', hand drawn by Nancy Moran.

FROM THE CHAIR

By Chauncey Moran, Riverwalkerr

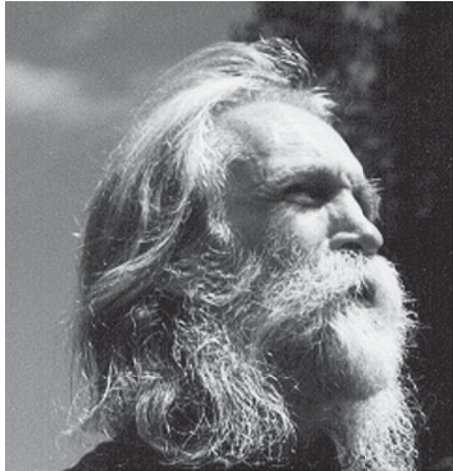


Photo by Wendy Johnson.

Many years ago, local residents passionate about conservation aspired to include the Yellow Dog River within the federal protection of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. However, a handful of dissenters shouted down the proposal, concerned that policies that protected the River corridor would inhibit camping, hunting, and benign development. Eventually, a 300-foot setback became a zoning ordinance to protect the many sensitive banks and canopy of the River in Powell Township. Around the same era, four miles of the Yellow Dog's headwaters in the Mc-

Cormick Wilderness received protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Later, in 1994, a small group of residents bound together, determined to maintain the River in its most natural state by keeping it free from excessive development and encouraging best management practices within the watershed. Among the founders of the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve are some names not seen for some years in these pages, and some that remain: Mike Davis, Mike Collar, Mary O'Donnel, Nick Economides, Nick and Sharon Cartier, Doug Cornett, Sharon Kissel, Lorin Lardie, Cathy Core, Jan Zender, Rochelle Dale, Rachelle Peabody, Frank Kerwin, Nancy Moran, Bob and Cynthia Pryor and many more.

Although threats of major development have loomed for decades, the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve has maintained a core legacy of commitment and perseverance to sustain its mission. To provide all the historical accomplishments would require pages and hundreds of photos. We recognized decades ago that acquiring land within the watershed was the most prudent way to keep the River in its most natural state, while continuing to encourage responsible stewardship of current and future land owners. To date, we have 2400 acres within our care, with emerging opportunities to acquire additional properties through living trust, gifting, and future purchase proposals.

With land ownership comes great responsibility: monitoring human activity on those lands and monitoring natural events that may cause bank failures or other excessive sedimentation into the river or tributaries. Sustained support by dedicated board members, staff, volunteers, visitors, and river lovers alike are paramount in sustaining our original mission of keeping the Yellow Dog River in its most natural state. For decades, organizations and agencies like Superior Watershed Partnership, River Network, Waterkeepers International, GLIFWC, KBIC, HMC, MDNR, MDEQ (now EGLE), township governments, individual families and others have supported and inspired those efforts. From a modest beginning, passing the hat for donations, we continue to grow with purpose.

Come to the River. Immerse yourself in its corridor, cool waters, and shaded canopy. Sun bathe on bed rock, ski the winter wonderland, hike the trails, be part of the legacy for your own future generations. Help us sustain that vision from so long ago. A blessed 25 years have passed since the formation of YDWP, and with faith and hope we will continue for another 100.

-Riverwalkerr



Already in 1989, Fred and June Rydholm (left) were planning for the conservation of the land they would later deed to YDWP. In 2019 it became the Mudjekewis Wildlife Refuge.

PLANNED GIVING: A LEGACY OF CONSERVATION FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

If you are reading this, you likely have made a contribution to the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve as a volunteer, member, donor, or a combination of these. Whatever the level of your participation, you have given of yourself to see this place nurtured and protected, so those who come after may marvel as you have at the raw beauty of a landscape loosed from the imperatives of development and extraction. You may wish to do more but are constrained by physical distance, economic realities, competing priorities, or demands on your time.

The possibilities for engaging in the transformational work of this organization, however, are not limited to traditional means. Planned giving provides an avenue to make a deep and lasting contribution to the conservation of our watershed and its living natural communities. As the name implies, planned giving involves promised contributions, by which a donor leaves a legacy testifying to their values and life commitments. It also can be a way of honoring a family member or friend in perpetuity, bearing witness to the loved one's devotion to and passion for this rugged land.

Planned giving can take many forms: from bequests of real estate either within or outside the watershed, to gifts of stocks, bonds or other securities, to the assignation of YDWP as a beneficiary in a will, trust, or life insurance policy. If you are intrigued by these possibilities, please contact us, and we'll be happy to discuss them!

AN EPIC HIKE TO PINNACLE FALLS

(continued from front page)

me yesterday while verifying the direction we were going to take. He did the hike two days in a row!

The river sights and the woods were a combination of spectacular, fantastic, and amazing. After about two hours we stopped for a break. We sat down on a sandy shoal beside the river. Chauncey broke out crackers and cheese. The river was loud; there was not a cloud in the sky. We headed on downstream, passing through the area where a land slide occurred several years ago. Chauncey and YDWP volunteers had planted 200 trees in the area to help strengthen the soil. Two hours later we came to where Rochelle was waiting for us. She had made sandwiches; some of the ingredients were grown in her garden. She also had a small camp fire going with a pot of hot water that she put peppermint into, which she also had grown.

Rochelle headed home, hiking up the hills away from our lunch camp area. Chauncey and I proceeded downstream a short distance and crossed the Yellow Dog again. This is where it became obvious I was beyond my physical capabilities. I could only make it from one tree to another and take a break gasping for air. At one point, I could only crawl on my hands and knees up a near vertical hill (to slip and fall was certain death). Chauncey gave me encouragement and let me know to take my time.

At one point we got to a slightly leveled-off area. The voice inside me was of course asking, "Are we there yet?" After a minute or two we kept going straight up vertically. I kept going from tree to tree, trying to do my best to keep following Chauncey. I looked back over my shoulder. The vertical drop was long and steep. As we pressed forward, I slipped and slid. I felt that if I lifted a hand or foot my backwards acceleration would increase. I dug in with everything I had, and my body came to a stop after several feet. By a miracle I was able to push myself up and continue walking. I caught up to Chauncey and he pointed ahead – there was his truck.

The hike was "epic" to say the least: 5.25 miles, ascended 35 stories, 360 minutes, and 4,000 calories burned, according to my FitBit watch. I was not physically prepared for it, winded 5 minutes in, saying to myself, "I'm a business analyst. I have a desk job - what the hell was I thinking?" The climb at the end, up from the gorge, was past my limit - way past. But, it was a great experience. The sound of the Yellow Dog is wonderful. It allows your senses to focus on one thing – the sound of the river- as it drowns out so much else.



Tom Hudson with Rochelle's dog Misun, taking a lunch break. Photo by Rochelle Dale.

KIRTLAND'S WARBLER: SINGING AGAIN ON THE YELLOW DOG PLAINS

By Nancey Moran



Male Kirtland's Warbler on the Yellow Dog Plains. Photo by Nancy Moran.

This past June, bird surveys of the Yellowdog Watershed once again yielded a singing male Kirtland's Warbler! This observation was made in a young jack pine stand, very near where KW sitings had been made in previous years.

Due to COVID-19, the agencies involved with the KW did not survey this past spring, and meetings of the Kirtland's Warbler Conservation Team have been reduced from the usual two days twice yearly to 3-hour Zoom meetings. Still, plans are in place for habitat development and future conservation efforts. Although the KW was recently delisted from endangered, it is still a species of great concern, and will not survive without human intervention.

Other bird species observed this past June in the watershed included many warblers, with Nashville Warblers doing particularly well, and singing at all the sites surveyed! Some great birding spots to keep in mind for spring include the Pinnacle Falls trail, where 33 species were counted in 25 minutes, the Bob Lake crossing, with 22 species in 15 minutes, and the Clowry Bridge area, with 20 species in 15 minutes. A great treasure we have indeed to witness and be immersed in spring singing on the Yellow Dog!

BROOK TROUT AND THE PEOPLE WORKING FOR THEM

By Rochelle Dale, Administrator

YDWP has long been a member organization of Partners for Watershed Restoration (PWR), and last winter PWR expanded with the formation of the Brook Trout Subcommittee that is dedicated to brook trout habitat restoration throughout the western and central Upper Peninsula. This new committee is made up of representatives from nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies, and private individuals including Trout Unlimited, Ottawa National Forest, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Pilgrim River Friends, and more. YDWP has been a part of this group since the onset and is determined to improve trout spawning and refuge areas within our watershed wherever possible. To this end, in early July, YDWP staff organized a two-day walk-through of the middle portion of the Yellow Dog River with members of the committee in order to identify priority sites for restoration. Those on the hike brought a broad range of expertise, ideas, and advice. Of the fourteen sites visited, three were identified as priority and possible without too much wait time.

One of the top ranking sites for restoration is an old, deteriorating road stream crossing. With the help and support of members of the brook trout team, YDWP has applied for an EGLE nonpoint source pollution grant to address the sediment build up, potential road failure, and lack of aquatic organism passage on this site. If funded, work will begin in summer 2021, with planning, designing, and developing the data base and procedures.

The committee itself will be bundling a few projects together from across the region for another grant proposal. This will include a site



Brook Trout Subcommittee at Section 20 landslide along the Yellow Dog River. (L to R): Sam Prentice, Maggie Scannell, Sarah Heuer, Rochelle Dale, John Highlen, Jeff Koch & Eric Miltz-Miller.



Rochelle Dale at Deer Creek with Robert Sweet (EGLE representative), discussing proposed project.

within the Yellow Dog River Community Forest, where an ATV trail allows for excessive sedimentation to escape into the river, a site on the Pilgrim River in the Keweenaw Peninsula, and a site on the Ontonagon River. The Brook Trout Committee is not just about having meetings. These folks are dedicated and ready to get to work out on the rivers and streams. On October 17, even in the rain and snow, members and volunteers gathered at the Yellow Dog bridge on County Road 510 and from there walked to the

mouth of Lost Creek, a major feeder stream of the Yellow Dog. Lost Creek was another priority site identified by the group in its summer walk through. The stream is plagued by seemingly abnormal amounts of sand which is detrimental to trout habitat, so in order to help stabilize the sandy and highly erodible banks, nearly 40 people showed up to plant 500 white pine and cedar saplings along the shores. Superior Watershed Partnership, who has been a longtime supporter of YDWP, donated the baby trees.

Thank you to everyone who braved the weather that day to come out and make a difference. We had cold rain and snow, but more than one person commented, "What a beautiful day to be on the river."



Photo left: October 17th, 2020. Lost Creek tree planting volunteers (L to R): Maggie Scannell, Lynn Roovers, Jan Zender, Jim Jenkin, Dan Raish & George Lindquist.

BACK IN THE DAY: THE BENTLEY TRAIL

Hikers, historians, and outdoor enthusiasts have long been fascinated by the legendary Bentley Trail. This pathfinding endeavor was industrial magnate Cyrus McCormick and his friend Cyrus Bentley's passion during the first decades of the twentieth century. The trail they cut led from Fortress Lake (White Deer Lake) in what is now the McCormick Wilderness Area to the shores of Lake Superior in the Huron Mountain Club, roughly a thirty-mile trek. Adventurers would begin at White Deer Lake and hike to the half-way point, Arbutus Lodge, whose remains lie near the Bentley Pond in YDWP's Mudjekewis Wildlife Refuge, before continuing on to the Club. Since the 1930s, however, the trail has been neglected, and major portions are now overgrown and indistinct.

YDWP has begun talks with local and federal stakeholders to determine the feasibility of redefining the footpath through Mudjekewis and connecting it with the remnants in the McCormick Wilderness Area. In our enthusiasm for this project we follow author and storyteller Fred Rydholm, who actually purchased the lands where the Arbutus Lodge once stood and often hiked the path to White Deer Lake and back. In his 1989 book *Superior Heartland: A Backwoods History*, he writes of the genesis of the trail:

In Chicago, Mr. Bentley and the McCormicks spent much of that winter (1914) discussing plans for the new trail. With all this talk and planning, even the McCormicks became enthusiastic about the new trail. All three decided to go up to White Deer Lake just as early that spring as the weather and snow would warrant. They could seldom plan on getting into the woods much before the middle of May, and even then there could be much snow left in the shaded places.

On May 14, 1914, Cyrus and Harold McCormick and Cyrus Bentley arrived, intending to look over the land between White Deer Lake and Huron Mountain Club, east of the old trail. They had arranged to have Christ and Jim Andersen accompany them on the trip. It was an ideal time to go land looking. The snow had gone and there were no bugs. There were no leaves on the trees to hinder one's vision. They wasted no time getting into the woods.

After the trip down the lakes and the long hike to the Yellow Dog River along the south side of the Panorama Hills, the party plunged headlong through the big Yellow Dog Swamp. As Mr. Bentley grappled his way through the tag alders that blocked his way and tore at his clothing, he exclaimed, "This is worse than the jungles of Africa!"

The swamp seemed to stretch endlessly ahead of them. Christ Andersen explained that the time to go through the swamp was in March, when the snow was deep and had a good crust on it. You were above the water and the mud, and halfway up the tag alders. Bentley and McCormick suggested that the Andersens take some time off from trapping and complete the trail through the swamp the next winter.

It was a welcome change when they walked out into the tall jackpine and white pine stumps of the Yellow Dog Plains. They kept their northeasterly course and came out onto a pleasant little pond. Looking about, they found another small pond further east. All of them agreed that these ponds would be a nice stop over for hikers when the trail was completed.

-Fred Rydholm, *Superior Heartland: A Backwoods History*, Vol. I, 672.



Pictured second from the left, Rochelle Dale, with trail crew and other staff from the Ottawa National Forest in the McCormick Wilderness Area. Photo by Chauncey Moran.



October 21, 1916. Pictured L to R: Christ Andersen, Cyrus Bentley, Charles Morrow, Reuben Swanson, & Ernest Gagnon. The group hiked the Bentley Trail to the Halfway Cabin on the Plains, and woke to find themselves in deep snow.

The Community Forest was a popular destination this past summer. With the pandemic in full swing, the number of tourists seeking outdoor activities and special places grew exponentially. In addition to that, YDWP staff and volunteers were on the ground working on trails and improving stream crossings.

With grant funding from the Community Foundation of Marquette County, YDWP's first priority was to relocate a section of the foot trail leading to the falls. This precarious segment threatened to fall into the river over a 10-12 foot eroding vertical drop which posed a danger to visitors and to water quality. Crews effectively closed this section of trail after preparing a new trail farther inland through a scenic grove of nearly old growth maples and pines.

The next steps were to improve stream and wetland crossings. Volunteers collected large flat stones from the surrounding area which they then used to place in small, wet sections of the trail where, for years, visitors had made their way over a collection of dead limbs and branches. This mass of debris was cleared and replaced with the stepping stones. Then, on a small feeder stream near the first waterfalls, YDWP staff and volunteers constructed a split cedar log foot bridge and removed the woody debris and sediment clogging the mouth of the stream, thus creating a free flowing stream and unobstructed passage for fish and other aquatic organisms.

Lastly, Chauncey and faithful volunteers improved the trail beyond the first falls. Now, visitors can easily find their way to Twin Falls and beyond, and, with trail traffic increasing, trekkers can spread out and enjoy the wilderness safely.

Thank you CFOMC and faithful volunteers: John Anderson, Jan and Arjuna Zender, Chauncey Moran, Dylan Anderson, Abraham Turner and Clare Fastiggi.



Abraham Turner and Clare Fastiggi: relocating the CF foot trail.
Photo by Sarah Heuer.



Dylan Anderson and Abraham Turner with Sergey: placing stepping stones.
Photo by Sarah Heuer.



John Anderson with Abraham Turner: setting rebar to secure foot bridge.
Photo by Chauncey Moran.

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FOUR-SEASON TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS CONTINUE

By Chauncey Moran.

Our twenty-fifth annual meeting in October brought dozens of volunteers to plant 500 trees in most inclement weather. A common thread among YDWP volunteers (and these were no exception) is to go for it, since weather is part of the experience! Among our group this year was a team from Northern Michigan University's Conservation Crew, five of whom also have helped to better define trails on the north and south sides of the river for year-round recreation. This year we have seen additional traffic on our trails, which has increased the potential for erosion close to the river's edge. Although we are nudging the trail further from the bank, we are lengthening it as well, all the while maintaining the spirit of a wilderness path. Work will continue until the snow flies and will resume next spring. Leave a donation or comments about your experience on the trails.

See you out there!



HELPING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE: VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS



Abraham Turner & Clare Fastiggi in the McCormick on a day hike with Chauncey Moran. Photo by Chauncey Moran.

Abraham Turner and Clare Fastiggi are new volunteers to YDWP, through a not-so-random encounter with the Riverwalkerr in the Community Forest.

New home owners in the area, they are excited to be active members of the community and expand their relationships with those who are passionate for the outdoors.

Both are graduates from Northern Michigan University. Abraham earned a degree in biology with a concentration in wildlife management, and Clare has a degree in ecology. They are also very interested in doing bird studies on our

YDWP properties and incorporating those reports with our spring and fall land monitoring surveys.



Maggie Scannell. Photo by Carly Arby.



Dylan Anderson was an intern for YDWP during the 2017-18 academic year and has continued his involvement. Since graduating from NMU, he has been teaching introductory chemistry lab courses while wrapping up a research project on the effect of heavy metals on mushroom growth. He plans to keep teaching next semester and, come summer 2021, help his mom and stepdad work on their family camp south of Republic.

Dylan Anderson & Sarah Herscher, spring VSMP. Photo by Kristi Mills.

Staying at her family's cabin on Lake Independence this summer, Maggie met Jan Zender and Rochelle Dale while riding her bike along the Iron River, and her involvement with YDWP began. Maggie has a bachelors degree in business administration from Western Michigan University and is currently pursuing a masters in philanthropy and nonprofit leadership from Grand Valley State University. Maggie was a great help setting up our online store and attended virtual Land Trust Alliance planned giving seminars with YDWP staff. "It has been really awesome getting to know the organization that works tirelessly to preserve the land I have enjoyed for my whole life," she says.

YDWP SEASON HIGHLIGHTS: 2020



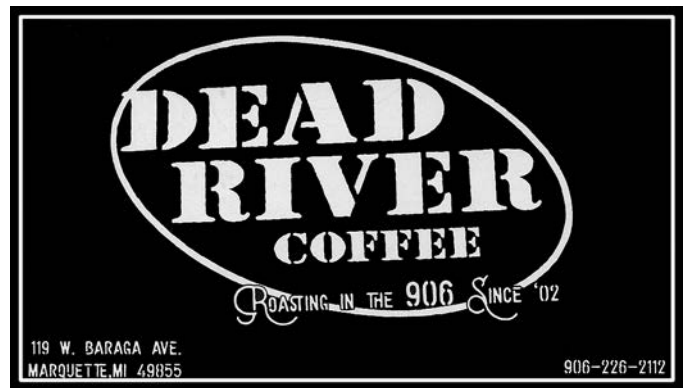
Members of the Cedar Tree Institute from Marquette came out to plant hundreds of white cedar trees in YDWP's Community Forest.



Success! Volunteers take a step back and down a cold one after completing the split cedar log foot bridge over a stream crossing in the Community Forest. (L to R): Jan Zender (kneeling), Abraham Turner, John Anderson, Rochelle Dale & Dylan Anderson.



Bull moose captured on a trail camera near the headwaters of the Salmon Trout River in YDWP's North American Wetland Conservation Act Property.



October 17th, 2020. Volunteers, Board members, staff, and members of the Brook Trout Subcommittee came out to the Community Forest to plant 500 white pine and cedar trees along the banks of Lost Creek.



Members of Northern Michigan University's Conservation Crew helped to define the Community Forest trails downstream of Hill's Falls on the north and south sides of the river. Pictured L to R: Nick Burns, Jane Fitkin, Emily Mitchell, Jacklyn Lenten, & Brianna Elizondo at Victory Falls, Yellow Dog River.

THE LONE WOLF: A NEW BOARD MEMBER REFLECTS ON HALF A CENTURY IN THE WATERSHED

By Brian Noell, Administrative Assistant

John Anderson recalls that, though born and bred in Marquette, son and grandson of Swedish-American foundry men, he didn't visit the Yellow Dog in the late fifties and early sixties. He heard stories from his dad, who was nostalgic about this country, but, when he and the wife piled John and his two brothers in their fake-wood paneled Plymouth Town and Country, they headed for camp in Alger County, near his mom's Chatham family farm. John was a teenager by the time friends led him to the Yellow Dog, and he immediately fell in love with the oxygenated falls water, pines and cedars, rocky knobs, and glacial erratics. That was 1966 or thereabouts, but when he returned to the UP after a tour in Vietnam and military assignments elsewhere in the US, he began solitary explorations that brought him to the watershed's hinterlands.



John Anderson overseeing installation of the CF cedar foot bridge.
Photo by Chauncey Moran.

This was before the McCormick Tract had been designated as a wilderness area, but John notes that there were interesting characters in the wilds even in the mid-70s, including tipi-dwelling earth children in the McCormick and on the Yellow Dog Plains.

John wasn't far from that himself. One day, driving his microbus on a dirt two-track headed for adventure, he crossed the Salmon Trout and came upon a bleary-eyed circle around an open car hood.

"Everything OK?"

"Hey man, do you know where we can get some water?"

A little perplexed, John looked back at the river, then to them, and pointed, "Uh, right there."

Amazed, one of the stony clan offered, "Oh, wow, thanks, man!"

John recalls local efforts to advocate for preservation in the mid-seventies, including a Marquette-based campaign to designate the McCormick as a wilderness, which featured an advertised ski in The Plains to benefit the cause.



John continued to visit the Dog frequently and particularly enjoyed the bicycle ride from Marquette to Big Bay on the 550.

By the 80s illustrious Americans were passing through as well. Checking in on stranded motorists, John pulled his bike alongside a black limo on a straightaway median. The driver explained his predicament. John promised to engage a tow-truck in Big Bay and peered into the back seat. As a fan, he had to verify,

"Are you Linda Ronstadt?"

"Yes, I am."

"And... are you Jerry Brown?"

A little snidely, the helmet-haired chief-executive shot back, "Indeed."

Then, in 1995, came the first encounter with Chauncey. A group was splashing and chattering in the river as John hiked alongside. He held back to observe, then approached, hooting disarmingly.

A wiry, bearded character reached out a hand, "I am... The River-walker"

John was ready with a comeback, "You walk all the rivers around here, eh?"

"Yep, most all of 'em"

"You walk the length of them, then?"

"Uh huh, I walk the length of them. Who're you?"

"I'm... The Lone Wolf"

I asked John whether he was serious, because, well, you never know. He said yah that he meant it. He felt he had hiked, biked, and hunted the McCormick more than most anyone he knew, and so, yes, he was The Lone Wolf.

I puzzled for a minute and asked, "You're married, aren't ya?"

"Yep, 30 years."

"I reckon if you got a woman to go home to, you ain't no Lone Wolf."

John drew his head back slightly, taking on an expression of serious consideration, "Hmm, hadn't thought of it that way."

GREETINGS FROM BOARD MEMBER DAN RYDHOLM

By Dan Rydholm

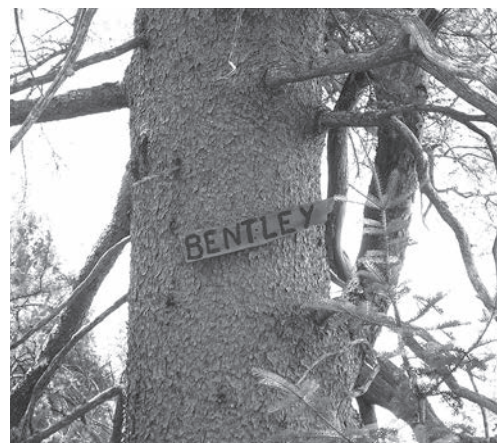


Thanks for the welcome!

Any land ethic I harbor I inherited from my folks - the late C. Fred and June Rydholm. As a child, Fred sometimes rode along with his father, a grocer who supplied the logging camps on the Yellow Dog Plains with food and provisions. Later as a summer employee at the Huron Mountain Club, Fred met his mentor-figure - "Indian Jim" Dakota - who taught Fred everything he knew about the woods and planted the seeds of his preservationist land ethic. It was on one of Fred's solitary walkabouts in the late 1940's that he literally stumbled upon the ruins of the Halfway Cabin or "Arbutus Lodge" situated at the edge of one of the two Bentley ponds. That day changed his life forever. Only later did he learn that the location was the halfway point along the historic Bentley Trail connecting the McCormick wilderness retreat to the south and the Huron Mountain Club to the north. Convinced he had to "own" this history, in 1949 he bought the first 80 acres of what would later become the 1000-acre Mudjekewis Wildlife Refuge- the largest tract of wilderness now owned by YDWP.

My day job since 2008 has been serving adults with psychiatric disabilities at Pathways Community Mental Health. My life-partner, Kathleen, is an artist, naturalist, and poet who

serves on the board of the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (UPEC). Like each of you, we are passionate about the Yellow Dog. Fred grew to believe this was the true "heartland" - not only due to its rugged beauty, but also its history. He gave his life to preserving and documenting the Yellow Dog because he saw it as the pulsating heart of the Upper Peninsula. However, Fred's mentor, Jim Dakota, taught him that this land does not belong to us; it is something we hold in trust. The Yellow Dog is not only a gift passed down from the ancestors; it is on loan from our children and our children's children. Our actions today will reflect how seriously we honor that trust. A great big shout-out to you! - the many supporters of the YDWP.



Bentley sign that Fred Rydholm installed at Marsh Lake many decades ago.

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WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS: VSMP UPDATE

By Sarah Heuer, Programs Coordinator



As in the past, our work on the river this year proved most satisfactory. Despite the challenge of extra sites to monitor, and the pandemic, we managed to accomplish our goals through collaboration with close friends and Board members.

Every water monitoring season we email all of our contacts asking for help, but this year, no such outreach was possible. A few simple phone calls, though, to trusted friends was all it took to pull together a small crew to make it happen. One of my favorite things about this program is the enthusiasm and dedication of folks coming together not only to perform the task at hand, but to do something for the greater good, connecting with like-minded individuals, and sharing in laughter, mostly at each other's expense.

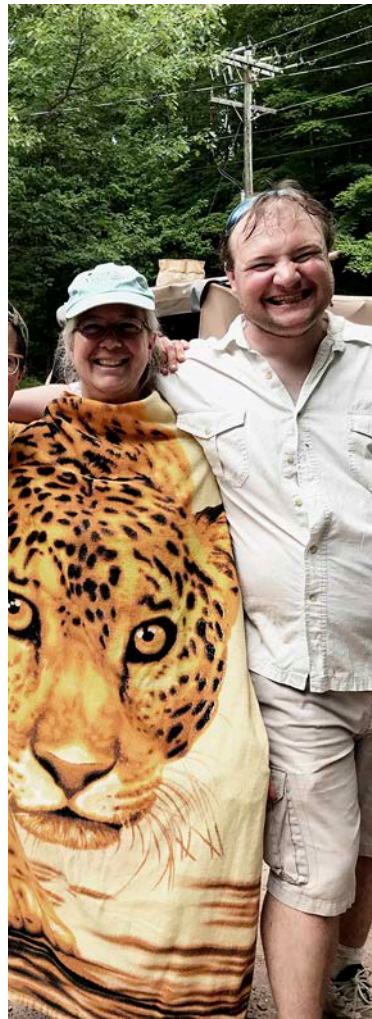
*"If we couldn't laugh, we would all go insane."
- Robert Frost
Incense burning to keep our sanity.
this bug season.*

Each site we monitor offers new adventure and different obstacles, whether it be battling with the elements, failure of

gear and necessary improvisation, close encounters with other humans, close encounters with wildlife, or learning you don't know everything and discovering something new about yourself and the environment. Each time I work with an individual, I get to see a different side of them, and I feel that working in the 'great outdoors' brings out the best in people... even in the most unforgiving situations.

Taking on additional sites this spring, allowed me and fellow Yellow Dog members to get more acquainted with the river. Identifying sensitive or critical areas coincided with our work with the Brook Trout Subcommittee (see page 5), allowing us to better target areas for restoration. In particular our water monitoring along Lost Creek and Deer Creek (both tributaries of the Yellow Dog) was an eye opener- much needs to be done in these areas, which score poorly due to the lack of viable fish and macroinvertebrate habitat.

Expanding our work in order to be more inclusive of all areas of the river will continue to be of importance to me. Our original VSMP sites on the Yellow Dog and Salmon Trout Rivers will help us to maintain consistency in our data collection, but charting new territory will be a goal each season. Exploration and diversification are not only needed but make the work more interesting and exciting. John Anderson, with whom I've shared many walkabouts, has inspired in me this spirit of adventure. I never want to stop learning from the watershed and from those who immerse themselves in it.



Salmon Trout River water monitoring. On site at STR2, the entrance to the Huron Mountain Club. Volunteers (L to R): Kristi Mills (YDWP Secretary), Murphy Drury (Big Bay native) & Dave Kadell (YDWP advisor).



Wrapping up the spring VSMP, Sarah Heuer receives a six-pack of Light Hearted Ale from Kristi Mills. A well deserved toast was made to all. Salud!

WATER MONITORING PARTNERS

By Chauncey Moran



Seventeen years ago we began mapping springs, wetlands, and recharge areas within the Salmon Trout and Yellow Dog River watersheds in an effort to establish a baseline of ground and surface water quality that could be affected negatively or degraded by activity at what was then the proposed Eagle Mine.

Later, the Humboldt Mill Site was included in the survey. Data loggers were strategically installed, and direct water sampling initiated. USGS gauging stations were also installed on the Salmon Trout Middle Branch and East Branch as well as the Yellow Dog River at the Bob's Lake crossing. The Salmon Trout East Branch is also a monitoring site for the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve MI-Corps water monitoring protocol carried out in spring and fall each year.

Much of the work that began in the early 2000s continues today in coordination with the following partners: John Coleman from Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), Jeff Koch of Superior Watershed Partnership collecting data for the Community Environmental Monitoring Program (CEMP), Sarah Heuer, program leader for the Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve, and Matt Holmio from USGS Escanaba office. Perhaps due to the robustness of our data collection partnerships, no significant degradation has been recorded to date.

Recently, while collecting samples with John Coleman from GLIFWC at the Salmon Trout River, we were assisted by Wendy Sutter, volunteering as scribe, porter, and photographer. The next day at Humboldt Mill Site, Anna Irish Burnett volunteered for the same duties. Without the passion of volunteers like these, our work would require many more staff hours and would prevent our team from guiding current and future projects. We sincerely appreciate the efforts of everyone who helps keep our strong water monitoring protocol in place!



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MY MEASURING ROCK

By Teague Whalen, YDWP SPRING ESSAY CONTEST WINNER

On still days, Brown, Diane, and Ward Mountain reflect in Ward Lake as I walk the trail around the shore, where each morning I take the season's pulse. The spring teams with returning life. A flock of Canadian geese rests on their migration north. A pair of trumpeter swans float in tandem, back to nest and mate. Skunk cabbage blooms. Ravens cluck and caw. A bald eagle chitters atop a Sitka spruce. From branch to branch, dark-eyed juncos flit and chirp where tufts of old man's beard droop. Robins peck the ground; stellar jays screech, and black-capped chickadees repeat their name in onomatopoeia—chicka-dee dee dee. On rare occasions, a loon's tremolo calls out; a great blue heron stalks the reeds; a beaver floats a log down Ward Creek, or a family of otters playfully roll about. Then one day, summer arrives to nourish. Salmonberry and thimbleberry bushes line the trail. Squirrels squeak and chatter, gather pinecones. Hooded mergansers, buffleheads, and mallards paddle and bob for breakfast. An American dipper pops in and out of the creek's rapids. Late summer, salmon begin their run up-river to spawn and die, when at the tail end, fall brings decay and cleanses. Sheets of rain blow sideways and bronze the ground with leaves; snow crowns the alpine once again. Seagulls squawk while black bears patrol the shore, pick at the rotting salmon remains before the rains flood the banks. Gradually, winter's darkening dormancy descends into the valley. Occasional bouts of snowfall track the past whereabouts of mink, deer, and wolves. On and off, the lake freezes; the ice expands; staccato cracks punctuate the quietude.

Walking through Ward Lake's varying seasons helps me to weather my emotional landscape and to maintain a foundation of peace beneath each day. At the footbridge where Ward Creek drains out of the lake, a moss-backed rock—the size of Bigfoot's meditation mat—sticks out of the rapids during the normal flow. After a good day of rain, the river will lap over half the rock. After two or three days of hard rain, the creek spills over the rock in a mini waterfall. After a week or more of nonstop rain, the rock disappears. When I'm drowning in nasty university politics and I want to quit and move away, sometimes this morning walk is my only joy. The worst times are when my heart is broken and I can't find joy. Alone, I walk around Ward Lake, trying to trust in this daily practice if I can just keep moving forward. Though my feet step down the trail, my mind is often stuck in the past, still seeking her warm touch beside me as I suffer to make sense of why love sometimes needs to be let go.

My meditation practice teaches me that I need to skip my mind out of the looping track of what was, because the reality is that she is not coming back. Though I know we made the best decision, my heart does not want to let her go, fools my mind into keeping her memory alive. So, I recite a mantra that I created for whenever I realize I am spinning back to her again. I return to the present moment of what I am actually doing and simply say, "I am walking away . . ." After months of this—when the fall storms swell the creek, flood the lake, and wash away the stinking salmon carcasses from the banks—smoother days start surfacing above the rockier ones, and I begin shifting the mantra to: "I am walking toward . . ." Eventually, spring's mountain snowmelt breaks apart the lake ice and funnels the chunks downstream to bob through the rapids a mile to dissolve in Ward Cove's saltwater, and I begin to let the last bits of her go and become more hopeful of meeting someone new.



Eleventh-century, Japanese Zen-master and poet, Eihei Dōgen's words—from a poem of his that I hold dear—have given me faith that a better day would one day resurface: "I have always known that at last I would take this road / But yesterday I did not know / It would be today." Today, as I stand on the footbridge and look down at the rapids, the moss-backed rock sticks out of the water; the level returned to normal. May's cool breeze hints of freshwater, pine, overturned earth; the whitewater tirelessly speaks of the cyclical movement of change; a choir of birdsong lifts my spirit to the blue sky; the sun warms my face with whispers of summer. I breathe deep this filling presence welcoming me home to the present moment, and I brim with morning's joy. No more to or from. For now, just, "Walking . . ."

Photo: Teague Whalen, Wyoming--Driving from Colorado to Alaska a few years ago with his then girlfriend. Photo by Suzanne Webb.

THANK YOU MEMBERS AND DONORS!

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If we have accidentally omitted your name, or you find an error, we apologize. Please contact Brian at (906)345-9223 or email brian@yellowdogwatershed.org so we can make it right.

Pictured Left: Ian Zender of Third Coast Builders and Adam Jones loading red pine logs to be milled for office renovations. Jay Johnson, Board member, kindly donated the logs, harvested on his property in Sands Township. Photos by Jay Johnson.





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*Dave Kadell inside Lost Creek culvert beneath the County Road 510.
Fall VSMP. Photo by Sarah Heuer.*

Photo by John Anderson.



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