



ADAMS CHAPTER Update

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President's Report

Fall is upon us and steelhead season is in full swing. I've yet to hookup yet in my few short opportunities, but I'll be trying from now until spring. Most of my steelhead fishing is close to home and often its in the Boardman. I don't get many fish, but the ones I manage to find are cherished. Thinking about steelhead makes me think about fish passage and the Boardman dam removal process. So, I've decided to dedicate this report to that topic.

I am torn about fish passage because I do love steelhead fishing. I fished for many years with my Grandfather and Dad in the lower Au Sable and have fond memories of sitting in their 14 foot aluminum boat wearing my long underwear, snowmobile suit, gloves, hat and anything else that would allow me to stay out as long as they could on those cold mornings. In those days we fished with skein while anchored above the holes only my Grandfather seemed to know. All but the other old timers would give us funny looks when they passed us going upriver to the more obvious spots. We consistently caught fish and I have the pictures to prove it. The pictures bring me joy less for the fish than for the memories of fishing with my Grandfather.

As great as my steelhead memories are and as much as steelhead fishing is in my blood I still think the Boardman should remain steelhead free. The question of steelhead passage concerns more than just steelhead because fish passage means passing other species too. The fish passage issue is going to be complicated. The options will be many and there will be more opinions than options. However, for me the answer is easy. We know the Boardman has a naturally reproducing brook trout and brown trout population. We know that those fish are throughout the system as far down as the Boardman Dam (Cass Road). Finally, we know that when the

dams are removed the water will be considerably colder and better for brook and brown trout. What we don't know is the full impact steelhead, salmon, and other invasives that find their way upriver will have on them.

I have recently learned that sea lamprey have been making their way past the Union Street Dam and reached Sabin Dam requiring lampricide treatments at Sabin. I have also recently learned that sea lamprey can make their way over fish ladders by climbing up and over each other. Lampricide treatment is very expensive, but that is not the real problem. Lampricide kills lamprey larvae, but it also kills aquatic insects that are necessary for trout. Lampricide won't kill all the insects and won't result in killing off the brook and brown trout, but I can't see any reason to create new and costly problem for the Boardman.

Salmon will presumably remain subject to the weir in downtown Traverse City where most of them are captured. However, anyone that keeps a regular eye on the Boardman knows there are salmon entering the Boardman before the weir goes down and after the weir goes up. If the river is opened up to fish passage there will be salmon in the Boardman. The steelhead and salmon impact to the trout population is unclear. I understand that juvenile steelhead are likely to compete with, and perhaps outcompete, brook trout in all but the upper reaches of the Boardman. That is, the brook trout that are in the middle part of the Boardman right now may no longer be there if the big fish reach it. Brook trout are Michigan's State Fish and are the only native river trout we have. Displacing them and knowingly reducing their range seems to a significant step backwards.

The response will be that other rivers

in Michigan have very healthy brown trout populations that may even thrive because of the egg deposition from salmon and steelhead. But if that is the case then why do we need another one of those rivers? The Boardman and its trout are unique now and will be even more so if left to thrive on their own.

There may also be other impacts to the Boardman that we simply do not know about and cannot predict. The invasive species that now exist in the Great Lakes have caused untold harm from the sea lamprey's devastation of the native Lake Trout to the zebra and quagga mussel depletion of the microscopic base of the foodchain. What will invade the Great Lakes next and what will those invaders do to rivers that are open to their migration? The risks are great and the Boardman should not be subject to those risks. As we know from the Great Lakes, once an invader finds a new place to live, it is impossible to eradicate.

Ultimately, getting rid of the dams will remedy their 100 years of dividing and warming the Boardman. The River will return to a state that it hasn't seen since pre-logging days. There is no logic in removing one harm and creating new and unknown harms. I love steelhead, and salmon fishing is a blast when they are still fresh. However, I am not willing to harm the Boardman when they can still be fished in the lower Boardman not to mention the any number of rivers within a short drive. I am asking you to examine this issue yourself and I think that you will come to the same conclusion. If you do, please make your voice heard as the fish passage question is on the horizon and will be here soon. If you have any comments or thoughts on this issue, please don't hesitate to contact me or any of the other Adams Chapter Board Members.

Jeff Jocks

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Chapter Supports Production of In-Stream Habitat

Brown Bridge Dam Drawdown

The City of Traverse City's recently completed 6-foot drawdown of the 191 acre Brown Bridge Pond this past fall has already resulted in dramatic changes to the Boardman River. At operating level Brown Bridge dam/pond had a 33-foot head. This is the difference between the pond (operating) level and the surface of the river below. For safety reasons the City decided to drawdown the pond in 2008 by 3.5-feet. With the additional 6-foot drawdown this past fall Brown Bridge Pond is now down approximately 9.5-foot total.

With the 2008 drawdown you couldn't see much of a change at the upper end of the pond. With the recent 6-foot drawdown were beginning to see exciting changes with the formation of a new river channel and even rapids!! The pond is now down to about 100-acres.

Permits for the final removal of Brown Bridge will be submitted this winter with deconstruction beginning in the spring of 2012. To access more pictures, time-lapse videos, or for general information visit www.theboardman.org.

Blended Restoration Approach

A draft *Concept Design Report for Brown Bridge Dam Removal* was prepared and submitted by dam consultants Inter-Fluve in association with project engineers AMEC Environmental of Traverse City. This is an excellent report and can be found on the website www.theboardman.org under archived documents.

The report lays out three approaches: 100% Active Restoration; 100% Passive Restoration; and finally a Blended Restoration alternative. The pros and cons of each approach are clearly stated with each scenario. The 100% Active approach has an estimated cost



Brown Bridge Delta – Project engineers plan to dredge a new channel through the delta to control sediment.



Brown Bridge Forming Rapids – It may take decades if not centuries to naturally recruit LWD in the "new" river at Brown Bridge.

of \$6.8M – \$8.3M. The 100% Passive Approach has an estimated cost that ranges between \$2.4M - \$3.0M. After much debate both of these approaches were dismissed. The 100% Active Approach deemed too costly. The 100% Passive Approach, among other concerns, would allow too much sediment to escape downstream.

Once the two 100% alternatives were tossed, the group made up of project stakeholders determined what they felt were the most important elements that we needed to accomplish now. In other words "what must be done" versus "what we would like to see done" which included "what could be done at a later date/phase". Pretty much everyone agreed the top priority was breaching the dam (i.e. dam removal). Beyond that, the group felt that sediment mitigation was most important followed by reconnection of the river to its floodplain. The list went on.

Sediment Mitigation

Sediment mitigation is one of the Adams Chapter's greatest concerns. Inter-Fluve feels that a majority of the sediment is located in the upper 1/3 of the pond in the delta region. Through probing, they feel the old channel is still intact in the lower 2/3 of the pond. Inter-Fluve estimates that

84,000 cubic yards of sand will be mobilized during drawdown and removal of Brown Bridge Dam unless the sand is dealt with where it currently sits. To that end they recommend excavating a new river channel through the delta. This will also allow us to shape the banks such that we can establish a floodplain that's so important to handle flood flows. Ideally at this same time we would install trees (LWD) and other habitat features associated with a healthy, productive trout stream. Unfortunately LWD fell out as "what we would like to see done" instead of a "what must be done".

LWD – Large Woody Debris

LWD is simply trees or parts of trees that provide critical habitat diversity in a healthy trout stream. In most of our rivers in the sections that are large enough to float, paddlers have removed a great deal of this habitat. Fortunately through education and cooperation often times paddlers are now only removing what is necessary to allow for safe navigation and leaving the rest as habitat.

In the case the "new" river at Brown Bridge, from a functional perspective, the channel itself will recover fairly quickly as the pre-dam substrate becomes exposed and organizes into

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In-Stream Habitat *continued*

pools, runs, and riffles. In the *Conceptual Plan* for Brown Bridge project engineers and biologists call for approximately 50 trees/500 feet of river. Unfortunately **without adding LWD this critical in-channel habitat element may take decades if not centuries to establish on it's own.**

Anglers Taking Action

As anglers and stewards of our coldwater fisheries we cannot let this happen. The Adams Chapter is taking action by applying for an Embrace-A-Stream grant for LWD placement. The Chapter is backing this with a cash match and labor to support this effort. State Council recently submitted a grant to the US Fish & Wildlife Service's Part-

ners For Fish and Wildlife Program for LWD at Brown Bridge. In addition, Rotary of Traverse City, through their Gourmet Game Dinner fundraiser for the Boardman is considering a pledge to match the Adams Chapter up to \$8,000 to support this effort.

We need to raise as much money as possible as quickly as possible for this effort. If anyone would like to provide support, or knows of any other chapters or organizations that would like to help with this vitally important project have them contact Adams Chapter Stream Chair Steve Largent at (231) 883-9960 or slargent@gtcd.org We must act quickly.

Treasurer's Report

(November 8, 2011)

Current bank balances: checking - \$8,819.68; savings - \$8,738.00; CD - \$10,987.63; and the Bill Fernandez Memorial Children's Activity Fund (BFMCAF) - \$8,052.15.

The cash balances of TU Adams increased by approximately \$4,700 over the last year. This is the combined result of a \$2,500 contribution to the BFMCAF, a successful banquet and a slight reduction in the total grants sought by (and thus awarded to) other non-profit organizations conduct-

ing cold water habitat protection and restoration. The Board is currently considering a number of ways to best utilize TU Adams resources, including the possibility of leveraging its funds by using them to secure a matching grant to fund a project aimed at protecting the Boardman River from adverse sediment release arising from dam removal.

Most recently the Board approved providing complementary Stream Explorer Memberships to 12 area youth. The resulting \$144 cost was covered with funds from the BFMCAF.

Calendar of Events

December 7 General Membership Meeting and Annual Election of Directors and Officers, Dam removal presentation by Steve Largent and commentary Bryan Burroughs (Union Cantina)

January 25 General Membership Meeting (Union Cantina)

February 22 General Membership Meeting (Union Cantina)

March 23-25 Traverse City Hunting and Fishing Expo (Grand Traverse Civic Center)

March 28 General Membership Meeting (Union Cantina)

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