



## Healthy Pine River – Quarterly Newsletter - Summer 2024 Edition

**Join us on September 12<sup>th</sup> for our HPR Membership Meeting** – First, join us at 6:00 p.m. at Pine River Park for a cookout for our members and guests with the program focusing on river restoration, the State Street Dam, and the ongoing degradation of the Mill Pond/Alma impoundment. We are also inviting our Alma College LEAPS students to join us as a welcome back to college and HPR. See meeting reminder out this week.

**Volunteers Needed** – **As HPR continues to grow its commitment to our river and watershed we are finding a real need for more volunteers to assist us in the numerous ongoing projects we are undertaking. Let us know if you have some time and a passion for improving our environment and we promise to use your help wisely!**

**Summer Water Testing** – HPR continues to fund the Alma College summer water testing program that tests the Pine River throughout our watershed. We are asking Murray Borrello to join us at our October meeting to share what the summer water testing found regarding our river.

**Alma College “Connecting to our Community” – August 28<sup>th</sup>** – HPR joined many organizations at the Connecting to our Community night at Alma College in showcasing organizations both at the college and in our community regarding their mission and opportunities for volunteers to be a part of.

**EPA Septic Smart Week** – Gratiot Conservation District, Mid-Michigan District Health Department, EGLE, and HPR will be hosting a Septic Smart program on September 19<sup>th</sup> at Summer Township Hall for residents of our rural townships. The 45 minute program will focus on safe septic practices. The program starts at 6:00 p.m.

**EGLE wins Supreme Court Ruling** - EGLE won a Michigan Supreme Court ruling this past month in regards to stiffer regulations on large livestock farms (CAFOs) and their manure management. See the article on August 4<sup>th</sup> in the Michigan Advance.

**Grants HPR has applied for....”the beat goes on”** – HPR has been busy applying for various EGLE grants this past summer seeking funding for four different grants. Listed below are the grants and their focus.

**EGLE Environmental Justice Impact grant** – focusing on communities with residential areas that qualify for funding due to impoverished areas and environmental issues.

**EGLE Justice 40 grant** – this grant will support 25 organizations through a cohort program that will lead to possible federal funding for environmental issues.

**EGLE Community Change grant** – this grant supports communities who have environmental justice concerns and seeking to make inroads to improving issues that negatively impact their communities.

**EGLE Watershed Planning grant** – HPR is seeking funding to update our Upper Pine River Watershed Management Plan with new and relevant information we have learned over the past five years in

researching and testing the Pine River. Including the information in the UPRWMP helps with grant applications.

**The Pine River-Honeyoye Creek & Drain 96 Update** – The Board of Determination for the Gratiot Drain Commission met on Thursday, July 25 to hear comments regarding various Drain 96 concerns and voted to move forward with asking Spicer Group engineers to detail the projects and the costs associated. Restoring the flow of Honeyoye Creek (end of Drain 96) into the Pine River was included in that list of projects.

**The State Street Dam & Alma Impoundment research paper** – HPR commissioned Faron Grossman and Jacilyn Dietz two Alma College seniors to research the history and the cause/effect of the State Street Dam and the Alma Impoundment. It is an interesting read and points to the struggles that often evolve over time with a dam and the waters behind the dam. The paper is on the HPR website for your review.

**MDOT Hospitality in Clare & HPR brochures** – To spread the work about our work and organization HPR brochures are now at the Michigan Department of Transportation Hospitality Center in Clare.

**HPR Outreach Efforts** – Lots of effort is going into educating and informing our residents about the struggles of the Pine River. We have listed here a few of our current efforts....

**Septic Liaison, Mikie VanHorn** – continues to work with our rural residents and communities in helping understand appropriate septic system practices. Mikie works closely with Michigan District Health Department and residents living on or near the river to make sure their septic systems are not polluting the river.

**Farm Engagement Liaison, Bart Stoneman** – was recently hired by HPR to better connect HPR to the farming community in seeking “best management practices” and improving river awareness.

**Connecting to our students** – HPR is beginning a working relationship with Forest Hills Nature Area to have the Pine River and watershed included in some of the teaching and learning available to elementary students at Forest Hills Nature Area. Erika Kemler, director is guiding HPR in curriculum development.

**Gratiot County Townships** – Brittany, Mikie, and Ladean (GCD administrator) are working with our Gratiot County townships in providing them with Septic brochures and attending township meeting to see how HPR can best serve them.

**Sara Warren, our Vista Volunteer** – Brittany, Gary, and Chuck joined Alma College staff in a coffee and donuts meeting sendoff for our Vista Volunteer, Sara Warren. Sara was an integral part of our HPR team working on updating our website and Face Book pages. Her attendance and input at our meetings was special as we learned very quickly how much she cared about HPR and was willing to help us in moving forward. Sara is now at Oregon State working on her graduate degree.

**Pine River Cleanup** – Mike Miller, Seville Township trustee and friends worked hard at cleaning up a section of the Pine River below Riverdale moving towards Elm Hall. Mike shared it is not uncommon to see 100 kayaks/canoes go by on a weekend. That is great news for our river and our residents!

**Lumberjack Park News** – Remember if you are looking for water recreation Lumberjack Park has canoes and kayaks for rent and the Pine is clear and flowing well. The park also has rustic campsites, 4 cabins, and event buildings all for rent. Call 989-833-7373 for more info.

**Riverdale Celebration** – On September 21 you may want to venture to Riverdale for their annual car & motorcycle show and to help celebrate their 150<sup>th</sup> year celebration.