



HPR's Quarterly Newsletter

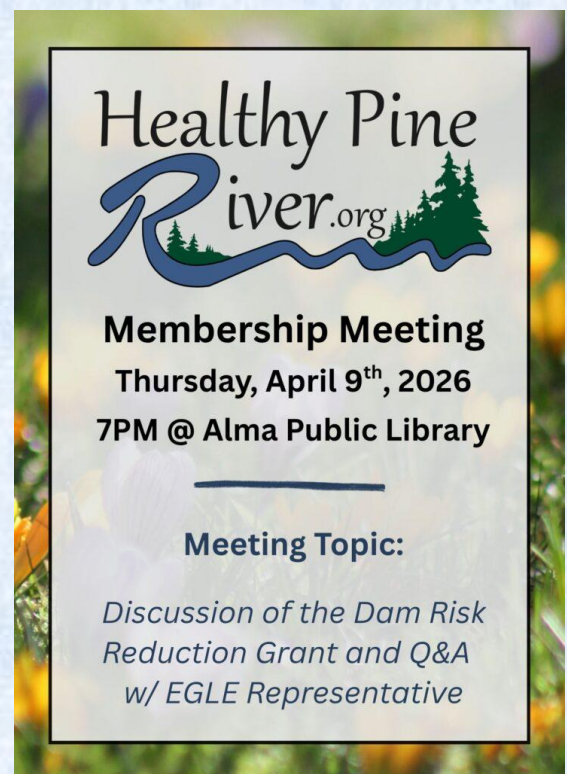
Spring Edition

April 2026

April 9, 2026 HPR Membership Meeting – Mason Manuzak, EGLE (DRRG) Our membership meeting for April will feature EGLE's Mason Manuzak who is overseeing the Dam Risk Reduction Grant that HPR and GEI authored for the City of Alma. We purposely asked Mason to join us to provide both an overview of the grant areas of emphasis, but also to answer the questions that are surfacing about the Mill Pond and State Street Dam. *We hope you will join us on Thursday, April 9th at the Alma Public Library starting at 7:00 p.m.*

2026 EGLE Dam Risk Reduction grant (DRRG) – Our last couple of HPR meetings have been designed around talking about the DRRG and trying to share why the grant was authored and what does a “Feasibility Study” really mean. The grant was sought simply due to two fundamental factors. The ongoing degradation of the impoundment waters behind the dam often referred to as the Mill Pond, and the significant costs of dam upkeep the city must incur to stay abreast of dam safety standards and state inspections. Additionally, we know that the dam and Mill Pond have a unique relationship due to the stoppage of sediment and contaminants, the shallowing of waters, and the increase of algal matts/bloom and vegetation growth.

The grant focus is a “Feasibility Study” designed to include a series of tests regarding the sediment depth, characterization (what is in the sediment), and volume of sediment in the Mill Pond. The study will also include hydrology models that deal with the river channel, flow, volume, and flood plains. The Feasibility Study when finalized will provide our city and residents with what the engineers believe to be viable options in trying to restore the Mill Pond/river channel. A significant part of the Feasibility Study is engaging our community in trying to provide accurate information regarding the impoundment and seeking community input. HPR will utilize a series of surveys and community conversations to gain insight as to how our residents and interested citizens perceive the Pine River, its health and usage. The surveys are helpful in developing community conversations as to what people want to see regarding the restoration of the Mill Pond and river channel. Our April 9th HPR monthly meeting guest speaker is Mason Manuzak from EGLE who actually oversees the DRRG program.



Earth Day coming soon April 22 – Each Spring HPR, Padnos, and this year WQBX are collaborating to provide residents with an opportunity to dispose of or recycle their metal on Tuesday, April 22. Padnos will place their recycling dumpster for your metal and aluminum in the parking lot of Alma Public Library.

You can bring your metal to the library where HPR volunteers can unload it for you. If you need assistance with loading or picking up metal at your location, please call 989-285-1095 (Chuck) to ask for assistance with your metal loading and transport. WQBX is our advertising partner in this project. HPR does the heavy lifting and receives the metal recycling monies to put towards the many projects that are ongoing with the Pine River including water testing, rural septic assistance, and outreach to our county residents.

2026 Membership Drive – The HPR 2026 membership is winding down as we seek to have our current and past members continue their dues/donations contributions to assist HPR with our ongoing work with the Pine River. To date we have had roughly 170 members renew their annual dues and are hopeful that those who have been past members will continue to see the mission of restoring the Pine River as important for water recreation, protecting property values, and making the future river usage much better for future generations.

Our membership goal this year is to reach 250 dues paying members. This helps greatly in funding our projects and in advocating for environmental improvements. One last membership reminder will be going out soon to be able to renew your 2026 HPR membership dues. <https://www.healthypineriver.org/dues/>

2026 Friends of the Pine River Campaign – On Thursday, March 12th HPR hosted a Before Hours Breakfast Event for Gratiot Area Chamber of Commerce businesses and organizations to get caught up on the latest water testing results, Dam Risk Reduction grant testing to date, and HPR's priorities this year in regards to moving forward in our efforts to restore the river. The presentation featured a power-point presentation that is available on our HPR website for members and the public who would like to be informed of the latest information regarding the river. <https://www.healthypineriver.org/information-and-education/>

Healthy Pine River.org

METAL RECYCLING DRIVE

Alma Public Library Parking Lot

Sponsored by: PADNOS, WQBX, and Healthy Pine River

TUESDAY APRIL 22ND, 2026

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Alma Public Library Parking Lot, Alma MI

WE CAN COME TO YOUR HOME AND PICK UP METAL!

If you need assistance with loading or picking up metal at your location, please call 989-285-1095 (Chuck).

Farm Engagement – One of HPR’s fundamental priorities for 2026 is the opportunity to work with our farming community and county farm agencies in helping address the issues of the Pine River. HPR has hosted the state Farm Bureau, area farmers and county agencies is learning about farming practices and how it impacts our waterways. We are in the process of putting forward a collaborative effort to establish a farmer-led workgroup that will assist our farming community with understanding the plight of the Pine River, what can be done, and how can HPR assist with grant writing etc. to help.

Educational Outreach – HPR is working on reaching out to our younger generations as we prepare curriculum and presentations for Alma HS/MS students and 4th/5th graders who take field trips to Forest Hills Nature Area. The curriculum and presentations work will be done this spring and summer with the intention to provide an overview of the Pine River and its struggles and possibilities for the future, and what is being done to restore the river and how students can get involved.

HPR Leadership transitions – Over the next 2-3 months there will be some leadership transitions in HPR as former director Brittany Sommerville has become the HPR treasurer due to accepting full-time employment with a Clare business. We are excited Brittany is continuing her service with HPR. Our search for a new director is continuing with our hopes for filling the position by this summer. Ben will continue on as Chair, with Dave Shepherd as Vice-chair. ***HPR is seeking someone to replace Sue Joyce as secretary after Sue served in that capacity for nearly 10 years.***



Summer Water Testing – This summer HPR will contribute \$10,000 to summer water testing that will deal with specific locations to check for contamination levels and contamination input areas as well. Professor Borrello will continue his work with testing throughout the watershed while addressing specific areas communities have requested testing due to specific contamination levels being on the rise.



HPR Septic Assistance – We are planning our continued work with our rural communities and residents in providing septic system assistance to home owners. To date, Mikie VanHorn-HPR septic liaison has worked with over 300 households in our rural communities including Riverdale, Sumner, Elm Hall, and Elwell. ***We are also seeking an assistant for Mikie this spring/summer so if interested please contact Chuck Sandro at 989-285-1095, or cesandro@yahoo.com. HPR funds the septic assistance program by paying an hourly wage and mileage.***

Highland Festival & Games – Once again HPR will be a Highland Festival & Games sponsor and will be featuring on an Avalon-Tahoe pontoon our banners featuring our major contributors in our “Friends of the Pine River” campaign. A special thank you to Avalon & Tahoe Manufacturing for letting HPR banners catch a ride on one of their pontoon boats for the parade.