The Boyne River once again received a Grade A for water quality!

As part of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council's volunteer stream monitoring program, FoBR volunteers meet in the spring and fall to collect aquatic insects that are highly sensitive to pollution for the river evaluation. Their presence or lack thereof is a strong indicator of water quality.

Volunteers collect aquatic insects and other macroinvertebrate from 14 area rivers. A variety of pollution-sensitive stoneflies, mayflies and caddisflies portrays a healthy ecosystem and high water quality, while a sample with only pollution-tolerant worms and midges reveals a stream ecosystem that is likely suffering.

Four Boyne River sites are monitored twice a year: South Branch at Dobleski Rd., North Branch on Thumb Lake Rd., mid-river at Dam Rd., and near the mouth of the river at Old City Park. Scores are averaged from all monitoring events.

The report indicates that elevated water temperatures from impoundments created by dams and stormwater runoff from urban and agricultural areas are primary stressors to the Boyne River ecosystem. Total diversity scores rarely surpass 20, but consistently high EPT and sensitive family diversity at all sites show why the Dept. of Natural Resources includes the Boyne River on its list of “Blue Ribbon” trout streams.

See the full Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council report on the FoBR website: [www.boyneriver.org](http://www.boyneriver.org)
Upcoming Events & Volunteer Opportunities

**June 20:** Path making at the Boyne River Nature Area

Volunteers are invited to help make a pathway at the top of the Boyne River Nature Area ravine, 10 am. A short nature walk will enable visitors to enjoy the nature area without descending the ravine to the boardwalks and river. Bring clearing tools and work gloves to the parking lot area. Refreshments provided. *For more information, call Nancy Cunningham 231-582-9373.*

**June - Aug:** Stroll the Streets.

Look for the FoBR on Friday evenings during Boyne City’s Stroll the Streets. We’ll have a table with information about FoBR, the Boyne River and the nature area, and invite people to join our organization. Stroll the Streets runs June 27 to August 29, 6-9 pm. We need volunteers to staff the table on individual Fridays. Please join us. *Call Adam Kennedy 231-330-2923 to sign up.*

**July:** Children’s’ Nature Explorer Programs, Wednesdays, 10-11:30 am, in July

The Little Traverse Conservancy and Friends of the Boyne River will host a series of summer Nature Explorer Programs at the Boyne River Nature Area for children ages 6–11. Discover plant and animal life at this treasured natural area through fun activities and art/craft projects. *Details on pg 4.*

**August 12:** FoBR members are invited to our 2015 Annual Meeting, Wednesday, 5:30 pm, at Veterans’ Park pavilion, Boyne City. This is a potluck with meat and beverages provided. No RSVP and no charge. Bring a dish to pass, visit with other members, vote for incoming board members, and hear about FoBR accomplishments over the past year. Awards to be announced.

**August 22:** 3rd Annual Northern Michigan River Sweep.

Friends of the Boyne River will join volunteers across Northern Michigan for the 3rd annual six-river clean up on Saturday. Participants will walk river banks and float the rivers collecting trash along 100 river miles of the Boyne, Jordan, Maple, Bear, Pigeon and Sturgeon Rivers. Please join us for the Boyne River sweep, 9 am-Noon. An after-event will be held at Boyne Outfitters, Boyne Mountain Resort, for all participants, 5-8 pm. Call Adam Kennedy to volunteer 231-330-2923. We will meet at the Veterans Park boat launch at 9 am.

**Monthly:** FoBR Board Directors meets 4th Wednesdays, 6 pm, at the Boyne District Library.
Students Learn Water Quality Monitoring

The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council began a new program called the Watershed Academy to involve high school students in their watershed. As part of the program, the FoBR was invited to help a team of students monitoring on the Boyne River on May 4. Ed Strzelinski, FoBR, joined the team.

Ed Strzelinski shows students a hydrology gauge (photo courtesy of Tip Mitt Watershed Council)

After gathering water quality data on the South Branch, students learned about the hydrology gauges FoBR installed along the Boyne River. The students then submitted the current water level value for gauge MI1025.

For more information about the Watershed Academy: www.watershedcouncil.org (231-347-1181)

Boyne River Education

The FoBR’s Education Committee, co-chaired by Candy Greene and Suzie Dickow, strives to integrate environmental education into the community and schools.

~ Each spring, they teach edible plants and plant folklore to 6th graders in Boyne City and other local schools, including recognizing flowers and fish, doing art activities, and about the FoBR.

~ In May, they join local school groups on a Beaver Island ferry to experience Lake Charlevoix aboard the boat. FoBR volunteers teach about the lake, alien water invaders, lake monitoring, water tables, coast guard lifesaving, and more.

~ They present a lesson as part of the Boyne District Library Adventure Club which is a summer program to teach elementary students about local nature.

~ The committee encourages groups to meet at the Boyne River Nature Area and will give guided workshops in the summer.

~ The FoBR awards $1,000 in tuition monies annually to students living within our watershed and who are focused on college level environmental studies.

To get involved with the committee, call Candy Greene 231-582-2434
2015 Summer Nature Discovery Programs for Kids

We are pleased to announce that The Little Traverse Conservancy and Friends of the Boyne River will host a series of summer Nature Discovery Programs at the Boyne River Nature Area for children ages 6 – 11, Wednesdays in July, 10-11:30 am. Siblings are welcome. Choose one or all of the classes. Bring sun screen, a hat and water. Parents must stay with their children for the class. Call 231-347-0991 to sign up. No charge.

(For more information, see the map of the new Boyne River Nature Area, which is adjacent to the Boyne City’s Business Park. From M-75 east of the Boyne City High School, turn onto Moll Drive and follow to intersection with Lexamar Rd. Turn right and the parking area is on the left.)

JULY 1: CREATURES IN DISGUISE

Blending in is a survival strategy for many animals. We’ll explore the world of creatures in disguise and discover how they use camouflage to conceal themselves from predators and prey. Observe some animal pelts up close, participate in some fun seek and find activities that will test your observation skills, and take a hike to look for critters that may be hiding in the nature area.

JULY 8: FEATHERED FAMILIES

Summer is nesting time for many birds. Learn about different types of nests, nesting habits, communication techniques and more about the family life of our feathered friends. Take a hike to find out what birds hang out at the Boyne River Nature Area and make a bird nest of your own. A limited number of binoculars and field guides will be available for use during the program. Please bring your own if you have them.

JULY 15: HABITAT HOPPIN’

Explore the various habitats at the Boyne River Nature Area and find out what makes each one unique. Through fun activities, learn about the plant and animal life in each one. Compare them and decide in which habitat you’d prefer to make your home.

JULY 22: BUG DETECTIVE

Insects make up the largest and most diverse group of animals on the planet. They and their relatives live nearly everywhere and their behavior, adaptations and life cycles make them interesting to learn about. Investigate bug life at the BRNA by using nets to capture some on land and in the river, observe them up close and determine their role in the natural world. Wear shoes you don’t mind getting wet!

JULY 29: CREATIVE KIDS

Nature’s beautiful colors, patterns and designs can inspire the artist in all of us. We’ll start with an artsy scavenger hunt to get our creative juices flowing and then make several projects to take home. Bring your imagination and be prepared to paint, pound, rub, shape and create!
Recent FoBR Guest Speakers

March 11: Melissa Hansen, Education Coordinator, Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC)

Melissa made a two-fold visit on March 11. She talked about the conservancy and then highlighted this summer’s Nature Discovery Program (p. 4) that will be held at the Boyne River Nature Area during July.

The LTC serves Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Chippewa, Emmet, and Mackinaw Counties. There are 13 staff, 244 volunteers and 3,917 members who work together to protect land in Northern Michigan. The staff offers educational programming to schools, summer groups and community groups, explaining why it is important to protect our wildlife habitat. From loanable items for teachers such as “To Go Educational Kits” and books, to hosting field trips, making presentations and workshops, holding community events and collaborating on projects and programs, subjects include nature photography, wilderness survival, orienteering, and more.

April 8: Heather Hettinger, Fisheries Management Biologist, Michigan Dept. Natural Resources

Heather talked about the most recent survey of the Boyne River by the DNR, which was done in 2012. The entire Boyne River is classified as a cold water stream and as a designated trout stream by the MDNR. There is a long and diverse fish stocking history on the Boyne, including Atlantic salmon (discontinued due to poor survival rates), steelhead and brown trout.

The most recent fish survey indicates the presence of 18 additional fish such as bluegill, black nose dace, brown bullhead, creek chub, green sunfish, rock bass, sculpin and smallmouth bass. The full fisheries survey can be found on the FoBR website. www.boyneriver.org.

May 14: Dr. Elizabeth Del Buono, MD, Citizens Climate Lobby

Dr. Del Buono talked about the science and local impacts of climate change on future generations. She is a volunteer for the non-partisan grassroots advocacy group, the Northern Michigan chapter of Citizens’ Climate Lobby (CCL), which started in March 2013. Given the urgent need to transition quickly away from fossil fuels, she is convinced that carbon “fee and dividend” legislation is the best approach to create a market for this transition. For more information about the group and climate change due to fossil fuels, go to http://citizensclimatelobby.org.
Adam’s Boyne River Kayaking Journal: April 18, 2015

Today was our annual “Rites of Spring” event. Four friends did four sports in one day, beginning with a ski run at Boyne Mountain (had to climb the hill), followed by mountain biking the trails at The Hill Preserve and then roller blading at Young State Park. The final event was a Boyne River paddle. We put all four kayaks on one jeep and headed to Dam Road. Gorgeous day, 65 degrees. There were quite a few fishermen after the spring steelhead. We caught glimpses of the steelhead as we paddled. A hawk soared high over the power line clearance. The water level was low so it was difficult to paddle through or around a couple obstacles. We finished the Rites with a dart game back at the house. A great day!

More journal entries on www.boyneriver.org

Managing Purple Loosestrife

Purple loosestrife is a very hardy invasive species which can rapidly degrade wetlands, diminishing their value for wildlife habitat. Wetlands are the most biologically diverse, productive component of our ecosystem. Hundreds of species of plants, birds, mammals, reptiles, insects, fish and amphibians rely on healthy wetland habitat for their survival.

However, when purple loosestrife gets a foothold, the habitat where fish and wildlife feed, seek shelter, reproduce and rear young, quickly becomes choked under a sea of purple flowers. In June, the invasive loosestrife will meet its natural deterrent, *Galerucella Calmariensis*. These are beetles that FoBR ordered through the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council’s invasives elimination program. The leaf-eaters seriously affect growth and seed production by feeding on the leaves and new shoot growth of purple loosestrife plants. They eat themselves out of food and then die. The size of a peppercorn, the beetles will arrive in early June for release near the Boyne River mill pond. This is the 3rd beetle release since 2007.

Be a Volunteer Scientist: Text water levels

The FoBR crowd hydrology team reports that the five water level monitoring gauges installed on the Boyne River in May 2014 survived the winter. Some repairs were needed but the gauges are ready for volunteer scientists to report water levels via text.
**Toxic Wild Parsnip (pastina sativa)**

The wild parsnip, while beautiful, is a dangerous Eurasian invasive plant. Growing 60-200 cm (2-7 feet) high with **bright yellow flowers in June and July**, it beckons unassuming folks to cut blossoms. It is typically found around ponds, rivers, lakeshores, forests, fields and roadsides.

The plant contains chemicals in the sap of leaves, stems and flowers. It causes painful skin rashes, burns, blisters, and discolors skin, especially in the presence of sunlight (photo dermatitis). **Seek medical attention.**

The Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council urges us to report aquatic invasive species. Wild parsnip is on their priority list. Email info@watershedcouncil.org or call 231-330-5928 for reporting details. If possible, use cell phone GPS to note longitude and latitude.

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**Thank you, FoBR Volunteers!** This organization functions on the enthusiasm and efforts of volunteers, and every project in this bulletin is accomplished by volunteers.

**I tip my hat to:**

- The river monitoring teams that verify our Grade A river rating
- The people who help at the Boyne River Nature Area summer kids program, the youth program at Camp Daggett, the library’s adventure club and the Experience Lake Charlevoix program
- The people who plan the annual meeting in August and who line up interesting speakers and snacks for our general membership meetings every month
- The members who will staff the booth at Stroll the Streets
- The folks who will show up to clean up the river and release the purple loosestrife-eating beetles
- The group that installed and maintains the river hydrology gauges
- The volunteers who work with the Watershed Academy youth to teach the value of protecting rivers
- The grant writer who steered the nature area project
- The guy who helped select and plant native plants for the river bank and nature area
- The website guys
- The folks who will show up to create a path at the nature area
- The writer and editor of this Boyne River Bulletin
- The Board of Directors and the officers who manage our organization

**You know who you are and I thank you.** For readers who also want to volunteer with this dynamic organization, please join us!

**Adam Kennedy, President** boyneriverinc@gmail.com or call me 231-330-2923
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