

Coaster Brook Trout Population Rebounds



A decades-long effort to help the threatened Coaster Brook Trout in the Salmon Trout River Watershed is proving successful, thanks in part to the efforts of the Superior Watershed Partnership (Partnership). The Salmon Trout River, located in the Huron Mountains, is the last river on the south shore of Lake Superior in which Coaster Brook Trout naturally reproduce.

The Partnership, along with local, state, federal and tribal support, is implementing the Salmon Trout Watershed Management Plan they developed which is approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) and DNRE. The Partnership has conducted more than twenty large-scale projects and implemented nearly \$1 million in funding in the Salmon Trout Watershed alone. Funding comes from a myriad of sources including the U.S. EPA, DNRE, Michigan Coastal Management Program, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Great Lakes Commission, the Joyce Foundation, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and others.

A sampling of the watershed restoration projects include erosion control, clear-span bridges, bottomless arch culverts, sediment traps, storm water controls, native plant restoration and stream bank stabilization. These projects improve habitat for the Coaster Brook Trout and provide spawning areas, which are important for the long-term health of the fish population.

The tireless work of biologists, planners, technicians, officials and on-the-ground crews are paying off. The DNRE and Michigan Technological University monitor the number of large Coaster Brook Trout in the Salmon Trout River. After years of decline, researchers have seen a 70 percent increase in the number of adult fish since 2002. Although that is clearly a reason for celebration, according to the Partnership, there is still work to be done.

For more information about the Coaster Brook Trout restoration effort, contact Carl Lindquist, Superior Watershed Partnership, at 906-228-6095.

Bete Grise Coastal Wetland Protection Efforts Gain Momentum

The 8,000-plus acres of coastal wetlands at Bete Grise Wetland preserve are gaining protection from development one step at a time. The latest in an ongoing, multi-phase effort came in May when the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District received a \$1.7 million grant from the federal government's new Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI).

The funding was the first grant Michigan received under the GLRI. The funds will support the acquisition of 1,475 acres of high-quality wetlands, sand dune uplands and 3,500 feet of shoreline frontage on Lac La Belle — a freshwater estuary of Lake Superior.

The wetlands are home to a healthy population of diverse plant and animal species that live in the rich mosaic of habitats, including a rare type of wetland called a patterned fen. The preserve also contains the last best coastal dune swale system of its type in the United States. The area will be preserved in perpetuity for conservation and open to the public for passive recreation, such as hiking, kayaking and bird watching.

The grant process and funding was made possible by the efforts of several organizations including DNRE, Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, The Nature Conservancy, Keweenaw Land Trust and the Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District. The Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District will serve as the titleholder and land manager for the conservation area.

For more information about the Bete Grise Wetland acquisition efforts, contact Gina Nicholas, Houghton Keweenaw Conservation District, at 906-370-7248.