

Mason Tract News 2009

The “Mason Tract Northern White-Cedar Restoration Project” is a working partnership with “Cedars for the Au Sable”, Huron Pines RC&D and Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Forest Management Unit to help begin the reforestation of native northern white-cedars within the Mason Tract. This project, which is chaired by Howard N. Johnson and administered by the Au Sable River System Property Owners Association, is using an “adopt-a-bank-segment” approach to restore northern white-cedars (*Thuja occidentalis*) to ecologically appropriate sections of the South Branch of the Au Sable River within the boundaries of the Mason Tract.

The project began in 2004 with the assistance of Dave Waltz, president of Au Sable River Property Owners Association, Kathy Ryan, NRSC, Susan Thiel, MDNR, and Howard N. Johnson, chairman of the “Cedars for the Au Sable”. The first year Anglers for the Au Sable, Wm. B. Mershon Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and the Grayling High School planted and protected a total of 150 seedlings within the Mason Tract. The following year these groups were joined by the Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited, The North Branch Boys, Mason Griffith Founders Chapter and the Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Since then, the Sierra Club of Michigan and Eagle Scout Spencer Redford planted additional cedar seedlings.

Ten different groups participated with the planting over the five years. The groups completed 21 separate plantings with an estimated 265 volunteers working an estimated 1500 – 2000 hours.

751 seedlings were planted; plus 200 replants. Twenty seedlings were removed and not replanted due to their poor location. Kathy Ryan determined and marked each planting location.

There are no dead seedlings in enclosures at the present time. The sponsoring groups will continue each year to replace any dead

seedling and maintain the enclosure, while also installing the 6-foot enclosures as needed. Currently, there is one cedar in a 6-foot enclosure near Daisy Bend. More cedar seedlings will be growing into the larger enclosures in the coming years.