

CEDARS FOR THE AU SABLE
An Au Sable and Manistee Rivers Cedar Tree Planting and Protection Project

Originated and administrated by the Au Sable River Property Owners Association (ARPOA), P.O. Box 15, Grayling, MI 49738.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In March 2020, on the recommendation of the chairman of the Cedars for the Au Sable (CFAS) project and the agreement of the board of directors of the Au Sable River Property Owners Association, the CFAS project was canceled for the year 2020 due to concerns of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Now in its twenty-third year, the Cedars for the Au Sable project encourages river property owners to replant their native northern white-cedar seedlings along the river's edge to help maintain the delicate balance of the river's ecological system. Since the beginning of this project in 1997, by the Au Sable River Property Owners Association, over, 23,000 northern white-cedar seedlings have been planted and protected in enclosures.

The northern white-cedars along the riverbank provide needed shade to maintain the cold-water fishery of the river. The presence of the cedar sweepers at the water line provides protection for the fish, increases the amount of large woody debris in the water, as well as, the preservation of the riverbank by locking in the soil.

There is virtually no natural reforestation of northern white-cedar in northern Michigan. Many believe it is mainly due to the tremendous deer populations in our northern counties. River property owners have long recognized the complete absence of any young cedars in our area. They have attempted to plant replacement cedar seedlings only to have the deer and hares eat them again. Recognizing that this problem existed, and a solution needed to be found, volunteer members of the ARPOA pre-packaged northern white-cedar seedlings into a planting kit. Included in this planting kit are: 10 northern white-cedar seedlings, protective fencing material, wooden stakes, and complete planting instructions.

Group plantings and caring of existing cedars within the Mason Tract was canceled for this year. This is part of the on-going Mason Tract Northern White-cedar Reforestation Project which planted and protected 900 cedar seedlings within the Mason Tract. While new cedar planting in the Deward area of the upper Manistee River was canceled for this year, the Mason-Griffith Founders TU chapter completed a maintenance project in the fall by replacing 49 existing small protective cages with larger 6-ft cages to continue to protect maturing cedars from deer browse.

Volunteers continued to pre-cut replacement 6-ft fence that will be distributed at Grayling's McLean's Ace Hardware to river property owners. Past project participants may purchase the larger enclosures when their seedlings out-grow their existing enclosures. This taller enclosure is black PVC coated fencing material that will make the enclosure inconspicuous at the river's edge. The cost of this larger enclosure, along with three additional wooden stakes, is \$8.00 each. This expense is partially subsidized by project supporters.

CFAS project volunteers, along with members of the Mio Lions club, replaced 6-ft protective fence on eight maturing cedars downstream of the Mio damn. Several of the cages were also removed from larger cedars that are now large enough to survive deer browse. Mio's Lions Club members planted these cedars as seedlings in 2011.

Project supporters purchased 30 cedar seedlings on behalf of a friend or a memorial to honor a loved one during the holiday season as part of the CFAS's Christmas Cedar offering.

The actual cost for all the material in the planting kit is substantially more than the asking price. The purchase price is subsidized by: the Michigan Fly Fishing Club, Rotary Club of Roscommon, the Hodge Family Fund of the DuPage Foundation, Riverdale Mills Corporation, Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation, Trout and Salmon Foundation, The Hal & Jean Glassen Memorial Foundation, Scientific Anglers, AJD Forest Products, Anglers of the Au Sable (Grayling), Mason – Griffith Founders Chapter (Grayling) of Trout Unlimited, Mershon-Neumann Heritage Chapter (Saginaw) of Trout Unlimited, Paul H. Young Chapter (Detroit) of Trout Unlimited, Headwaters Chapter (Gaylord) of Trout Unlimited, Adams Chapter of Trout Unlimited (Traverse City), Challenge Chapter (Bloomfield Hills) of Trout Unlimited, Leon P. Martuch (Midland), Kalamazoo Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Ann Arbor Area Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Kalamazoo Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Upper Manistee River Association, Au Sable North Branch Area Association, Grayrock Rodmakers, Au Sable River Watershed Restoration Committee, and Mr. Craig Hinkle, Re/Max of Grayling.

To order planting kits for next summer, (or to start a similar project on your favorite river) please contact project chairman Howard N. Johnson at 989-280-0381, ausablecedars@gmail.com, or visit the web site: www.cedarsfortheausable.org.

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Masked fence cutters behind McLean's Ace Hardware. Volunteers include Steve Poullos, Sara Lawless, Marie Harrington, Boyd Dillon, Jim Lawless, Mark Rais, Howard Johnson, Margot Surridge, and David Smith.

Are you able to place a name with the volunteer?