

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

Fifty-seven river property owners planted and protected 720 northern white-cedar seedlings in September 2021 to preserve and protect the cold-water fishery of the Au Sable and Manistee River watershed. Now in its twenty-fifth 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 (ARPOA), over 25,000 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. Volunteer members of the ARPOA assisting with this year's distribution included: Rodney Ney, Ralph Rucinski, Boyd & Shirley Dillon, Julie Gibbs, Susan Thiel, Ken Rouston, Barb & Gary Vetter, Margot Surridge, Tim Hornsey, Howard R. Johnson, Carolyn Johnson, John & Kathy Keagle, Jim Lawless, David Long, and Chairman Howard N. Johnson. Ivan Witt, Registered Forester, Forestry Consultants, Inc Gaylord, MI and Patrick Mohny, Unit Manager, DNR Gladwin FMU provided technical assistance. Marlene and Mike Swiss of the Au Sable North Branch donated 150 home-grown Northern White-cedar seedlings to the project to be re-planted on the North Branch.

Plantings and caring of existing cedars continued within the Mason Tract by the Anglers of the Au Sable, Mason – Griffith Founders Chapter (Grayling) of Trout Unlimited, Sierra Club, and the Headwaters Chapter (Gaylord) of Trout Unlimited. 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. Cedar seedling planting continues on state land in the Deward area of the upper Manistee River with Anglers of the Au Sable planting and protecting 50 cedar seedlings on their site above Cameron Bridge and Mason-Griffith Founders Chapter protecting 46 cedars with 6-ft cages. planting and protecting cedar seedlings on their assigned segment of the river.

Additional donations have been made to the project during the year from local supporters including: Arauco North America, Upper Manistee River Association, Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation, Grayrock Rodmakers, Au Sable River Watershed Restoration Committee, the Rotary Club of Roscommon, the Hodge Family Fund of the DuPage Foundation and Mr. Craig Hinkle, Re/Max of Grayling. Trout Gorillas, through their representative Tom Buhr, provided a \$5,000 donation to the Cedars for the Au Sable project.

Project chairman Johnson announced that a program to further protect the maturing northern white-cedars that have been planted in previous years has been prepared. Past project participants may purchase the larger 6-ft enclosures
2021 Post News Release

at McLean's Ace Hardware in Grayling 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 \$10.00 each. This expense is partially subsidized by project supporters.

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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