

CEDARS FOR THE AU SABLE CONTINUES TO REPLANT WHITE CEDARS

Fifty-four river property owners planted 1,050 northern white-cedar seedlings this fall in an effort to preserve and protect the cold-water fishery of the Au Sable and Manistee River watershed. Now, in its twelve 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 10,000 northern white-cedar seedlings have been planted and protected in enclosures.

The northern white-cedars along the river bank 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 due mainly 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 ARSPOA 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 Au Sable River Property Owners Association assisting with this year's distribution included: Jerry Gosnell, Greg Stansbury, Steve Witt, Walt Tilson, Ralph Rucinski, Rodney Ney, Howard R. Johnson, Thomas Johnson, William Fowler, Jim Kingsley, Jim Shiflett, and chairman Howard N. Johnson. Ivan Witt, Registered Forester, Forestry Consultants, Inc provided technical assistance.

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 enclosures 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 \$5.00 each. This expense is partially subsidized by project supporters and McLean's Ace Hardware.

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 989-753-6373, hjohnson@aol.com, or visit the web site: www.cedarsfortheausable.org.

The actual cost for all the material in the planting kit was substantially more than the asking price. The purchase price was subsidized by: Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation, Trout and Salmon Foundation, The Hal & Jean Glassen Memorial Foundation, AJD Forest Products, Anglers of the Au Sable (Grayling), Mason – Griffith Founders Chapter (Grayling) of Trout Unlimited, William B. Mershon Chapter (Saginaw) of Trout Unlimited, Paul H. Young Chapter (Detroit) of Trout Unlimited, Clinton Valley Chapter (Rochester Hills) of Trout Unlimited, Challenge Chapter (Bloomfield Hills) of Trout Unlimited, Arnold J. Copeland Chapter (Bay City) of Trout Unlimited, Leon P. Martuch (Midland) Lansing Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Upper Manistee River Association, Au Sable North Branch Area Association, Au Sable River Watershed Restoration Committee, and Mr. Craig Hinkle, Re/Max of Grayling.