

2018 Brown Trout Redd Survey – South Branch of the Au Sable River

The brown trout redd survey on the south branch of the Au Sable River was completed on November 2 & 3, 2018. Nineteen members of the Wm. B. Mershon Chapter, Mason-Griffith Founders Chapter, and Au Sable River property owners participated over the two days. Thirteen reaches were surveyed between Chase Bridge and Truettner's Landing, below Smith Bridge.

This is the sixth year of the survey, therefore until we learn where the productive spawning areas are, different reaches are being surveyed each year. This year we found a total of 89 redds. We added a reach this year below Smith Bridge Landing to Truettner's Landing.

Five reaches had increases this year over the last year surveyed (2016), while eight reaches had decreases compared to the last year surveyed. The reaches with the greatest decrease are in the center sections of the Mason Tract.

High water levels prevented the volunteers from completing one reach entirely and reduced the length of surveyed water in two other reaches. The high water also made it more difficult to detect redds. This handicap may account for the overall reduction in redds surveyed.

This year's Team Leaders from MGFTU included Boyd Dillon, Jim Lawless, Bruce Hambell and Bob Andrus. MGFC's Director Gerry Lake provided training. Other volunteers included: Bob Lafferty, Steve Loudon, Mike Meyer, Larry Brown, Jim Redford, Gary Torkeo, Mark Rais, Joyce Haxton, Ed Boris, Gene Williams, John Williams, Nate Winkler, and Tim Weiler. Howard N. Johnson coordinated the south branch redd survey.

Steve Johnson will tabulate and plot all GPS points to river maps. We are very grateful for his work plotting the GPS points in past years. We will start to see the most productive areas of the river for redds development.

This survey on the south branch of the Au Sable River is coordinated with a similar survey on the main branch by the Mason-Griffiths Founders Chapter of TU and another survey on the north branch by Anglers of the Au Sable.

Chapter volunteers team-up with other volunteers to wade a one-mile section of the south branch to inventory brown trout redds. Each redd location will be measured and the GPS coordinates will be recorded. Any protective fish cover will be noted.

The location and size of spawning trout redds provides:

- DNR Fisheries an estimate of the female trout population
- Yearly averages of redd sizes identifies trends of fish size
- Identifies protective cover needs
- Identifies productive and non-productive river reaches

If you would like to help with next year's survey, please email chapter director Howard N. Johnson at hjohnson@aol.com. Additional detailed information will be sent to you along with training information.