

# Planning for Prosperity in River Hydro Communities

## Lower Au Sable River Group: Cooke, Foote, Loud, and Five Channels

# Meeting Two

June 25, 2024 | 9:00 a.m.

Warrior Pavilion  
6288 F41  
Oscoda, MI 48750

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## Attendees

- Consumers Energy
  - Public Sector Consultants
  - Iosco County
  - District Commissioner
  - Oscoda Township
  - Charter Township of AuSable
  - Senator Hoyenga's Office
  - Seven Mile Hill Homeowners Association (HOA)
  - Pine Acres
  - Save the Dams
  - Iosco Conservation District/County Parks and Recreation
  - Michigan Hydro Relicensing Coalition
  - County Board/Housing Director
  - Great Lakes Fishery Commission
  - Bissonette Landing HOA
  - Develop Iosco, Inc.
  - Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
  - Conservation Resource Alliance
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## Welcome

- Jamie Carruthers-Soboleski, local convener and county controller/finance director, asked everyone to reintroduce themselves. The purpose of this meeting is to determine which strengths or assets that Iosco County can build upon if the dams are decommissioned or relicensed.

### Boardman/Ottaway River Restoration

- The Conservation Resource Alliance was asked to oversee the dam removal and restoration process within the Boardman River Watershed. Traverse City and Grand Traverse County, after years of deliberation and a \$1.1million feasibility study, chose to decommission Sabin Dam, Boardman Dam, and Brown Bridge Dam. They decided to restore the Union Street Dam as a sea lamprey barrier.
- Brown Bridge Dam removal
  - The Brown Bridge Dam was built in 1921 and was removed in 2012. 277,000 cubic yards of sediment was managed during the dam's removal. 2.9 miles of river was restored, with an average width of 45–50 feet. During the dewatering process of the dam, a sinkhole formed. The dewatering method used was not proper for the Brown Bridge Dam.
- Boardman Dam removal
  - The Boardman Dam was built in 1894, relocated/rebuilt in 1930, and removed in 2017. 300,000 cubic yards of sediment managed during the dam's removal. 1.8 miles of river was restored with an average width of 60 feet. Robbins Bridge was built to replace the one-lane crossing over the powerhouse.
- Sabin Dam removal
  - The Sabin Dam was built in 1906, repaired/rebuilt in 1914 and 1930, and removed in 2018. 122,316 cubic yards of sediment was managed. The average river width after the dam was removed is 60 feet. The river needed to be raised eight feet to go back to its original height.
- Monitoring
  - Trees are still being planted and the areas surrounding the dams are being treated for invasive plants. The DNR are doing fish surveys. They have found that brook trout, native to Michigan, is increasing in numbers. Herpetological Resource and Management, LLC conducted reptile and amphibian assessments.

### Focusing on Opportunities

- The meeting broke up into two groups to discuss which assets and strengths can Iosco County build upon if the dams are relicensed or if they are decommissioned. After about half an hour, the meeting reconvened.
- If the dams are relicensed, Iosco County can build upon the following strengths/assets:

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- Property values maintained/increased
  - Tax money with new assets
  - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance to both water and land assets
  - MMAC stop strict regulations
  - Dam safety is number one
  - Maintain or enhance river access
  - Maintain aquatic species
  - Block invasive species
  - Transparency
  - Relationships with leaders
  - More campsites
  - Better communication on closures to recreation sites
  - Fish habitat
  - Enhance current trail systems and build upon them
  - Water quality and temperature
- If the dams were decommissioned, Iosco County can build upon the following strengths and assets:
    - Enhance river access and trail system
    - Riverbank hiking trail
    - Paddle sports enhancements
    - Cooperation/partner with the United States Forest Service and DNR
    - No residential or commercial development of land surrounding the dams – look at nonprofits
    - Diverse recreation to new river system
    - Marketing and promotion
    - Community buy-in or campaign
    - Extend land from existing recreation sites to new river location
    - Enhance Old Orchard Park
    - Rustic campsites
    - UTVs/ATVs – more trails
    - Block invasive species
    - Add new overlooks, maintain existing ones
    - Promote new businesses
    - River access with ramps, bathrooms, parking to be ADA compliant
    - Economic opportunities
    - Compensation for lost property value

## What's Next

- The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 17 regarding how to reach community aspirations.
- Additional meeting dates are:
  - October 24
  - December 10: Public meeting