

FishPass Monthly Update



Dear partners:

On behalf of the FishPass team, I am pleased to provide an update from June-Aug 2025. Please distribute the update as you see fit.

NOTE: A time-lapse camera has been installed to capture FishPass construction progress. Check it out [here](#).

Construction:

- FishPass has reached the first major construction milestone in completing Phase 1—arc-labyrinth and low-flow weir installation. Phase 1 of construction saw the demolition of half the existing dam and installation of a new, safe water control structure. The new weirs are an important component of FishPass by providing all the regulatory required flood control and acting as a default sea lamprey barrier (**Figure 1**). A portion of the upstream cofferdam (connecting from River's Edge Condominiums to river center) has been completely removed and the entire river flow is now passing over the new arc-labyrinth and low-flow weirs (**Figure 2**). Overall, construction is one-third complete.
- The contractor has started construction Phase 2, which includes encompassing the north side of the river inside a sheet pile cofferdam. Working within the cofferdam will permit the contractor to work in the dry to remove the remaining portions of the existing Union Street Dam and install the 400 ft L x 30 ft W fish-sorting channel, which will be the primary site of research on selective fish passage. The sheet pile installation is anticipated to be completed by mid-August. Throughout sheet pile installation activities, vibration and settlement at nearby properties continue to be monitored and no thresholds have been exceeded.

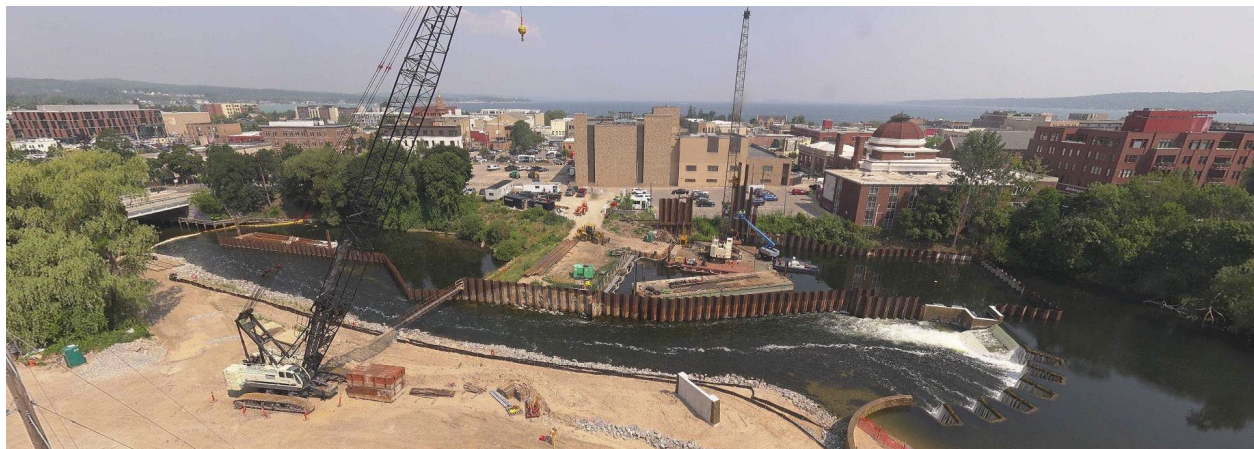


Figure 1. Image from the FishPass time-lapse camera: August 1, 2025 showing flow over the new weirs and into a temporary bypass channel, while the contractor installs the cofferdam around the north bank of the river to start constructing the fish-sorting channels.



Figure 2. Rerouting of the Boardman/Ottaway River to pass over the new arc-labyrinth and low-flow weirs. Switching of flow from the old Union Street Dam to the new structures occurred on June 16, 2025.

Research:

- 26 June – FishPass staff completed seasonal operation of a horizontal submerged screen weir (HSSW) at the MI DNR Traverse City Salmon Weir which began on 25 March 2025. At the conclusion of the 93 days of operation, staff processed over 2100 captured fish (**Table 1**). The HSSW is positioned two feet off the bottom of the river at the Salmon Weir to not impede river navigation or block free movement of fish. The purpose of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the HSSW to capture sea lamprey and other fishes migrating into the Boardman/Ottaway River.
- June – FishPass staff conducted an additional four electrofishing surveys in the lower Boardman/Ottaway River (Below Union Street Dam) for a total of 12 “spring” surveys in this section of river. FishPass staff in corroboration with project partners have been conducting four seasonal electrofishing surveys annually (i.e., index surveys) in this stretch of river for

the past six years. This increased sampling effort being conducted in 2025 will help further refine shifts in the composition of the spring-time fish community assemblage and will greatly increase the number of tagged fish present in the river in preparation for FishPass operations. As part of this work, staff have implanted over one thousand passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags in fishes of suitable size and condition likely to return to the river in the future and encounter the FishPass facility. These tagged fish will help researchers evaluate the effectiveness of sorting technologies when FishPass becomes operational. Additional information on the results of these surveys is available in **Table 1**.

- 15 July – Staff from GLFC, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and Conservation Resource Alliance conducted a two-pass electrofishing survey at the Forks long-term monitoring site. The team counted and measured all fish captured and estimated the population of brook and brown trout and a pooled estimate of slimy and modeled sculpin abundance (**Table 2**).
- 29 July – GLFC and Central Michigan University staff completed the second scheduled index electrofishing survey in the lower Boardman/Ottaway River (below Union St. Dam). These surveys are conducted to understand the seasonal diversity and abundance of the Boardman/Ottaway River fishery in this section of river and have been conducted for the past seven years (**Table 3**).

Table 1. The number of fishes (n) sampled in spring of 2025 in the lower Boardman/Ottaway River (i.e., Below Union Street Dam), the number sampled during eight electrofishing surveys (n.efish) on 09, 15, 23, 28 April, 07, 13, 21, 27 May, 03, 10,17, 25 June, and 29 July 2025, the number of fish sampled at the Horizontal Submerged Screen Weir Trap (n.HSSW), the number of passive integrated transponder tags implanted (n.PIT) in the fishes, and the average length and weight of individuals measured and during all sampling events.

Species	n	n.efish	n.hssw	n.PIT	Average length (in.)
Atlantic salmon	2	2	0	2	17.9
Northern brook lamprey	24	0	0	0	4.5
Northern pike	4	4	0	3	30.1
Western blacknose dace	16	0	0	0	2.4
alewife	30	30	0	0	6.1
black bullhead	1	0	1	0	-
bluegill sunfish	3	0	3	0	3.7
brook trout	25	0	0	0	4.6
brown trout	144	38	6	34	10.1
channel catfish	1	1	0	1	28.2*
cisco	18	1	17	1	8.7
coho salmon	144	1	143	0	5.4
common carp	6	6	0	6	27.2
freshwater drum	2	2	0	2	23.9
golden redhorse	1	1	0	1	22.4*
green sunfish	2	0	2	0	-
largemouth bass	5	0	0	0	1.5
longnose sucker	517	351	165	319	17.4
rainbow trout	346	223	120	171	20.2
river redhorse	4	4	0	3	23.2
rock bass	707	24	683	9	6.4
round goby	49	0	49	0	4.2
sculpin mixed species	202	0	0	0	2.3
sea lamprey	100	2	98	70	19
shortnose gar	1	1	0	0	-
silver redhorse	1	1	0	1	23.7*
smallmouth bass	80	77	3	72	15.6
three-spined stickleback	587	0	587	0	2.3
walleye	35	31	4	31	23.5
white sucker	443	386	56	316	13.5
yellow perch	183	7	176	4	7.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>3683</i>	<i>1193</i>	<i>2113</i>	<i>1046</i>	

*Denotes a sample size of one.

Table 2. The number of fishes captured (n), mean length and weight, adjusted Lincoln-Peterson population abundance estimate and density for brook, brown trout, and a pooled abundance estimate for slimy and modeled sculpin at the Forks long-term monitoring site 15 July 2025.

Species	n	Mean (SE) total length (in.)	Adjusted Lincoln- Peterson population estimate (95% CI)	Acreage	Fish/acre	Lbs./acre
brook trout	25	4.6 (0.38)	29 (19-51)	0.76	38.16	2
brown trout	100	6.5 (0.45)	133 (102-189)	0.76	175.42	40.57
largemouth bass	5	1.5 (0.05)				
Northern brook lamprey	24	4.5 (0.43)				
rainbow trout	1	5.31*				
rock bass	1	4.06*				
sculpin mixed species	202	2.3 (0.03)	554 (402-924)	0.76	729.57	5.06
Western blacknose dace	16	2.4 (0.08)				

*Denotes a sample size of one

Table 3. Average length and number of fish (n) sampled during electrofishing in the lower Boardman/Ottaway River on 29 July 2025.

Species	n	Average length (in.)
brown trout	3	17
rainbow trout	5	23.7
rock bass	4	6.5
sea lamprey	1	-
smallmouth bass	5	11.3
white sucker	5	9.8
yellow perch	3	5.3

Outreach:

- FishPass Tours – Offered throughout June and July to the public at large, project adjacent neighbors, and mission-related partners including 20Fathoms, the National Cherry Festival, Hagerty, staff from Representative Tim Walberg, Inland Seas Education Association and multiple groups from Hagerty. 7 tours were hosted, attended by more than 150 people.
- 4 June – Hosted a FishPass tour for the Michigan Downtown Association (60+ppl)
- 8-13 June – The International Conference on Fish Telemetry was held in Traverse City. The conference brought together hundreds of research professionals and industry experts to discuss advancements in technology, novel methods, and research results used to advance our understanding of fish behavior and ecology. As part of the conference, the public and conference attendees gathered for a screening of “All too Clear,” a fantastic documentary film full of spectacular underwater footage and tells the story of how invasive mussels have impacted the Great Lakes ecosystem (<https://inspiredplanet.ca/alltooclear/>).
- 16 June – FishPass presentation to the TC Optimists Club (20+ppl)

- Ongoing June – October; FishPass staff is playing an advisory role in the Blue Tech Challenge, locally sponsored by Northwestern Michigan College(NMC).
- 14 & 21 July – FishPass staff participated in “History of the Anishinaabe” taught by JoAnne Cook at NMC – knowledge to be incorporated in future FishPass stories/presentations.
- 15 July – TC New Tech Expo – Michigan’s Blue Tech Innovation Hub
- July + Ongoing – Collaboration with TC Arts Commission re: public art plan for FishPass site
- 24 July – IPR Guest Host during fund drive + FishPass update with reporter Ellie Katz
- 29-30 July – PBS Great Lakes Now – part 2 of 3 documentary on river restoration

Upcoming:

- 8 August – Senior Staff Visit from the Office of Senator Gary Peters (31 ppl)
- 18 August – [ReShore](#): Innovation at the Intersection of Water, Mobility and Outdoor Tech
- 28 August – [UnPlugged](#) with 20Fathoms: Northern MI’s Blue Tech Innovation Hub Round Table
- 12 September – [Freshwater Research and Innovation Center](#) Ground Breaking
- 17 September – [GLOS](#) Leadership Visit + Tour
- 25 September – Tribal Council FishPass Tour
- 25 September – Presentation during Leadership Grand Traverse Natural Resources Day
- 29 September – October 1 – [Oceans25](#) and [BlueTech Challenge](#) Finale

In the News:

- Traverse City signs FishPass agreement, outlining operation and maintenance (UpNorthLive, 16 June 2025): <https://upnorthlive.com/news/local/traverse-city-signs-fishpass-agreement-outlining-operation-and-maintenance>
- FishPass Agreement, New Staff Positions, Ethics Ballot Proposal on City Agenda (The Ticker, 16 June 2025): <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/fishpass-agreement-new-staff-positions-ethics-ballot-proposal-on-city-agenda/>
- Two Design Concepts Emerge for Rotary Square (The Ticker, 10 July 2025): <https://www.traverseticker.com/news/two-design-concepts-emerge-for-rotary-square/>
- TRAVERSE CITY: FishPass moves forward – with a bang (The Ticker, 09 August 2025): https://www.record-eagle.com/news/local_news/traverse-city-fishpass-moves-forward-with-a-bang/article_d3a1eabf-f450-406d-88e1-a92440f50688.html
- I Speak for the Fish: Swiping right on native fish (Great Lakes Now, 18 August 2025): <https://www.greatlakesnow.org/2025/08/i-speak-for-the-fish-swiping-right-on-native-fish/>



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