This year, the Boardman River Clean Sweep decided that we would concentrate on getting more fishing related litter out of our local rivers. We targeted the Boardman, Betsie and Lower Manistee Rivers which endure heavy steelhead and salmon fishing pressures. People who fish for steelhead and salmon use heavy monofilament lines, metal swivels, steel wire leaders, treble hooks and lead sinkers. When these lines get snagged in a tree or on an underwater log, they do not break easily and often long pieces of line with all the hardware is left in the river to snare birds, fish, other wildlife, tangle around or injure swimmers, get wrapped around powerboats props, and hook passing paddlers.

This year we used our ACA-LL Bean – CFG grant to build 10 monofilament recycle bins and place them in locations on the Lower Manistee River and on the Boardman River. These were in locations owned by the USFS, MI-DNR, Grand Traverse County and the City of Traverse City, Michigan. We were able to get permission to place 10 of these bins. We were not able to get permission for the Betsie River. But we feel that now we can show how successful these have been in the locations where we have placed them, we can finally get permission to place one on the Betsie River next year.

When we were placing the bins, the fishermen we encountered were happy that someone finally was doing this and they have stepped up to use them and help us maintain them. On the Lower Manistee, they are being used extensively. On the Boardman, they are not being used as much.

We also used our grant to do a cleanup on the Lower Manistee River on July 20. It was the worst day we have ever spent on any river anywhere. It was cool and thunder was in the area when 7 of us launched but in just a few minutes, the rains came and in the next 3 hours it rained more than 6 inches with constant lightening, thunder, wind and pounding rain. One volunteer described it as a “Wrath of God” storm. We took shelter under our canoes for a while but finally had to gather up our courage and head out in the storm. We managed to take out 20 pounds of litter from the river but our hearts were not in it. We wanted to get off the river before someone got killed.

We all survived and are none the worse for the experience. We did learn a few valuable lessons and we will be more careful the next time.

We want to thank the ACA and LL Bean for their generosity. These grants have allowed us to do projects that we would not have been able to do otherwise and they have been a big part of our success.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman Fred
Chairman – Boardman River Clean Sweep
7/24/2019