

Habitat Improvement Project-Roxbury Ponds, Chippewa County

Michigan Department of Natural Resources and United States Forest Service

On March 10, 2016 the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) conducted a habitat improvement project on two ponds located within the Hiawatha National Forest in Chippewa County. Roxbury Pond East and West were selected for habitat improvement projects as part of an effort to create fisheries in two idle ponds. Both ponds were once managed for Brook Trout for more than 30 years. Following netting surveys in the early 2000's which captured few Brook Trout, stocking was ceased and management was changed to warmwater fisheries. In 2013, fisheries managers decided to create warmwater fisheries through wild fish transfers and stocking. In 2014 and 2015, Roxbury Pond West received Largemouth Bass and Bluegill through wild fish transfers. Starting in 2016, Roxbury Pond East is scheduled to be stocked with Black Crappie with stocking events to occur in subsequent years.

Both Roxbury Ponds are borrow pits created from the construction of Lakeshore Drive during the mid-1970's. After excavation, these ponds were left with very little woody debris providing limited cover for fish. In order to improve fish cover, fisheries managers decided to place brush bundles and tree drops into each pond.

Project Summary

- United States Forest Service Crew: 3
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources-Fisheries Division Crew: 4
- 10 brush bundles completed on Roxbury Pond East; primarily cedar
- 10 brush bundles and 11 tree drops completed on Roxbury Pond West; brush bundles primarily cedar with some spruce; tree drops consisted of all red pine
- Bundles were placed with intentions of angling activities offshore with some near shore; tree drops will provide near shore angling opportunities
- See maps for placements on each pond

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Below are photos highlighting the actions taken to complete the project.



Depth soundings were made for proper brush bundle placement. Optimal depths were 7-9 feet.



Technicians selected trees for brush bundle arrangements.



Selected trees for brush bundles.



Using snowmobiles, US Forest Service technicians hauled brush to desired locations to be bundled.



Arrangement of brush bundles.



Technicians used steel cable to secure the bundle to blocks which act as anchors to hold the structures on the bottom of the ponds.



In addition to the brush bundles, tree drops on Roxbury Pond West were made using the available red pine.



Finishing up bundles on Roxbury Pond West.

Before



After



