



Other things to see and do while visiting the Little Manistee River Weir

A small river with spectacular scenery, the Little Manistee River is wade-able throughout its length and is considered one of the best wild trout and salmon streams in the Midwest. Fishing is excellent for trout and salmon with many access sites available along the river.

The river is very popular with paddlers; access above and below the Little Manistee River Weir offers exceptional opportunities to view wildlife up close. Just below the weir and easily seen from the on-site trail is a bald eagle's nest that has been active for more than 10 years. While visiting it is also common to see various reptiles and amphibians, such as blue tailed skink, northern water snake and a variety of turtles and frogs.

There are also abundant opportunities to hike and camp while visiting the Little Manistee River area.



Interested in planning a visit to the Little Manistee River Weir?

For fall Chinook salmon migration the weir is usually in place from mid-August until mid-November. For spring steelhead migration the weir is usually in place from early March until the end of April.

Self-guided tours are allowed any time the weir is in operation.

Call the Little Manistee River Weir hotline at 1-231-775-9727, extension 6072 to hear about the weir's current activity and to plan your visit. The hotline is updated daily during times of heavy activity.

Interested in bringing a group for a guided tour? Contact Scott Heintzelman at 231-389-2551 to schedule a time and day.

For more information on weirs in Michigan, visit www.michigan.gov/fishing and click on "Managing Michigan's Fisheries".

Little Manistee River Weir

Michigan Department of Natural Resources
egg-take facility



What is the Little Manistee River Weir?

The Little Manistee River Weir is an egg-take facility managed by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Division.

Why was this site chosen?

The Little Manistee River was chosen for a weir because of its close proximity to Lake Michigan, its natural run of steelhead trout, and the ideal spawning habitat it provides for trout and salmon.

How does it work?

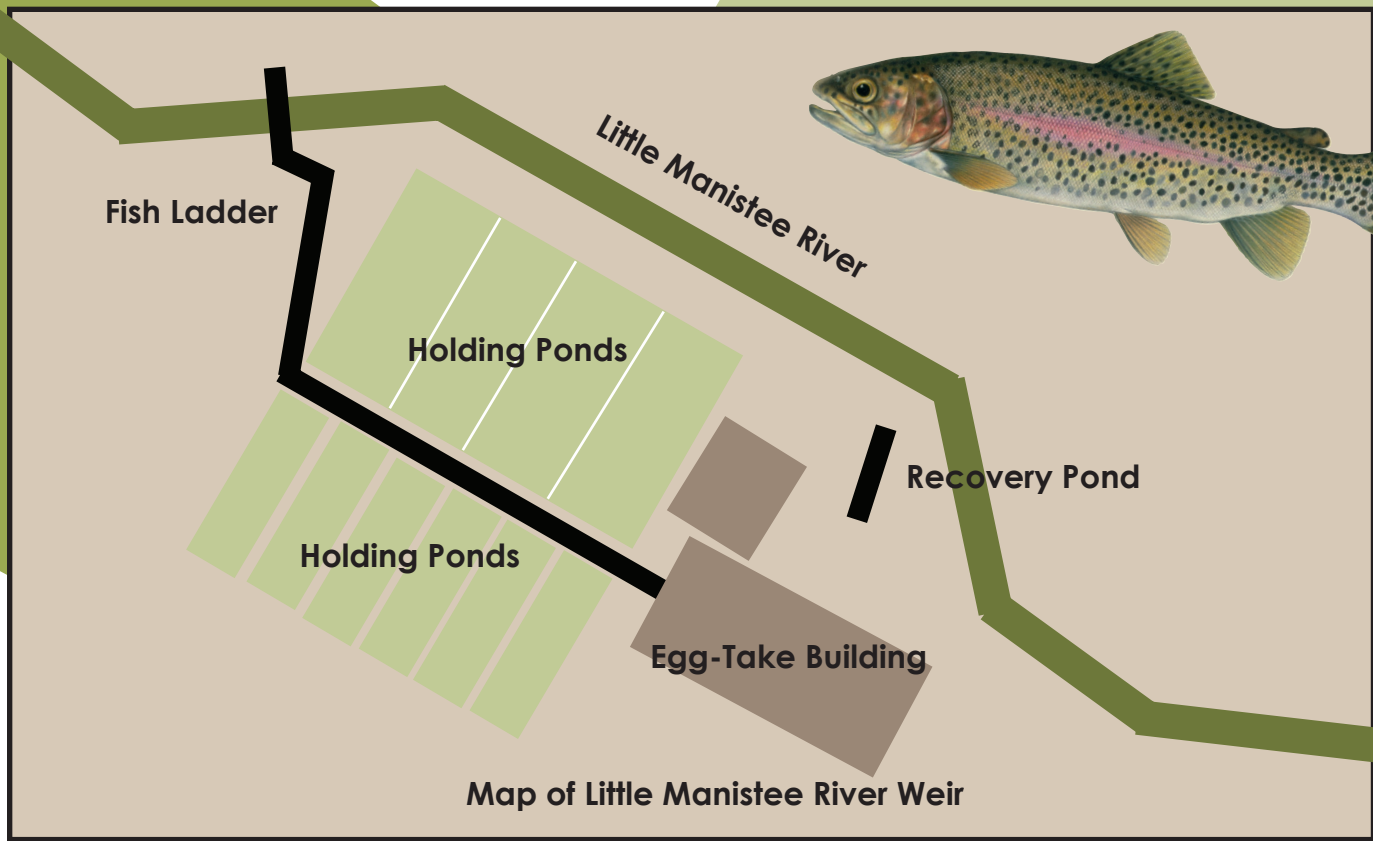
Salmon and trout migrate into the Little Manistee River from Lake Michigan looking for cool, clean water and gravelly bottoms to spawn.

The DNR blocks upstream passage of fish during specific times of the year using a dam-like structure known as a weir. Fish congregated below the structure are diverted into the facility via a fish ladder. Their natural instinct is to seek out spawning habitat, so they continue looking for this and move up through the ladder.

Once in the facility, the DNR harvests eggs and milt (sperm) of Chinook salmon each fall and steelhead trout each spring. Fertilized eggs will travel to state fish hatcheries where they will be provided with food, water and shelter until they reach the desired size.

The fish reared are released back into the wild to create fishing opportunities for anglers throughout Michigan and the Great Lakes.

Keep reading to learn about specific features of the Little Manistee River Weir!



Fish Ladder
Seeking ideal spawning habitat, salmon and trout instinctively swim upstream, against the current. The natural flow of the river is simulated as water flows over this stair-like structure known as a *fish ladder*. Salmon and trout will leap up and over the three-foot-tall "stairs" and into the weir facility.

Holding Ponds
After fish swim up the fish ladder and into the weir facility, they are guided into *holding ponds*. Each pond can hold anywhere from 500 to 1,000 fish. Groups of fish are separated into ponds based on when they arrive and their readiness to spawn (or ripeness).

Egg-Take Building
Inside the *egg-take building* eggs and milt are collected and combined to provide fertilized eggs for hatchery rearing programs. The number of fish handled and the number of fertilized eggs collected is determined by a daily quota request by state fish hatcheries. All Chinook salmon handled here are harvested by the DNR in cooperation with a private contractor.

Recovery Pond
This relatively small, rectangular *recovery pond* serves as a rest point for fish that have been handled inside the facility and will be released upstream of the weir structure. During fall operations Coho salmon, steelhead and brown trout are released upstream. During spring operations steelhead are released upstream.