



# THE ALPENA NEWS

NorthEastern Michigan's Newspaper

thealpenanews.com  
Today's weather  
**Mostly cloudy**  
High: 66 Low: 50  
40 percent chance of rain.  
Forecast, 4A.

111TH YEAR

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2010

4 SECTIONS - 50 CENTS



**OPENING**  
Sweeney Todd opens today at TBT. 4B.

**WAITING**  
Sikorski must wait another month for sentencing. 1B.



**ADVANCING**  
Onaway softball wins, moves on to semifinals. 1C.



News Photo by Patty Ramus

Alcona High School incoming juniors Megan Griffith and Austin Gerard, and Brandon Schroeder, Michigan Sea Grant extension educator, gather samples of macroinvertebrates in Mill Creek near the Swamp Road stream crossing in Harrisville Township on Tuesday morning. Griffith and Gerard were part of a small group of students who assisted with testing of multiple road stream crossings in and around the Black River Watershed.

## Learning during summer break

By **PATTY RAMUS**  
News Staff Writer

While other students are enjoying their summer freedom from school, three Alcona High School students and a recent graduate decided to participate in a voluntary place-based education opportunity on Tuesday, which got them a little wet.

Incoming juniors Megan Griffith and Austin Gerard, incoming sophomore Joe French, recent graduate Connor Hubbard and Brian Matchett, agriscience teacher and Alcona FFA chapter advisor, met with Brandon Schroeder, Michigan Sea Grant extension educator and Nico Tucker, Northeast Michigan Council of Governments transportation and resource planner, to conduct testing of multiple road stream crossings in and around the Black River Watershed.

Tucker said Matchett and the students, who also are FFA members, are gathering the data to help him with a watershed conditions report needs to be completed by Sept. 30. NEMCOG received a grant last year to fund the first phase of a Black River Watershed Plan it's been assisting the Alcona Black River Watershed Advisory Council with.

The phase one work involves conducting field inventory including stream bank erosion, looking for

areas of concern in terms of agricultural sites and taking an inventory of land stream crossings. From this data the conditions report is being developed.

Matchett said the project ties in with another project his environmental science class has done for the past three years with Negwegon State Park because the watershed flows near park. It also is providing a chance for FFA members to be involved with helping the community.

"It's a community service project; it has educational value," he said.

While at the sites Griffith, Gerard, French and Hubbard were involved with collecting macroinvertebrate samples from streams, identifying them and doing an assessment of the general characteristics of the bank and stream. Schroeder was on site providing technical assistance during the process. The data was recorded on forms created by the Michigan Clean Water Corps.

"We're hoping this data can be compared with other volunteer groups," Schroeder said.

Sea Grant became involved because this type of project is an example of the place-based education opportunities supported by the Great Lakes Stewardship Initiative. Sea Grant also was

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## Learning,

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able to support the program through Toyota 4-H2O funding that allowed the group to purchase water sampling equipment and supplies, Schroeder said.

Matchett said he plans to try and do further testing of some of the sites with the students over the summer.

Gerard said he decided to participate because he's a FFA officer and wanted to help the community. He also enjoys being outside.

"I see it as a service project with the FFA and I also see it as a chance to have fun," he said.

French said he's interested in nature and thought it would be a way to help out while making some friends.

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