



For Immediate Release
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Au Sable Fish Farm Case Settled

Michigan DEQ Permit for a commercial fish farm on the Au Sable to be withdrawn, commercial fish-farming to cease by end of 2018, Grayling Fish Hatchery to remain open as a tourist attraction

GRAYLING, MI – The Anglers of the Au Sable announced today that it has entered into an agreement to settle the case against Harrietta Hills Trout Farm LLC, which will end all commercial fish farming operations at the Grayling Fish Hatchery, located on the East Branch of the Au Sable River. Furthermore, Harrietta Hills agrees not to conduct any future commercial activities in the Au Sable Watershed.

The \$160,000 settlement brings an end to a four-year legal battle in administrative hearings and circuit court. The often-contentious case received press in the *New York Times* and other national media outlets and inspired several bills to regulate aquaculture in Michigan and the Great Lakes.

“The State’s issuance of this permit was a green light for a commercial fish farm operation to pollute the Au Sable River, plain and simple. Such permits, and such operations, have no business being located on one of the most popular wild trout streams in the world. We are happy to have the case settled and look forward to working closely with the local community to improve the Grayling Fish Hatchery as a tourist attraction, and historical landmark. Today is a new chapter in the life of this historic facility,” said Anglers of the Au Sable President Joe Hemming.

Under the settlement, Anglers of the Au Sable has created a new nonprofit entity, Grayling Hatchery, Inc, which will take over the lease, as well as the responsibility for the Grayling Fish Hatchery. Visitors will be able to view and feed trout, as well as learn about the history of the facility, and the famous wild trout fishery of the Au Sable.

“Fewer trout. More history. More education. We believe that the Grayling Fish Hatchery is an important historical landmark, not a commercial fish farm operation. This was the intent of the 1995 deed between Crawford County and the State of Michigan when the state decided to cease operations there in the 1960s. We intend to honor the deed and the wishes of Crawford County and to make the facility both safe for the river and worthwhile to the community,” Hemming said.

Additionally, Anglers of the Au Sable will reinvest in plans to achieve fish passage between the main river and the upper East Branch, which is currently blocked by the Grayling Fish Hatchery. Such fish passages allow trout to migrate to cool water refuge, to spawn, and to diversify gene pools. Plans for a fish passage were rejected after Harrietta Hills began operation of the facility.

Hundreds of Anglers of the Au Sable members from around the world donated sums both large and small to this cause. Anglers of the Au Sable could not have prevailed without that generous support. In the end, this case demonstrates yet again the enormous and global reverence anglers, river lovers, and conservationists have for Crawford County's crown jewel – the river itself.

Anglers of the Au Sable is more than 1,200 men and women from across the nation, created to preserve, protect and enhance the Au Sable River System for future generations of fly fishers.