



Upper Black River Council - Final Report for 2021 River Work Season January 14, 2022

Happy New Year to all and on behalf of the Upper Black River Council (UBRC) and its many partners, we'd like to thank each of you for your on-going support. As was discussed at our Fall wrap-up meeting held on the 23rd of September, 2021 was another great year for the Upper Black River resource.

In addition to the professional crew work conducted by Ken Reed Contracting, Inc., volunteers from the UBRC, Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited, as well as many others helped to continue the stewardship of this treasured cold-water resource. None of these efforts, however, could be conducted without the leadership of MDNR Fisheries Biologist Tim Cwalinski and the continued technical and financial support provided by Heather Rawlings of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

As has been discussed in prior reports, the current in-stream project permit reach begins at Sparr Road in eastern Otsego County and extends to the Tyrolean Hills area about 3.5 miles downstream (see maps included - Permit No. WRP017532).

In addition to the new in-stream habitat enhancements conducted by Ken Reed Contracting, their work season included stabilization of materials which had released during times of early season high-water which were situationally impeding flow and potentially causing streambank erosion.

The early season work also included two volunteer events initiated by the Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited. In addition to the removal of man-made debris, these events included the collection and analysis of aquatic invertebrates at two locations. This was done under the tutelage of the Tip-of-the-Mitt Watershed Council and confirmed the diversity and abundance of this critical measure of stream health.



Early season activities also included the placement of water temperature monitoring devices throughout the system. These are "launched" by Tim Cwalinski and installed and removed by volunteers. These data are recorded by the devices on the hour, 24/7 and are downloaded for analysis at the end of each season. The Excel file can be retrieved by clicking [here](#).

This year's contract permit work resulted in the [completion of 251 new in-stream structures](#) over a nearly 0.9 mile reach of river. Work in this portion of the main stream is especially challenging due to the access limitations which can require as much as two hours every day spent just hauling work materials and equipment to and from the nearest vehicle parking location. These access conditions make the volume of work completed in 2021 an even more remarkable achievement.

As has been the case since the inception of the Upper Black River Council and its predecessor the Upper Black River Restoration Committee, all of the funds raised go back into this resource or its advancement. All administration and program management is conducted by volunteers who receive no compensation. We mention this because there have been times when we have been unable to respond to new initiatives proposed for the UBRC as quickly as we would have liked.

We again extend our thanks to project partners which include the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Huron Pines, Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Michigan Fly Fishing Club, Montmorency County Conservation Club, The Shelden Foundation, Canada Creek Ranch, our donors, NEMCOG and our UBRC Board of Directors.

No discussion of the Upper Black River and the events of 2021 can be conducted without acknowledging the passing of David Smethurst. Dave spent most of his adult life advocating in support of conservation, specifically on behalf of the cold-water triumvirate of the Black, Pigeon and Sturgeon Rivers. In addition to his involvement with Trout Unlimited, he was a founding member of the Pigeon River Country Advisory Council and prior to his full-time career as an educator in Gaylord, was the manager of Blue Lakes Club. It was there where his deep connection to the Black River was formed. Both the Black River and those of us who came in came in contact Dave, are better because of it.

Until the snow melts and the rivers rise, we remain available for any question or comments and we'll be in touch as we get closer to the time of our Spring meeting.

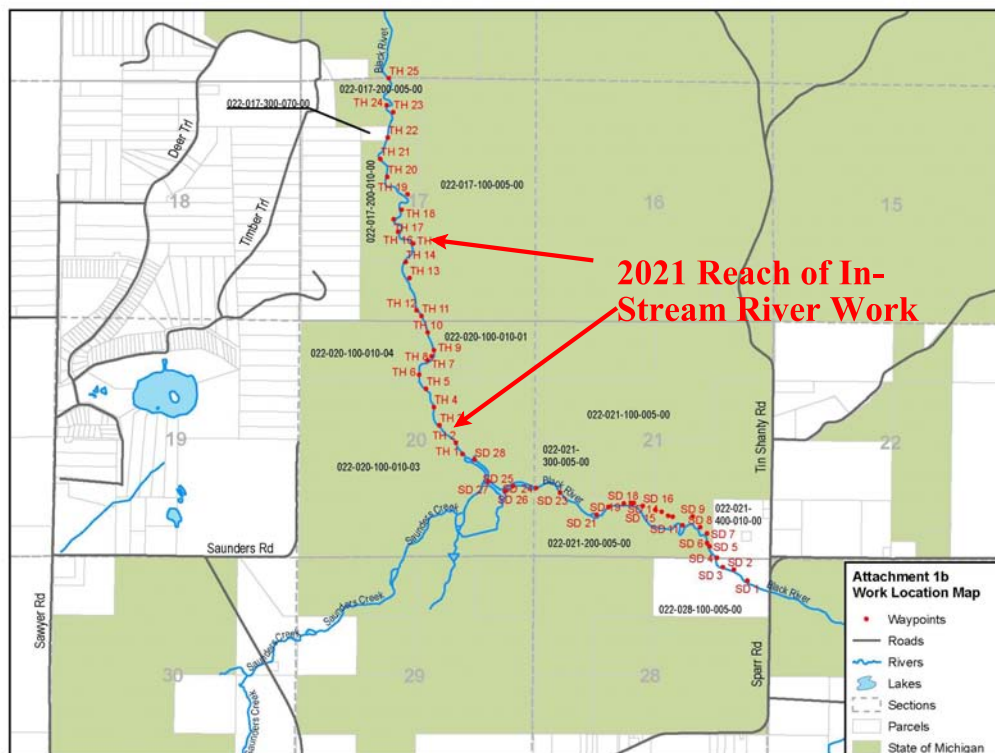
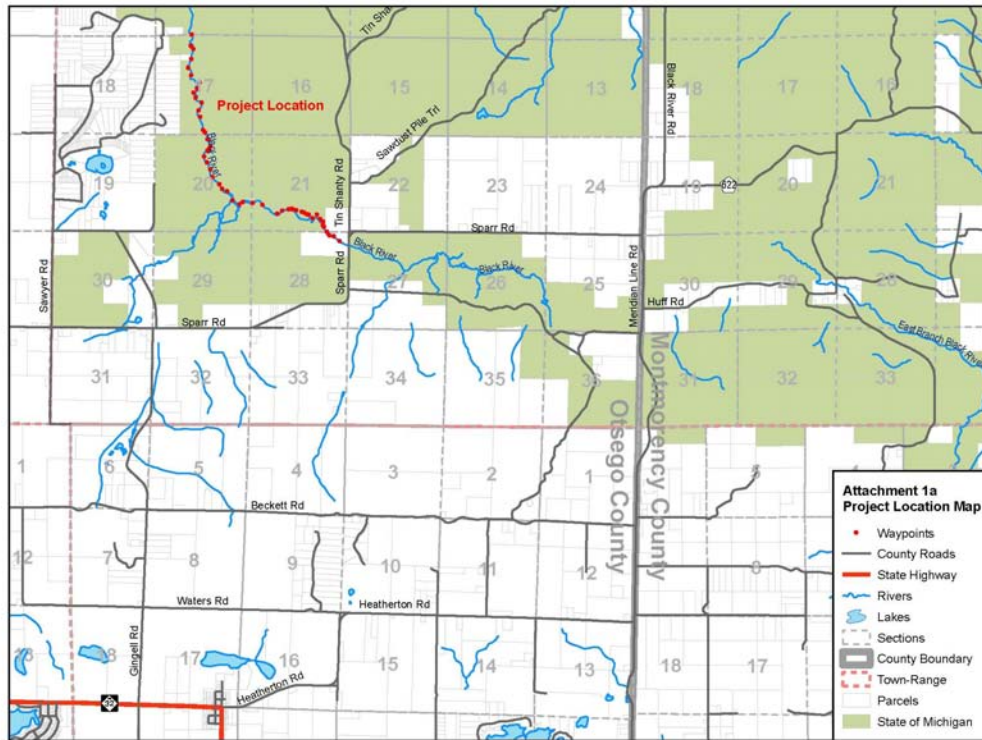
Sincerely,

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The mission of the UBRC is to restore and maintain the outstanding water resources and natural brook trout fishery of the Upper Black River Watershed

BLACK RIVER PERMIT PROJECT LOCATION MAP

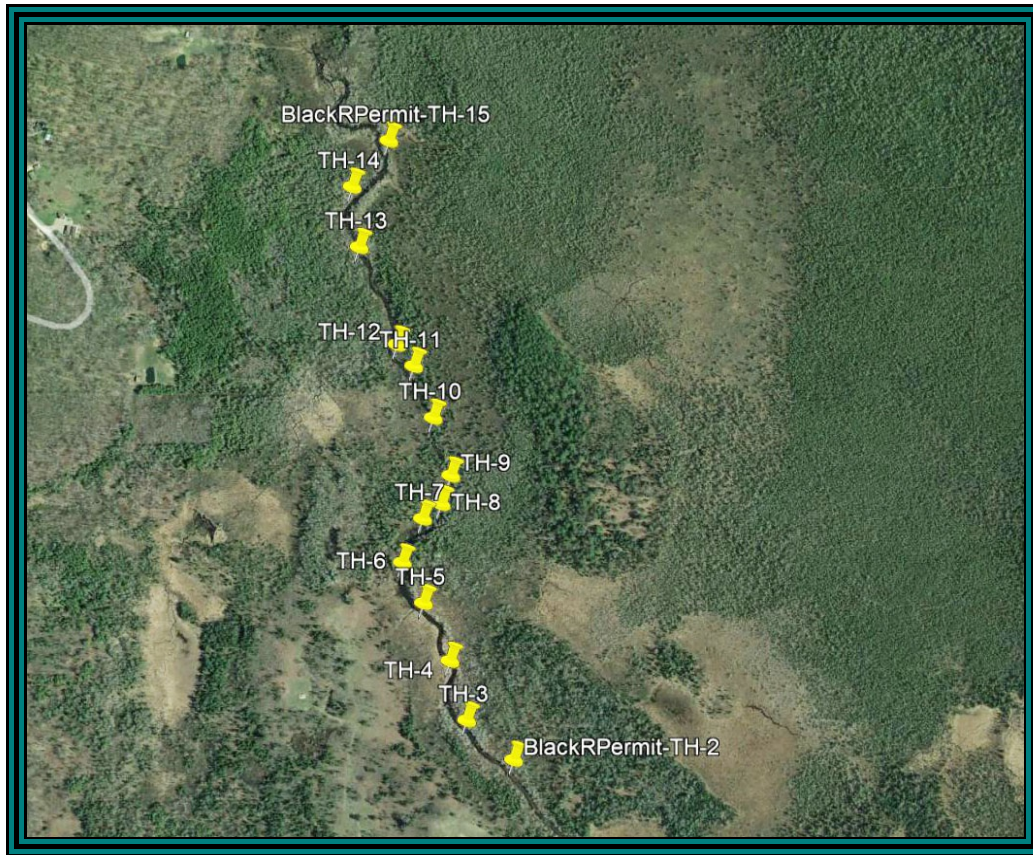


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AERIAL VIEW OF 2021 IN-STREAM PROJECT LIMITS

(from N45° 3.787'/W84° 27.394' to N45° 4.478'/W84° 27.589')

click for: [Google Earth Link](#) then click "download"



SAMPLE IN-STREAM STRUCTURES - BEFORE & AFTER

(Additional Photos Available upon Request)



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SAMPLE IN-STREAM STRUCTURES - BEFORE & AFTER (Continued)



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SAMPLE IN-STREAM STRUCTURES - BEFORE & AFTER (Continued)



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