



UPPER BLACK RIVER COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes - September 11, 2015

The fall meeting of the UBRC took place on Friday, September 11, 2015 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. The meeting began at 9:30. Those in attendance included:

Carol Rose, UBRC
Dave Borgeson, MDNR Fisheries
Tom Carlson, UBRC/MCCC
Paul Rose, UBRC
Heather Rawlings, USFWS
Chuck Thurston, CCR
Tony Dunaske, Gaylord Fishing Club
Billy Crist, Black Lake
Eric Johnson, CCR

Richard Bruot, UBRC, Riparian owner
Lisha Ramsdell, Huron Pines
Ross Nave, UBRC
Rick Harris, Riparian owner
Nico Tucker, NEMCOG
Tim Gaffney, Gaylord Fishing Club
Brenda Archambo, Sturgeon for Tomorrow
Tim Michiels, Black River Ranch

Carol Rose welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made around the table. A request was made by Brenda Archambo to move the discussion of the sand load at the mouth of the Black River at Black Lake to the beginning of the meeting, due to commitments elsewhere that morning. The agenda was approved as amended.

Black Lake Sand Load: Brenda introduced longtime Black Lake riparian owner, Billy Crist, who presented several photos and print-outs of the sand deposit issue. With the draw-down of Black Lake that takes place every winter, sand builds up at the mouth of the river and flooding of riparian properties occurs. The area in question is about 18" deep and 70' wide. It was last dredged in 1949-50, according to Crist, who was seeking support/input on doing another dredge of the area. Crist estimated the cost to do the job to be in the \$300,000+ range, offering to do it using his own equipment for a 40% discount. Further discussion ensued, with a recommendation to continue the conversation with the DNR and Huron Pines.

Finances for 2016: All of the grant funding from USFWS was spent during the 2015 season. Heather indicated that the Upper Black remains a priority project, anticipating that the funding would continue for next year. Huron Pines has a SOGL grant with \$40,000 earmarked for the Upper Black. We expect to tap into this in 2016. CCR expects to continue working with our crew for the coming years as there are four more years on their permit.

Crew Review: Nico reported on the crew's progress on the UBRC and CCR permits in 2015. He indicated that 10 new structures were installed on the Springs/Hardwood Creek permit this year, with another 3 on Volunteer Day in August. Sixteen were installed on the CCR permit. Many of the structures have been beefed up because of changing attitudes about the prescriptions for these particular waypoints on this particular stream. Discussion took place about how many of the DEQ requirements for in-stream habitat work are generic, i.e. they don't allow enough leeway for the conditions found and "what's best" in each particular stream. Mention was made by Heather of a conference/workshop relating to in-stream habitat work coming up in October in Tustin, MI. It came highly recommended.

While the number of LWD's seems low, there were challenges presented by availability of woody material, among others. Carol Rose volunteered that Nico really did yeoman's work coordinating an ever-changing crew dynamic, finishing the season with three fine crew members. Some

discussion took place about the need for a mature individual who could lead and work seasonally in the stream with the crew, similar to Ken Reed of Huron Pines.

While there are waypoints remaining on the Springs/Hardwood Creek permit, we'll be developing a new permit application in 2016 for an area up and downstream from the former site of Saunder's Dam.

Canada Creek Ranch Permit: Chuck Thurston indicated that Brad Arnold would be the new Chair of the Ranch's Conservation Committee. Carol Rose reported that a Longitudinal Profile, a/k/a "long-pro," was done on a reach of Canada Creek just downstream of the area where the crew finished this year. Led by Patrick Ertel of the DNR, Tim Cwalinski, Nico Tucker and Carol Rose took the necessary measurements from riffle to riffle, measuring changes in stream gradient and depth along with myriad other data. In all, 1,200+/- feet of stream was measured. The purpose was to collect "before" data on the stream before the crew installs the prescribed permit structures next year. Then, these same data will be collected after the work has been done to determine the impacts on the stream. This is something the DEQ/DNR are looking for and expecting in future permit and grant applications.

Black River Ranch: Tim Michiels reported that the cache of Hillsdale College students spent much of the summer at BRR. They studied the Black and the history of the ranch itself. He also reported that there are about 20 logs with cables attached that have come loose from older structures that need to be addressed. Nico agreed to get out and take a look at the situation and take care of the situation. Additionally, Tim indicated that there is interest on the ranch in having additional work done on the river. Discussions to follow as to where and what.

Road/Stream Crossings and Dams:

1. *Saunders Dam* - Lisha mentioned that several old logs with logging stamps have been located in the Black near the former dam site. She also indicated that an invasive yellow iris has appeared in the vegetation near the site.
2. *Foch Dam* - Borgeson reported that after much wrangling between the DTMB, the DNR's Dam Grant program and Fisheries Division, enough money has been secured to complete the project. The bid from the engineer came in much higher than anticipated, hence the back and forth between entities. Fortunately, one of the projected originally granted funding from the Dam program did not take place, so the funding from that project was transferred to the Foch Dam project. Nothing to it!
3. The updated road/stream crossing (RSX) inventory of the Upper Black was completed by a Huron Pines Americorps member. It will ultimately be uploaded to the Northern Michigan Roads website, which the UBRC offered to fund on Huron Pines' behalf. Sites with fish passage and/or erosion issues have been identified on a collection of maps. Lisha mentioned that the Montmorency County Road Commission has or will be working on the Tomahawk Lake RSX, and that the Brady/Waveland RSX at Milligan Creek will have the engineering done yet this fall.
4. MITU has completed the baseline data on the Black River.
5. In Cheboygan County work will take place on Welch Creek and Freeman Road.
6. At Clute Road/Little McMasters Creek, crushed culverts will be replaced by Cheboygan County Road Commission.
7. Heather mentioned that RFP's for the USFWS's Fish Passage program are coming out now, for those interested.

Temp Loggers: All temp loggers have been turned in to Fisheries for analysis.

CCR Erosion Site/Sand Trap Update: The erosion site on Canada Creek near the sand trap area continues to be of considerable concern. Huron Pines indicated that the SOGL grant would be able to help on this project, with assistance from DNR Forestry division. The trap on the East Branch referred to as the Galen Brown Trap, was not emptied this year. This was due to difficulties in securing a contractor with the necessary time and equipment to do the job. Plus, spawning season approaches and we'll just have to wait until next summer.

Volunteer report: The August volunteer day with the Vanguard Chapter went well, with many familiar faces and a few new ones along for the day. Three large structures were installed. The crew had staged a large pile of branches for topping off the structures in advance of the meeting, which helped considerably.

UBRC Partner updates:

- Ross Nave reported that poaching continues to be an issue at Milligan Creek. Some logging has recently taken place in the surrounding area, beavers have been active and trapping is planned for this winter.
- Lisha reported that a really nasty invasive plant, Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*), has appeared with a vengeance in the Pigeon and Sturgeon River corridors. This plant resembles Wild Parsley, grows to as much as 5' in height and likes moist or wet feet. Hence, it's found along riparian corridors and roadways. If the sap from the plant gets on a person or animal's skin and is subsequently exposed to sunlight, a severe burn results. This plant is one nasty plant and very much on Huron Pines' SWAT radar.
- The dam on the Pigeon at Song of the Morning Ranch/Golden Lotus will physically be removed sometime in October, according to Lisha. Team Elmer has been hired to do the much anticipated removal. The vegetation upstream is "very lush."
- Heather reported that Andrea Ania is no longer in the Alpena USFWS office, hence Heather has temporarily taken on Andrea's former responsibilities until her replacement is found.
- Dave Borgeson reported that the DNR did some electro-shocking at the St. Mary's River, Stephan Bridge on the Au Sable, and at Burt Lake. He also mentioned the seasonal workers were really helpful this year.

The last order of business was scheduling the 2015 spring meeting. Friday, April 15, 2016 was selected, tentatively to be held at Canada Creek Ranch. Carol Rose thanked our partners at Canada Creek Ranch for being such steadfast and excellent hosts for our meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair