



UPPER BLACK RIVER COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes - April 8, 2016

The spring meeting of the UBRC took place on Friday, April 8, 2016 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. The meeting began at 9:30. Those in attendance included:

Carol Rose, UBRC	Richard Bruot, UBRC, Riparian owner
Tim Cwalinski, MDNR Fisheries	Lisha Ramsdell, Huron Pines
Tom Carlson, UBRC/MCCC	Ross Nave, UBRC
Paul Rose, UBRC	Phil Bandish, UBRC
Heather Rawlings, USFWS	Nico Tucker, NEMCOG
Perry Smeltzer, NRCS	Joe Jarecki, UBRC
John Bailey, Huron Pines	Pete Thomson, UBRC/MCCC
Matt Claucherty, Tip of the Mitt	Lindsay Adams, USFWS
Eric Johnson, CCR	John Walters, MITU
Ron Young, Thunder Bay River Watershed Council	

Carol Rose welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made around the table. The agenda was approved and a brief recap of the available funding for the 2016 season took place.

Crew Update: Nico reported that a three man crew has been assembled including two members of last year's crew and a college student who'll be working with the crew to fulfill requirements for his major. They should be able to get started earlier than last year's crew, perhaps as early as April 29. Richard Bruot will be "mentoring" the crew at the beginning of the season. Nico announced that he had knee surgery planned for July, so additional assistance with the crew will be ideal. Vehicular access to the PRC for the reach of the permit the crew's finishing up will need to be secured.

Canada Creek Ranch: Plans for the crew to work approximately 3 weeks after the 4th of July were made.

Road/Stream Crossings and Dams: Lisha and John (Bailey) provided updates on RSX projects. The recently compiled RSX inventory for the Black River has been uploaded to the Northern Michigan Streams web site. Projects ahead include Packer Creek at Rouse Road, Tomahawk Creek and Oxbow Creek.

Temp Loggers: All temp loggers assignments were reviewed.

CCR Erosion Site/Sand Trap Update: Tim laid out the plans for the erosion site on Canada Creek which will be a permitted project involving multiple divisions of the MDNR, Huron Pines, UBRC and the Montmorency County Conservation Club. A toe wood treatment will be used – one of the first times for this part of the state. It will involve the use of heavy equipment, whole trees and creation of "benches" up the affected riverbank, followed by stabilization planting and fencing. This, to reduce the estimated 15.5 tons of annual sand deposition into Canada Creek!

As to the sand trap on the East Branch, J&N Excavating out of Gaylord was recommended.

New Permits: After some discussion, it was decided that the next permit reach would be a continuation of the work on the Main Branch upstream of King's Bridge (a/k/a Main Branch Bridge). Tim indicated that he didn't think the area up and downstream of the site of the former Saunder's dam had had enough time to settle back into its former flow for the crew to get in there yet.

Volunteer opportunities:

- Huron Pines: Two springtime planting projects (May 20 and 27) in the PRC.
- MUCC's On the Ground (OTG) - May 14 elk habitat work at the PRC
- Tip of the Mitt - Stream monitoring, 2nd week in May
- UBRC - second weekend in August, project TBD
- Planting project with Boy Scouts on the Lower Black, May 27

UBRC Partner updates:

- Ron Young of the Thunder Bay Watershed Council said that there is renewed interest in the Thunder Bay River from Alpena to the headwaters in Montmorency County. Efforts to open it up for recreational use (canoes, kayaks, fishing) are coalescing, particularly in the areas up and down river from Salina Bridge.
- Tom Carlson announced that 2016 marks the 70th anniversary of the Camp Merriment gathering along the East Branch of the Black River.
- Perry Smeltzer brought up continued concerns about northern long-eared bat habitat and timbering schedules.
- John Walters mentioned two new invasive species of concern in our rivers: New Zealand Mud Snail and Didamore Rock Snot. These are easily transported from watershed to watershed on boats and fishing attire and gear. The best way to combat this is to thoroughly clean between waters. 409 spray or placing your wading boots in the freezer were recommended.
- Tim Cwalinski reminded us that follow up is necessary for the blown structures on Black River Ranch. The 2016 season includes shocking surveys on two sections of the East Branch that are each 2,000 +/- feet long.
- John Bailey had a big week ahead with work on the Au Sable as well as heavy monitoring of Buhl Dam on the Pine River.
- Richard Bruot reported that beavers are really on the upswing throughout the watershed. This observation was also shared by Ross Nave who described their presence on Milligan Creek as "big time." Many were trapped there during the winter trapping season.
- Heather Rawlings also spoke about major die-offs of long-eared bats in Michigan and elsewhere. She also confirmed that the Cheboygan River Watershed (of which the Black is a part) continues to be a focus area for USFWS Fish Passage and Fish Partners programs.
- Removal of the dams on the Black River near Tower were briefly discussed. Conversations are beginning, but we're a long way from anything concrete on the horizon.

The next meeting of the UBRC was scheduled for Friday, September 9, with location TBD. (NOTE - this has since been changed to Thursday, September 8, at Canada Creek Ranch.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair