



UPPER BLACK RIVER COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes -April 6, 2017

The fall meeting of the UBRC took place on Thursday, April 6, 2017 at the Atlanta Senior Center. The meeting began at 9:30. Those in attendance included:

Carol Rose, UBRC
Dave Borgeson, MDNR Fisheries
Jim Kurbel, Headwaters TU
Paul Rose, UBRC
Heather Rawlings, USFWS
Pete Thomson, UBRC/MCCC
Bill Houston, MCCC
Richard Bruot, UBRC
Tom Carlson, UBRC
Ron Young, TB River Watershed

Alex Cerveniak, Headwaters TU
John Bailey, Huron Pines
Tim Michiels, Black River Ranch
Nico Tucker, NEMCOG
Lindsay Adams, USFWS
Tom Ames, CCR
Ken Reed, Black River Contractor
David Last, Angler
Howard French, Angler
Dan Cook, Angler

Carol Rose welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made around the table. The agenda was approved and a brief recap of funding for the 2017 season took place.

Work Season Plan: As a result of the Request for Proposals made by the UBRC in late 2016, Ken Reed, Contractor of Lewiston was selected to perform the permitted in-stream habitat enhancement work for the 2017 season. Ken was introduced to those in attendance and indicated that he was ready to begin as soon as the river levels made it possible. The plan is for Ken and crew to complete the remaining waypoints on the Springs/Hardwood Creek permit (Phase 1 of the RFP), then move on to the first half of the waypoints on the new North Blue Lakes Permit (Phase 2 of the RFP). Ken will also be doing work for Canada Creek Ranch on sites on their existing permit under a separate agreement. Vehicular access to the PRC reach of the North Blue Lakes reach was discussed and follow up ensued.

Road/Stream Crossings: John Bailey of Huron Pines reported on plans in the Cheboygan River watershed for the 2017 season. Five road/stream crossings (RSX) are to be completed this year. Included are two in the Upper Black Watershed - Packer Creek @ 622 and Tomahawk Creek. Bailey reported that the multi-year 470,000 SOGL grant through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will be wrapping up this year, resulting in 40 miles of riparian habitat improvement projects. Bailey also indicated that they're looking for erosion sites for remediation yet this year. As a reminder, the recently compiled RSX inventory for the Black River has been uploaded to the Northern Michigan Streams web site, www.northernmichiganstreams.org

Temp Loggers: Ten loggers were set for deployment in 10 sites in the Upper Black watershed. These, along with several in Canada Creek and the Pigeon. Replacements/back-up loggers will be needed soon.

Sand Traps/Erosion Sites: The big erosion site on Canada Creek at the popular disbursed camping area north of Canada Creek Ranch is to be addressed this spring. Three divisions of the DNR (Parks, Fisheries, Forestry) will be providing the heavy equipment and personnel, augmented by the Montmorency County Conservation Club, UBRC and Huron Pines. The toe-wood treatment will go a long way to reduce the 15.5 tons of sand and sediment historically deposited into the river at the site each year!

In other news, the sand trap on the East Branch is also slated for maintenance in 2017. The DNR's Fisheries, Parks and Forestry Divisions are also assisting with this project.

New Permits: At the time of the April meeting, the North Blue Lakes permit was under review by the DEQ and was subsequently approved. There was additional discussion about the location(s) for our next permit. Black River Ranch, Saunders Dam, East Branch Black and other sites are possibilities.

Statewide Efforts to Reintroduce the Arctic Grayling: There was much discussion about the possibility of grayling being reintroduced into Michigan waters. The two rivers being considered in the northern lower peninsula are the Manistee and Au Sable. Concerns about the arctic relic's competition with brook trout should they ever be introduced to the Black were significant. A resolution opposing such was presented and voted on, passing by enthusiastic consent by all, with the exception of those representing USFWS and the DNR, who respectfully abstained. A copy of the resolution has been attached to these minutes and will be forwarded to the MDNR and Natural Resources Commission.

UBRC Partner updates:

- Carol Rose passed along the news that two students from Lake Superior State University have been working with Tim Cwalinski on a study of temperature changes in the Upper Black River watershed. Using the data collected via our temp loggers over the years, they'll put together an analysis to be posted on the UBRC web site.
- Carol Rose also mentioned that there's a need for someone else take on the work bee with Vanguard TU this year. (It's since been cancelled)
- Alex Cerveniak reported that Headwaters TU has an aggressive list of 20 projects ahead for 2017. These include assorted river clean-ups in the PRC, habitat work, beaver dam work and educational outreach.
- Heather reported that June 27 is the day for USFWS annual Fisheries Day with high school students. The group will gather in Onaway and participate in a fish shocking survey demonstration, visit the sturgeon hatchery and do some aquatic insect collection and identification.
- Carol Rose mentioned that the 21st Annual Watershed Summit will be taking place in Cadillac on April 21.
- Ron Young of the Thunder Bay River Watershed Council mentioned a meeting of the TBRWC will be taking place at Alpena Community College and also in Hillman.
- Tim Michiels of Black River Ranch mentioned the study done by students from Hillsdale College last summer.
- Canada Creek Ranch's Tom Ames mentioned some continuing soil work for woodcock on the ranch.
- Pete Thomson reported that the plans are in the works for the fence installation at the erosion site on Canada Creek.
- Angler David Last reported that he's just moved to the area, has enjoyed fishing the Black and wants to volunteer to help out.
- Bill Houston of the Montmorency County Conservation Club talked about the Thunder Bay River Water Trail project in the works. This project will include providing location and mileage signage at various access points along the river which will include estimated time to the next markers, etc. The focus of the project is to provide more access/egress sites along the river from Atlanta to Alpena, restore its navigability by removing blowdowns and other obstructions and provide more recreational opportunities on the Thunder Bay. Additionally, the work will provide open corridors for first responders to use air boats, if needed, for medical emergencies occurring along the riparian corridor.
- Tom Carlson shared that 2017 marks the 70th Anniversary of Camp Merriment. This is a gathering of longtime friends from Alpena and Montmorency County who set up a camp along the East

Branch for a week. These days, there are grandchildren and great grandchildren of the original group who help to sustain this extraordinary legacy on the Black.

- Alex Cervenjak mentioned Headwaters TU's upcoming banquet on April 22 and their regular "Tie One On" gatherings twice a month in Gaylord.

- Howard French, self-described "small stream fisherman," extended his compliments to those actively involved in the work on our cold water fisheries.

The meeting adjourned at noon with plans to schedule the fall wrap-up meeting via Doodle survey later in the season.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair

Upper Black River Council Arctic Grayling Policy Resolution

1 Whereas, the Upper Black River watershed flows through the northeast Michigan counties of
2 Otsego, Montmorency, Presque Isle and Cheboygan before becoming a part of the Cheboygan
3 River and Lake Huron, and
4 Whereas, the Upper Black River and its tributaries have historically been regarded as being
5 among the finest brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) fisheries in the Great Lakes region, and
6 Whereas, in 1993 a private-public partnership organization was formed to assist professional
7 natural resource managers in the enhancement of habitat associated with the Upper Black River
8 watershed, and
9 Whereas, in recognition of the exceptional brook trout habitat which is present in this watershed
10 Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Fisheries managers have historically
11 sought to make brook trout a priority management species, and
12 Whereas, the Upper Black River Council (UBRC) has now grown to include large and small
13 private landowners from within this watershed, private citizens, local, state and national
14 conservation organizations, as well as State and Federal fish and wildlife agencies in an effort to
15 advance this fisheries management mission, and
16 Whereas, the State of Michigan is in the process of identifying potential rivers, lakes and streams
17 which may be suitable for the reintroduction of Arctic Grayling (*Thymallus arcticus*), and
18 Whereas, if selected the effect of such a reintroduction into the Upper Black River system is
19 largely unknown and has the potential to be detrimental to brook trout and the other biological
20 factors upon which these fish depend, Now,
21 Therefore Be It Resolved that the members of the Upper Black River Council oppose the
22 reintroduction of Arctic Grayling in the Upper Black River or any of its tributaries.

Resolution adopted by the Upper Black River Council this 6th Day of April, 2017.