



UPPER BLACK RIVER COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes - September 14, 2017

The fall meeting of the UBRC took place on Thursday, September 14, 2017 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. The meeting began at 9:30. Those in attendance included:

Carol Rose, UBRC
Jim Kurbel, Headwaters TU
Jim Treadaway, CCR
Ken Reed, Contractor
Tim Gaffney, Gaylord Fishing Club
Heather Rawlings, USFWS
John Bailey, Huron Pines
Tim Michiels, Black River Ranch
Ross Nave, UBRC Board
Eric Johnson, CCR
Joe Jarecki, UBRC Board

Paul Rose, UBRC Board
Chuck Thurston, CCR
Pete Thomson, UBRC Board, MCCC
Tony Dunaske, Gaylord Fishing Club
Lindsey Adams, USFWS
Matt Kowalski, USFWS
Tim Cwalinski, DNR Fisheries Division
David Richards, Black River Ranch
Phil Bandish, UBRC Board
Gary Isaman, Angler, Headwaters TU
Scott Kallenburg and 5 students, Onaway

Carol Rose welcomed those in attendance and introductions were made around the table. The agenda was approved and a brief recap of remaining/anticipated funding for the 2018 season took place.

Work Season Report: Paul Rose reported on the 2017 season, our first using a contractor for the in-stream habitat work. While Ken Reed Contracting was still working on the river at the time of the September meeting, it was reported that the remaining 57 structures in the Springs/Hardwood Creek permit have been installed. Further, there was every reason to believe that Reed and crew would complete the entirety of the new North Blue Lakes permit (146 structures) before the season was through. Reed and crew also spent some time on Canada Creek Ranch, completing 56 structures there on the CCR permit reach.

Rose also reported that the East Branch Sand Trap had been “serviced” in late August. With access permission from private riparian owner, Byron Brown, DNR Parks & Rec Division was able to get their heavy equipment into place to remove the excess sand deposit and place it on the spoils pile. A team of volunteers from Headwaters TU did the finish work with raking, seeding and spreading straw over the disturbed soil in the work area. It was a great team effort, coordinated by Fisheries Division. Now, per Cwalinski, it’s time to focus on the **source** of the sand.

Also work-related, there was some discussion about the strength of the cable material used for the structures during heavy rain/run-off events. Ross Nave mentioned some utility cabling that might be useful to investigate.

Sites for Next Permit/New Projects: Several sites for new projects and/or permits were discussed. These included re-visiting the sand trap at Tin Shanty Bridge. As to new permit locations, the mainstem Black between the power line and Gaylord Fishing Club, up/downstream of Saunders Dam, East Branch Highbanks area, up/downstream Tin Shanty Bridge, and Black River Ranch downstream from King’s Bridge were all chatted up.

The Tin Shanty Bridge site seemed to be the one that rose to the top of the list. It’s a prime brook trout wintering area and a site very popular with anglers. Because of the abundant tag alder on the

upstream reach, discussion took place about the possibility of using brush bundles, employing the RGS habitat machine, along with a variety of other treatment techniques. Plans were made to wade both up and downstream of the bridge to develop the permit in a group consisting of Paul Rose, Tim Cwalinski, Ken Reed and Nico Tucker.

Road/Stream Crossings: Heather Rawlings (USFWS) and John Bailey (HP) led a discussion about road/stream crossings (RSX). Shingle Mill Bridge at the East Branch/Co. Rd. 622 has long been on the wish list. In a surprising moment, it was decided that in memory of UBRC founder, Bud Slingerlend, Shingle Mill Bridge WILL be replaced. It will be a joint effort between USFWS and HP and will likely take place in 2019. This has been a focus area of the USFWS Fish Passage Program for many years and this project just might be a great fit.

Bailey reported on several RSX in the Cheboygan River watershed (of which the Black is a part). Packer Creek, Tomahawk Creek, and Oxbow Creek at Canada Creek Road have been completed, collectively re-opening 40 miles of stream. The projects on Milligan Creek at Waveland and Brady Roads have been funded and should be completed by fall of 2018.

For those interested in knowing more about the RSX inventory for the Black River, visit the Northern Michigan Streams web site, www.northernmichiganstreams.org

Temp Loggers: All temp loggers have been pulled. Several will need replacement soon, per Cwalinski.

Storey Lake: John Bailey asked if the UBRC could provide a letter of support for the MNRTF grant application for the purchase of Storey Lake. The letter was subsequently written.

UBRC Partner updates:

- **Joe Jarecki** mentioned that the Pigeon River Country Discovery Center project is really coming along and should be open to the public in May of 2018

- **Jim Kurbel of Headwaters TU** said the chapter is always looking for projects on the Black, Pigeon, Sturgeon and other cold-water fisheries in the region. In addition to the East Branch sand trap, they also did white cedar planting on the Sturgeon, removed an old, REALLY heavy stove from the middle of the Sturgeon and did some erosion mediation there...just to name a few of their many projects.

- **Howard French** mentioned that the O.B. Eustis fund at Community Foundation for Northeastern Michigan would be a good source for funding for the replacement temp. loggers.

- **Chuck Thurston/Jim Treadaway of CCR** reported on a beaver dam “deconstruction” on the ranch, cedar planting along the upland sites along the river and looking for some new woodcock habitat development areas.

- **Pete Thomson, Montmorency County Conservation Club/UBRC** said that he periodically stops by the site of the Canada Creek toe-wood erosion site and was happy to report that it looks great and that the fence and stairway are still intact.

- **Ken Reed/Tony Dunaske/Tim Gaffney** spoke about working together on the river for a few days this summer. Dunaske was very complimentary about the work, having spent 60 years fishing the Black.

- **Heather Rawlings, USFWS** mentioned that it’s likely that the Partners in Fish and Wildlife Program that has been a reliable funding source for UBRC work on the Black may not be available going forward. Having said that, she also exclaimed that what would have probably taken at least four years of in-stream habitat/structure work to accomplish using our seasonal work crews only took one season for Ken and crew to complete!

- **Tim Cwalinski, DNR Fisheries** reported that a trail cam had been installed at the Tomahawk Flooding, one of seven “floodings” owned by the DNR. The purpose was to gauge the amount of use. Foch Lake Flooding, the site of the recent dam replacement is also getting lots of use. He also reported that temp logger data will be forthcoming soon, that a two acre woodcock site was created at Chandler Dam Road, and that there was a beaver dam on Rattlesnake Creek. Gary Isaman stepped up to see to the dam.
- **Tim Michiels, Black River Ranch** said that it might be time to investigate re-opening the most recent permit on the ranch to see about having some maintenance done on the older structures.
- **Ross Nave of Milligan Creek** reported that trappers remain ready to work on beaver issues on the creek again this season.
- **Paul Rose** mentioned PA 288 allowing ORV use on all State Roads that haven’t otherwise been posted as closed, and its potential impact on popular access points on the Black such as the Highbanks reach of the East Branch.
- **Eric Johnson of CCR** reported that the ranch’s Conservation Committee is committed to providing funding for work on Canada Creek and looks forward to working with Reed and crew in 2018.
- **Tom Carlson** suggested developing a monitoring system for structures on the river, and establishing a list of priority parcels for possible acquisition within the watershed.
- **Scott Kallenburg, Onaway teacher** and his students thanked Heather for the Fisheries Day she held for them earlier this year.

In closing, Carol Rose thanked CCR for hosting us again and thanked everyone for coming to what was likely the largest number of people sitting around the table for a UBRC meeting ever (27 people!). A Doodle Survey will be circulated in the coming year to schedule the Spring UBRC meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair