



UPPER BLACK RIVER COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes - March 23, 2018

The spring meeting of the UBRC took place on Friday, at the March 23, 2018 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	Jim Kurbel, Headwaters TU
Dave Smethurst, Headwaters TU	Gary Isaman, Headwaters TU
Roger Bergstedt, USGS, Retired	Jim Tredaway, Canada Creek Ranch
Tom Carlson, UBRC/MCCC	Ross Nave, UBRC
Paul Rose, UBRC	Phil Bandish, UBRC
Heather Rawlings, USFWS	Nico Tucker, NEMCOG
Tony Dunaske, Gaylord Fishing Club	Tim Gaffney, Gaylord Fishing Club
John Bailey, Huron Pines	Pete Thomson, UBRC/MCCC
Dave Edwards, Tip of the Mitt	Lindsay Adams, USFWS
Ken Reed, Contractor	Matthew Kkowalsi, USFWS
Ethan Winchester, Boyne Outfitters	Howard French, Angler
Brian Marshall, MDEQ	CCR Board Member

The spring meeting of the UBRC took place on Friday, March 23, 2018 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. After introductions and approval of the agenda, there was a quick rundown on the funding available for projects in the Black River Watershed this year. Jon Bailey of Huron Pines indicated that a number of road/stream crossings (RSX) are on the schedule. Shingle Mill Bridge is officially on the radar, with surveying to begin in 2018. Heather Rawlings of USFWS said the future funding for the Black was iffy this year, but she's sent in the paperwork and awaits word from the D.C. Finally, Paul Rose, UBRC Treasurer gave a brief report on what was spent on in-stream habitat work (\$46,000±) in 2017, and also included costs for development of a new permit and supervision. This work was funded by USFWS, private donors, Huron Pines, CCR (for CCR work only), UBRC, Michigan Fly Fishing Club and Headwaters TU.

River Work Update: 2017 was a very productive season for in-stream habitat enhancement on the Upper Black and Canada Creek. This is the first season when this work was done by a professional contractor and crew. A brief slide show of before/after photos of several of the LWD structures took place. By the end of the 2017 season, all remaining structures in the Springs/Hardwood Creek permit were completed (57), the ENTIRE North Blue Lakes 2017 permit reach was completed (146 structures) and another 56 structures were installed on the Canada Creek Ranch Permit. All total, 259 structures were installed by Ken Reed and crew. Additional maintenance work was done on some older waypoints, blow-downs removed, along with other miscellaneous items.

RSX/Erosion sites: Cheboygan River watershed (of which the Black is a part) is up for additional RSX projects, especially those in the Milligan Creek area. Brady and Waveland Roads to be completed. John Bailey noted that detours are being worked on for these projects. He noted that

12 RSX have been completed in the watershed, with funding available for five more.

As to Shingle Mill Bridge, USFWS and Huron Pines are working on funding its replacement. This has long been on the UBRC wish list. Heather Rawlings indicated that USFWS Fish Passage funding in the area of \$60,000 - \$80,000 has been requested for removal and restoration of the site. Per Bailey, engineering is underway, to be followed by hydro-modeling. 2019 will likely be when the transformation takes place. It was also noted that there are at least two pipelines running under the road/river at this RSX.

Also of interest, RSX work is going on in the Maple River watershed west of the Pigeon River Country State Forest. The endangered Hungersford Crawling Water Beetles (HCWB), also known to frequent the Black River watershed, are also found in the Maple. It has been observed on the Maple that HCWB appear to be benefitting from the RSX work going on there. eDNA is being used more for determining the presence of species here.

Temp Logger Sites: Eleven temp loggers will be deployed throughout the Upper Black watershed, with additional loggers at specified sites on Canada Creek. These will be ready to pick up in April, scheduled to be installed by the end of May. Tim Cwalinski shared year-to-year temp data.

Sand Traps/Erosion Site remediation: There is often much discussion about sand traps at the UBRC meetings - whether continued maintenance is truly necessary or whether it's best to address the sources of the sand being collected in the traps. An excellent example is the erosion site on Canada Creek that was identified as a primary source of sand deposition in the publicly maintained trap farther downstream. The site was remediated via the use of a toe-wood treatment orchestrated by multiple divisions of the DNR, Huron Pines and the Montmorency County Conservation Club. On the other hand, the trap on the East Branch at the former Slingerland frontage (now owned by the people of the State of Michigan) may be an example of one that requires routine maintenance as the sand it collects just naturally bubbles up in the groundwater that feeds the stream. This trap was emptied in 2017, thanks to head's up scheduling of MDNR heavy equipment scheduled to be in the area at the time. Headwaters TU did the finish work on the site. A number of erosion sites were identified at waypoints that were part of the most recent North Blue Lakes permit on the Main Stem Black that could use some additional attention to augment the LWD structures. These will likely be taken on by volunteers from Headwaters and other TU chapters.

A review of the condition of the many public access sites was suggested. Winter, time and use take a toll; steps go missing, trees block access, new access lanes are created, etc. Brian Marshall also mentioned the the DEQ's Sediment Control Program which offers funding up to \$50,000 for erosion/remediation projects.

Next Permit: A new permit application was developed for the area up and downstream from Tin Shanty Bridge. A small group consisting of Tim Cwalinski, Nico Tucker, Paul Rose, and Ken Reed waded the reach in the fall of 2017 and Nico pulled the formal application together over the course of the winter for submission to the DEQ in early 2018. The permit is being reviewed by the DEQ's Bryan Marshall (*it has since been approved*). It is worthy of note that Bryan was once a member of the UBRC summer river crew. A comment was made with reference to being mindful not to block the traditional deer/elk crossings on the river when placing LWD structures along the streambank, for fear that fawns/calves may not be able to navigate them if blocked. Additionally, it was noted that the vast amount of public lands in the Upper Black River watershed make all of the work we do possible.

Looking ahead, yet another permit is to be developed in anticipation of the 2019 work season. This one will likely be between Sparr Road and Tyrolean Hills and involve some of the most difficult stretches to navigate on the Black. This reach includes the site of the old Saunders Dam. The area has had a long beaver presence and is very difficult to navigate. Headwaters TU has offered to do some habitat mapping in this area. *(update - since the March meeting, this reach has been waded and analyzed for permit development. Waypoints and prescriptions for sites have been identified and a permit will be developed in anticipation of starting upon completion of the Tin Shanty Bridge permit)*

Reintroduction of Arctic Grayling to Michigan: This project is still moving along, but slowly. Many voiced their continued opposition to the project, especially in the Black which is managed for its naturally reproducing brook trout fishery.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Headwaters TU will be doing macro-invertebrate sampling in two locations on the Black on May 12. These sites will include Tin Shanty Bridge and the East Branch at Barber Bridge. The plan is to return to these sites again next year to compare results. In particular, this is of interest at the Tin Shanty Bridge site as this is included in the new permit reach.
- MUCC has continued On the Ground (OTG) projects around the state, a handful of which will be taking place in or around the Upper Black River watershed. Visit www.mucc.org for more details.

Partner Updates:

- **Gaylord Fishing Club:** They're very pleased with the quality of quantity of work completed on the Black this year, particularly the areas adjoining the GFC property.
- **Huron Pines:** John Bailey went down a lengthy list of projects underway in the HP service area. Invasive species eradication work continues throughout northeast lower Michigan, RSX projects and the anticipated closing on the purchase of the vast acreage on Lake Huron north of Alpena referred to as North Point by the Michigan Nature Association. Many entities are in the mix for stewardship of this parcel, which will have a conservation easement on it to be overseen by Huron Pines.
- **Headwaters TU:** Ethan Winchester, chapter Vice President, went through the highlights of almost ambitious agenda for this local TU chapter throughout the watersheds found in the Pigeon River Country State Forest. A minimum of 50 projects have been identified, in addition to their annual banquet in April. It was suggested that if all of the public access sites are reviewed for maintenance/remediation needs, that a single permit be secured that would include work on all identified.
- **Canada Creek Ranch:** Jim Tredaway reported that woodcock habitat work will continue on the ranch. The Ranch hopes that Ken will begin his work season on CCR and mentioned a big beaver dam between the north limits of the Ranch and CC Highway.
- **USFWS:** Continue to secure funding through traditional USFWS programs for the Black and other watersheds in the service area. USFWS is working more closely with state and local entities with an increased emphasis on projects on public lands.
- **Black River Ranch:** Tim Michels indicated that the sand traps on the Ranch have been emptied.
- **Howard French, angler:** Mention a project in its infancy to seek grant funding for a Taking Kids Fishing project through the Friends of Lake Huron Watershed.
- **Roger Bergstedt, USGS, Retired:** mentioned the possibility of using a "sand sucker" device that has been used for lamprey control for emptying sand traps.

There being no further business to come before the UBRC, the meeting came to a timely close at 11:45. Thank you's were extended to Canada Creek Ranch for hosting us once again, and to Tony

Dunaske of Gaylord Fishing Club for the tasty donuts.

The next meeting of the UBRC will take place in the fall of 2018 on a date to be determined via a doodle survey.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol Moncrieff Rose", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair
Upper Black River Council