



UPPER BLACK RIVER COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes - April 5, 2019

The spring meeting of the UBRC took place on Friday, April 5, 2019 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. The meeting began at 9:30. Those in attendance included:

Carol Rose, UBRC
Tim Cwalinski, MDNR
Gary Isaman, Headwaters TU
Jim Tredaway, Canada Creek Ranch
Paul Rose, UBRC
Josh Leisen, Huron Pines
Jim Kurbel, Headwaters TU
Ken Reed, Contractor
Eric Johnson, CCR

Richard Bruot, UBRC, Riparian owner
Lindsey Adams, USFWS
Heather Rawlings, USFWS
Nancy Thurston, CCR
Chuck Thurston, CCR
Joe Jarecki, UBRC/PRCA
Scott Whitcomb, MDNR
Ross Nave, UBRC

After introductions and approval of the agenda, funding sources for the 2019 season were reviewed. These included USFWS, Huron Pines, Headwaters TU, Michigan Fly Fishing Club and several private donors.

2018 River Work Report: Contractor Ken Reed provided an update on his work season on the Black and Canada Creek. He completed 57 structures on the Canada Creek Ranch (CCR) permit early in the season. Reed further reported that he completed the Tin Shanty Bridge stream habitat permit, in its entirety. This included installation of 282 structures, enhancing 9,082 feet along the Black's riparian corridor.

Schedule for 2019: Fifty-six structures remain on the Canada Creek Ranch permit, which expires in 2019. Ken will begin the season at CCR and finish there before moving to the new permit reach on the Black.

2019 Permit: The new permit reach will run between Sparr Road and Tyrolean Hills on the Upper Black in Otsego County, with a focus area around the former Saunders Dam site and impoundment and Tyrolean Hills. This area involves some of the most difficult stretches to navigate on the Black. Beaver trapping ensued during the winter while Nico worked on developing the new permit application for DEQ (now EGLE) review and approval. Tim stated that a Forest Treatment Permit might be needed.

Road/Stream Crossings: Josh Leisen of Huron Pines updated us on current road/stream crossings (RSX) projects. On Milligan Creek, both the Waveland Road and Brady road crossings were. Both crossings have 35' bottomless structures spanning the river. As John Bailey shared last fall, John again gave kudos to the effort invested by the Cheboygan County Road Commission (CCRC) and crew." The CCRC's level of investment of time, materials and equipment equated to about \$250,000 for these projects, according to Josh. Funding for the Milligan Creek crossing projects came from the DNR's Aquatic Habitat Grant program, USFWS, the Walters Fund and time, equipment and materials from the Cheboygan County Road Commission. Our thanks to the donors and Huron Pines and USFWS for their coordination of these much-needed projects. Josh

also praised the cooperative spirit of riparian property owners who provided access across their land. Thank you letters have been sent, according to Josh and a ribbon cutting ceremony is to take place on a date to be determined.

Engineering and planning are progressing for Shingle Mill Bridge, the crossing on Co. Road 622 over the East Branch Black River. Approximately \$200,000 has been secured through USFWS, the Walters Foundation and other sources for preliminary engineering and associated data collection. It was also noted that the private parcel on the SW corner of the crossing on Co. Rd. 622 is currently being marketed.

An RSX on Three Mile Road over the Rainy River in Presque Isle County is also on the radar.

There was discussion about the RSX over Canada Creek on Co. Rd. 622 at Muskellunge Lake. USFWS is seeking funding for a feasibility study regarding the reconfiguration of the dam there and a survey and title search involving the ownership of what had once been a popular access point (now barricaded). Approximately \$25,000 is to be secured for this early phase of the project.

For more information on crossings in the Black River watershed, visit www.northernmichiganstreams.org.

Temperature Loggers: Five new temp loggers have been secured by Headwaters TU for use on the Upper Black River. These new ones have a newer version of technology for data downloading than the long-time inventory of temp loggers we've historically used. Gary Isaman of Headwaters TU has been trained to do the downloading. We thank Headwaters TU for their continued support of and investment in the watershed

Sand Traps: The East Branch sand trap was discussed. Tim Cwalinski indicated that he'd scheduled the Parks & Rec Division's equipment team for providing maintenance on the trap again this year. This work could be considered a possible "match" for the Shingle Mill Bridge project as it unfolds. Headwaters TU has pledged their time and \$500 to go towards off-setting the expense to the Fisheries Division for the project. USFWS also indicated the possibility to assist with this expense. (It should be noted that a subsequent inspection of the trap after the spring run-off was substantially complete indicated that the trap would not require maintenance this year.)

Future Permits: A brief discussion took place regarding securing a permit to allow opening up the overhead blow-down trees upstream of the former Saunders Dam which are currently causing "braids" in the river.

UBRC Inventory disposal: It was determined that there is no longer a need to keep and pay for storage of the accumulated UBRC tool and material inventory. A plan was put together to have the Conservation District remove its items from the storage unit, followed by disposal of the UBRC's items to partner organizations. Our thanks to Nico Tucker who coordinated the project and to those partner organization who will continue to make good use of their newfound inventory in "the resource."

Partner Updates:

- **Headwaters TU:** Gary and Jim Kurbel listed the various chapter projects ahead for the Black River watershed. These included additional macroinvertebrate sampling. Seeking different stream gradient sites was suggested, as was providing site-to-site data as they are collected. Joe Jarecki said that Tip of the Mitt keeps such records. It was further suggested that some sampling at

Shingle Mill Bridge at Slingerland's Bend would be useful as we anticipate the RSX project. They also plan to have at the big beaver dam on Canada Creek north of CCR.

Headwaters TU is also hosting 14-16 year olds to TU Camp at the RAM Center, as well as hosting a Trout Opener breakfast at the PRC Headquarters.

- **Canada Creek Ranch:** Plans are being made to deal with some loose logs from older structures on the creek that have come loose, particularly at Wilson Bridge. Also, Jim Tredaway reported that woodcock/grouse habitat enhancement work continues along the riparian corridor through the ranch. This involves cutting tag along the corridor, changing the age class incrementally.

- **USFWS:** Per Heather Rawlings, the Upper Black River continues to be an important watershed to USFWS and funding shall continue. She also mentioned that her region is changing its focus to sturgeon.

- **DNR Fisheries:** Tim Cwalinski announced that the unit has lost a Fisheries Technician. Though this presents additional challenges, the unit's hard work on behalf of all the watersheds in northern Michigan will continue.

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

The next meeting of the UBRC will take place in the fall of 2019 on a date to be determined via a Doodle survey.

Respectfully submitted,

CMR

Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair
Upper Black River Council