



**Upper Black River Council  
Minutes from the meeting of July 16, 2010  
Canada Creek Ranch House**

A meeting of the UBRC took place on Friday, July 16, 2010 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. Carol Rose, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. She welcomed everyone and had each person introduce him/herself. Those in attendance included:

Carol Rose, MC <sup>3</sup>	Lisha Ramsdell, Huron Pines
Paul Rose, MC <sup>3</sup>	Eric Johnson, Canada Creek Ranch
Heather Rawlings, USFWS	Nico Tucker, NEMCOG
Richard Bruot, landowner	Tim Cwalinski, DNRE Fisheries
Gloria Woudenberg, Montmorency Conservation District	

The agenda was approved as presented and the minutes from the March 19, 2010 meeting were approved as presented and accepted into the official record.

**Funding and Fund-raising Updates**

**Montmorency Conservation District report:** Gloria reported that funding for the UBRC continues to be in good shape. The first invoice for contracted work to Canada Creek Ranch will be going out within the coming weeks.

**Chandler Dam removal: Heather Rawlings** reported that a contractor has been selected for the project after an open bid process. Elsholtz Excavating of Merit, MI was the successful bidder and anticipates completing the project within a two-day turnaround time.

Pursuant to Tim's request that some older in-stream structures up stream be removed as they are "blowing out" the banks, Heather indicated that this would be a good opportunity for volunteers and/or the crew to take care of. Scott Whitcomb of the DNRE will be kept in the loop re: progress on the project.

The physical building structures on the site are an issue for another day.

**U.S.F.W.S. – Heather Rawlings:** Funding requests through USFWS for 2011 projects are being solicited. Heather indicated an October 1, 2010 deadline to get requests to her office.

**Huron Pines– Lisha Ramsdell:** Lisha reported that Huron Pines has submitted several large grant applications to the Great Lakes Rehabilitation Initiative and expects to hear the results sometime this fall. Huron Pines and CRA have partnered on a grant proposal for the Pigeon River.

**Other Funding Success** -- Carol reported that four grants have been secured since the March meeting. \$600 from the Gaylord Elks Lodge, \$1,000 from Communities First Foundation, \$1,000 from Headwaters Chapter of TU, and \$245 from Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan. A private donation in the amount of \$250 has also been received.

### **River Restoration Crew plan for 2010**

**Schedule/Progress:** *Nico Tucker* reported that an estimated 165± structures have been restored/completed by the crew since the beginning of the season. These include 26 structures remaining on the old permit, 45 in the Beaver Dam Club area, 68 at Canada Creek Ranch (CCR) and 25 already at Black River Ranch (BRR). They've also "deconstructed" 7 beaver dams up on Milligan Creek.

The crew spent part of three weeks on CCR and are into their first week at BRR. BRR had much of the woody debris materials assembled along the East Branch in advance of the crew, giving the crew an extra level of efficiency. Some of the logs were in the 16-18" caliper range, according to Nico. The crew was SO efficient, that they went through all of the material provided. Nico reports that Tim Michiels and his crew at the ranch will be busy this weekend pulling more materials together for the crew.

**Next year's crew:** Crew leader, Travis Elowsky, will be moving on with his career plans after this season on the river. He has been a tremendous asset to the crew and UBRC and will truly be missed. Discussion took place about the make-up of next year's crew.

### **Canada Creek Ranch Report**

**Eric Johnson**, CCR manager reported that all four of the CCR sand traps have been emptied and should be good for a couple of years. He inquired about the DNRE status of a permit CCR has submitted for construction of a foot bridge over the river. After confessing that he'd sent it directly to Lansing, he was encouraged to contact the Gaylord DNRE office for further details and expediting. Eric also asked about how many more sites are left on the current CCR restoration permit. Nico and Tim Cwalinski said that they could help him find that information.

### **Black River Ranch**

The permit application for the BRR work was approved by the DNRE, with some exceptions relating to the possible presence of the Hungerford's Crawling Water Beetle on some of the Main Branch sites. The crew has begun work on the ranch as of July 12 and made quick work of the materials BRR had stockpiled for them over the winter logging period. Nico mentioned that the crew has been offered use of one of the cabins on the East Branch next week, to which everyone responded with a jealous groan.

### **Road/Stream crossing projects:**

**Barber Bridge:** Per Heather and Lisha, this project has been completed by the Montmorency County Road Commission (MCRC). \$25,000 has been funded by USFWS to fix the approaches for this crossing over the East Branch. Lisha indicated that she'd received an invoice for the MCRC portion of the project and would forward it to Heather for USFWS payment. The MCRC has been an excellent project partner on a variety of road/stream crossing projects.

**Stewart Creek/Blue Lake Road:** Beetle issues linger, but hope remains to get to this project in 2011.

**Roth Road/Van Helen Creek:** Beetle issues here, too. Plans remain to complete this project in the fall of 2010, however. Heather reported that she has completed her Biological Assessment (BA) and Longitudinal Profile ("long-pro") and submitted them to Barb Hoessler of the USFWS Lansing office for her preparation of a Biological Opinion (BO), due by September 1, 2010. Once this is done, then the final permit can be submitted. Engineering plans are nearing completion and the MCRC has the project on its schedule yet this year.

**Other R/S crossings:** Tim Cwalinski mentioned that he saw a plume of sediment feeding down into Hodges Creek when he drove over it recently. He also asked that the Milligan Creek/Brady Road crossing in Cheboygan County be added to the list.

### **Volunteer opportunities**

**Huron Pines: Lisha Ramsdell** reported that all of the volunteer projects involving the Upper Black that are part of Huron Pines' 11/11 Program have been completed. The sites on the Lower Black are maturing well and are a real success story. The local "buy in" on these sites has really contributed to their continued maintenance and oversight. In addition she handed out a flyer with details of their other upcoming events.

**Rattlesnake Creek Project: July 26 and August 7/8, 2010:** The spawning riffle project continues with a couple more work bees. One has already taken place with about 20 people hauling stone and gravel down to the southernmost of the three sites on the creek. A second mini-bee is scheduled for July 26 @ 8:30 a.m. and will focus on completing the northerly of the three sites. The August 7/8 work bee will welcome back the folks from the Vanguard TU chapter. Participants are encouraged to bring 5 gallon buckets, shovels and "otter sleds." Otter sleds are often used by ice fishermen to haul gear out onto the ice. They are short (about 50" long) with raised edges on all four sides. We had one to work with and found that it works perfectly for this kind of application.

### **Other**

**Sand traps/Regulation changes:** Tim reminded the group that contractor who handles sand trap clean-out for the State will be retiring this year and that funding limitations will likely mean that the State will no longer be in the sand trap maintenance business.

Funding sources for this work need to be sought. Tim said that he will be preparing a sand trap inventory for our use on the Upper Black. He also reported on some regulation changes on the Black. A 4 ½ mile stretch will continue to be a special regs, extended season fishery with Type 2 (10") trout size restrictions. The balance of the Black will go to Type 1 (8"), and will be consistent with the East Branch and the rest of the river system.

***Beaver Dam "Deconstruction" Plans:*** The beaver dam on the Upper Black north of the Camp Merriment site was up for discussion again. No action will be taken until certain wildlife biologists can be consulted.

***Turtle Lake Club river work:*** After some discussion it was agreed that the crew would not be available for work at Turtle Lake Club. Technical and/or permit assistance may be offered, however.

### **Partner Updates/issues**

The future of the Montmorency Conservation District was discussed. With limited revenues, its future may well involve dissolution or merging with another district. It was mentioned that the UBRC is involved in seeking 501(c)3 status, which should help alleviate some of the issues.

Lisha informed the group that Huron Pines will be working on a road/stream crossing inventory for the Sturgeon and Pigeon Rivers. She also indicated that the Pigeon River Habitat Initiative has received some funding from the DNRE. When combined with funding brought to the table by NRCS for the Cheboygan River Watershed (of which the Black is a part), the future looks better for the PRHI program.

The 80 acre Slingerlend parcel on the East Branch has been purchased by the Natural Resources Trust Fund. Closing is to take place by September 1. A sign or plaque of some sort will be placed there by the UBRC, in honor of Bud and his legacy with the UBRC. The Thies parcel which includes Sanders Dam was also mentioned as a possible acquisition by the State, but much needs to happen before an offer is even made.

### **Schedule next meeting**

It was decided to meet on Friday, September 17 at BRR, if they'll have us! Carol agreed to contact Tim at the ranch. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.