



**Upper Black River Restoration Committee
Minutes from the meeting of March 19, 2010
Canada Creek Ranch House**

A meeting of the UBRRC took place on Friday, March 19, 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 themselves. Those in attendance included:

Carol Rose, MC ³	Roxanne Merrick, DNRE Fisheries
Gordon Ferguson, Contractor	Paul Rose, MC ³
Heather Rawlings, USFWS	Gerald Casey, DNRE Fisheries
Richard Bruot, landowner	Tim Cwalinski, DNRE Fisheries
Bob Hook, landowner	Nico Tucker, NEMCOG
John Walters, Trout Unlimited	Lisha Ramsdell, Huron Pines
Phil Bandish, landowner	Hank Jankoviak, Cheboygan Co. Road Com.
Richard Kropf, PRCA	
Frank Krist, Hammond Bay Area Anglers Association	
Gloria Woudenberg, Montmorency Conservation District	

The agenda was approved as presented and the minutes from the September 11, 2009 meeting were approved as presented and accepted into the official record.

Funding and Fund-raising Updates

Montmorency Conservation District report: Carol Rose presented and discussed the budget figures put together by Donna Hardies and Gloria Woudenberg. The report shows the expected revenue amounts and sources, and expected expenditures. If the summer of 2010 goes as planned there should be a carry-over for next year of about \$16,000. This is good since some of our funding sources may not be available next year, and this gives us some flexibility. Everyone seemed comfortable with the figures and the budget stood as presented.

Gloria asked for clarification of the Montmorency Conservation District's role in the overall project process. She is taking over many of Donna's duties and wanted to be sure she did not fail to fulfill her responsibilities, and conversely, not to overstep her authority. Carol and Paul defined the duties as administrative and financial. The funding for the projects comes into the District; payroll and expenses are paid out. In the past the District has maintained inventories of equipment and supplies, provided safety training for the crew, and relayed progress reports from the river crew to the Committee.

Chandler Dam removal: Heather reported that she has spoken with Jennifer Gelb from Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. They have a DNRE grant for this project, are moving ahead and permitting is in process. Heather indicated that she has seen two surveys that show the area to be free of the Hungerford's Crawling Water Beetle (hereafter referred to as "the beetle"). Roxanne has also spoken with Jennifer regarding permitting. Since the site is "in the middle of nowhere," she did not foresee any problems.

Tim spoke about the removal of some cabins at the dam site and the possibility of asbestos issues. Heather asked if the work crews would be able to remove old CCC structures upstream from the site and Carol Rose asked if we would need a permit to do this. Roxanne confirmed that a permit would be needed, but suggested that it be included in the dam removal permit even if the work was not completed for a couple of years since the permit is good for 5 years.

Tim also mentioned that there are some older in-stream structures up stream that need to be removed as they are “blowing out” the banks. He asked that Scott Whitcomb of the DNRE be kept in the loop re: progress on the project.

Heather has taken a contractor to the site and gotten a rough estimate of \$36,000 for the work. This is good since the amount available is \$60,000. Jennifer is also obtaining some bids. Discussion of technical issues took place. Roxanne said that clean or new equipment is required to reduce contamination if entering the river. Bob Hook expressed concern over tree removal and soil erosion—Heather felt the erosion should not be extensive and the banks would heal quickly.

U.S.F.W.S. – Heather Rawlings: Heather was the bearer of much good news. She announced that USFWS Fish Passage funding in the amount of \$15,000 had been granted for the **Roth Road/Van Helen Creek** crossing. This will be added to \$15,000 granted the previous year. Heather has submitted a work plan, but beetles have been found there and are a complicating factor. She sited a possible solution used at another site where beetles were captured and relocated upstream in suitable habitat. Another proposal is to capture the beetles, hold them in a safe location, and replace them to the original location once the work project was completed.

Stewart Creek/Blue Lake Road crossing - more beetle issues there, but still hopes to get to this project soon.

Three sites in the Pigeon River Country State Forest have been targeted. **Webb Road** is to have the bridge and culverts replaced and the approaches fixed. The road commission will help with the funding on these projects, with a little help from USFWS. Crossings at **Nelson and MacIntosh Creeks** are also slated for work.

\$25,000 has been funded to fix the approaches for the **Barber Bridge** crossing over the East Branch. Steve Wicks (Montmorency Road Commission) has indicated that they are on board for the project. Heather indicated that we’ll have a “volunteer opportunity” post construction.

Heather indicated a glitch on the funding of the **Rattlesnake Creek** spawning riffle project because the private landowner dropped out of the project. There was discussion on how this could be resolved.

\$15,000 has been funded for the work crew. Work on **Miller Creek** (in the Thunder Bay watershed) has also been funded.

Yeah, USFWS!

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 in May. Huron Pines and CRA have partnered on a grant proposal for the Pigeon River. Lisha also passed out a six page Black River Watershed priority list of road crossings, culverts in need of replacement, erosion sites and dams to be removed and asked everyone to review them and offer input. Tim asked to have the Brady site added.

Klieber Dam was also mentioned. Lisha further reported that three large erosion sites are 90% done; they are in process of wrapping up, putting up signage, etc. The sturgeon spawning site on the lower Black River that was the subject of a major work effort in the spring of 2009 appears to have been a smashing success.

River Restoration Crew plan for 2010

Crew composition: Carol reported that three of the four crew members from last season will be returning—Travis Elowsky, Chad Elowsky, and Ryan Gressick. They will be joined by Devon Jones. There is also another interested person who could be called on if needed. Looking long-term, we need to be thinking about a new crew leader for next year.

Materials: Late last season we purchased a 5000' roll of cable and are assembling our own duckbills in various lengths. Additional cable, anchors, ferrules and assembly tools will be purchased as needed.

Schedule: We are planning to have the crew spend a minimum of 5 weeks on the public reaches of the Black River (this will complete work on the old permit and begin work on the new one), 2 weeks on Canada Creek Ranch and 2 weeks at Black River Ranch.

Canada Creek Ranch Report

No representative from CCR was present at the meeting, but Heather reported that the culvert @ S. Gate and Montague Creek has been completed. Tim stated that he'd talked with CCR Manager Eric Johnson who said that CCR is looking into hiring a consultant to do a survey of both the lakes and streams on the ranch. Sand trap maintenance may take place on the ranch this summer, but it was suggested to check with Ken Byrne of the ranch on this.

Black River Ranch – Plans for 2010

BRR Manager Tim Michiels was not able to be at the meeting. Roxanne complemented Nico on the great permit applications he submitted, saying that most of the applications she gets aren't much more than "sketches on a napkin." She said the Town/Range search immediately flagged the presence of "the beetle," wood turtle, and Dusted Skipper. Working with Barb Hossler (USFWS), Roxanne is thinking they will employ a strategy similar to the CCR application; i.e. to divide the proposed sites into "permitted" and "restricted." The sites of concern are #'s 25 through 29 on the main stream. Because there are actually two streams through Black River Ranch (Main Branch and

East Branch), work on one could be completed even if there are restrictions on the other. Bob Vandekoppel – beetle expert—may make site visit

Volunteer opportunities

Huron Pines – Lisha Ramsdell: On May 15th Huron Pines will be in Lewiston for a celebration/summer kick-off event of Huron Pines' 11/11 Volunteer Project. Their new river simulator will be there and they are hoping for participation from other entities like the Hunt Creek Fisheries station, the road commission, Conservation District, etc. She extended an invitation to participate to anyone interested. In addition she handed out a flyer with details of their other upcoming events.

Rattlesnake Creek Project – August 7/8, 2010: This site has been picked for the TU volunteer day project. Tim handed out a description of the plan and goals of the project which is modeled on work he saw done in the Upper Peninsula. The objective is to mimic spawning bed conditions in three locations on the creek. One location is fairly easily accessible and Tim wants to construct that one with the work crew prior to volunteer day. This will provide an opportunity for them to learn and to work out any kinks prior to having a large group of workers.

Pigeon Rive data collection survey: John Walters of Headwaters TU announced that they are getting an AmeriCorps volunteer. The AmeriCorps worker will help collect data for an inventory of the river, road/stream crossings and erosion sites. The project area will run from Old Vanderbilt Road bridge to the edge of the Pigeon River impoundment at Panorama Ranch.

Rattlesnake Creek Project

See above "Volunteer Opportunities"

Temp Logger Installation, Sand traps

Tim explained that contractor and time limitations for the State mean that sand traps on State land are only cleaned out about once every three years. Funding sources for this work need to be sought. CCR has two traps that require attention, and the Galen Brown sand trap in the East Branch was just taken care of by Gordon Ferguson and is good for the next year or two.

One temp logger was never removed last fall. Tim doubts it will still be functional if found. We have 14 on hand; do we need more? It was suggested that 5 more would be adequate so we have some back-up units. Bob Hook was going to check with the Gaylord Elks Lodge for possible funds for the purchase. The list of logger placement locations was circulated and assignments for the 2010 installations made.

Beaver Dam "Deconstruction" Plans

Phil Bandish reported that two were trapped upstream and that he has someone who wants to learn trapping, so they will be working in the area. A list of GPS coordinates of likely candidates for dam removal are being collected for the river crew, but is not yet

complete. Phil reported that there seems to be as many beaver as ever. Tim said Tom Carlson had identified one dam on the upper Black, but there is not much activity.

Other

New logo: Carol passed out a copy of the new logo. The group's name has been changed from "committee" to "council" and we now have our own website at www.upperblack.org. Discussion ensued and Tim asked if the term "restoration" accurately reflects the group and suggested we use "watershed" instead. John Walters then suggested we eliminate the word "restoration" altogether and just call it the Upper Black River Council. Further discussion took place and it was agreed to change the name of the organization from Upper Black River Restoration Committee to Upper Black River Council.

Leaking oil facility: John Walters brought up a concern regarding an oil facility around Greens Landing that has leaked oil. He wanted to know what was happening and who to contact. Roxanne suggested the DNRE Water Bureau website that offers an online petition. Paul suggested contacting Tip of the Mitt. Tim informed the group that the spills have been contained and monitoring has shown that the plume has actually receded. The facility is located about a mile from the river, so there was not concern that the spill would reach the river.

Private culvert removal: Hank Jankoviak of Cheboygan County's Road Commission reported that he had talked a private landowner on West Brady Road into removing a culvert and replacing it with a bridge. The abutments were poured last fall and the bridge should be constructed this spring.

Schedule next meeting

Carol suggested that our next meeting be scheduled in September to review accomplishments and wrap up the summer projects. Others felt it was important to meet quarterly to stay on top of what gets funded. It was decided to meet on Friday, July 16th at a site to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.