



UPPER BLACK RIVER COUNCIL  
Meeting Minutes - March 20, 2020

The spring meeting of the UBRC took place on Friday, March 20, 2020 via conference call hosted by the Gaylord DNR Field Office. The meeting began at 9:30. Those on the call included:

Carol Rose, UBRC  
Tim Cwalinski, MDNR  
Gary Isaman, Headwaters TU  
Nancy Thurston, CCR  
Paul Rose, UBRC  
Josh Leisen, Huron Pines  
Jim Kurbel, Headwaters TU

Tom Carlson, UBRC Bd/MCCC  
Matthew Kowalski, USFWS  
Heather Rawlings, USFWS  
Dan Blanton, CCR, trapper  
Chuck Thurston, CCR  
Caroline Keson, Tip of the Mitt  
Ken Reed, Contractor

**Schedule for 2020:** Ken Reed and crew will be returning to the most recent permit reach between Sparr Road and Tyrolean Hills this season. He said he'll likely soon head to the work area via the former Saunders Dam site and work back (east) to where he finished last season. Once that's done, he'll continue the march downstream. Access remains challenging on this Saunders/Tyrolean permit, with access to the Tyrolean Hills stretch complicated by an easement in question between the DNR and some local landowners. In addition, Ken will conduct maintenance work on older structures on Canada Creek Ranch, and, time permitting, the same on those on former permit reaches on the Upper Black and East Branch.

**Road/Stream Crossings:** Josh Leisen of Huron Pines updated us on current road/stream crossings (RSX) projects. The final installation of the culvert and infrastructure on the Shingle Mill Bridge crossing at 622/East Branch Black should take place early this summer. The culvert is already at the Montmorency County Road Commission office. Josh also mentioned additional RSX work on the upper Milligan Creek with funds left over from a USFWS grant. These will include Weed Creek and Gokee Creek, both at Osmun Road, on the Lewis Branch of Adaire Creek and a second RSX over Gokee Creek at Walker Road. 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.

There was discussion about the RSX over Canada Creek on Co. Rd. 622 downstream of at Muskellunge Lake. USFWS has secured funding (\$25K) for a feasibility study regarding the reconfiguration of the dam/water control structure there. A title search involving the ownership of what had once been a popular access point (now barricaded) will be a preliminary step.

For more information on road/stream crossings in the Black River watershed, visit [www.northernmichiganstreams.org](http://www.northernmichiganstreams.org).

Several of the Upper Black and East Branch access sites were inventoried last year by Alex Cerveniak of Headwaters TU. Follow up on those needing remediation will take place over the coming season and years, spearheaded by the Headwaters TU chapter. The Montmorency County Conservation Club has also offered to assist with work on the stair railing at one of the high-banks

access sites on the East Branch. Tom Carlson will lead this effort with the local conservation club.

**Temperature Loggers:** We have 10 locations again identified for temperature meters in the Black River watershed in 2020. Gary Isaman has volunteered to deliver the meters to the “installers” if need be. There may be a delay in launching them this year by the DNR, however, Tim is currently missing the software from his computer due to it being lost in a computer replacement. He is working with State of Michigan DTMB to replace the software, but this has been an issue since many SOM employees are working at home to the Coronavirus. Priorities have changed. He hopes to have them launched by June, or at least July 1. The July and August summer data is the most critical when comparing to previous years.

**Sand Traps:** The East Branch sand trap was discussed. Tim said that the trap needs to be at least 50-100% full to justify the work and that it should be done before the Shingle Mill Bridge work is completed, or after (if needed). The five year permit for this trap expires mid-August 2020. Tim indicated that he's 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. The UBRC has also pledge \$500 toward this project. USFWS also indicated the possibility to assist with this expense. As with everything as of today, virus-related protocols can change our plans in an instant.

**Future In-Stream Habitat Permits:** The current permit (Saunders/Tyrolean) may last a few more years. It was suggested that we just put future permits on the back burner for the next year or so.

**UBRC Fish Passage Program:** This season, protocol permitting, a number of inactive beaver dams will be deconstructed. Headwaters TU has scheduled an August 15 work bee involving the big dam north of Canada Creek Ranch. There are also two on the Slingerland reach on the East Branch which will be addressed.

**Partner updates:** Caroline Keson of Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council spoke to the presence of the Hungerford's Crawling Water Beetle (HCWB or just “the beetle”) in the East Branch at Barber Bridge. No macroinvertebrate stream monitoring is to take place at this site unless there's a USFWS-approved HCWB professional present. She also reported on a macroinvertebrate survey of tributaries which flow into Black Lake. Carol Rose also mentioned that the Access Navigation Tool on the [www.upperblack.org](http://www.upperblack.org) site has changed slightly.

There being no further business to come before the UBRC, the meeting came to a timely close at 10:20 a.m. Thank you's were extended to Tim and the DNR and to all who participated on the call. Virtual donuts were enjoyed.

The next meeting of the UBRC in the fall of 2020 will be determined via a Doodle survey.

Respectfully submitted,

CMR

Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair  
Upper Black River Council