



**Upper Black River Council  
Minutes from the meeting of September 17, 2010  
Black River Ranch House**

A meeting of the UBRC took place on Friday, September 17, 2010 at Black River Ranch. Carol Rose, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:40 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>	Heather Rawlings, USFWS
Nico Tucker, NEMCOG	Phil Bandish, property owner
Richard Bruot, landowner	Tim Cwalinski, DNRE Fisheries
Ray Tassava, MAPS	Tim Michels, Black River Ranch
Gloria Woudenberg, Montmorency Conservation District	

The agenda was approved as presented and the minutes from the July 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 river restoration continues to be in good shape. Final billing to USFWS is all that remains for this year.

**Chandler Dam removal: Heather Rawlings** reported that contractor Elsholtz Excavating of Merit, MI will be on the job site September 23 and 24.

**U.S.F.W.S. – Heather Rawlings:** Funding requests through USFWS for 2011 projects are due October 15, 2010. She anticipates having \$15,000 for the crew for 2011 and anticipates additional Fish Passage funding for other sites.

**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. Also included in the proposal is funding for the Stewart Creek/Blue Lakes Road crossing, Van Hellon Creek/Roth Road crossing, two years of funding for the river crew and additional funding for sand trap maintenance and in-stream and upland habitat improvements. Good luck, Huron Pines!

**River Restoration Crew plan for 2011**

**Schedule/Progress:** Due to the lack of a power point projector, the presentation **Nico Tucker** had prepared of the crew's 2010 work in review was not available. Nico reported that an estimated 232 structures were installed on the public reaches of the Black over the course of 38 days of work there. The sites on the old permit have been completed and the new permit is approximately 1/3 complete. Seven beaver dams on Milligan Creek have also been removed over the course of the season. Phil Bandish

commented that the positive effects of these dam removals are already being seen there.

**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. It appears that Chad Elowsky may be available for one more year and would assume Travis' leadership duties with a new crew. Follow-up for the new crew will take place early this winter.

### **Canada Creek Ranch Report**

Ten days of crew time were spent at CCR, during which time they installed 10 new structures and repaired 58. Since 2008, 263 structures have been installed/repaired there.

### **Black River Ranch**

During eleven days of crew time, 93 new LWD structures were installed at BRR. The permitted sites there are now approximately 50% complete, per Nico. Tim Michels reported that BRR is budgeting another \$15,000 for 2011.

### **Road/Stream Crossing Projects**

**Barber Bridge:** This project was completed, under budget. The only thing missing now is the barber pole!

**Stewart Creek/Blue Lake Road:** Beetle issues linger, and the Biological Opinion is still underway. 2012 is now the anticipated year for this project.

**Roth Road/Van Hellon Creek:** Beetle issues here, too, but Heather reports that more beetles have been found downstream, "which is a good thing." She indicated that this will allow technicians to relocate those beetles found in the project area to the downstream location instead of moving them completely off-site. The BO has also been completed, so the remaining steps to secure the permit and begin the project are accelerating for work to be done in October/November, 2010.

### **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. Huron Pines has been making a particular focus on invasive plant species and has had a number of work bees to address phragmites throughout their service area.

**Rattlesnake Creek Project:** The artificial spawning riffle project is now complete. All that remains is for the brook trout to make use of the new habitat, be fruitful and multiply.

**Chandler dam:** Volunteer efforts to install LWD will be encouraged for 2011, according to Heather. The contractor will be coming in late September/early October and plans to have the dam structure out within two days. Photos **will** be taken!

### **Temp logger collection time**

Per Tim Cwalinski, the loggers can be pulled and returned to him at any time now.

### **Other**

**501(c)3:** Carol Rose reported that plans are continuing with the assistance of a river-friendly attorney in northern Michigan who assists groups like the UBRC in securing tax exempt status, pro bono (i.e., for free). He provided a standard form of by-laws recently used by another river group, which has been tweaked for the UBRC. Rose offered to send it in PDF form to anyone interested in taking a look.

**UBRC web site:** Tweaks are forthcoming on the site. Apologies were made by Carol for the delay in getting them on to the site.

### **Partner Updates/issues**

**DNRE Fisheries:** Tim Cwalinski reported that DNRE Fisheries' Todd Wills has been monitoring sand traps throughout the state. He's found that they are best emptied when they are 50% full, instead of waiting until they are completely full. Tim also reported that the Black River brook trout study was completed for 2010.

Tim also reported that 4,300' of Milligan Creek was shocked this year. Phil Bandish reported that it was every bit of 4,300 feet!

The sturgeon hatchery at Black Lake had a very successful year, with approximately 5,000 little hatchling sturgeon.

**Huron Pines:** Lisha reported that the earthen dam removal and restoration of Meyer Creek by Huron Pines has been completed. She provided a hand-out with photos of the before and after on this project, which was most impressive.

**Roy Tassava:** Roy joined the folks at the UBRC as a representative of the Mullett Lake Preservation Society. He was seeking counsel on how best to go about securing funding for work to be done on the Pigeon River. He said that there are a whole lot of folks in the Mullett Lake group anxious to see good things happen on the Pigeon. It was suggested that they work together with Huron Pines and/or Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. Ideally, if they could come up with a good, tangible project right out of the chutes, then it will be easier and easier to find funding and increase support.

**Phil Bandish:** Phil reported that the recent oil and gas lease auction free-for-all that took place earlier this year has resulted in many private property owners being approached by the oil and gas companies seeking access to their parcels. He said the Milligan Creek area is particularly attractive to them. He mentioned this because this issue is just getting started in these parts.

### **Schedule next meeting**

It was decided to meet on Friday, April 8, with the location to be determined. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.