



# Huron Pines

*Conserving the Forests, Lakes and Streams of Northeast Michigan*

## Hodges Creek/Black River Road—Montmorency County

*December 2009*



Photo courtesy: Tim Cwalinski MDNR

Huron Pines is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and an equal opportunity provider working to conserve the forests, lakes and streams of Northeast Michigan.



We bring partners together to take a hands-on approach to conservation problems. Our vision is that through active leadership and coordination of conservation projects, Huron Pines makes the region a better place to live, work and enjoy.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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## Reducing Erosion and Protecting Brook Trout

As with most streams in Northern Michigan, sediment is the number one pollutant. The case with Hodges Creek in the Black River Watershed is no different. River crossings, naturally being at the low point along the roadway, tend to be the points of entry for sediment into a stream system. Many roads that cross streams are sand or dirt roads. When these roads are regraded, excess sediment is pushed to the road edge. These piles of sediment create “curbs” and prevent water from flowing off the road and into the ditches. The untreated rainwater is then funneled directly to the lowest point, which is usually the stream crossing.

## Watershed Approach to Restoration

The Hodges Creek/Black River Road crossing has been a chronic problem that was identified in the 2002 Black River Watershed Plan and by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and MDNR as a priority site. The current problems at this site are twofold; fish passage and excess sediment entering the stream at the road crossing. Several crossings in the watershed have been fixed and the Hodges Creek/Black River Road crossing is now the number one priority site. By installing appropriate best management practices (BMPs), sediment will be reduced and fish passage problems will be eliminated.

*Left: The original culvert was restricting water flow and hindering fish passage. Right: Before work began, sand-laden runoff went directly into the river.*



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## The Solution

The new culvert, chosen for its capacity to span the entire stream width was also lengthened to reduce the steep embankment and resulting erosion. Originally there were two 24 inch culverts at the site, though only one of them was allowing water to flow through. These culverts were replaced by one 60' long by 6' wide span elliptical culvert. The culvert was also "recessed" and fieldstone was placed in the bottom of the culvert by volunteers from the Upper Black River Restoration Committee to create a more natural streambed. In addition, the sand road was hardened with a crushed limestone aggregate. Hardening the road surface, replacing the culvert and protecting the embankment, has resulted in sediment reduction of 5 tons/ year and 26 river miles have been opened for fish passage.



*NRCS Engineer, Andrea Paladino, and Huron Pines AmeriCorps member, Casey Ressler, gather survey information for the road crossing site design.*

## Thank You Partners

Huron Pines coordinated the project and received technical resources and financial commitment from numerous partners. The Natural Resource Conservation Service provided survey and engineering designs for the project while Huron Pines AmeriCorps members assisted with data collection. Financial assistance was provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service Fish Passage Program, FishAmerica Foundation and the Headwaters, Mershon and Paul H. Young Chapters of Trout Unlimited. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources collected fishery data and volunteers from the Upper Black River Restoration Committee helped to complete the project. A special thank you to the Montmorency County Road Commission for providing the equipment and labor necessary to complete the project.

*Left: The new culvert is set in place by the Montmorency Road Commission.  
Right: The 6' wide culvert has reconnected 26 river miles for fish passage.*



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