

**Upper Black River Restoration Committee
Meeting Minutes - September 11, 2009
Canada Creek Ranch House**

A meeting of the UBRRC took place on Friday, September 11, 2009 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. with a welcome from Chair, Carol Rose and introductions of those in attendance.

The agenda was approved as presented by call of the chairman. The minutes from the March 20, 2009 meeting were reviewed and approved as presented and accepted into the official record.

Funding and Fund-raising Updates

The financial report for the date ending September 11, 2009 was presented to the committee for review by Donna Hardies. This report showed the breakdown of income and expenses for both the Black River work and also activities on Canada Creek Ranch. Following review and discussion on the report it was accepted into the committee's official record. This report was prepared and presented by the Montmorency Conservation District.

Headwaters TU and MCTU Embrace-a-Stream grants: The \$2,000 Embrace-A-Stream grant awarded to Headwaters TU for work on the Black River has not yet been distributed to the UBRRC. Carol Rose will follow-up on the status of this funding.

Chandler Dam Removal: In coordination with the dam removal the State would also like to remove (take down) all of the buildings on site, depending on scheduling, etc. Discussion took place about having the work crew or a volunteer TU work weekend to assist with this project, but nothing was resolved. Andrea from USFWS has brought in \$12,000 from fish passage money for this project, with an additional \$15,000 from Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program.

Heather Rawlings – USFWS: A funding report generated by USFWS was passed around for committee review. Heather then reviewed the following projects with the committee and answered questions.

Roth Road/Van Hellan Creek:

\$15,000 is allocated to the project but more is needed. There have been beetle and construction issues with this site. A brainstorming session is needed to hash out ideas and other potential funding sources for 2010 completion.

Black River (Work Crew) Large Woody Debris: \$10,000 from Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program-2009

Chandler Dam Removal: See above

Hodges Creek/Black River Road Crossing: Referred to Lisha Ramsdell of Huron Pines later in the meeting.

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Montague Creek: Heather also reported that for FY 2010 the potential sources of money for habitat projects are expected to increase dramatically. The recommendation is that groups should focus on large projects for funding consideration. It is suggested that some brainstorming sessions be planned or any suggestions or ideas could be e-mailed to Heather.

Barber Bridge: Discussion digressed to the Barber Bridge approaches and general design flaws on the bridge. The Barber Bridge is a tremendous source of sand entering the river system, but work addressing just the bridge design without correcting the approaches would be self-defeating. After a major storm all of the approach materials are entering the river and are ponding up. According to Heather, the Barber Bridge is not an actual fish passage. Consideration for long term plans to pave the approaches is necessary, with surfacing up to the top of the grade. Funding is an issue, as always. A preliminary estimate for paving costs for the approaches will be sought by the Roses.

Fish Passage Funding Requests: All fish passage requests and grant applications are due by October 9. This due date is not negotiable, so anyone interested or with an idea to pitch needs to contact Andrea for a copy of the form or the RFP as soon as possible.

Heather then turned the discussion to proposed projects for FY2010, shown in green on her handout.

Stewart Creek: This project has been removed from list, as 4 beetles have been found at the site. Therefore, this site will now require an environmental assessment before any further activities can progress. Stewart Creek will be planned for FY 2011 or 2012, to allow time to get some of the beetle work completed and to also use other sites (that have beetle identification) as a reference point to allow for BMP's on beetle sites. USFWS and other entities are working to develop these BMP's and welcome this discussion. Heather reminded us that this is a good thing so that the work being performed is not detrimental to the beetle habitat.

Potential 2010 Sites:

Shingle Mill Bridge: The cost for the Shingle Mill site is estimated at over \$200,000 for a bridge replacement. This would be the year to try and gather funding for a site of this magnitude (due to cost and size). The group needs to think big about such large projects.

Milligan Creek Crossings: Brady Road (Cheboygan), Osmun Road (Cheboygan), and 2 Sites on Walker Road (Cheboygan) The group agreed that all sites are worthy or in need of repair/replacement

County Rd 622/VanHellan Creek (Montmorency): This site is being considered by the Road Commission, so solicitation of funding would increase the likelihood of its completion.

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The group agreed that all of the items noted in green on Heather's report are very good choices and fully support funding of each of the sites.

Huron Pines Report: Lisha Ramsdell reported on the status of the Hodges Creek project, reminding everyone that this is the crossing on Black River Rd. All the contracts are in place and all activities can move forward. Construction is actually scheduled to begin next week (mid-September 2009). Following completion of the site volunteers may be needed to place rocks at the site. It is a long culvert and sand will be necessary inside the culvert, thus the need for placement of rocks into the culvert to allow for some resting places and additions to the natural channel. The road commission will leave the materials on site, and the entire process should not take more than a few hours. A number of volunteers left contact information with Lisha and will be contacted when necessary. Kim Bleech of the Road Commission will contact Lisha with the proposed time line. One small issue could be on when and how much of the old spongy bottom should be altered. It was also noted that the approach work may be completed a little later than the crossing itself. Lisha will keep everyone posted via email.

2009 Work Crew Activities

Black River: Nico Tucker presented a brief Powerpoint presentation highlighting the 2009 work season. Over three weeks of work time was spent on the Black River by the crew installing LWD structures, de-constructing beaver dams and other miscellaneous projects. In all, 79 in-stream structures were installed/renovated which included 60 new and 19 older structures. On the new structure installations the crew ran into some issues with driving and placement of anchors on the rocky sites. Overall, this season the crew did an excellent job. The lunker structures have much more depth and there are larger logs in the water. Plus, the selection and placement of LWD sites was done very well, with better photos, and more in-depth, well documented notes. Approximately 32 structures sites are left on the current permit.

CCR: Due to really rainy weather and time constraints, the River Rat crew was only able to spend a total of 8 working days on the ranch projects. In 2008 the crew was able to spend considerably longer time than planned at CCR at the beginning of the season due to permit delays for the Black River work. They were still very productive during this abbreviated 2009 time line, however, installing 32 structures of which 17 were new. They also went through 128 duckbill anchors, which were a precious commodity during the 2009 season. Approximately 120 structure sites are left on the current CCR permit.

Beaver Dams: A total of 27 beaver dams were removed during this work season throughout the Black River watershed and all are happy with the results of the planned activities (except the beavers!).

Miscellaneous: According to Donna and Nico, the crew is always in need of equipment. Among the items they always need are new or additional cameras, chain saw(s), post drivers, waders, driver bar, batteries, blank cable for binding and holding structures (contact garage door companies to see if they have used/discarded cable). It was suggested that it might be possible to secure these items via grant applications or soliciting contributions (of old waders, for instance) from TU chapters.

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TU Volunteer Day: The day was a huge success despite the weather, nearly 50 participants, ranging in age from 9-69 years old. The weather was horrific, downpours of rain, very cold, yet the volunteers had materials flying in the river. Six new large structures were completed with great success. The crew staged the materials ahead of time allowing for the volunteers to complete more structures and a warm meal was served. Overall, the day was very productive and the work effort, spectacular.

2010 Work Season: There are 32 structures left on the current permit for the Black from Town Corner to Stella Maris Club. This should take the crew about the first two weeks of the season to complete. The CCR permit has a total of 170 structure permits, with 120 structures yet to be completed, so that work is available depending on CCR funding.

Nico Tucker and Tim Cwalinski are working on the permits for both UBRRC activities and also for proposed work on Black River Ranch. These will be two separate applications and all costs for the BRR permit and work will be covered by the ranch. Each permit will be a 5 year grant, consisting of close to 200 structures each.

Potentially we could have three theaters of operation: CCR, BRR and Black River, depending on funding sources and permitting. Beyond the Restoration permit, the BRR will also be applying for permits for their sand traps.

Volunteer efforts

Huron Pines: The Huron Pines newsletter was passed out to the group and was reviewed and entered into the official record. Huron Pines hosted a large volunteer day in May, where over 60 people gathered together to plant native plants and shrubs on three large erosion sites on the lower Black. This event occurred during the sturgeon run, allowing for educational opportunities about the species and their habitat. This work bee was another huge success, with kudos to Huron Pines and their project partner, Sturgeon for Tomorrow, on how a volunteer day should be run. With the unusual rain fall this season, it's reported that over 90% of the vegetation lived.

Tim Cwalinski - Rattlesnake Creek Project Update

Tim has completed the survey work for the Rattlesnake Creek Riffle Project and reported that he had been working on the permit for the last day and a half. He then presented a Powerpoint to the group explaining the type of demonstration gravel installation he would like to see completed on this creek. He has put a lot of time and study into the best location for this demonstration project. The goal of this project is to increase fish spawning success and increase downstream migration into the East Branch of the Black River. The locations proposed have best met the criteria for a successful venture (movement of water, river bed, amount of naturally occurring gravel in the stream). This demonstration project will consist of 3 sites, with each site containing 3 sills and 2 gravel beds. The river already meets the temperature requirements and has other site requirements.

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The cost of the permit will be \$50.00. Donna will get a check to Tim immediately for the permit application. The funding for the site will come from Black River funds, and at least one of the sites could be used as a volunteer day. Heather and Paul Rose will work on gathering complete cost estimates

Temperature logger collection

All loggers have been pulled, 10 collected and one a fatality. The fatality involves a logger by Clark's Bridge where high water this year affected placement and recovery. Thus, the data may be altered on this location.

Beaver Dam Reports/Updates

Milligan Creek: Super-impressed with the total effort in this area, no negative aspects and are seeing results. The activity is still present, but the numbers are definitely down. We will continue to work with the trapper again this year, and he'll be ready to go in November. Discussion took place about any beaver sites farther upstream. There are still isolated pockets of activity, with a complaint on the Chandler dam road. This was definitely the best summer in terms of complaints about beaver activity.

Miscellaneous Other Topics

Headwaters TU chapter is in the process of collecting data on the Pigeon as part of the TU Healthy Streams Program.

It is hoped that 501©3 status and a website presence can be secured for the UBRRC over the winter months. Lisha offered the Huron Pines e-newsletter as an option for promoting the group during the interim.

Partnership Updates

Huron Pines has a number of "big projects" they are working on. Details to follow. The Montmorency Conservation District is focusing on invasive species, wetland restoration and assorted WHIP projects, and Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council is going to be doing another water sampling project in September.

There being nothing further to come before the committee, the next meeting was scheduled for Friday, March 19 at Canada Creek Ranch @ 9:30 a.m.