



**UPPER BLACK RIVER COUNCIL**  
Meeting Minutes - September 13, 2013

The fall wrap-up meeting of the UBRC took place on Friday, September 13, 2013 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. The meeting began at 9:30. Those in attendance included:

Carol Rose, UBRC  
Tim Cwalinski, MDNR Fisheries  
Ross Nave, UBRC Board  
Nico Tucker, NEMCOG  
Scott Whitcomb, MDNR

Pete Thomson, UBRC Board  
Phil Bandish, UBRC Board  
Sam Prentice, Huron Pines  
Dan Cook, property owner  
Ken Byrne, CCR

**Finances:** Finances available for 2014 were inventoried. The Montmorency Conservation District (MCD) has indicated that there's approximately \$12-14,000 remaining from the 2013 grant. Heather has indicated that the Black continues to be a priority for her unit and that funding requests to USFWS continue. Several small grants will be also applied for by the UBRC.

**River Restoration Wrap-up:** Nico Tucker reported that in addition to cleaning up "a lot of blow-downs" at the beginning of the season, the crew made fine progress on the new Springs/Hardwood Creek permit areas. Seventy new large woody debris (LWD) structures were installed in the Springs reach with 183 to go. This should carry the crew through 2014 and into 2015, according to Nico. A number of inactive beaver dams were also addressed by the crew. Active ones near Saunders Dam will be trapped this fall/spring. Discussion regarding locations for the next new permit included the area downstream or upstream from the now "former" Saunders Dam, or the King's Bridge (Main Branch Bridge) area.

At Canada Creek, the crew worked on 23 structures, 18 of which were new with the balance older structures requiring maintenance. Canada Creek Ranch (CCR) will also be developing a new permit for 2014 and beyond. Discussion regarding a new improvement reach ensued, focusing on the northernmost reach of the creek still within the ranch boundaries. The logistics of finding available woody debris near this reach will be a challenge faced by the ranch owners. This area is very sandy and open, and beaver impacts over the century have made riparian wood scarce. Also, input regarding the possible presence of Hungerford's Crawling Water Beetles will also be a part of permit development. Ken indicated CCR's interest in continuing to engage the crew for work on the ranch next summer.

At Black River Ranch, the crew spent their time doing maintenance on 63 of the 70 older structures on the East Branch which were blown out during high water and major storm events.

**Road/Stream Crossings and Dams:**

1. *Gokee Ck/Walker/Osmun Road* - The Cheboygan County Road Commission will be doing some work at this site yet this fall. Cwalinski expressed his concern about doing this during the brook trout fall spawning season.
2. *Milligan Creek @ Waveland Road*: This site is a top priority from the MDNR Fisheries standpoint. HP indicated that preliminary studies are being done for permit development and engineering needs.
3. *Saunders Dam*: The dam and building improvements at the site have been removed. Sam Prentice shared several before and after videos of the dam removal

and highlights from the official dam removal celebration which took place in early September. USFWS was a significant project partner on this project through their Partners in Fish and Wildlife program.

4. *Foch Lake Dam:* Tim Cwalinski reported that there will be another dam grant opportunity coming up in November, but that it only has approximately \$350,000 available for this funding round. Some concern was expressed for the potential impact on the East Branch if this dam were to fail. Scott Whitcomb also mentioned some potential funding opportunities through the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant program which might be worth pursuing for the dam project, as well as others throughout the watershed.

**Sand Traps:** More discussion about the effectiveness of sand traps took place. There are many variables to be considered such as location, depth, length, width, costs and ability to regularly maintain the traps.

**Temp Loggers:** The seventeen temp loggers deployed on the Black, Milligan Creek, East Branch, McMasters Creek and Canada Creek have been removed. Tim Cwalinski emphasized the importance of the data these little devices provide as “the arteries and veins of the Black River system.” Tim will have the data available for everyone later this fall.

**Canada Creek Erosion Site Inventory:** Scheduling did not permit this to take place as hoped during the 2013 season. (Subsequent to the meeting, Tim and Nico took a day to this. Data they collected will be used to develop another permit for erosion site remediation on the “public” reach of the creek north of CCR boundary.

#### **Volunteer Project Wrap-ups:**

- Huron Pines had a series of work events involving the sinkhole lakes in the PRC, one of which became the UBRC’s annual Vanguard/Headwaters TU work bee. It was very well received, as the volunteers really enjoyed staying dry for a change!
- River Sweep - Ethan Winchester of Boyne River Outfitters organized this event which engaged conservation groups and TU chapters from across northern Michigan in a multi-river clean-up dubbed “River Sweep.” The UBRC is encouraged to join in for next year’s event.

**UBRC Partner updates:** Tim filled the group in on Fisheries activities in the Black River watershed. Juvenile sturgeon were netted in the lower reaches of the Black River as they have been for over a decade. The Springs stretch of the Black River was inventoried by Fisheries late this summer, with population estimates obtained for this 2400 foot station. Large woody debris has been added to this reach, and according to DNR officials, looked pretty good. Fish numbers were about normal for age-1 and older fish, but young trout densities appeared lower, which is normal population variation.

**Web site Enhancements:** Nico and Jason Evans continue to add ArcGIS enhancements/mapping for the web site.

The last order of business was scheduling the spring meeting. Friday, April 11, 2014 tentatively scheduled for the PRC Headquarters. Weather may be a factor as it was for the 2013 spring meeting! Our thanks, as always, to our meeting hosts for their hospitality and support of the UBRC.

Respectfully submitted, Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair