



**Upper Black River Council
Minutes from the meeting of April 8, 2011
Canada Creek Ranch House**

A meeting of the UBRC took place on Friday, April 8, 2011 at Canada Creek Ranch. Carol Rose, Committee Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. She welcomed everyone and had each person introduce him/herself. Those in attendance included:

Carol Rose, MC ³	Lisha Ramsdell, Huron Pines
Paul Rose, MC ³	Heather Rawlings, USFWS
Nico Tucker, NEMCOG	Ross Nave, landowner/UBRC Bd.
Tim Cwalinski, DNR Fisheries	Richard Bruot, landowner/UBRC Bd.
Tom Carlson, MDNR retired/UBRC Bd.	Elaine Carlson, MDNR retired
Pete Thomson, landowner/UBRC Bd.	John Walters, Headwaters TU
Gloria Woudenberg, Montmorency Conservation District	

The agenda was approved as presented and the minutes from the September meeting were approved as presented and accepted into the official record.

Funding and Fund-raising Updates

Montmorency Conservation District report - Gloria Woudenberg: Gloria reported that funding for river restoration is in good shape for 2011. Funding will be forthcoming from USFWS, Huron Pines (through a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant), Montmorency Conservation District, donations, small grants and private work for Black River Ranch and Canada Creek Ranch.

U.S.F.W.S. – Heather Rawlings: Heather indicated that \$15,000 in Fish Passage funding has been pledged for 2011 and she remains confident that it will go through. She said that a “flat budget” for USFWS has been predicted for the next five years and that the public/private partnership of the UBRC has been generating a lot of interest with folks at USFWS.

Huron Pines– Lisha Ramsdell: Lisha reported that Huron Pines funding from the large grant from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative will result in a total of \$25,000 in funding for the crew for 2011 & 2012. This comes from a total of \$170,000 in funding to be apportioned throughout the Black River watershed, including several road/stream crossings. Carol Rose asked if the \$6,000 match of two seasons ago was still on the table and Lisha indicated that it may still be needed.

UBRC - Carol Rose: Rose reported that 501(c)3 designation is now in place for the UBRC. Thanks to the extraordinary assistance provided by Pentwater attorney, James Schramm, the UBRC was lead through the application process over the winter. All that remains is one final letter from the IRS.

Rose emphasized that the objective for securing this designation is so that the UBRC can be a stand-alone legal entity. This will be useful for donation purposes, eliminating the “pass through” or designated fund contributions previously made to project partners in support of the UBRC for purposes of tax deductions they offered. Further, looking down the road, creating this legal entity also puts the UBRC in a position to respond to changes UBRC partners may experience in the future. Additionally, this designation will

allow the UBRC to pursue direct fund-raising opportunities through merchandise sales, events, etc. The Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation are in place, and the Board of Directors has met (Joe Jarecki, Carol Rose, Paul Rose, Phil Bandish, Ross Nave, Tom Carlson, Pete Thomson and Richard Bruot).

Rose concluded the discussion by emphasizing that no change is anticipated in how the UBRC works. The 501(c)3 will be the financial entity, but the UBRC partners will continue to be the advisory, collaborative council it has always been. Having said that, however, she offered that it would be entirely appropriate to add an agenda item for the next meeting for the proper election of the chair of the Council.

River Restoration Crew plan for 2011

Crew composition for 2011 - Carol Rose: With the departure of former crew leader, Travis Elowsky, Chad Elowsky will serve in this capacity for the 2011 river crew season. Anticipating that this will be Chad's last year, the stage has been set for selection of a new crew leader for 2012. With funding securely in place for this year, there was discussion about going from a four to a five-person crew. Nine applications have been received for 2011 crew positions and it was agreed that a brief review of the applications by crew supervisor, Nico Tucker and MCD and UBRC representatives would take place immediately following the meeting.

Crew materials, equipment needs - Various options for providing the crew with a means to reliably report any emergency they encounter while out in the field was discussed. Heather Rawlings mentioned S.P.O.T., a system that utilizes a satellite signal and subscription, might be worth considering. Ross Nave offered that he's had some experience with satellite phone systems. It was agreed that further research into S.P.O.T. would be done.

Crew schedule - It is anticipated that a partial crew will begin work the first or second week of May, based upon school/college schedules, with a full crew anticipated in early June.

Canada Creek Ranch Report

Two to three weeks of work are planned for Canada Creek Ranch in 2011. Nico recounted that 66 new LWD structures have been installed there since 2008, while nearly 200 old LWD structures have been restored. The current permit for CCR expired in July of 2013.

Black River Ranch

Two to three weeks of work are planned for Black River Ranch in 2011. Their permit expires in May of 2015.

Public Permit on Upper Black River

The current permit for the public reaches of the Black expires in 2015, but many of the sites have been completed. Discussion ensued about where to pick up with a new

permit. The reach between Blue Lakes and Tin Shanty Bridge was suggested. If we go with a five-person crew, it might be possible to pull one of the crew members to work with Nico developing a new permit application.

Road/Stream Crossing Projects

Roth Road/Van Hellon Creek - Heather Rawlings reported that the new culvert is in place and the road has been widened. Because of the very late start date and challenging weather last fall, the approach work and seal coat will be done by the Montmorency County Road Commission this summer.

Stewart Creek/Blue Lake Road - Lisha Ramsdell reported that 2012 will be the season to address this long-awaited project. The Montmorency County Road Commission is on board for construction and labor and Huron Pines is doing the engineering and permitting. A consultant will be engaged for issues relating to the presence of the Hungerford's crawling water beetle at the site.

Co. Rd. 622/Roth Road - Lisha Ramsdell also reported that Montmorency County Road Commission has agreed to work with Huron Pines on this project. This site is just upstream of Roth Road. Heather commented that the culvert is just about buried there.

Red Bridge Crossing - Brenda Archambo asked about who the proper agency would be for contacting about right-of-way and ownership issues at the Red Bridge crossing on the lower reaches of the Black River near Black Lake. Prior to the UBRC meeting, photographs had been circulated of an erosion issue developing at this location. Heather offered to contact Luke at the Cheboygan County Road Commission and then follow up with Tim and the rest of the group.

Volunteer opportunities

Huron Pines - Lisha Ramsdell reported that there will be a volunteer opportunity on the Pigeon River on September 10. This project is a direct outgrowth of contact initiated by Roy Tassava of the Mullett Lake Preservation Society at the September UBRC meeting. Lisha also mentioned Huron Pines' "Brown Bag" lecture series.

Sturgeon Guard program - Brenda Archambo said that UBRC partner Sturgeon for Tomorrow is gearing up for its annual Sturgeon Guard project. This excellent endeavor takes place every year during the sturgeon springtime spawning period. Volunteers are positioned along the river throughout the traditional sturgeon spawning area to keep watch over the endangered fish species when they are most vulnerable to poaching and predation. Brenda mentioned that the water is very low in the Lower Black and that there are growing sand bars near the mouth of the river at Black Lake which may impede sturgeon movement in the future.

Temp logger time

Per Tim Cwalinski, twelve loggers will be installed again this year. He'll have them programmed and ready to deploy as of May 25, so plan on picking them up at the Gaylord

DNR office and get them installed before the 25th. It was agreed that the logger on Rattlesnake Creek would be eliminated from the list this year and move to a new location at the Main Bridge at Blue Lakes. Phil Bandish and Ross Nave will take care of the four on the more northerly locations, Paul/Carol Rose will take care of the middle and easterly locations and Joe Jarecki will be asked to take care of the more westerly locations.

Sand traps

Discussion took place regarding the DNR's reallocation of staff formerly involved in maintaining sand traps on the public reaches of the Black River. Tim Cwalinski reported that there is one trap on public land on the Black, two on public stretches of Canada Creek, plus the one on the East Branch at the Bud Slingerland/Byron Brown properties. Tim emphasized that sand traps are only useful when they have been thoroughly dug out and regularly maintained. Tom Carlson offered to check on the trap at the Slingerland property after the meeting. No further action was taken by the Council.

Beaver Dams

Changes are being proposed by the DEQ which would revise some of the requirements for securing major and minor permits, including such things as removal of inactive beaver dams. Details on this to follow.

The large dam on the East Branch was discussed. Richard Bruot trapped it out over the winter and it is currently inactive.

Trout Fishing Regulation Changes

Tim Cwalinski reported that there have been some changes in trout fishing regulations specific to the Black River. The 4.4 mile "experimental reg's" reach has now been made permanent between Town Corner Stairs and Tin Shanty Bridge in Otsego and Montmorency Counties (T32N, R1E, Section 31 SE/SE). Fishing there is open for the entire year with possession season for brook trout from the last Saturday in April through September 30. Possession for brown and rainbow trout open for the entire year. Artificial lures only are allowed here. Daily possession limit: five (5) trout; except that the daily possession limit shall not include more than two (2) brook trout; Size limits: minimum size limit: brook trout – 10 inches; brown trout – 8 inches; rainbow trout – 10 inches.

The other change is that both the Main Branch and East Branch of the Black and Canada Creek are now Type 1. This means that all brook trout taken must be at least 7".

Partner Updates/Issues

Montmorency Conservation District - Gloria Woudenberg and Elaine Carlson informed the UBRC of the transitional changes being made by the MCD. Gloria will be retiring as its Administrator effective May 1. MCD Board Member, Donna Hardies will be stepping up as a liaison between the UBRC and the crew. Gloria will continue doing

the bookkeeping for the crew, but the specific details as to who would be taking over the official administrative duties was still being worked out by the MCD at the time of the meeting. Elaine assured the group that the MCD will always be here, but the way it functions will change over time.

Brenda Archambo brought up the growing concerns about increased hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” on the horizon here in northeast Michigan as gas exploration resumes with a vengeance. She and John Walters recently attended a forum on this topic, where disclosure of the chemicals used in this process was a major focus of discussion, along with the significant amount of water required by the process (5-8 million gallons of water are required for a 5,000 foot well). Spacing of wells was also an issue. John indicated that a baseline project is being put together by conservation groups.

John Walters invited people to attend any of the “Tie One On” fly-tying events the Headwater Chapter hosts during the winter months at Michaywe Inn the Woods. He also reported that there is still a long way to go before the Song of the Morning/Pigeon River Dam issue is resolved.

Schedule next meeting

It was decided to meet on Friday, September 16, with the location to be determined. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Moncrieff Rose