

**Upper Black River Watershed Restoration Committee**  
Minutes from the Meeting of September 16, 2005

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Attendance: Bud Slingerland, Paul Rose (Montmorency Conservation District), John Walters (Trout Unlimited), Tim Cwalinski (DNR Fisheries), Mike Moreau (Montmorency Conservation District), Neal Godby (DNR Fisheries), Susan Wells (USFWS), Donna Hardies (Montmorency Conservation District), Ann Baughman (Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council), Barb Travis (Canada Creek Ranch), Brian Bury (MDNR Natural Rivers)

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Bud Slingerland.

**WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS**

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

Donna reported that total income was \$14,242.68 and total expenses were \$22,922.26. The income includes the starting balance from Huron Pines RC&D and \$3565 invoiced to T.U. but not yet received. Income does not include money from USFWS. Expenses include wages, duckbill anchors, temperature loggers, and chainsaw.

**2005 ACTIVITY UPDATE**

DNR- Tim distributed a list of surveys the Northern Lake Huron Management Unit did this year. Surveys of interest include Black Lake (walleye and northern pike population estimate), Black River at Main River Bridge (trout population estimate), and the Cheboygan River. Tim also talked about the trout stocking program at Bear Den Lake.

The group discussed the potential for quality fishing regulations (gear restrictions) on Black River. The suggestion was made that Andy Nuhfer, DNR's inland trout research biologist, should give a presentation to the group about regulation changes. **Action:** Tim will contact Andy Nuhfer to schedule a talk for the next meeting.

**WORK CREW** – Mike gave a PowerPoint presentation showing some before/after pictures of some of the habitat improvements the work crew did this summer. Major projects done by the crew include fixing stairs, placing instream log structures / deflectors, and plantings for bank stability. Overall, the crew opened/removed 5-6 beaver dams, installed 100 current deflectors on the Canada Creek Ranch property, and 100 current deflectors outside of the Canada Creek Ranch property.

**THERMOMETERS** – John reported that the 10 temperature loggers purchased by the group this spring will be retrieved around October 1.

**2006 WORK PLAN AND PROJECTS**

Next year, the work crew will continue to do stair maintenance, remove dams, and place instream log structures. Montmorency Conservation District is willing to administer the funds again next year. USFWS may have some funding available for next year, and Canada Creek Ranch will seek approval for continued funding at their membership meeting. The need for lat-

long locations (GPS) for each project, along with before and after photos, was identified. This location information is necessary for reporting to both the USFWS and the DNR.

The Cheboygan County Road Commission plans to have the following road-stream crossings done by late 2006 or 2007: Gillis Creek (Kisser Rd) and Oxbow Creek.

#### NATURAL RIVERS PROGRAM

Brian Bury gave a presentation on the Natural Rivers Program, giving an overview of the program and a description of the process to get a river designated. Brian said that an important generalization about the program was that it is intended to preserve a river, not restore. The Natural Rivers Program is primarily a zoning program, geared toward river protection (e.g., structure placement, residential use). It requires building setbacks and regulates property splits and lot sizes. If the county or township does not implement natural rivers zoning rules, then the state will oversee.

Brian then described the process of getting a river designated. There needs to be broad public support (or at least non-objection) from citizens, groups, and governments. You do not need to designate the entire river, but segments need to be at least 10 miles in length. An initial step in the designation process is for the DNR to assess the river, looking at outstanding values of the river (fish, water quality, recreation, historical) and threats. A Citizen Advisory Group (comprised of DNR, county, and township officials, and citizens) would then be organized to achieve designation and write a management plan.

Local zoning boards (county or township) don't have to adopt a whole new zoning ordinance; instead they can make reference to state rules and create an overlay district. It was suggested that it may be easier to get individual townships to adopt natural river regulations before designation, and the UBRWRC may be able to work on that.

Some benefits of designation and some of the common barriers to achieve designation were also discussed. Common barriers to designations include a lack of knowledge about the program, individual opposition, and misinformation.

**MOTION:** The Upper Black River Watershed Restoration Committee supports the concept of Natural Rivers designation for all or portions of the Upper Black River and its tributaries, and supports the study to achieve that designation.

**MOTION WAS PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

A Natural Rivers Committee was established, with the following membership: Bud, Paul, Tim, Susan, Ann, and John.

#### REVISED PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

This agenda item was tabled.

**NEXT MEETING:** January 20.