



Upper Black River Council 2024 Council and River Work Annual Report December 30, 2024

The 31st year of the [Upper Black River Council](#) (1993-2024) came to a close in December with another season of significant accomplishment. It began with the spring meeting which was held on April 11, 2023 at the Canada Creek Ranch clubhouse where over 20 members were in attendance. Representatives from Michigan DNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Canada Creek Ranch, Black River Ranch, Huron Pines, Trout Unlimited chapters, UBRC board members, our in-stream habitat contractor and numerous anglers and trappers.

Meeting discussions included a review of the 2023 work season together with project partner reports where emerging issues were also brought forward. An update on UBRC funding was also provided where it was announced that over \$40,000 had been raised from grants and private donors. As has been the practice in the past, all of those funds were reinvested in river work and with zero dollars being spent for administration.

In early May, Upper Black River Council volunteers, in cooperation with the Fisheries Division of the DNR, deployed water temperature loggers in the Upper Black and its tributaries. These temp loggers record data every hour throughout the summer. These were retrieved in the fall and the temperature information was downloaded by DNR Fisheries Biologist Neal Godby and added to the 20+ years of historical data. These reports are available from the [UBRC website](#).



Our habitat enhancement contractor, Ken Reed Contracting, Inc., began the season by continuing in-stream work for our project partner, Canada Creek Ranch within the association boundaries. This was followed by early season work which included the removal/stabilization of multiple blockages caused by seasonal high water events.

Main Stream Blockage Removal Photo Series



This was followed by continued work on the 2023 EGLE permit which consists of the placement of natural woody debris, whole tree revetment and deflection logs at 25 way-point locations extending over some three river miles. As in the past, this project represents a continuation of a partnership effort established between the MDNR Fisheries, US Fish and Wildlife, and Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) and additional partners of the UBRC.

As we have discussed in the past, project goals include increasing surface area for macro-invertebrates, scour sand, uncover cobble and rock, thereby creating additional cover for yearling and older brook trout. This work will also result in additional holding cover for young-of-the-year brook trout and the increased potential for their Year-One survival.

Sample Photographs of In-Stream Habitat Enhancement



A DNR permit was also sought and secured for the removal of two major beaver dams (one on the East Branch and one on the Main) which had been determined to be inactive. Reports of a continued increase in beaver activity appear to have been confirmed through the aerial surveillance together with a fall structure inventory commissioned both of which were commissioned by the UBRC. This trend is also being experienced in other northern Michigan watersheds and is potentially problematic for cold-water systems. The concerns relate to the potential warming of water, the accumulation of silt which is toxic to fish and impounded by these structures, as well as fish passage.

Representatives of the UBRC were also invited to comment and present on the current challenges which exist for beaver management at the November meeting of the Michigan Natural Resources Commission. Comments were being sought on the issue as the DNR conducts a review of its current beaver management permitting policies which is expected to conclude during 2025.

Permitted Beaver Dam Management Photos



We extend our thanks to our partners which include the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Huron Pines, Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Michigan Fly Fishing Club, Montmorency County Conservation Club, the Sheldon Foundation, Canada Creek Ranch, our many individual donors and the UBRC Board of Directors.

We look forward to seeing all of our friends and partners at our Spring meeting which has tentatively been scheduled for 9:30 a.m., April 10, 2025 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. If any of you require more information or details regarding our projects or operational activities, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

PAR

Paul A. Rose, Chair
Upper Black River Council
18555 Glacier Trail
Hillman, MI 49746
(989) 742-4225
paulrose.appraiser@gmail.com