



UPPER BLACK RIVER COUNCIL  
Meeting Minutes - October 11, 2018

The spring meeting of the UBRC took place on Thursday, October 11, 2018 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. The meeting began at 9:30. Those in attendance included:

Carol Rose, UBRC	Richard Bruot, UBRC, Riparian owner
Tim Cwalinski, MDNR	Nico Tucker, NEMCOG
Gary Isaman, Headwaters TU	Heather Rawlings, USFWS
Jim Tredaway, Canada Creek Ranch	Nancy Thurston, CCR
Paul Rose, UBRC	Chuck Thurston, CCR
John Bailey, Huron Pines	Pete Thomson, UBRC/MCCC
Dave Edwards, Tip of the Mitt	Tony Aderman, USDA
Ken Reed, Contractor	Howard French, Angler

The fall wrap-up meeting of the UBRC took place on Thursday, October 11, 2018 at the Canada Creek Ranch House. After introductions and approval of the agenda, UBRC Treasurer Paul Rose reported that the funding we received at the beginning of the year covered all of the in-stream habitat work on the Black River. Funding sources included USFWS, Huron Pines, Headwaters TU, Michigan Fly Fishing Club and several private donors. As we look ahead, it would be useful to make a full assessment of what needs to be done within the watershed, including access points, past, present and future in-stream habitat improvement reaches, beaver activity and future in-stream habitat improvement needs.

**2018 River Work Report:** Contractor Ken Reed provided an update on his work season on the Black and Canada Creek. He completed 57 structures on the Canada Creek Ranch (CCR) permit early in the season. He reported the need for maintenance of several older structures on the CCR reach where logs have come loose, cables or duckbills have been broken, etc. It was recommended that if these are on now-expired permits that a request to maintain the structures and update the permits can be submitted to the DEQ to address these issues. Reed further reported that he's completed the Tin Shanty Bridge stream habitat permit, in its entirety. This included installation of 282 structures, enhancing 9,082 feet along the Black's riparian corridor.

**2019 Permit:** The new permit reach will run between Sparr Road and Tyrolean Hills on the Upper Black in Otsego County, with a focus area around Sunders and Tyrolean Hills. This area involves some of the most difficult stretches to navigate on the Black, described by those who waded the reach for permit/waypoint development as a "cedar swamp death march!" This reach also includes the site of the old Saunders Dam. The area has had a long beaver presence, as well, and trapping will ensue over the winter. Preliminary work (stream reconnaissance, prescribed habitat improvement) has been done and the permit will be developed and submitted to the DEQ early in 2019.

**Road/Stream Crossings:** Jon Bailey of Huron Pines updated us on current road/stream crossings (RSX) projects. On Milligan Creek, the crossing at Waveland Road is now complete and the one

at Brady Road is to be completed this fall. Both crossings have 35' bottomless structures spanning the river. He extolled the effort invested by the Cheboygan County Road Commission and crew, describing them as “the best road commission crew I’ve worked with.” He also thanked the DNR Forestry Division for the use of a 45' temporary bridge during the periods when the project required detours, as well as a private landowner who allowed a temporary road over his property for a detour. Funding for the Milligan Creek crossing projects came from the DNR’s Aquatic Habitat Grant program (\$370,000), USFWS (\$125,500), The Walters Fund (\$55,000) and time, equipment and materials from the Cheboygan County Road Commission (\$185,000). Our thanks to the donors and Huron Pines and USFWS for their coordination of these much-needed projects.

Engineering and planning are progressing for Shingle Mill Bridge, the crossing on Co. Road 622 over the East Branch Black River. Major rain events made measuring the bankfull width challenging, but it was ultimately done. Concerns about the road approaches on each side of the river (steep), private land ownership on both sides of the river, just what kind of materials should be used for the bridge and maintenance of the sand trap on the former Slingerland reach were discussed. The crossing at Sparr Road was also discussed, where use of a box structure and the possibility of paving the approaches were mentioned. For more information on crossings in the Black River watershed, visit [www.northernmichiganstreams.org](http://www.northernmichiganstreams.org).

**Temperature Loggers:** As of the meeting date, all but a couple of temperature loggers have been returned to Fisheries Biologist Tim Cwalinski for data download. A recent software upgrade to Windows 10 by the DNR has created a wrinkle in being able to seamlessly perform the downloads. David Edwards of Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council indicated they have the necessary software/portal to which the loggers could be linked for download if needed. The eleven temp loggers are getting a little long in the tooth after 10+ years in the river and will be incrementally replaced.

**Tony Aderman, USDA:** Tony is the District Supervisor for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) out of the Gaylord office. He came to the meeting to speak about the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Services offered by the USDA. The program is supported by funding from Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and provides various services associated with wildlife management. Specifically, there are professionals who can provide beaver trapping and dam removal services for a fee, charging by the hour. Discussion ensued about the best ways to survey the entire watershed for pockets of beaver activities. Use of a drone was suggested, but, according to Aderman, the best and quickest way is to use a fixed-wing airplane and spotters. Because there are a number of local trappers in the UBRC watershed, he mentioned the possibility of a meeting with these trappers later this fall or early winter.

#### **Partner Updates:**

- **Huron Pines:** John Bailey will be leaving Huron Pines at the end of this year to pursue some other interests here in the area. He assured us that he’ll still be around and keeping an eye on UBRC activities. We wish John all the best. Until his replacement is identified, Josh Leisen of HP will fill in for him. He also welcomed Emily Vogelgesang as HP’s new Environmental Education Coordinator.

- **Canada Creek Ranch:** Chuck Thurston of CCR’s Conservation Committee mentioned a large beaver dam north of the ranch “in the canyon behind Bear Den Lake.” He agreed to show Ken Reed its location. (Note: subsequent to the meeting, they were advised by DNR Fisheries to delay any activity re: the dam until spring)

- **Pete Thomson:** Pete Thomson of the UBRC and Montmorency County Conservation Club said the Canada Creek state land erosion site which was remediated two years ago by this group looks to be growing in well and the fence is still intact.

- **Canada Creek Ranch:** Jim Tredaway reported that the invasive plant phragmites has been sighted on the ranch.

- **Richard Bruot:** Riparian owner and UBRC board member reported on yet another large beaver dam on Trail 94 off Chandler Dam Road. He's trapped it, but it's really backing the water up. (Note: subsequent to the meeting, this dam was incrementally removed).

- **Tip of the Mitt:** David Edwards indicated that the results of macro invertebrate samples collected by Headwaters TU this summer should be available by spring

- **Headwaters TU:** Gary Isaman reported that the chapter accomplished all 50 of the watershed projects on their ambitious "to-do" list for 2018 across a number of northern Michigan trout streams.

- **USFWS:** Per Heather Rawlings, the Upper Black River continues to be an important watershed to USFWS. She also mentioned that for the first time ever, one million cisco reared in USFWS facilities were planted in Saginaw Bay this year.

- **DNR Fisheries:** Tim Cwalinski reported that the unit's hard work on behalf of all the watersheds in northern Michigan will continue.

There being no further business to come before the UBRC, the meeting came to a timely close at 11:45. Thank you's were extended to Canada Creek Ranch for hosting us once again

The next meeting of the UBRC will take place in the spring of 2019 on a date to be determined via a Doodle survey.

Respectfully submitted,

CMR

Carol Moncrieff Rose, Chair  
Upper Black River Council