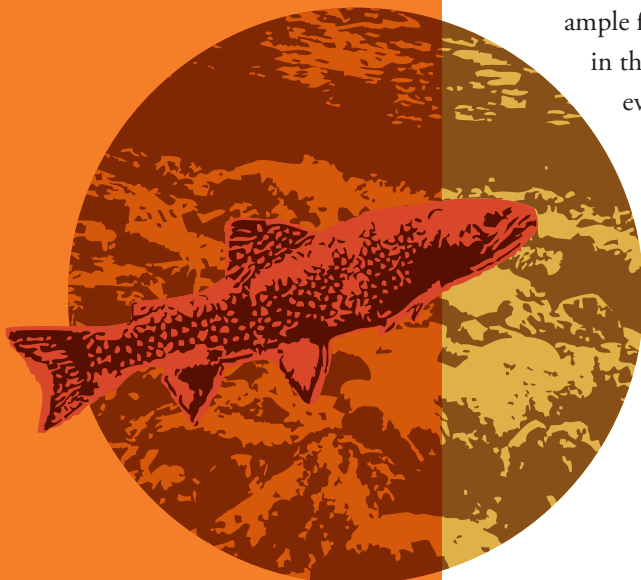




Oleson Foundation Invests in Conservation

The Traverse City based Oleson Foundation has continued their long-term commitment to supporting good works in northern Michigan with a \$10,000 grant to CRA's River Care Program. This support will be focused on projects underway and planned in Charlevoix and Emmet counties, including road/stream crossings and inventory work for the Lake Charlevoix watershed. These sites will be incorporated in the River Restoration in Northern Michigan best management practices website: <http://www.northernmichiganstreams.org/>.

The Oleson Foundation was founded in 1962 by Gerald and Frances Oleson, providing leadership and support for projects that benefit communities throughout northern Michigan.

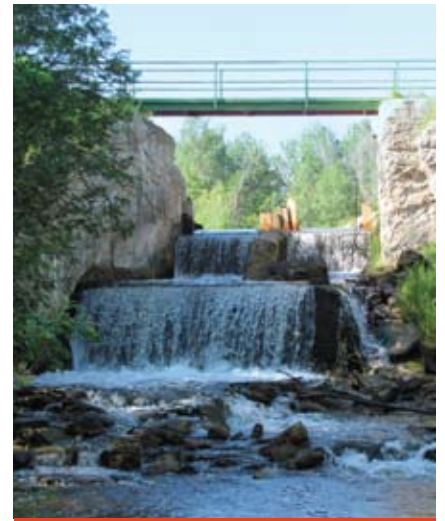


Trout Swimming Freely in Manton Creek

One day after the Manton Millpond Dam was removed a brook trout was observed swimming upstream in the newly formed channel of Manton Creek. After darting from boulder to boulder, taking a break here and there, it made it through the rushing rapids and under an old stump for some cold water refuge. Aquatic organisms are now able to migrate through a part of Manton Creek that has been completely disconnected for nearly 100 years. A project with many challenging elements has taken over 20 years to come to terms. Manton residents voiced concern to retain the pond for present and future recreational use, state and federal agency partners wanted to see ecological processes restored to the stream, and CRA's goal was to help facilitate a quality project and find common ground for the residents of Manton, agency partners, and for the good of the natural resource, Manton Creek.

Manton Creek, also known as Cedar Creek, is an important cold water tributary to the Manistee River. A historical 1886 article from the Manton Tribune noted ample fishing opportunity for brook trout and grayling (extirpated in Michigan) in the streams near Manton. In 2000, research conducted by J.L. Lessard evaluated the effects of Lake Billings Dam and Manton Millpond Dam on water temperature. The study found that the dams of Manton Creek had more impact on water temperatures than any other dams she studied. The study also found that brook trout were very abundant above the dams and virtually nonexistent below the dams.

Since 1986, the dam had failed multiple MDEQ Dam Safety Unit inspections resulting in listing the dam in extremely poor condition. Multiple reports from MDEQ recommended the city to remove, repair, or replace the dam. The City of Manton had to make a decision. After considerable public process, it was decided that the dam would be



Manton Millpond Dam prior to removal.



Free flowing Manton Creek today.

Manton Creek *continued from cover*

removed while still having the opportunity to retain a smaller pond disconnected from Manton Creek. Starting in the summer of 2010, a small crew from Kanouse Outdoor Restoration (KOR) began the impoundment drawdown. This summer with assistance from MDNR heavy equipment crew, KOR was back in action removing the remaining portion of the dam and spillways and restoring the channel through the old impoundment.

What next for Manton Millpond Park? CRA will continue to monitor the project and make adjustments if needed. Currently the city is seeking funds to dredge the existing pond. Having a pond aside the cold water trout stream will give the community the opportunity to fish cool water and cold water species of fish within feet of each other. Look forward to a beautiful timber bridge to replace the current iron bridge. Although not always easy, this truly is a project that the community can be proud of with positive benefits for both the resource and people.



Wood for the Good Ole Pine River

With a little help from a lot of partners the Pine River received a boost of habitat enhancement in the form of large woody debris fish cover structures this past year. The habitat improvement included the construction and placement of 42 woody structures designed to add a critical habitat component for cold water aquatic organisms. The structures also change flow alterations increasing sediment transport and mobilization and provide improved channel depth to width ratio. Partnership collaboration and support was provided by MDNR Fisheries HIA, USFWS-GLRI, USDA NRCS CIG, Pine River Association, Wer Hee Gen Club, Kanouse Outdoor Restoration, and the Osceola County Community Foundation.



Ransom Lake Volunteer Extraordinaire Earl Clark pulling vinca.

Real Progress at Ransom Lake Natural Area

On August 9th, CRA staff and volunteers from Almira Township and the Natural Resources Conservation Service worked on improvements to the stream and surrounding habitat of Ransom Lake Natural Area near Lake Ann. Last year during a similar workday a large patch of invasive vinca (aka myrtle) was hand pulled. This year, the same patch was about 95% smaller and only took a few minutes to pull. That's progress. The volunteer crew also continued with instream habitat improvements by removing large log jams that were slowing the flow of Ransom Creek and causing streambank erosion which threatens the adjacent trail. The wood was repositioned to provide optimum instream habitat, increase stream flows, and provide fish cover.



Discarded tires are both an eyesore and environmental detriment.

Antrim County Cleanup

In a non-traditional project for the Wild Link program 1,450 old tires were removed from a 40 acre parcel in Antrim County this summer. Funding for the tire removal was provided by a Scrap Tire Cleanup grant from the MDEQ. CRA Biologist Chris Pierce secured the grant and worked with volunteers in the heat of the summer to pile the tires for removal by the semi load. The parcel was a dumping site for decades and is now being gradually restored through sustainable forestry practices and wildlife habitat improvement projects.



Our Great Lakes

Cameron Davis, appointed by President Obama to be US EPA's Great Lakes "Czar," recently visited with key partners working to restore Great Lakes habitats in northern Michigan. The discussion took place at CRA's office in Traverse City, and focused on the importance of showing real results from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative investment. In northern Michigan, partners are opening up hundreds of miles of streams to fish passage, restoring large wetlands, and improving habitat for fish and wildlife. The work not only improves the health of the Great Lakes, but also creates and retains many jobs in conservation, local agencies, and private contracting businesses. Recent grants awarded to northern Michigan organizations including CRA, the Grand Traverse Band, The Watershed Center, and Grand Traverse Conservation District are proving significant support through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to projects on the Boardman, Betsie, Platte, Manistee, and other important rivers.



CRA staff and partners met with Cam Davis (second from right) to discuss local GLRI projects.



Perched culverts prevented upstream fish passage.



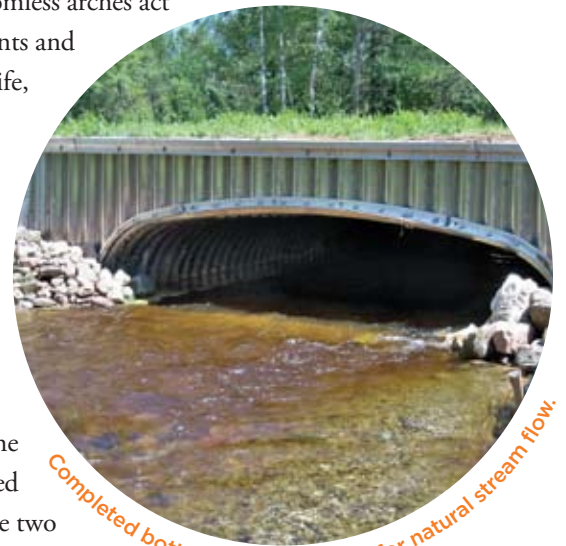
The McDowell Construction crew drive sheet piling for the new crossing structure.



Flowing Well Creek in late summer 2011, free flowing for the first time in 60 years.

Reconnecting Sanborn Creek

This summer the Lake County Road Commission worked with CRA, the US Forest Service, Wilcox Associates, and McDowell Construction to upgrade two road/stream crossings on Sanborn Creek, a coldwater brook trout tributary in the Pere Marquette Watershed. Perched and undersized culverts were replaced with 16' wide bottomless arches. These bottomless arches act as bridges, providing room for flood events and the passage of fish, aquatic insects, wildlife, and the natural movement of sediment and woody debris. At the Nelson Road site, the stream channel dropped almost a foot upriver and a gravel bottom was discovered because the old, small culverts had been blocking sediment for so many years. The US Forest Service provided \$275,000 American Recovery Reinvestment Act funds and the Lake County Road Commission provided \$75,000 in match for construction at the two sites. "The Road Commission would like to do more if CRA can help find the funds," says Superintendent, Jay Syrewicze. That's a good thing because there are more sites to do and more stream miles to reconnect on the Pere Marquette and its tributaries.



Completed bottomless arch allows for natural stream flow.



Flowing Well Creek is Free Flowing Again

Significant progress has been made on the Upper Manistee Restoration Project at the Flowing Well property near Kalkaska. Last summer, Flowing Well Creek was partially bypassed through a dredged channel and had 3 dams. It is now a free flowing body of water again. By late summer all the dams were removed and the water flow was redirected back into the natural channel. The exposed bottomlands have revegetated with thick native wetland species demonstrating the resilience of these systems. On the North Branch of the Manistee River all dam drawdowns have been completed and the final dam is currently being removed. The raceways which held the diverted main channel for the last 30+ years have been filled in and will be planted with native forbs and grasses next year. The natural channel has been cleared of excessive woody debris built up after 30 years of low flows and most of the wood was repositioned in the river channel to allow for the free flow of water and to provide in-stream fish and aquatic organism habitat. A large snake hibernation chamber is also near completion and is being constructed with concrete debris from the site. We will likely be unable to access the site once the snow starts to fly but we will be back out there to continue the restoration next spring.



Restoration in Progress for Arcadia Marsh/Bowens Creek Watershed

Working with our partners at the Manistee County Road Commission, four road/stream crossings in the Arcadia Marsh/Bowens Creek watershed have been replaced with fish passage friendly structures. What were originally perched (elevated at the outlet) and undersized culverts now have appropriately sized and placed “squashed” culverts that are inset, allowing the bottom of the culvert to become covered in natural streambed materials like sand and gravel. Being appropriately sized, the structures are now able to pass stream flows more effectively, especially during high water events. Three of the sites required the addition of grade control structures to minimize the amount of erosive head-cutting upstream, due to extreme elevation differences between the inlet and outlet. The additional grade control design work, materials, and labor went above and beyond the scope of the original project as planned and was generously donated by the road commission.

Funding for the project is through the multi-agency “Sustain Our Great Lakes” program which provided a grant to Ducks Unlimited and partners CRA, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, and the Manistee County Road Commission, to not only replace a total of seven road/stream crossings in the watershed, but to also perform restoration in the marsh and to place the lower Bowens Creek back in its original channel. Stay tuned!

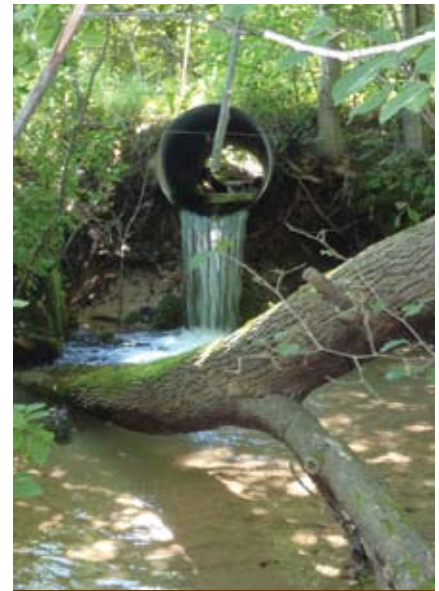
Congratulations Keith!

On July 21, CRA Board members and staff were proud to be among the hundreds of loyal friends and colleagues who honored Keith Charters in the dedication of the Traverse City State Park in his name. Keith has served the DNR in leadership positions on the Natural Resources Commission and Trust Fund Board since 1992. Keith’s deep passions for hunting, fishing, and conservation in Michigan led him to volunteer on CRA’s Board beginning in 2004. Sue Peters, another Board member in attendance at the event commented, “What a truly touching and meaningful celebration this was; we are so honored to work alongside Keith.” Congratulations on a very well deserved honor, Keith! For more information on the park, go to www.michigan.gov/traversecity.



Floating the Pine

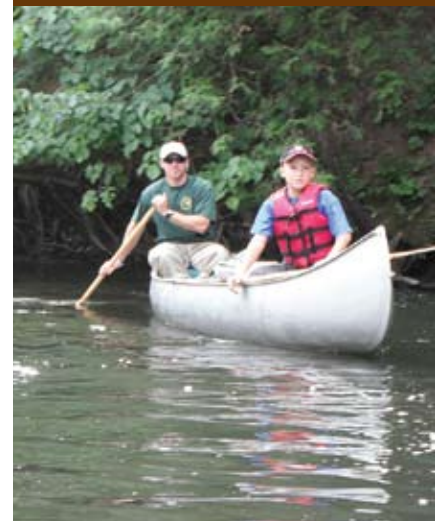
Cold, clear, swift. The upper Pine River is just about as good as it gets when it comes to northern Michigan rivers. An August float trip hosted by the Pine River Restoration Committee offered an opportunity to experience the beautiful stretch from Edgetts to Skookum. Watershed and agency partners observed historic restoration work that has held up extremely well while looking for problems that still need to be addressed. Overall, this is one heck of a nice piece of river. Thank you to the diverse stakeholders that hold the Pine near and dear, keeping a local treasure a great resource for recreational enjoyment and a healthy watershed for the future.



Before replacement, old culverts create severe problems for the creek.



Now there is a properly sized and installed new culvert.



DNR Fisheries Biologist, Mark Tonello, and his son, Derek, navigate the Pine River.



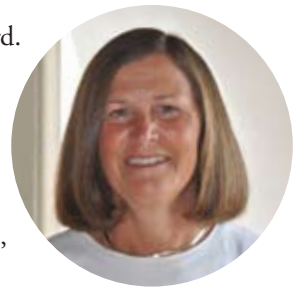
Final Funding Needed for Boyne River Timber Bridge

“We’re so close.” says CRA Biologist and Project Manager, Kim Balke when she talks about a new timber bridge for the degraded road/stream crossing on Springbrook Road over the Boyne River. The design and engineering phase of this project has been completed with support from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Charlevoix County Community Foundation, Friends of the Boyne River, and the Charlevoix County Road Commission. **With an estimated cost of \$250,000, a timber bridge will provide: more structural capacity to handle fluctuating stream flows, sediment control, and natural stream bottom conducive to aquatic insect habitat and fish passage.**

CRA has approved funding of \$200,000 from the US Fish & Wildlife Service’s Fish Passage and Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Restoration Act programs. With a commitment to continue support for this project from FOBR and the road commission, we are “so close” to making this bridge a reality. “Another \$25,000 will close the loop. We’re confident we can raise these funds to complete construction in 2012.” says Kim Balke. Please contact Kim, at (231)946-6817 to discuss how you can help us finish this project.

Welcome Chris!

CRA’s Board of Directors has elected Christine Bates to our Board. Chris recently retired from the General Motors Corporation and will offer her expertise in environmental policy, regulations, and permitting. Chris now resides in Onekama and can be spotted fishing on the Great Lakes or out on the golf course. We are excited for the opportunity to work with Chris. Thank you again, Chris, for your offer to help CRA through service on our Board.



Support Conservation that Matters to You

CRA’s annual membership and fund drive is kicking off and your support will help make an impact for northern Michigan’s rivers, forests, and wildlife. Please consider a tax-deductible gift to CRA that supports our work throughout the region.

- You can also leave a legacy by including the Conservation Resource Alliance in your will and estate plans.
- Your future gift will support critically important real work projects that restore, preserve, and protect some of Michigan’s most beautiful places. Donating to CRA’s Permanent Fund is a wonderful way to help us meet the challenges of keeping our rivers running free and healthy.
- If you’ve already included CRA in your estate planning, please let us know so we can thank you. With your support, Michigan’s rich natural heritage and resources will be enjoyed by future generations.

Please contact Matt Thomas, Development Coordinator at (231)946-6817 or email: matt@rivercare.org. *Always consult your advisors about philanthropic gifts.*



Drawdown has started at Brown Bridge and Sabin dams on the Boardman River forming new bottomlands and riffles at Brown Bridge Pond. To learn more about the Boardman River dam removal project and stay updated, visit www.theboardman.org.

THANK YOU for your recent support of CRA, River Care™ and Wild Link™

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 Michigan Chapter of Trout Unlimited - In memory of Bruce Arndt

Thank you to all of the presenters and attendees at our Biennial Celebration for helping make it a success!



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Stewardship Spotlight

Black Star Farms Celebration

CRA friends and partners recently gathered for our Biennial Celebration at beautiful Black Star Farms in Leelanau County. Tempted by great food and refreshments, a slate of passionate presenters, and an opportunity to share a perfect afternoon with like-minded conservationists, a capacity crowd was in attendance.

Legendary bamboo fly rod builder, Bob Summers, offered a hands-on experience with a line-up of his custom built cane rods. What a treat for anyone who has ever fantasized about these one of a kind fishing instruments. A true friend of conservation, former legislator and current Director of Michigan's Office of the Great Lakes, Patty Birkholz, offered a perspective from her vantage as an advocate for the State's natural resources for many years. Bob Garner's passion and humor kept the afternoon lighthearted and Boardman Pond landowner, Jim McIntyre, entertained with his narrated video illustrating the compelling transition of his beautiful pond to a spectacular river.

More celebration than meeting, this gathering allowed CRA to recognize the individuals, groups, and agencies that support the work we do. Mark Tonello, DNR Fisheries Biologist, Mike McGath, Big Sable River landowner, Kay Charter, Executive Director, Saving Birds Thru Habitat, and Jeff and Brad Graft of PC Management, were honored as CRA's Conservation Partner awardees this year.

Thank you to everyone who was able to attend the 2011 Biennial Celebration and the many other good partners who all work together to keep CRA strong and northern Michigan spectacular!



Patty Birkholz addresses CRA's Biennial Celebration.