



Patagonia Invests in River Care

CRA has enjoyed a long-term partnership with Patagonia through annual financial and product support. Recently, the Chicago corporate stores sponsored a River Care proposal resulting in \$7,000 of grant funding to assist with our work on the Boardman River Dams Project and for general support of CRA's conservation work throughout the region. Kelley Freridge-Olson, Chicago Store Manager said that when she searched for organizations that were involved with conservation initiatives that matched up well with Patagonia's ethic, especially regarding dam removal, CRA jumped out as one of the actionable groups she came across.

Thank you Patagonia for all of your support, leadership, and for producing some of the CRA crew's favorite gear!



Photo - Grand Traverse Conservation District

Volunteers recently rescued plants for future re-vegetation of Brown Bridge bottomlands

Restoration

Key Component of Brown Bridge Dam Removal

Within the next few months, pending permit approval, deconstruction of the first of three dams slated for removal on the Boardman River will begin. The removal of Brown Bridge Dam this summer will be a historic moment for the Boardman River and for Michigan. The Boardman River Dams Project (BRDP) is the largest dam removal initiative in the state's history and one of the largest in the nation. Brown Bridge Dam is at the vanguard of this effort.

When the work at Brown Bridge is completed, 1.5 miles of river will be restored and 145 miles of high-quality river habitat will be reconnected. The project will also restore 150 acres of upland and wetland as well as riparian forest habitat contiguous to the Boardman River. Restoration of the river and its adjacent environs is at the heart of the BRDP. The project is as much an ecosystem restoration project as it is a dam removal project. The community and the project partners place the highest value on the fisheries, wildlife habitat and recreational qualities inherent in the Boardman River, and the project design is based on this principle.

As the project moves into the construction phase, management of sediment will be a top priority. This includes relocating the many thousands of tons of sediment that have accumulated in the impoundment and within the original channel area since the dam was built in 1921. The project team has done extensive survey work to understand the pre-dam river channel location. As much as ten feet of sediment now covers this historic streambed. The project plan seeks to guide the river into its original channel by removing the sediment and placing it in spoil areas on site above the 100 year flood plain, as directed by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Throughout this process, measures such as sediment traps will be employed to prevent as much sediment as possible from moving downstream, but project engineers acknowledge that some sediment is likely to be released downstream.

In concert with the dredging, contractors will establish a 40 foot-wide floodplain that roughly parallels the re-established river channel. Strategic installation of large woody debris for bank stabilization and also for creation of habitat features associated with a healthy, productive trout stream will occur during this phase. The BRDP is a collaborative effort of historic proportion, and the Adams Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Trout Unlimited National and the Traverse City Rotary Club are providing generous financial support to make this aspect of the restoration package



View of the emerging delta as Brown Bridge Pond is drawn down.
Extensive restoration will help improve habitat as well as return the Boardman River to a more natural state.

Boardman River Restoration - *Continued from page 1*

possible. Another priority established by the Implementation Team (IT) is re-vegetation of exposed bottomlands and healing of construction areas. Grand Traverse Conservation District staff and volunteers are already busy at the Brown Bridge site, collecting native plant seeds to help re-vegetate exposed bottomlands and working to help prevent the spread of invasive species by directing the public to designated trails and viewing areas. These efforts are part of an extensive bottomlands management plan that involves both active and natural regeneration of plant species. Working with state universities, The Grand Traverse Band's Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) resources and other plant experts, the project team is taking a research-based approach to re-vegetation. This research will inform a planting plan based on downstream reference areas related to riparian plant density and diversity. Additionally, a plant rescue program will be implemented in construction areas and bottomlands.

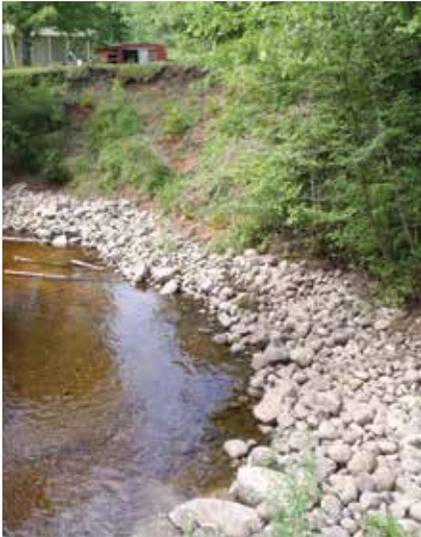
Like any major remodeling project, it will take time to see the end results of dam removal and restoration of the river and bottomlands. The public will need to exercise patience. The reward for that patience will be the resilience that will be reinstated to a fully restored river system. The restoration efforts now underway on the Boardman will in time unveil a natural, free-flowing coldwater stream at a level of quality and beauty not seen since pre-European settlement. It's exciting to think about, and historic indeed.

In 2009, CRA was hired by the Boardman River Dams Implementation Team, a body of 8 agencies authorized in a Settlement Agreement to oversee removal of the dams. The IT makes decisions, and CRA provides a point of contact for the engineering/contractor teams, fundraising assistance, fiscal management of certain funds, and support for communications and meetings. According to Amy Beyer, CRA's Director, "Our main job is to help the team stay informed and focused on common goals, make sure the funding goes through to the resource in the way it is intended, and to keep the records and books in order. This is a group of dedicated and top-notch professionals essentially on volunteer duty to the project, and we are very appreciative of their collective IQ – the Boardman River deserves nothing less." Follow the Boardman Dams Project at: www.theboardman.org



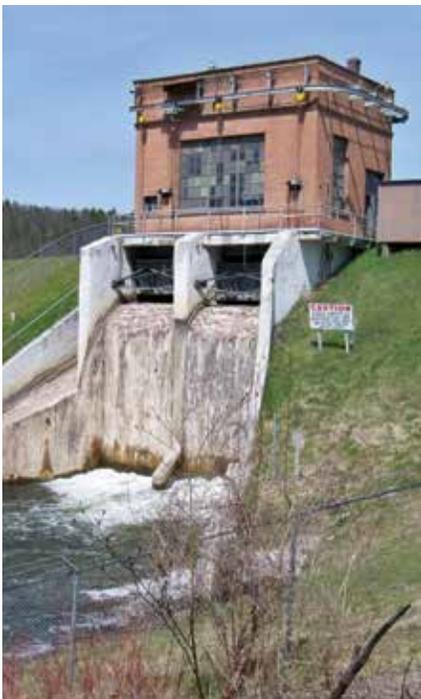
Active restoration involves many hands working together to restore important habitat





Teamwork Improves Coe Creek

In 2008, Michigan received record rainfall events that displaced culverts, washed out roads, and degraded river channels in our region. Four years later we are still working with partners on improving habitat and water quality. It took an emergency repair to fix the Coe Creek culvert under 20 Mile Rd. but the downpour also left a vegetated bank raw from the accelerated water velocities caused from misaligned, undersized culverts. Coe Creek is an important tributary to the Pine River. This spring, CRA staff along with Knoop Excavating Services halted the erosion with techniques using large woody debris, fieldstone, and improving the braided channel that was formed when the road crossing failed leaving an island of deposition. The project could not have been completed if it was not for our Trout Unlimited partners from Kalamazoo Valley and Challenge Chapters and the Michigan Fly Fishing Club.



Outdoor Industry Helps Northern Michigan

A wonderfully generous organization with a surprisingly similar name, The Conservation Alliance is a group of outdoor industry companies that disburses its collective annual membership dues to grassroots environmental organizations. They direct funding to community-based campaigns to protect threatened wild habitat, preferably where outdoor enthusiasts recreate. Founded in 1989 by industry leaders REI, Patagonia, The North Face, and Kelty, who shared the goal of increasing outdoor industry support for conservation efforts, they now have more than 180 member companies, and disbursed more than \$1 million in 2011. CRA recently was awarded a second year grant of \$35,000 from this new partner to help with our efforts on the Boardman Dams project.

Since its inception in 1989, the Alliance has contributed more than \$10 million to grassroots conservation groups throughout North America, helping save more than 29 million acres of wildlands; protect 2,700 miles of rivers; stop or remove 25 dams; designate five marine reserves; and purchase nine climbing areas. CRA is proud to include our northern Michigan accomplishments on the list of successes that the Conservation Alliance have helped make possible.

Thank You Ruffed Grouse Society

CRA partnered with the LeGrande Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Division to plant approximately 600 fruit and nut producing native trees and shrubs on state property near Copemish. The tree planting is part of CRA's Drummer Fund supported project that will revitalize 10 acres of young forest on state forest property.





Megan Cordes and Zachary Cramer from Kaleva Norman Dickson Elementary School, the 2012 winning participants in CRA's annual River Care Kids Charter Fishing Trip, show off their Father's Day weekend catch with Captain Kevin Hughes.



Undersized, perched culverts at Springbrook Road on the main-stem of the North Branch of the Boyne River will be replaced with a timber bridge thanks to support from the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Oleson Foundation, and the Charlevoix County Community Foundation.



Starting Young

The Council of Michigan Foundations' 12th Biennial Family Foundation Retreat at Crystal Mountain was held in June and provided CRA staff with a unique experience to interact with youth grant makers. While sharing lunch with a cool group of kids ranging from age 7 or so up to teenagers, we pitched the value of getting young people actively involved with conservation through our River Care Kids program. No better way to close the deal than help guide these future philanthropists and their families on a picture perfect float trip down the beautiful Betsie River.

The kids did their own presentation to the adult members the next day along with their determination to make a generous grant to CRA that was matched by a couple of the family foundations. The next generation is learning, paying attention to what is important, and figuring out how to make a difference. Thank you to CMF for this special opportunity!



CRA staff joined the Council of Michigan Foundations' Family Foundation Retreat for a float trip on the Betsie River.



Elliott Donnelley Trout Unlimited Stewards Northern Streams

Nearly 10 years ago CRA Development Coordinator, Matt Thomas, was provided an opportunity to meet and present to the Elliott Donnelley Chapter of Trout Unlimited in downtown Chicago. Already familiar with many of our great rivers through their own experiences and long-time relationship with area guide, Chuck Hawkins, this group was eager to learn more about cold-water conservation in our region. From that first meeting CRA and EDTU have forged a strong partnership that has resulted in new friendships, annual workbees, and \$27,000 in annual conservation grant dollars being invested in CRA's River Care projects.

Lacking "home waters" to care for, EDTU has reached out to CRA and similar groups in Wisconsin to help restore and protect streams that matter most to their members. They have dedicated time from their yearly fishing retreat to WaWaSum on the Au Sable River to offer manpower for hands-on projects with the CRA crew at the Flowing Well restoration site. This year, the Chapter granted \$5,000 to River Care and we look forward to working with the great people from Elliott Donnelley TU in the future.



Volunteers from the Elliott Donnelley Chapter of Trout Unlimited work with CRA to place woody debris on the North Branch of the Manistee on the Flowing Well property.



Eric Ellis visited Melissa Cole's primary class at The Children's House Montessori School in Traverse City to talk about the importance of planting native trees and shrubs. Each student helped plant a tree and took one home to grow for wildlife in their own backyards.



CRA partnered with regional groups during the 2012 AmeriCorps Russ Mawby Signature Service Project. CRA helped remove 400 meters of old barbed wire fence at the Flowing Well property. The fence posts were placed in restored wetlands to serve as turtle basking logs.



River Care Kids from Kaleva Norman Dickson Elementary clean up at Tippy Dam access



Welcome Erik!

This summer, our new intern Erik Anderson will be out in the field surveying road stream crossing sites. He is working on updating the Pere Marquette River Watershed Road Crossing inventory which includes up to 280 sites in four counties. Erik has a BS from MSU in Zoology and has worked for several National Parks. We are very pleased to have Erik on our team!



River Care Kids Unstoppable!

It was eleven years ago that CRA first partnered with teachers and students from Kaleva Norman Dickson Elementary school to tackle the litter problem that plagued the busy Tippy Dam access site on the mighty Manistee River. As one of CRA's first ever River Care Kids activities, this clean-up has helped strengthen a conservation ethic for over a thousand kids from this rural school that have returned year after year to pick up what careless adult users have left behind. Supported by the Michigan Fly Fishing Club, Consumers Energy Foundation, and CRA's River Care Program, this event is one of several River Care Kids activities that CRA coordinates annually to engage the next generation of conservation stewards in fun learning opportunities to benefit local watersheds.

This much anticipated end of school year outing is a highlight not just for the kids, but for CRA's staff as well. Teachers Vivian Peck and Jennifer Cordes returned with a busload of trash pickers on May 22nd to hit the banks and trails again. Although the youngsters filled many bags with some very interesting throwaways, everyone agrees that the overall amount of litter at this site is down due to the diligence of the kids and hopefully an increased awareness by the folks that frequent this popular fishing destination. As has become part of the annual tradition, the CRA crew hosted a picnic for the hard working River Care Kids at the Brethren Park when the work was done. The smiles and stories about fishing lures, old bottles, turtles, and so many more oddities, make it clear that this great project has been so worthwhile. Thank you to all the kids, teachers, and adult volunteers that have made such an impact for one of our special northern Michigan places and for the lives of so many passionate young people!



Recently, Senator Carl Levin got to see GLRI dollars at work on the North Branch of the Manistee River. Shown here are Eric Ellis, Amy Beyer and Senator Levin at the Flowing Well site.

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

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 City of Traverse City
 The Conservation Alliance
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Planned Giving – Fulfilling Your Conservation Goals

Leave a legacy by including the Conservation Resource Alliance in your will and estate plans.

Please remember CRA and the sensible conservation programs that continue to care for our precious natural resources with a generous bequest in your will or trust. 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 matt@rivercare.org to discuss planned giving options.

Always consult your advisors about philanthropic gifts.



SUMMER 2012



CONSERVATION RESOURCE ALLIANCE

Stewardship Spotlight

Building Bridges with McDowell Construction

We've said it many times - great contractors are one of the biggest assets that CRA counts on to get things done. Trust and confidence is built through experience, success, and communication. McDowell Construction is one of the best outfits that CRA has worked with to help construct bridges throughout our region.

A family company based out of Columbiaville, Michigan and led by owner, Roy McDowell, they have over 30 years experience building bridges in 27 counties around the State. Being a lifelong outdoorsman and an outdoor education teacher in a former career, Roy loves working on CRA's projects. The opportunity to improve natural resources through conscientious construction practices means a lot to him. McDowell has worked on CRA bridge projects on the Pere Marquette, Platte, Otter Creek, and Green Rivers. We look forward to many more future projects with Roy and his crew.

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4500 Free Trees!

The annual native tree and shrub giveaway distributed 4500 plants to 51 landowners and provided materials for 4 volunteer workdays. Thanks again go out to Fairmount Minerals and Saving Birds Thru Habitat for supporting this popular program.



Illustrations courtesy of Jennifer Thomas Design.com

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