



Everyone Loves a Good Party

The CRA team looks forward to every opportunity to hang out with our friends and partners, but our once every two years **Biennial Celebration** is our all-time favorite gathering. Mark your calendar and save the date on **Friday September 20, 2013 for this event at Black Star Farms** in scenic Leelanau County. We'll provide some first class edibles, refreshments, and presentations to ensure that the afternoon will be a hit. Maybe even a couple of surprises! Stay tuned for details in the mail, email, and on CRA's website: www.rivercare.org.



A. Viola, NWU, Bugwood.org

Freeloader Predators – Not Welcome Here!

While you may have never heard the term “subsidized predator” you have definitely seen one and may have more than one living in or under your home, whether you like it or not. Examples include raccoons, opossums, ravens, coyotes, skunks, and even house cats. These are all predators that can coexist, even thrive, with human populations while still intermingling with natural communities where they can have disproportionate impacts on species they prey on. Populations of subsidized predators are minimally affected, if at all, by natural prey and habitat cycles. The assistance they receive from humans insulates them from natural processes that would normally keep their populations in line with that of their prey species.

The subsidy provided by people can take many forms and includes food, water, nesting sites, cover, protection from inclement weather, and protection from other predators. In the Mojave Desert, raven populations have increased over 1000% in the past 24 years as human development has exploded. The ravens will use human buildings and utility poles for nesting sites, eat trash from landfills, and get unlimited supplies of water in a desert environment from sewage treatment plants. When they are not eating leftover chicken bones from the trash bag along the curb they can be found flying over adjacent creosote bush scrub habitat pecking to death and eating small mammals, reptiles, other birds, and the federally threatened desert tortoise.

Closer to home, subsidized predators will take shelter under the deck of a cabin and spend the day searching for the eggs of ground nesting game and songbirds such as American woodcock, ruffed grouse, eastern meadowlark, and wild turkey. Well-fed house cats, even declawed ones, still have a predatory drive and along with their feral kin have been estimated by a Smithsonian and US Fish and Wildlife Service study to annually kill between 1.4 to 3.7 billion songbirds, and 6.9 to 20.7 billion small mammals. This is in addition to the millions of reptiles and amphibians they also prey upon. In Michigan, many species of turtles have nearly 100% of their eggs eaten annually by raccoons, opossums, or skunks. This predation, combined with the fact that some Michigan turtle species take 10-20 years to reach reproductive age, is a major reason why many turtle populations in Michigan are rapidly declining and 36% are listed as Threatened or Special Concern.

Fortunately, this is a conservation issue that concerned citizens can do

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Ruffed Grouse and Woodcock nests are especially susceptible to predation.



Freeloader Predators – Not Welcome Here! *(continued from page 1)*

something about. There are many ways to help native wildlife, both common and uncommon species, have a better chance of surviving and thriving in northern Michigan:

Enhance native habitat. Having access to good quality native habitat will make prey species less vulnerable to subsidized predators. Enhancements could include planting native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers or removing invasive species like Japanese knotweed or garlic mustard.

Control your pets. The best way of doing this is keeping cats inside and dogs out of natural areas, especially during nesting season. If your cat must go outside keep it securely confined in a small area.

Partake in, allow on your property, or at least not argue against the hunting and trapping of subsidized predator species (No, not your neighbor's cat).

And if you are feeling really provocative you can support the scientifically managed reintroduction/repopulation of larger predators that can keep the smaller ones in check. In Michigan this includes cougars and wolves.

A common sense approach to management of these sometimes troublesome species can help balance delicate and diverse ecosystems.



Habitat Improvement on the Maple

Despite all the complaining about the long, cold winter, CRA Biologist and Project Manager, Chris Pierce, has diligently donned his waders on a weekly basis to venture into the icy cold Maple River in Emmet County all winter long. Determined to take advantage of an opportunity to tackle a habitat improvement project that theoretically can be accomplished regardless of the season, Chris dragged, pushed and hauled woody debris for placement regardless of what Mother Nature was up to.

Work includes the installation of up to 40 structures measuring on average 50 feet in length, on over a mile of river, specifically prescribed for sites taking into consideration stream channel morphology, access, materials availability and landowner permission. A combination of anchoring trees and materials with jetted wood posts and cables will help to secure woody debris in ideal locations along the river. Funding for this “year round” project is coming from landowner donations, the Michigan Fly Fishing Club, Kalamazoo Valley and Challenge Chapters of Trout Unlimited, and CRA's River Care fund. Additional funding of \$15,000 is needed to fully complete the designed project that will benefit brook and brown trout, mottled sculpin, a variety of aquatic insects, and wildlife including otter, mink, turtle and frog species. This project is part of a comprehensive initiative to restore the Maple River that includes road crossing replacement, dam removals, erosion control, and habitat improvement at a number of targeted sites.



Please consider making a contribution to CRA that will help finish this important work. Contact Matt Thomas, Development Coordinator, to find out more.

US Forest Service Grants Benefit the Pere Marquette and Pine Rivers

In 2009, the US Forest Service awarded CRA and the Lake County Road Commission (LCRC) grants totaling \$1,100,000 through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). CRA and LCRC provided an additional \$650,565 in match and grants, and completed 8 stream restoration projects between 2010 and 2012 with the help of 20 partners. The focus was replacing and improving road/stream crossings in Lake County in the Pere Marquette and Pine River watersheds on Silver Creek, Baker Creek, Sanborn Creek, the Baldwin River, Sweetwater and Kinney Creeks. Two timber bridges, three bottomless arch culverts, a concrete box culvert, a concrete round culvert, paving, streambank stabilization, and other measures were implemented to prevent over 16 tons of sediment from washing into streams and to open up 16 miles of creeks and river to the passage of fish and other aquatic life. The Pere Marquette and Pine Rivers are both National Wild and Scenic Rivers, and State-designated Blue Ribbon Trout Streams and Natural Rivers. Human disturbances such as outdated road/stream crossings are problematic to these rivers and tributaries. They contribute excessive sediment, act as barriers to aquatic species, change the stream channel shape, and can impact water temperatures. In addition, Lake County is fairly rural, is home to 200,000 acres of public-owned lands, and has one of the highest poverty rates of all of Michigan's counties. The combination of existing partnerships, natural resource problems, and economic needs helped make the Pere Marquette and Pine Rivers in Lake County an ideal location for US Forest Service ARRA support.



Above - An undersized culvert contributed to road failure during a heavy rain event. Below - A newly installed crossing benefits the entire watershed.



Future Jordan River Bridge

Funded by the Charlevoix County Community Foundation

Fundraising for the survey and design of a future bridge at Old State Road on the Jordan River has been launched with a \$10,000 contribution from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation. One of the most severe crossings on the Jordan mainstem is at Old State Road (#JO-8) and is comprised of twin 14' wide culverts, with eroding embankments, and well-worn recreational access trails. The culverts are undersized, thus changing the shape of the stream and creating a velocity barrier to a variety of aquatic species at most stream flows. Stream velocities at the outlet of the culverts exceed 5 times the velocity measured on the Jordan River upstream and outside of the impacted area. The Old State Road crossing is also one of the most widely used informal canoe/kayak launch and stopover sites on the Jordan River. The site is becoming hazardous to recreationists with the large deep whirlpool that has formed at the outlet on the west side of the river. The required first step is to complete the soil borings, survey work, design engineering, and opinion of cost for the replacement of the existing culverts with a bridge. Recreational access issues will be addressed and solutions explored during the design phase, as well. This will be a costly project, but the benefits to this cold-water resource and everyone who enjoys the Jordan River will be well worth it. An additional \$40,000 is needed to complete the design phase. Please consider contributing to this great project by making a gift to CRA and note the "Jordan River Old State Road Project" when remitting your donation. Contact Project Manager, Kim Balke, to find out more.



Stream velocities at the outlet of the culverts exceed 5 times the velocity measured on the Jordan River upstream and outside of the impacted area.





Tamarack Trout Farm Restoration Update

The project, located in Honor, is getting closer to having machines and boots on the ground after about a year of survey and modeling work at Brozofsky Creek and the immediate surroundings by project consultant AMEC Environment and Infrastructure. This work involved determining topographical elevations, current channel morphology, anticipated flow regimes, and predicted sediment transport volumes and rates.

Construction is anticipated to begin early this summer and be complete by the end of October. The anticipated result is a permitted plan for restoration of the stream back to a channel that more closely resembles the original one before construction of the Tamarack Trout Farm in the 1960's by former owners of the property. This diminutive brook trout stream is an ice cold-tributary to Big Platte Lake rising from springs on the working Brozofsky farm. The un-impacted section of stream provides important spawning habitat and thermal refugia.



Crews installed woody debris at 28 sites on the Pere Marquette.

Wood is Good for the Pere Marquette River

During 2011-2012, CRA worked with Kanouse Outdoor Restoration to incorporate 3,000 lineal feet (15,025 square feet) of woody debris into the Pere Marquette River mainstem providing instream habitat for a variety of aquatic species including trout, otter, mink, steelhead, turtles, and aquatic insects. A total of 28 sites were addressed extending from Gleason's Landing to Rainbow Rapids. Former "log riprap" sites where logs were jetted in along eroding streambanks 30-40 years ago were rehabilitated with woody debris platforms constructed underwater with fallen and cut trees secured at the water's surface. Project cost totaled \$90,000 including cooperation and support from the US Fish and Wildlife Service through the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act, Pere Marquette Watershed Council, Kinne Creek Club members, Trout Unlimited Chapters (Challenge, Kalamazoo, Paul Young, W.B. Mershon), US Forest Service, MDNR, MDEQ, and other CRA donors.



Recently, CRA was awarded the Outstanding Partnership Award from the MDNR Fisheries Division. Pictured here are (from left) Nate Winkler and Amy Beyer, CRA and Fisheries Chief James Dexter.

5,000 Free Trees

This past April, CRA handed out just under 5,000 native tree and shrub seedlings to 79 individuals and groups for planting in our region. The species selected were particularly beneficial to local pollinator and bird species and included chokecherry, fragrant sumac, and Alleghany serviceberry. Four volunteer events were planned around the planting of these trees

including two with The Children's House, a local Montessori school. The trees for this project were purchased with funds provided by Fairmount Minerals, Ltd. as part of the company's carbon sequestration program. This annual gift is facilitated by the Leelanau County non-profit Saving Birds Thru Habitat in coordination with CRA.





After over 90 years, the Boardman River is again flowing free above Boardman Dam.

Photo by John Russell



Photo by Jim McIntyre

The Boardman - A River Reborn

Returning a cold-water, blue ribbon designated trout stream to a more natural state after over 100 years of man-made manipulation is no small task. The Conservation Resource Alliance, acting as contracted consultant, has helped lead the Boardman Dams Implementation Team (IT) through the complex process of removing Brown Bridge Dam on the Boardman River. Constructed in 1921, Brown Bridge Dam was the first of three historic hydro-electric dams on this northern Michigan gem slated for removal. This massive community driven project was set in motion nearly a decade ago. It took a total of 21,270 man hours, equal to 14 people every day for 5 months, to complete the construction phase of this initiative. The project wrapped up on schedule, within budget, and the partners are poised to move downstream to tackle the next two dams.

Notable accomplishments

- Re-established 2.5 miles of river channel and 12.2 acres of floodplain through handling and grading of 260,000 cubic yards of sediment that had accumulated in the former impoundment over the last 92 years. This amount of sediment is equivalent to a football field 10 stories high. A mid-January float trip revealed many areas of the newly formed river channel have naturally occurring gravel beds resurfacing.
- Complete removal of Brown Bridge Dam, powerhouse, and dewatering structure.
- Placement of 985 lineal feet of woody debris for bank protection and habitat.
- Placement of 5,100 lineal feet of woody debris for instream habitat.
- Fish and turtle rescue efforts during and after dewatering of the impoundment.
- The Au Sable Institute was contracted to perform macroinvertebrate assessments pre- Brown Bridge dam removal in the project area.

A number of challenges and learning opportunities emerged throughout this project. A breach of the dam occurred on October 6, 2012 as the dewatering structure was put online, resulting in an unplanned rapid drawdown of the impoundment. The Implementation Team and contractors responded quickly and have worked collaboratively to remedy resulting impacts to landowners and the river downstream.

In addition to focusing on the next two downstream dam removals at Boardman and Sabin, the IT has developed and convened a working team consisting of groups/agencies most likely to assist in funding as well as designing the Cass Road bridge replacement at Boardman dam. Stay tuned as the effort to set the Boardman River free for the first time in over a century continues.

Welcome Bram!

On March 20, CRA Wildlife Habitat Biologist Eric Ellis and his wife Diana welcomed a baby boy into their family. Bram Thomas Ellis weighed 7 lbs. 8 oz. and was 19 inches long. Bram joins big sister Evie who is 4 years old. Congratulations, Eric and Diana, on your beautiful baby boy!



Welcome Bill!

Recently, CRA's Board of Directors welcomed William E. "Bill" Sundstrom to our Board for a three-year term. Bill is Chairman of Sundstrom, Friedman & Fumero, a Florida law firm whose practice revolves around infrastructure projects as well as a heavy emphasis on water law. Bill was born and raised in Cadillac and maintains a summer home on Lake Michigan. We are very pleased to have Bill joining our Board.



Outdoor Industry Focuses on Northern Michigan Restoration

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 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 185 member companies, and expect to disburse \$1.5 million in 2013. CRA recently was awarded a third year grant of \$35,000 from this partner to help with our efforts on the Boardman Dams project.

Since its inception in 1989, the Alliance has contributed nearly \$12 million to grassroots conservation groups throughout North America, helping save more than 42 million acres of wildlands; protect 2,748 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.

Pine River LWD Habitat Improvement

Large woody debris significantly influences the structure and function of streams. CRA is actively placing woody structures in many of our regional streams to help improve and enhance our local fisheries. Partners including the Pine River Association, Pine River Area Trout Unlimited, Wer Hee Gen Club, and US Fish and Wildlife Service have all chipped in to continue the efforts from the initial project phase started last year in the Meadowbrook Bridge access area and on private property near the Lake/Osceola County lines. Our partners have helped raise \$26,000 with an additional \$5,000 pending for the projects. Way to go Pine River partners!

Yes! I Want to Support CRA & Practical Conservation! Enclosed is my CRA Membership contribution:

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www.rivercare.org

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thank you

FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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

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Stewardship Spotlight - Elliott Donnelley Chapter of Trout Unlimited

The historic connection between Chicagoland and northern Michigan is well known and reveals itself in many different forms at both ends of the conduit. But the draw to our cold-water streams, magnificent landscapes, and quaint rural communities dates back over a hundred years and ties our neighbors at the south end of the big waters tightly to our region.

Back in 2004 CRA was introduced to Chicago's Elliott Donnelley Chapter of Trout Unlimited (EDTU) by our mutual friend, well known fishing guide, Chuck Hawkins. Over the years the friendship, partnership, and shared commitment for good conservation have been forged.

As the first chapter outside the founding state of Michigan, EDTU takes great pride not only in the results they help accomplish, but in the friendships built with local residents wherever they have been active. With a goal to work with other chapters of TU, local conservation organizations like CRA, DNRs, land owners and municipalities to achieve results that benefit all, it's no wonder that we work so well with this group!



The Elliott Donnelly Chapter of Trout Unlimited generously gives their time, energy, and money to support cold-water resource restoration and protection.

Over the years CRA and EDTU have worked together to complete numerous high priority projects, communicate the results to members, strengthen our organizations, and share some time on the water. This chapter has invested over \$30,000 in CRA's mission since that first meeting. They also share a similar deep rooted commitment to the high quality cold-water streams of the Driftless Area and Sand Counties of Wisconsin.

We look forward to many more seasons of collaboration with our good friends from EDTU.