



Undoing the Past - Upper Manistee Protection and Restoration

Tackling projects that might seem too large or complicated to many has become an identifying strength for CRA over the years. There are many examples of this dedication to getting the job done to benefit whole watersheds throughout the last four decades. With the help of many partners and leadership support from a Sustain Our Great Lakes Stewardship Grant (SOGL) of \$625,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, CRA is taking on another giant protection and restoration project with huge impacts for the Upper Manistee River watershed. Actually, it's a suite of projects that will address a number of challenges and threats to this resource.



One of a dozen Dam structures to be removed at Flowing Wells Trout Farm.

Tucked back off a dirt road about 8 miles east of Kalkaska is the defunct Flowing Wells Trout Farm property. This 1700 acre site reveals some of the most significant man-altered natural resources CRA staff has ever seen in our region. There are 12 dams, earthen berms, artificial ponds, stream re-channelings, concrete raceways, distribution of artesian well water, roads and trails; the list goes on and on. All of this manipulation was performed over a number of years back in the 1970's to support a private trout farm operation. Flowing Well Creek, Morisson Creek, Collar Creek, and the North Branch of the Manistee River all run through this property and all have been affected. So let's fast forward...

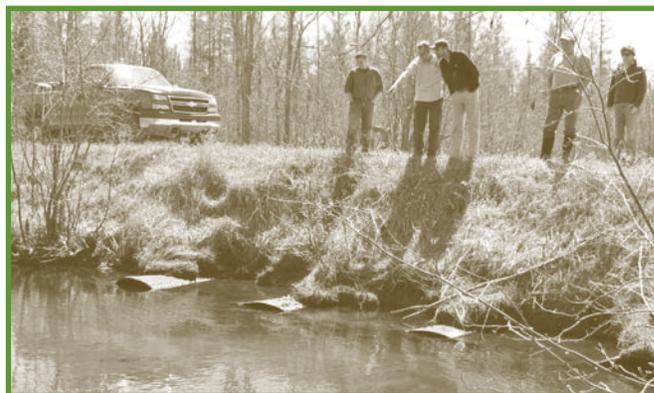
With the help of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, the State of Michigan was able to acquire this property in 2008. The Conservancy has protected over

3200 acres in the Upper Manistee watershed in the past few years and is a dedicated partner in this project. CRA was contacted to take the lead in a massive, multi-phased restoration of this site. Efforts will include dam removal and stream improvements to reconnect 31 miles of upstream fish passage. The goal? An increase of native brook trout populations, restoration of nutrient and sediment transport and the restoration of natural flow regimes on this designated Michigan Natural River.

Project partners also include: MDNRE, USFWS, Kalkaska County Conservation District, USDA-NRCS, Huron Pines RC&D, Kalkaska County Road Commission, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and the Upper Manistee Watershed Restoration Committee. There will be a comprehensive inventory conducted as well as pre/post monitoring of amphibians, reptiles, and macroinvertebrates. In addition to the SOGL grant, CRA has committed funding from the USFWS and MDNR-HIA programs.

There's more. High on CRA's priority list for road crossing improvements has been the severely degraded Mecum Road crossing on the North Branch of the Manistee. This is a site that has been a major concern for years. As part of this broad Upper Manistee protection and restoration initiative, CRA is coordinating the removal of 5 undersized culverts at the Mecum Road crossing to be replaced with a timber bridge structure that will provide a natural stream bottom and free fish and wildlife passage. Road re-grading and approach

Continued on next page



A Timber Bridge will replace submerged culverts on Mecum road.

Undoing the Past continued

paving will help prevent further direct sediment delivery to the stream. The site will be restored and re-vegetated with native trees and shrubs. This element of the project will cost approximately \$500,000. Design engineering will be completed in 2010, with construction anticipated next year.

We are so excited about this project. CRA biologists and project managers, Chris Pierce and Eric Ellis, both view this opportunity to help improve and protect the Upper Manistee as a challenge that they are proud to be a part of. With a total price tag of around \$1.5 million and about half of that need committed, this project also offers opportunities for many partners and supporters to invest in the outcomes. CRA will fundraise for this project until our goals are met and these sites are completed. Please contact Matt Thomas, CRA Development Coordinator, at (231)946-6817 to contribute to this project and explore how you can help.



An elusive 5 lined skink found at the Flowing Wells site.

CRA Services Benefit Woodcock

The Wild Link program has begun offering fee-for-service habitat management services to CRA members. This past winter we did a "test run" of these services at the Maple River Farm in Emmet County. This farm has been the site of many previous Wild Link activities including a long term American woodcock management project. This project continues to be supported by a USFWS Coastal grant. The remaining funds required to complete this year's work were made up by the landowner who paid CRA to manage the project, hire a contractor, and perform additional habitat improvements including the creation of grouse drumming logs. Approximately 5 acres of aspen and alder were clearcut to regenerate this important early successional habitat. This year's cuts were made adjacent to cuts from 2005 thus providing the varying age classes of young growth required by many species of wildlife, especially the ruffed grouse and American woodcock. CRA partnered with The Ruffed Grouse Society to bring in their ASV cutting machine to perform the cuts. If you are interested in fee for service work on your property, contact Eric Ellis at eric@rivercare.org.



Eric Ellis and Nate Winkler clearing habitat in Emmet County.

A Legacy of Good Work

CRA's River Care Program will benefit from a five year pledge of \$50,000 from the George Fund. A long time supporter of River Care, the George Fund trustees recently approved the pledge to help support habitat restoration and protection projects into the future. This fund was established as a legacy to honor the late Henry George, who had a deep passion for hunting and fishing in Michigan.

"CRA is extremely grateful to the George Fund trustees for their visionary commitment to caring for natural resources that this gift represents," commented Dan Hubbell, CRA's Chairman. This pledge will go to work immediately to meet project needs on a number of watersheds and help meet the significant private match necessary for a number of public grants that CRA is administering. Thank you to the George Fund for this opportunity to plan for the future!

The Big Sable Needs Your Help

Volunteers from the Big Sable Watershed Restoration Committee have been spending hundreds of hours working on a solo poplar strip canoe and custom bamboo fly rod for their annual raffle. All proceeds benefit Big Sable River restoration projects. Contact Chris Pierce at chris@rivercare.org or (231)946-6817 to purchase tickets.



GT Band Supports River Care

Tribal revenue sharing compacts help distribute 2% of electronic gaming revenue for community needs. The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians pay back to the region through twice a year grant cycles and have made a huge impact for CRA's River Care Program. A recent grant of \$35,000, applied for through Grand Traverse County, will help support restoration and preservation projects targeting priority sites on regional watersheds. In addition to this generous funding, CRA often works closely with tribal natural resource staff. Chairman Derek Bailey attended CRA's recent Board meeting to discuss coordinating projects that address shared resource concerns. CRA is proud to have the Grand Traverse Band as a River Care partner and would like to thank Chairman Bailey for his time, passion, and interest.



GT Band Chairman - Derek Bailey

Plans for Springbrook Bridge

The North Branch of the Boyne River is a high quality, coldwater stream and a state designated "Blue Ribbon Trout Stream." The North Branch river corridor is heavily vegetated and includes the "Big Cedar Preserve" where the Little Traverse Conservancy owns 60 acres. Streambank erosion is rare on the stream; however, there are many road/stream crossings where undersized culverts and lack of runoff control are significant issues. Two undersized, perched culverts at Springbrook Road comprise one such problem site. The culverts are perched about 5' and prohibit fish passage, scour out the stream bottom at the outlet, and cause significant streambank erosion just downstream. Brook trout, brown trout and mottled sculpin have been documented through stream surveys completed by MDNRE Fisheries Division upstream of the Springbrook site. This stream is not stocked; fish populations are naturally reproducing. The USFWS and Charlevoix County Community Foundation have granted \$25,000 to CRA to work with Charlevoix County Road Commission and Northwest Designs Group to engineer a timber bridge at the site. Once engineered plans are

completed bridge construction can be planned. The design of a bridge will be a major step in providing for full fish passage, natural substrate, and stream flows on the North Branch of the Boyne River. Sound like a project you would like support? We need your help. Please contact CRA at (231)946-6817 to discuss how you can contribute.



This severe road crossing on the north branch of the Boyne River will be replaced with a new Timber Bridge.

Playing to Make a Difference

Dust off the sticks and get in a practice round or two so you'll be ready for CRA's 7th annual Greens Fore Streams golf outing sponsored by Scientific Anglers-3M. Crystal Mountain will again host this popular and fun event on Wednesday June 2nd on the beautiful Mountain Ridge course.

Put together a team or sign up yourself and we'll hook you up with a great group of like-minded folks. We've held the rates the same as prior years- \$100 per golfer, \$400 for a foursome, hole sponsorships for \$150 or \$500, dinner only for \$35. We're out to have a good time while raising some cash for CRA and conservation projects in northern Michigan. We need golfers,

sponsors and prize donations to make sure this year will be another success. Over \$140,000 has been raised since our first Greens Fore Streams in 2004. Bring your best shot and you could drive home in the 2010 Subaru Outback wagon hole-in-one car provided by Cherry Capital Subaru. Even if golf is not your thing, come on out for the barbeque banquet with friends. Rain or shine, we'll be swinging for the green and guarantee a great day for a great cause!

For more information and to register as a sponsor, golfer, and to donate prizes, contact Jill Rowley or Matt Thomas at (231)946-6817 or return the mailed sign-up form to CRA. See you on the links!



Greens Fore Streams



Thank you for your recent support of CRA, River Care™ and Wild Link™

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Boardman River Dams Update

CRA is already more than halfway through a one year contract with the Boardman River dams Implementation Team (IT) as project manager for the Boardman River dams removal project. During the intervening months since last October a lot has happened. In addition to coordinating monthly IT meetings and aggressively pursuing grant opportunities for the project, CRA has been assisting in planning work to remove invasive species and restore exposed bottomlands at Boardman and Brown Bridge ponds. And due to the agency's prior involvement with the project, the US Army Corps of Engineers has been brought back on board to initiate an environmental impact study and engineering design and specifications. While it's too early to speculate on exact timelines for dam removal and subsequent river restoration, the process is definitely underway and lots of good work is being accomplished.



Three of the four Boardman River Dams are slated for removal.



Illustrations courtesy of JenniferThomasDesign.com

Trees in the Ground

In what is becoming an annual tradition at CRA, roughly 4700 native trees and shrubs were planted this past spring on 23 private landowner properties and during 10 separate volunteer workdays. The donation for purchasing these trees was provided by Fairmount Minerals (www.fairmountminerals.com) and facilitated by CRA partner Saving Birds Thru Habitat (www.savingbirds.org).



Suttons Bay Brownies earned their "Linking Girls to the Land" badge.

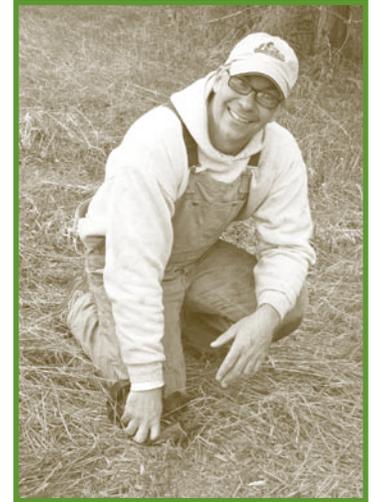
Over 100 trees and shrubs were planted at Jeff and Karen Newman's property in the Wild Link Kingsley Wildlife Corridor. Avid outdoors sports people, Jeff's family is dedicated to preserving and enjoying their beautiful land.

Suttons Bay Girl Scout troops including Juniors, Brownies and Daisies planted 65 trees on the Steinhilber/O'Connor property in Leelanau County. Mary Jo and Bob hosted a cookout following the planting.

The Kingsley High School Outdoor Adventure Club planted 130 trees and shrubs in degraded areas of the large school property. These are a dedicated group of students!

All of these projects will improve the diversity and quality of wildlife habitat in our region. Special

thanks go out to Boone Sharpe from Kingsley High School, the Newman family, Mary Jo O'Connor, Bob Steinhilber, Brian Tennis from New Mission Organics (newmissionorganics.com), Kay Charter, and Suttons Bay Girl Scout Troops.



Wild Link landowner, Jeff Newman

Yes! I Want to Support CRA & Practical Conservation!

Enclosed is my CRA Membership contribution:

- Contributor \$35 Supporter \$50 Sponsor \$100
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Conservation Resource Alliance

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Thank You For Your Support!



Want to have as much fun volunteering as Brian Tennis? Contact Jill Rowley at jill@rivercare.org to explore volunteer opportunities.





Conservation Resource Alliance

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Stewardship Spotlight

Molon Excavating, Inc.



Without a doubt, CRA's success relies on strong partnerships and relationships with highly competent and reliable contractors. Large scale restoration projects require the best people and equipment to get the job

done right and on schedule. One of the companies that CRA has come to trust is Molon Excavating, Inc. Established in 1979 and purchased by the Walton Group in 1998, Molon has grown to become a full-scale excavating and site development corporation serving all of northwest Michigan.

Molon Excavating brings together the experience and resources of four generations of the Walton family to offer the best managers, operators, drivers, laborers, and latest equipment. Recently, they were the contractor CRA utilized for the restoration efforts underway at the Wheeler Creek dam removal site. This work represents a lot of interesting challenges and the Molon crew has been there each step to make sure the job was handled.

CRA is proud to work with Molon Excavating, Inc. and include them as a business member and supporter. You can check out their company at www.molonexcavating.net or contact them at 125 Buck Shot Drive, P.O. Box 1860 Traverse City, MI 49685 - Phone: (231)943-3929

