



Biennial Meeting Returns to Black Star Farms Friday, September 23

Mark your calendar now to secure your place as we gather friends and partners to celebrate our shared passion and commitment for northern Michigan's special places. The return to the beautiful Black Star Farms venue offers an opportunity to experience one of the region's premier locations with a great group of conservation minded folks. We'll enjoy delicious food and refreshments, stimulating dialog, and maybe a surprise or two. Look forward to more details over the next couple months.



Tent Caterpillars are for the Birds

By Kay Charter, Executive Director of Saving Birds Thru Habitat and Eric Ellis, CRA Biologist

It's amazing how many aspects of the natural world are unknown, even to the experts. A case in point is the answer to the question, "Do birds eat tent caterpillars?" Some of us have either heard or read opinions by both bird and bug people that nothing eats these caterpillars. Upon deeper investigation it is apparent that tent caterpillars, as annoying as they can be, play an important role in the Northern Michigan environment for birds and other wildlife.

There are two species of springtime tent caterpillars in northern Michigan: eastern tent caterpillars (*Malacosoma americanum*) and forest tent caterpillars (*Malacosoma disstria*), ETC and FTC for short. These insects are native to the area and have coexisted with our forests for millennia. Populations of both species fluctuate with ETC fairly common every year and FTC displaying boom and bust outbreaks that last 2-3 years every decade or so. Eastern tent caterpillars build the unsightly silken "tents" in late spring, often on wild black cherry trees.

Forest tent caterpillars do not have highly visible tents but when there is an outbreak up to 4 million of them can cram into a single forested acre. Both species have just one generation per year leaving time for affected trees to grow new leaves for the season. The vast majority of defoliated trees will recover with little lasting effects other than a year or two of less growth.

The sight of these caterpillars denuding trees and crawling everywhere (even into buildings) during large outbreaks, cause both of these fuzzy insects to be thought of as pests. It is hard to argue that they do not have negative impacts. That said, the negative impacts are mainly the nuisance they cause around dwellings. The ecological impacts of these insects are surprisingly positive. *continued on page 2*



Malacosoma americanum



Forest tent caterpillar moth laying an egg mass

Tent Caterpillars are for the Birds *continued from cover*

As with many other Lepidoptera species, these caterpillars are frequently parasitized or eaten by a huge number of species as are the adult moths. During an outbreak years ago, well-known birder Tom Ford was asked whether any birds will eat these pesky insects. Tom answered that severely declining populations of black-billed and yellow-billed cuckoos in particular are crazy about them. According to research conducted at the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station 60 bird species have been documented to eat tent caterpillars including cuckoos, orioles, jays, chickadees and nuthatches. This same study also found that tent caterpillar outbreaks are controlled by native predators and parasites including 127 insect parasites, 28 insect predators, frogs, mice, bats, reptiles, squirrels, skunks, and bears. By sifting through one day's worth of bear poop (fun job) researchers found that a single bear on average ate around 25,000 caterpillars in a one day. What people find unsightly and annoying for a few months some years is a welcome gift of easy food for many species of wildlife and the species that in turn feed on them.

For years, Kay Charter and her husband have put mealworms out during the nesting season. They have purchased as many as 25,000 mealworms as supplemental food for nesting birds to feed their young. During the 2009 – 2010 widespread outbreaks of both species of tent caterpillars there were no takers for their offerings. Those two years were, moreover, periods of great nesting success, especially for the Neotropical species.

It is important to note that many methods used to control tent caterpillar populations kill indiscriminately and reduce the food supply for many wildlife species, especially nesting birds. Chemical controls are costly, kill non target species (Monarch Butterflies, native pollinators, etc.), can potentially degrade water quality and kill some natural predators/parasites of tent caterpillars potentially extending the outbreak.

Although most people we know are frustrated, irritated or concerned over the appearance of tent caterpillars, we welcome their infrequent arrival. It will be a good thing for the birds and other wildlife we are trying to help.



Annual Tree Giveaway a Success

This year's annual spring tree giveaway reached the most landowners in its history. Just under 5,000 native trees and shrubs were planted on 42 properties and during 7 separate volunteer workdays. The donation for purchasing these trees was again provided by Fairmount Minerals (www.fairmountminerals.com) and facilitated by CRA partner Saving Birds Thru Habitat (www.savingbirds.org). CRA staff participated in one of these workdays by partnering with the MDNR Wildlife Division Traverse City office and the LeGrande Chapter of the Ruffed Grouse Society to plant 700 trees and shrubs on state land near Lake Ann. The site chosen is specially managed for grouse and woodcock habitat and directly supports the goals of the MDNR management plan for the area. Special thanks go out to Steve Griffith of the MDNR and Rod Robison of the Ruffed Grouse Society.



"Natural resources are vital to our area" - Glenn Hirt - CRA Supporter

Native trees & shrubs were distributed to local groups and landowners.





Crews are hard at work constructing a new timber bridge over the Maple River in Emmet County

Maple River Crossing Breaks Ground

After 3 years of planning, outreach, design, and fundraising the Pleasantview Road Timber Bridge project over the West Branch Maple River is underway. The project includes the replacement of three undersized culverts with a 40 foot single span timber bridge. This important project has been made possible through commitment and support of numerous partners including the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, Emmet County Road Commission, CRA, USFWS, Fish America Foundation, Bay Harbor Foundation, Frey Foundation, Northwest Design Group, and USDA-NRCS.



CRA Staff and Partners Work on the Manistee

CRA staff and partners recently met at the Flowing Well Property in Kalkaska County to remove the first board at the old trout farm and to clear debris from the North Branch of the Manistee River in preparation for the upcoming dam removal. Representatives from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the MDNR Fisheries Division assisted with the project which cleared two old beaver dams and piles of fallen logs and debris that accumulated since the river was diverted from its natural channel decades ago. The debris was repositioned in the river channel to allow for the free flow of water and to provide in-stream fish and aquatic organism habitat. This is just one of the early steps in this project which is supported by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and funded by a Sustain Our Great Lakes Program grant. By the end of 2012 twelve dams will be removed and two river systems returned to their natural channels which will restore 31 miles of fish passage in prime brook trout habitat.



What a team! CRA and partners from the DNR and the USFWS work together at Flowing Well



Brown Bridge Dam is slated as the first of three dams to be removed on the Boardman River.

The Boardman is considered one of Michigan's top 10 Blue Ribbon designated trout streams.



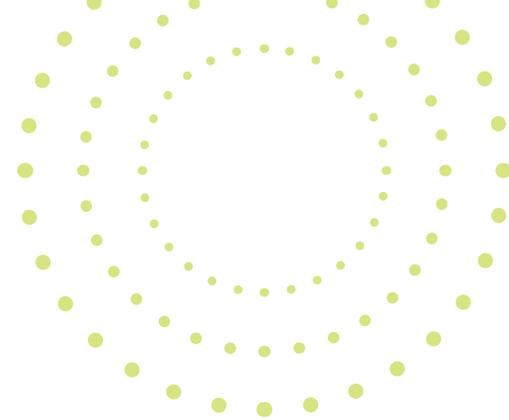
The Boardman: A River Reborn Update

The Boardman River is located in Grand Traverse and Kalkaska Counties and includes 160 miles of river and tributary streams. There are a total of 287-square miles in the watershed, producing one-third of the water volume of Grand Traverse Bay in Traverse City and draining 182,800 acres of land. An estimated 2 million user days are logged on the Boardman River annually for recreation purposes. Many of these visitors come to the river to fish since the river is one of the top ten trout streams in Michigan and 36 river miles are designated as Blue Ribbon river sections. A six year long process leading up to the current status of the project to remove three of the Boardman River dams and modify the Union Street dam has garnered broad attention and support. A diverse group of stakeholders have become involved, ensuring that this massive effort is successful, with the long-term benefits for the resource and community held as the highest priorities.

CRA's role as Project Manager is best defined as helping the Implementation Team (IT) move this project through each step necessary to reach the identified goals. The first quarter of 2011 was a busy time for the IT and working groups. A Request for Qualifications related primarily to Brown Bridge Dam removal was distributed to engineering firms. A Qualifications Based Selection process resulted in a short list of qualified firms that submitted Statements of Qualifications. Interviews of those firms and selection of a finalist to develop a Scope of Work for removal of Brown Bridge Dam was next. The chosen team, led by MACTEC, began this process with the assistance of a scoping team that includes members of the IT.

Key elements of a structured Communication Plan have been fulfilled with the launch of a new website (www.theboardman.org), facilitation of "small group" meetings with community leaders, and press releases related to the project distributed to media sources. The US Army Corps of Engineers negotiated a contract with the Baird/URS joint venture to produce a Feasibility Study and to fulfill NEPA obligations on the entire dam removal and modification project. CRA has provided support to the IT for planning meetings, preparing materials and minutes. Working teams have been formed for bottomlands work, communications, as well as project management. Various partners submitted five funding proposals during the first quarter, representing over \$2.9 million in requests for project support. Detailed project implementation and matching funds control charts were also developed by CRA for use by the various teams.

Whew! What a great collaboration. Stay in touch with this dynamic project by visiting the dedicated website: www.theboardman.org.



Adams Chapter of Trout Unlimited to Help Replace Dair Creek Crossing

The Adams Chapter of Trout Unlimited, long time CRA supporters, has approved a conservation grant to help fund the replacement of the road/stream crossing over Dair Creek. This project will result in re-connecting 8 miles of Dair Creek, a premier coldwater stream to the main stem of the Betsie River, benefiting migratory fish, and improving localized and downstream water quality and habitat by replacing the undersized and degraded crossing. This contribution of \$2,500 is an important part of the \$45,000 of local match needed for this \$187,000 project. Lead funding for this initiative is provided from a US EPA administered Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant.

Outdoor Industry Supports River Care

Sharing a very similar name, CRA's newest River Care partner, The Conservation Alliance, recently approved a grant for \$30,000 to support our work in The Boardman: A River Reborn project. The Conservation Alliance has served as the outdoor industry's collective commitment to protecting wild places. The Alliance was 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 and now has more than 180 member companies. CRA was nominated for the opportunity to apply for this grant by Grand Rapids based Grabber Inc., the maker of those great hand warmers, space blankets, and other cool outdoor product. We look forward to doing our part to make the beautiful Boardman an even more spectacular stream with the support of The Conservation Alliance!

Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Effort

Recently the Fairmount Minerals' Quest Team delivered 50,000 jack pine seedlings to the Kirtland's warbler recovery effort near Roscommon. CRA facilitated the purchase of the trees in partnership with the Leelanau County non-profit Saving Birds Thru Habitat. The endangered Kirtland's warblers nest only in dense jack pine stands between 5 and 20 years old. Once stands age to the point they are unsuitable for warbler nesting they are burned or cut and replaced with seedlings. This project not only benefited endangered wildlife habitat but is part of Fairmount Minerals' carbon sequestration program.



ABOVE - This Dair Creek crossing will be replaced to benefit fish passage and improve habitat.

BELOW - The Kirtland's warbler nests in just a few counties in Michigan's northern Lower and Upper peninsulas.





The Bear Creek watershed encompasses 118,000 acres in Manistee and Benzie Counties.



Greater Bear Watershed Plan

The Greater Bear Watershed Plan began with local groups working together to address the needs of the region's natural resources. The Manistee Community Foundation responded to this local interest by submitting a grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to update the previously developed Bear Creek Watershed Plan and expand the scope of the previous plan to include Bear Lake and its tributaries. The result is a community-driven effort to ensure wise and sustainable use of watershed resources now and in the future. The planning process is led by a steering committee of community representatives from across the watershed. This leadership group works with the residents of the watershed as well as other governmental and private entities to consolidate information, identify gaps in existing data, and develop an action plan that will help the community achieve its vision, goals, and priorities for the future. More information can be found at www.bearwaters.org.

Planned Giving - Fulfilling your conservation goals

- You can 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.*



CRA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

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

Supporter \$100 \$50 \$25

Leader \$500 \$250

Patron \$5000 \$1000

Small Business \$100 Large Business \$500

Other \$ _____

My employer will match (please send forms)

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Credit card payments are also accepted online at: www.rivercare.org

Make all checks payable to:
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 Traverse City, MI 49684

thank you
FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Thank You Charlevoix County Community Foundation!

The Charlevoix County Community Foundation has awarded CRA an \$8,000 grant to begin an inventory of the Lake Charlevoix Watershed utilizing the newly adopted inventory protocol. This summer sites in Bay, Charlevoix, Eveline, and Hayes townships that include the Horton Creek, Advance Creek and Stover Creek subwatersheds will be completed. This will account for 30% of the entire Lake Charlevoix Watershed! All of the road/stream crossing inventory data for the Lake Charlevoix watershed will be incorporated into the existing web-based "River Restoration in Northwest Michigan" site (www.liaa.info/crabmp/default.asp). This GIS database, designed by CRA and Land Information Access Association, includes the framework for an interactive and updateable tool for tracking sediment input at sites throughout 15 counties in northwest Michigan and now serves as a template for groups throughout the Great Lakes basin.

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Stewardship Spotlight

Miller & Miller

CRA strives for a business model that builds on relationships with partners that place the highest value on excellence, passion, and integrity. The Miller & Miller team meets all these expectations while helping support our work and mission in many ways.

The Miller family began its legacy in the oil and gas business in 1929 in Michigan and grew far beyond the State. In addition to continuing interests in energy development, Miller & Miller is an owner and manager of commercial, residential, and developmental real estate properties in Michigan and Florida, including CRA's home office, the Bayview Professional Centre. President & chief executive officer, Kelly Miller, along with his sons,

Adam and Chad, are fishermen and hunters who consider good stewardship as one of their highest callings. The Miller family feels their investment in CRA can help change northern Michigan for future generations. They hope that their support can be used to challenge others to become more involved, strengthening CRA as an organization and broadening our impact. CRA thanks the entire Miller & Miller team for all their support!



Visit www.millerandmiller.us to learn more about this interesting CRA partner.