



## Getting to Know Your Rivers

*“Wherever there is a channel for water, there is a road for the canoe.” - Thoreau*

The miracles that collectively are the clear, cold rivers of northwestern Lower Michigan are the result of a geological phenomenon that ended approximately 10,000 years ago. That’s when the region was liberated from the Valders ice field, loosening the icy grip of the upwards of two million year Pleistocene epoch. The glacial melt water coalesced into rivers that spider-webbed their way across the sandy outwash plains to Lake Michigan. Constant recharge was assured by vast formations of melted ice trapped in the sand and gravel till left behind by the retreating glaciers. Once the landscape became forested, these rivers became the path of least resistance to the Native Americans and later, the early European explorers. The indigenous vehicle that made river travel possible was the *jiimaan*. A true product of the forest, the Ojibwe and Odawa birch bark canoe were laid up with birch bark (white side in) and stitched with split spruce root. The bilge was reinforced with planks and ribs carved from white cedar and the gunwales were split spruce. Spruce gum was collected and heated till runny, mixed with fat, and applied to the stitched seams to seal out the water. Famed explorer Samuel de Champlain saw the canoe as the Native Americans did, as a tool so perfectly suited to its purpose that any alternative to it defied logic. On his advice, the French newcomers readily adopted the canoe and the bonanza that was the fur trade was subsequently borne in the utilitarian and lovely canot. Consequently, paddle-weary voyageurs arriving back home in Montreal and Trois Rivieres bore memories of tawny sand dunes guarding the mouths of mysterious tea-stained rivers along the Lake Michigan coast.

Today’s canoes have changed little from those days with the exception of construction materials and it’s still the best way to get around on and get to know a river. And as far as rivers go, we all have our favorites. For some it has everything to do with the fishing, for others it’s all about the scenery. And for more than a few, it’s a little of both. Whatever the reason, if you want to get better acquainted with a river, you can’t beat taking a float on it in a canoe. Ideally the canoe you have should have some rocker (the bottom higher at the bow and stern than amidships) for ease of turning and absent a keel. Keels can drag on rocks and gravel bars, and don’t allow the quick turns you need on rivers like the Betsie, Little Manistee or Jordan. Wood paddles are ideal as they’re comfortable in the hand and quiet when leaned across the gunwales or knocked against the hull. And if you can swing it, you should find a paddle attached to an experienced stern partner that would prefer to run the river without your help. That will leave you free to lose yourself watching the interchange between sun-dappled gravel and green bottomless pools.

The current often will take you down the best route and a few corrective strokes should keep you out of trouble. As you slide along, you start to notice things like the way the water mounds up in front of larger rocks mid-stream, before it spills around to form little eddies behind where a trout might be holding. Indentations along the banks cause eddies to form too, the flow actually reversing for a time before peeling off and rejoining the main current. If the gradient is perceptible, you’ll notice how the river falls away before you, providing a

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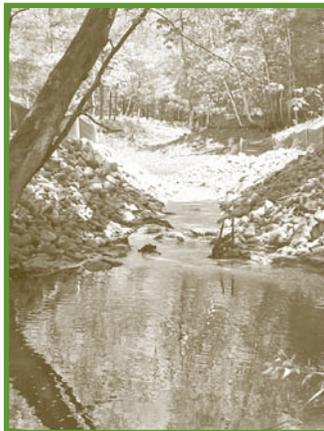
lesson in how gravity and hydraulics have been working over the years to cut the present channel. The riparian vegetation will tell a story of where the more fertile soils have been deposited over the years by the river and sand bars above the banks will tell you where the river runs in extreme high water events. The smell of sun baked pine needles will remind you that the river you're on was once used to sluice saw logs downstream during the spring drives of years ago. The river will tell you its story in a hundred different ways and all you have to do is sit and take it all in.

Conservation Resource Alliance at times coordinates float trips on rivers around the region. Dates and locations will be posted in advance on our website. If you have the time and are interested, take a trip with us and find out more about our rivers and how we can help each other leave it in better shape for the next generation of paddlers.

## **Almost 60 Years**

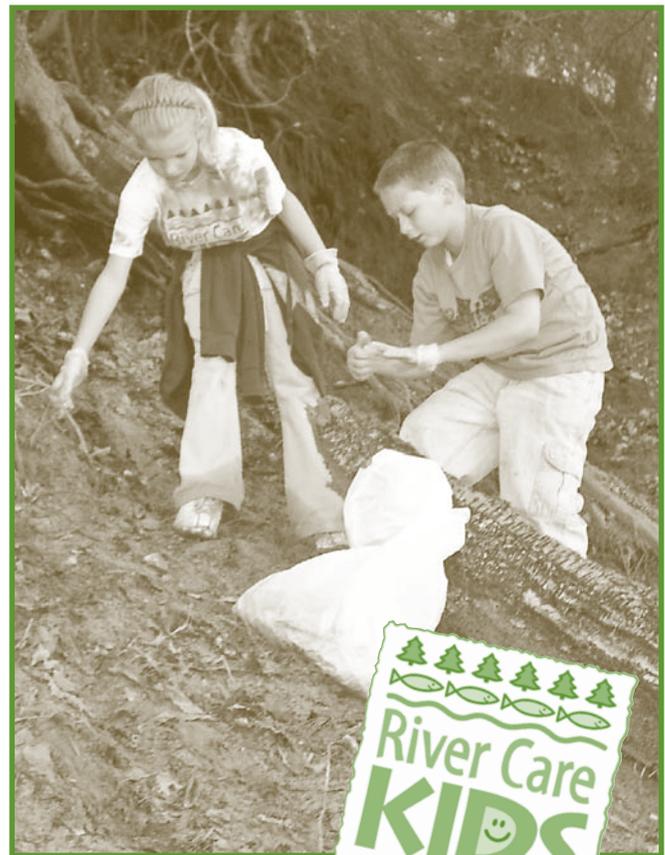
The East Branch of Tank Creek is a small, coldwater feeder stream to the Pere Marquette River mainstem. A failing dam plagued with seeps in the earthen berm, old and inadequate culverts was a problem and contributed tons of sand to the stream during high water events. This spring the dam was removed, allowing for a free flowing stream to return after almost 60 years. The following helped make the project possible with grants, donations and in-kind labor:

Pere Marquette Watershed Council, US Fish & Wildlife Service Partners Program, MDNR Inland Fisheries Program, Bill and Sue Arnold, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and CRA's River Care Program. CRA and NRCS will continue to monitor the new stream closely over the next year as it finds its new channel to determine if and where revegetation and stabilization measures are needed.



## **Familiar Faces on the Pine**

Ted Borgeld is stepping down after serving 15 years as its Chairman to the Pine River Watershed Restoration Committee and helping other local watershed groups as a leading example. Ted plans on continuing to be active with the Pine River and committee. Mark Johnson, former CRA biologist, has taken over as Chairman. Students from the Wexford-Missaukee ISD program that Mark teaches helped plant trees on an old two track road that leads to the Pine River. A portion of the access road was closed and a parking area constructed in a partnership between MDNR, CRA, Pine River Enhancement Fund, the Osceola County Community Foundation, and volunteers. Thank you Ted and Mark for your continued service to the Pine River!



## **River Care Kids Attack Tippy Access**

Seven years ago an eager group of kids from Wellston Elementary School converged on the busy Tippy Dam access on the mighty Manistee River and filled dozens of bags with the litter of careless adults. That first bunch of youngsters is now in high school and hopefully remembers the lessons learned as part of CRA's fledgling River Care Kids initiative. The annual tradition they and their teachers started has continued as has the positive impact for this popular site.

On May 29<sup>th</sup> over ninety ambitious 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> graders scrambled the trails, banks, and parking areas at Tippy scooping up all of the trash they could find. The good news is that each year there seems to be a little less to pick up. But these kids still can't understand why grown ups who love to use this area often show such little respect for it. As one happy student named Sara said, "I'm upset at the people who just leave the trash and don't take care. Thank goodness we helped clean up!"

Once again, representatives from Consumers Energy partnered with CRA to share information with the kids about the hydro electric generation at Tippy Dam and the very interesting facts regarding the bat hibernaculum under the spillway that is the home to over twenty thousand bats every winter.

Thank you to all of the teachers, parents, volunteers, and kids that make this one of the truly special days for CRA staff. And to Consumers Energy and the Michigan Fly Fishing Club for their generous support of River Care Kids programming.

## ***Golfers vs. Rain – Golfers prevail!***

We've known the possibility existed, and this was the year to test the waters, literally. After five years of near perfect weather for CRA's annual Greens Fore Streams golf outing, the gods got even. Yet despite a nearly constant rain, a dedicated group of nearly ninety golfers braved the elements to show their support for CRA's conservation programs. Apparently passion for the game or the cause helped some golfers overcome the inclement weather, resulting in some of the best scores ever carded for this event.

Leading the pack with a score of 61 was the team of Cliff Both, Jamisen Both, Len Swanson, and Larry Clark followed closely by the 2<sup>nd</sup> place team of Dave Hill, Tom Beesley, Tim Lurkins, and Wes Williams.

Thanks to event host, Crystal Mountain, title sponsor, Scientific Anglers-3M, hole in one sponsor, Cherry Capital Subaru, and all of the generous businesses and individuals that helped sponsor, donate prizes and participate in this successful fundraiser. Because of this cooperative effort nearly \$140,000 has been generated from the Greens Fore Streams outing in the last six years. That's worth getting your shoes wet!



*Annual Greens Fore Streams participant, Paul Paradis, didn't let the showers dampen his spirit. Thanks for the very popular donation of the beautiful hand crafted cedar Adirondack chair, Paul!*

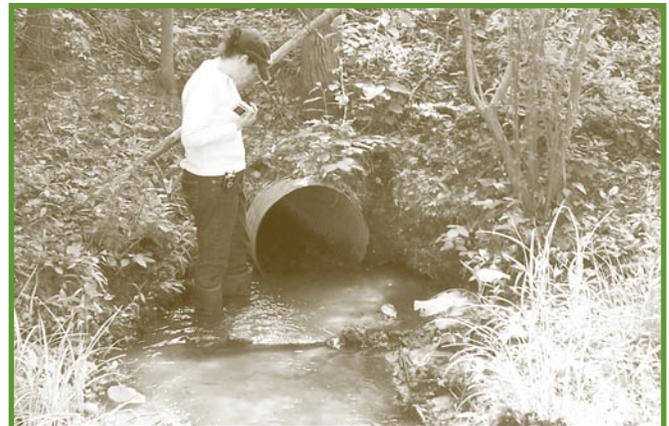
## ***Ransom Lake Natural Area Volunteer Workday***



On a sunny morning in mid-May, the Troy Athens High School AP biology students met with CRA staff and Almira Township officials at the Ransom Lake Natural area near Lake Ann for a few hours of habitat work. Three groups of students split up to plant and fence native northern white cedar along Ransom Lake, place fish cover in Ransom Creek, and stabilize a large section of the trail adjacent to the creek. These management practices were identified in the Ransom Lake Natural Area Habitat Management plan written by CRA's Eric Ellis and Chris Pierce and will improve the fish and wildlife habitat of the protected park. The streambank work will also stabilize the eroding soils along the edge of the park's new handicap access trail while reducing the amount of sediment that flows into the stream. The annual Troy Athens visit is now a favorite activity of the CRA staff and one that produces significant benefits for the natural resources of the region.

## ***The Road Ahead***

The US Forest Service will be contracting with CRA and the Lake County Road Commission over the next 3 years to replace and improve 10 road/stream crossings: 9 in the Pere Marquette Watershed and 1 in the Pine River Watershed. \$1.1 million in American Recovery Relief Act funds and \$240,000 in Federal Highway Fish Passage Funds are making this huge effort possible. Old, undersized, and perched culverts on important tributaries are targeted for replacements and upgrades in an effort to reduce sand from washing off the roads into the streams, and providing fish passage to coldwater creeks that provide invaluable nursery habitat for trout and havens for aquatic insects and wildlife.



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

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**Thank you for making the Greens Fore Streams Golf Outing a Success!**  
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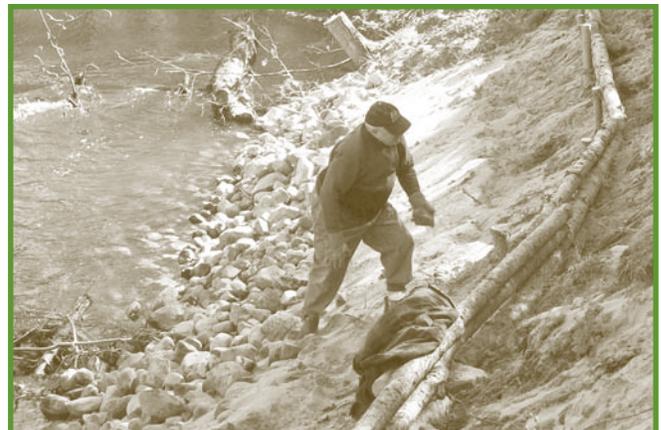
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**Participants**  
 Thomas Ackerson  
 Wayne Andersen  
 Tom Beesley  
 Charlie Bode  
 Jamisen Both  
 Cliff Both  
 Jeff & Kim Brackett  
 Jim Braun  
 John Brayton  
 Phil Callighan  
 Keith Charters  
 Larry Clark  
 Dave Danzer  
 Dick DeBoer  
 Michael & Rhonda Estes  
 Brett Fessell  
 Bill & Ginny Geaman  
 Mike Goggin  
 Sarah Gonzalez  
 Tom Hardecki  
 Jim Hegarty  
 David Hill  
 Chris Howser  
 Mark Johnson  
 Bill & Jacquie Johnson  
 Todd Kalish  
 George Kaminski  
 Brian Kanouse  
 Shawn Kanouse  
 Tony Kuberski  
 Patrick Kelly  
 Russ King  
 Kelly King  
 Barry Kalnbach  
 Pat Kochanny  
 Paul Kochanny  
 Ron Kochanny  
 Tim Kochanny  
 William Kropog

Jeremy Lewandowski  
 Tim Lurkins  
 John & Sue Ann Makinen  
 Tom Masters  
 Chazz McCall  
 Ed McIntosh  
 Craig Meredith  
 Adam Miller  
 Chad Miller  
 Dennis Muth  
 Troy Naperala  
 Larry Neetz  
 Irv Nichols  
 Jim Novak  
 Paul Paradis  
 Steve Rawlings  
 Dick & Leslie Redmond  
 Zach Redmond  
 Mark Reminder  
 Bob & Dina Richard  
 Bruce Richards  
 Todd Schmidt  
 Jim Schramm  
 Cully Smith  
 Jeff Smith  
 Brian Sousa  
 Dave Stapleton  
 Bob Streit  
 Len Swanson  
 John Thomas  
 Mark Thompson  
 Don Tilton  
 Steve Timmer  
 Randy Travis  
 Joe Valley  
 John & Diane VanderVeen  
 Greg Vogue  
 Rich Vogue  
 Rick Westerhof  
 Justin White  
 Tom Wilde  
 Wes Williams  
 Curt Yeiter  
 Matt Yeiter  
 Greg Yourst

## Still Going Strong

Volunteers such as the first Big Sable Watershed Restoration Committee chairman, Jim Miller and newer committee members like the Gambicki brothers are a key part in keeping our projects moving forward and affordable. Last fall fieldstone rip rap and large woody debris were placed along the toe of the streambank. Volunteers terraced and planted the moderately eroding bank this spring because of its potential to deliver 35 tons of sediment per year into the river. Current CRA projects on the Big Sable include wrapping up the fish cover project started in 2008 and restoring the last remaining severe streambank amongst other projects as funding will allow.





## Thank You Girl Scouts!

The Wild Link program recently teamed up with Suttons Bay Brownie Troop #10108 and Girl Scout Junior Troop #10115 to plant native trees and shrubs along a regional wildlife corridor. The scouts earned their Linking Girls to the Land badge by planting nearly one hundred Flowering Dogwood, American Hazelnut, Gray Dogwood, Sycamore, and American Bittersweet. The trees were planted on a 112 acre Wild Link property in Leelanau County and will provide valuable habitat for numerous species of wildlife, especially birds. CRA thanks the Girl Scouts and their troop leaders Jennifer Kohler and Deb Windemuller for partnering with us!

### Yes! I Want to Support CRA & Practical Conservation!

Enclosed is my CRA Membership contribution:

- Contributor \$35     Supporter \$50     Sponsor \$100  
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Credit card payments are also accepted at: [www.rivercare.org](http://www.rivercare.org)  
 Your donation is tax-deductible. Make all checks payable to:  
 Conservation Resource Alliance  
 10850 Traverse Highway, Suite 1111, Traverse City, MI 49684

**Thank You For Your Support!**

## Wild Link Adds New Landowners

Nine new properties along regional wildlife corridors have been added to the Wild Link roster this spring. Seven of these properties will soon receive their Wild Link habitat management plan while the others have already received the information they need and have begun implementing specific habitat projects recommended by CRA staff. The Wild Link program keeps chugging along and helping landowners protect and enhance northwest Michigan's wildlife habitat and water quality one parcel at a time.



*Wild Link landowner Cliff Both installs tree tubes over native trees planted this spring.*



## Git 'Er Done Boys!

Boy Scout Troop 264 from Rockford and the Fly Fishing Club from Jennison High School placed rock on an eroding streambank on Orvis Lodge property on the Pere Marquette River in May. Despite the rainy day, spirits were high and kids, troop leaders, parents and teachers had a good time. Funding for the rock was donated by the Michigan Fly Fishing Club. Thanks to Frank Willetts at the Pere Marquette Orvis Lodge for hosting the event and overnight campout for Troop 264.

## Welcome Genevieve!

On April 26<sup>th</sup>, CRA Wild Link Biologist Eric Ellis and his wife Diana welcomed Genevieve Rose Ellis into the world. She weighed 6 lb. 9 oz. and was 20 in. Genevieve arrived on her due date and is a beautiful, sweet baby. Congratulations, Eric and Diana!





## Conservation Resource Alliance

COORDINATING SENSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF THE LAND

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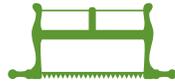
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### Stewardship Spotlight

In an age when mass produced, compromised integrity, goods of every

sort flood the marketplace, it's refreshing to find that there are still some real craftsmen around that continue to build heirloom quality objects of distinction. One of the finest of such artisans is Chuck Beyer and his Suttons Bay Furniture Company. With a degree in materials engineering and a passion for functional design, his approach to furniture fabrication transforms ideas into beautiful pieces that will be appreciated for lifetimes.

Chuck carefully matches a client's goals with the best materials for the project. From exotic hardwoods or



*Suttons Bay Furniture Co.*

popular classics like cherry, maple, or walnut, each board is hand selected for quality and

appearance, worked with time honored techniques, and completed with exquisite rubbed finishes. A lifelong hunter and fisherman, and husband of CRA Director, Amy Beyer, Chuck understands the richness of utilizing nature's harvest to enhance our lives.

CRA is proud to have Suttons Bay Furniture Company as a generous supporter and business member. You can contact Chuck at (231)499-6078 or via the mail at 955 S. Nanagosa Trail, Suttons Bay, Michigan 49682.



### Save the Date!

What: CRA's Biennial Meeting and Luncheon  
When: October 28th, 2009 from 11:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.  
Where: The Hagerty Center, NMC Great Lakes Campus, Traverse City

Keynote speaker Andy Buchsbaum, Executive Director of National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes Office will address the urgent need and unprecedented opportunity for restoring the health of the Great Lakes. Watch for your invitation in the mail.