

## ***Wheeler Creek Dam Removal & Restoration Underway***

In 1867 a local citizen named John Wheeler built a dam on what came to be known as Wheeler Creek. Though there were a couple of fires at the dam site, the structure was repeatedly rebuilt over the years and has kept Wheeler Creek from freely flowing into the Manistee River ever since. In October of 2009, CRA worked with partners to remove Wheeler Creek Dam. The concrete spillway was breaking apart, the stop logs were in poor condition, and the risk of failure was looming for the 20 foot high dam.

The dam removal process has not been without challenges. Over 140 years worth of accumulated sediment and debris had collected in the ponds behind the dam, and with the highway and Manistee River immediately downstream of the dam we lacked an ideal sand trap site. CRA contracted with Wade Trim and Molon Excavating to engineer and complete the dam removal project. The ponds were drawn down and the dam gradually removed in October and November. The stream continues to cut down to its natural streambed to accommodate for the 20' of fall through the old impoundment area. It's no wonder that John Wheeler thought this a good location to harness the energy of a steep, fast flowing stream to power his sawmill.

The project will last another 2 years with restoration work through the impoundment area and downstream, and monitoring of stream changes at the site. Project partners and funders have included MDNR Fisheries Division, MDEQ, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, MDOT, and Kanouse Outdoor Restoration. Landowners of the dam and upstream and downstream of the site, have been helpful and patient as we work together to restore this cold, clear, high quality trout stream.



**Before**



**After**





## *In and Out of Water...*

A couple of years ago Kimberly Balke, CRA Biologist wrote an article on the importance of woody debris in northern Michigan streams. We're pleased to announce the award of \$60,000 from the US Fish & Wildlife Service and the Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Restoration Act for woody debris work on the Pere Marquette River over the next two years. This will include strategically placing log jams, platform structures and islands into the mainstem of the Pere Marquette. An additional \$30,000 must be raised to match this grant. If you or your organization are interested in supporting this effort, please make a tax-deductible donation to CRA and note "PM woody debris" on your gift.

More good news... the PM is getting a lot of attention "out of the water" too. The Land Conservancy of West Michigan is making significant progress with conservation easements along the river and its tributaries. This winter CRA helped LCWM facilitate the purchase of conservation easements on 252 acres on the mainstem and Weldon Creek utilizing Federal Nonpoint Source and Clean Michigan Initiative dollars. Over the last 9 years the LCWM has worked with 16 families to protect nearly 1,600 acres in the Pere Marquette Watershed. This includes conservation easements along the Little South and Baldwin Rivers, small creeks like Tank, Weldon, McDuffee and the main river. Land Protection Specialist, Pete DeBoer, comments, "While the conservancy completed our first conservation easement in the watershed in 2001, the momentum over the last several years has been substantial

as the concept of conservation easements have spread. Conservation easement lands that have been held in families for generations not only protect the land for current and future owners of the property, but also protect water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and scenic vistas throughout the watershed."

What else lies ahead? CRA will be updating the Pere Marquette watershed management plan to EPA standards and working with Lake County Road Commission on timber bridges and culvert replacements on Tank, Kinney and Sweetwater Creeks utilizing US Forest Service American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Fish Passage dollars.



*Over 250 acres were protected in the Pere Marquette Watershed this winter including this 76 acre piece owned by Bob and Carla Ohse on the PM and Weldon Creek.*



*CRA worked with US Forest Service, the Nature Conservancy, US Fish & Wildlife Service, MDNR, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, MDEQ, Wade Trim and Benzie County Road Commission to put on two road crossing workshops in Cadillac in October with US Fish & Wildlife Service funding. Special thanks goes to Dale Higgins and Mark Fedora, US Forest Service hydrologists from the Upper Peninsula and Wisconsin.*



*CRA was recently hired as a project consultant to help coordinate the Boardman Dams Project Implementation Team's (IT) charge of carrying out removal of three dams and possibly modifying the Union Street dam. Project Manager, Nate Winkler, will assist the IT's efforts that will involve numerous agencies, engineers, and contractors.*



*The Pere Marquette Watershed Council organized a workbee with 36 students from the Ferris Honors Program this fall at an eroding streambank site on the Pere Marquette. CRA obtained permits and paid for rock through the River Care Program. PMWC provided lunch, a Kubota tractor, and matching funds from OxyChem. Kanouse Outdoor Restoration installed 30' of habitat platforms along the deepest part of the bank. Over 200 feet of eroding bank was restored, and everyone enjoyed the day!*



## Silver Creek Fish Passage

The Silver Creek road crossing at State Road, upstream from the confluence of Silver Creek and the Pine River, blocked all fish passage into Silver Creek, a cold-water tributary and nursery stream for rainbow, brown, and brook trout. Because

the site posed no transportation problems, the replacement of the structure was a low priority for the local road commission. We were able to establish fish passage upstream into Silver Creek from the Pine River by removing a perched culvert and installing a bottomless arch structure. This is a great example of how local watershed partnership models can foster



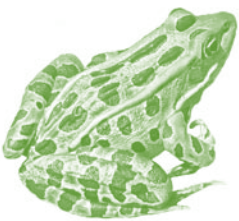
Before



After

consensus on appropriate BMPs, obtain implementation funding, and carry out large scale restoration projects. Funding was provided by the following partners: USDA Forest Service, MDNR Fisheries, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Forest Foundation, USDA-NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant, CRA River Care, and from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 administered through the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service.

## Wild Link Expansion Continues



*Amphibians, like the leopard frog, and other herps will benefit from a recent review of CRA management practices.*

CRA recently enlisted the help of David Mifsud of Herpetological Resource and Management to review our Wild Link and River Care management practices and make suggestions on how to better benefit herps (that is, reptiles and amphibians). Wild Link and River Care restoration sites were visited to assess how the projects were implemented and to view the results.

David's management suggestions will be ready for use in early 2010 and should provide valuable guidelines for planning future restoration efforts.

This past fall was also a busy time for Wild Link plan writers. Four plans were completed and delivered to private landowners in Emmet, Mason, and Antrim counties covering roughly 1,420 acres of regionally important wildlife corridors. These plans will guide property owners in managing their land for better wildlife habitat, water quality and sustainable timber resources. CRA anticipates helping these, and many other Wild Link landowners, complete on-the-ground management projects outlined in their management plans.

## Middle Branch Bridge Complete

A new timber deck and paved approaches have been installed at Baker Road where it crosses the Middle Branch of the Pere Marquette River. The US Forest Service Fish Passage Program funded the majority of site work, while the Lake County Road Commission, Chase Township and CRA provided match. The previous concrete deck structure was breaking apart and falling

into the stream. LCRC Supervisor, Gary Truxton is retiring after 37 years with the Road Commission. CRA staff have really enjoyed working with Gary and we wish him well!



*On September 29, 2009 partners celebrated the completion of the Green River Bridge in the Jordan River Watershed. Costs for this timber bridge project totaled \$161,500 and included the help and support of 14 different donors and agencies.*

## Conservation Innovation Grant

Funded by a program of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, CIG projects ranging from waterfowl habitat improvement to dam removals and timber bridges, are carried out under an over-arching conservation strategy tailored to the needs and attributes of each watershed. After four years, we are happy to report the results from the first of two \$500,000 CIG grants: 49 landowners have received help improving nearly 10,000 acres of critical habitat lands, 67 in-stream and upland projects were funded, improving hundreds of miles of stream. More than \$2 million in leveraged funds was raised to help expand the positive impacts. County road commissions, land conservancies, watershed councils, Trout Unlimited Chapters, community foundations, contractors, local government, and scores of volunteers have contributed time, money and motivation for the work. Special thanks goes to the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, whose natural resource and environmental professionals played a key role in identifying projects that dovetailed with the priorities of tribal members throughout northwest Michigan.

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

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	Jane Elzerman	Leslie Lee	Jim Shepherd	

## Biennial Meeting Draws Diverse Crowd

CRA's October Biennial Meeting attracted a broad representation of dedicated individuals and organizations. Over 120 attendees helped celebrate accomplishments, address challenges, and honor conservation award recipients. Keynote speaker, Andy Buchsbaum, Executive Director, National Wildlife Federation Great Lakes Office, focused on the emerging threats to our Great Lakes. Special Guest, Ann Mills, USDA Deputy Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment, provided insights from a national perspective after a morning of touring the Wheeler Creek dam restoration project on the Manistee watershed.

This event provides an opportunity to publicly recognize a number of individuals and organizations for their

contributions to sensible conservation in our region. This year's awards went to: Wayne Andersen - Outstanding River Care Partner, Tom Waurzyniak - Outstanding Wild Link Partner, Rick Westerhof (US Fish & Wildlife Service) - Outstanding Agency Partner, and Kelly Miller (Miller & Miller) - Outstanding Business Partner. These folks are some of the best of the best that CRA is fortunate enough to work with.



*Andy Buchsbaum, Executive Director, National Wildlife Federation Great Lakes Office, illustrated the impact that alien species have on the Great Lakes ecosystems and how the watersheds that feed the big lakes are essential for their immune systems.*



## CRA Membership and Fundraising Drive Kicked Off

It's been over 10 years now that I've been with CRA as Development Coordinator. I still start conversations and presentations with my honest proclamation that I truly have one of the best jobs in the world. Fundraising is a funny business. A lot of folks think it must be really daunting to ask others for money to help support our organization and work. The truth is that it can be. Getting to know what is most important to each individual or organization and helping determine if there is a connection to CRA's mission is more art than science.



The 2010 CRA T-Shirt Art  
Painting by Richard Forrest

Each year we work hard to assemble a funding puzzle that allows CRA to complete planned projects, address emergent problems, and stay strong as an organization to continue to care for natural resources into the future. Every donation, grant, contract, and fee for service, is critically important to this process. We honor the generosity and trust of our supporters. Your contributions are the fuel for CRA's conservation engine.

Our annual membership and fundraising drive restarts every fall and continues throughout the year. Your support goes right to work sustaining our organization while helping us meet the need for local investment in projects that are crucial for mobilizing public funding opportunities. There are many ways to give. Contact me anytime to discuss how you can arrange an annual, planned or estate gift, or contribute to CRA's Permanent Fund to ensure your commitment continues to make an impact for generations. Please consider making a tax-deductible gift to CRA this year. You will help make a difference! Thank You!

Matt Thomas, CRA Development Coordinator



Dr. Brian Burroughs, Executive Director of MI Trout Unlimited

## Trout Unlimited – A Half Century of Stewardship

2009 marked Trout Unlimited's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. From its inception on the banks of the Au Sable this committed organization has grown to include over 400 chapters around the country that find many ways to conserve and protect cold-water

resources. CRA has recognized TU as an essential partner from the chapter level on up to national. We appreciated the opportunity to offer representatives from around the country a conservation tour of the completed multi-staged Dair Creek restoration project on the Betsie River watershed as part of TU's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration held in Traverse City in August. Michigan TU kicked off the summer's celebration with a well attended anniversary event at the DNR Rayburn property on the Au Sable River in July.

We encourage everyone passionate about cold-water conservation to consider joining Trout Unlimited as one more way to get involved and help protect our streams.



A delegation of over 70 Trout Unlimited representatives checks out the restoration of Dair Creek.

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

Contributor \$35    Supporter \$50    Sponsor \$100    Benefactor \$500    Patron \$1000    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Business Membership:  Small \$100    Large \$500   *Special recognition and employee benefits available*

My employer will match my gift (please send forms)    I wish my support to be anonymous

Send Free T-Shirt, Size:  S    M    L    XL    XXL

Enclosed is my CRA Membership contribution

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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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!**



## Conservation Resource Alliance

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## Stewardship Spotlight

Starting the morning off with a nice cup of really good coffee is one of the little joys that many of us look forward to each day. The CRA crew is very lucky to have a little perk right here in our Bayview Professional Centre building to help us kick start our daily river saving activities. Aromas Coffee & Tea anchors a ground floor corner of our beautifully remodeled building and serves up some of the best brew in town by the friendliest team anywhere.



In a competitive market with a coffee shop every couple blocks, Aromas has worked hard to stake their claim in the Traverse City java scene. A relaxed, warm décor adds to the comfort of enjoying your favorite coffee drink or tea, smoothies, baked goods, soups, or a sandwich in house, or you can get it to go. Of course they offer WiFi service, a decent bay view, and easy parking. They regularly provide live music and open mic entertainment. Aromas also has a second location at 1535 S. Division St. in Traverse City.

CRA is proud to have Aromas Coffee & Tea as a supporter and daily provider of coffee, eats, and good energy. Check out their website: [www.aromascoffeeshop.com](http://www.aromascoffeeshop.com) for more information.

## Jordan River Electrical Weir Removed

This fall CRA worked with US Fish & Wildlife Service, MDNR, MDEQ, Friends of the Jordan River, Charlevoix County Community Foundation, the Great Lakes Fishery Trust, and Pete's Contracting to complete the removal of the defunct sea lamprey barrier on the Jordan River. The wooden barrier spanned the entire stream channel, and the headwalls were undercut and in disrepair. All man-made structures were removed from the site, the streambanks were stabilized, and the disturbed areas were covered with topsoil and seeded. Now we have full passage for all fish and aquatic insect species, and recreationists don't need to maneuver the weir decking. Next on the list for the Jordan River: leading downstream to remove the unused salmon weir gates in East Jordan and leaving the foot bridge near the mouth of the river intact.



Illustrations courtesy of JenniferThomasDesign.com