



## Passion for Resource Drives Involvement

An August canoe trip on the Boardman River with CRA staff and friends rekindled boyhood memories for Mark O'Reilly who recently moved from Colorado to Traverse City. In the 1950's, Mark spent three summers at Camp Tosebo located on Portage Lake near Onekama. Mark recalls canoe trips on the Manistee, Pere Marquette, and Pine Rivers as the highlights of each summer. "I'm a life-long fly fisherman and I think that my love of river environments really began on those trips." The two-hour Boardman float from Brown Bridge Dam to Shumsky's Landing was an opportunity for Mark and others to learn more about the Boardman Dams Project and the bright possibilities that lie ahead for this beloved resource. "In the context of all the development on the Boardman, becoming a member of CRA and volunteering my time were easy decisions" said Mark. He is currently assisting with CRA's annual membership campaign and numerous administrative activities around CRA's office. According to Matt Thomas, CRA's Development Coordinator, a personal connection to a cause can be a powerful motivator. "The closer the match between your passions and your giving, the greater the reward for everyone involved" said Matt. "We're happy to have Mark's help. He brings a ton of experience to the table along with a fresh perspective that helps us every day."

Perhaps a new set of childhood memories are being formed for a number of young people that helped CRA as River Care Kids and volunteers this field season. Over 120 hard working litter pickers from Kaleva Norman Dickson Elementary School hit the banks and trails at the busy Tippy Dam access. This was the 8<sup>th</sup> year that teachers Vivian Peck and Jennifer Cordes helped coordinate the event for 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. This year's volunteer crew included one of the original "Tippy Kids" that participated 8 years ago and is now a senior in high school!

More than an end of the year field trip, this group represents kids that love their river - the Mighty Manistee. Nearly every one of the youngsters has a story to tell about fishing,

paddling, and playing on this great resource. It also never ceases to amaze these kids that adult users of this popular fishing spot can act so disrespectfully, leaving behind so much trash. Fishing line, bottles, cans, wrappers, clothing, lures, tires, you name it, these kids have found it and bagged it. The goal of this outing is to make conservation fun while planting some seeds that we hope will help the next generation keep caring for these cool places, maybe better than past generations have done.

CRA volunteers came out for nearly two dozen events this field season. Girl Scouts from Leelanau County, watershed groups throughout the region, landowners, clubs, and folks who just heard about an opportunity to get involved, all showed up to help in some way. Whether it was hard work or plain fun, getting some mud on your boots can make a real difference. Thanks to everyone who pitched in to create success stories all over northern Michigan. We'll all be back out there in the spring to do it all again!



*CRA volunteer Mark O'Reilly is pictured in the stern of the lead canoe as a boy making lifetime memories at Camp Tosebo in the 1950's.*



## CRA's Director Points to New Conservation Vision for Michigan

With CRA's steadfast commitment to real, on-the-ground work, we sometimes have difficulty getting excited about broad plans, visions, and paper products. But I want CRA's supporters to know that I am excited about the recent "New Vision for Conservation in Michigan", authored by a loosely knit but highly dedicated group of non-profit and agency conservation leaders over the last 12 months. I told my kids, as I headed for the final meeting in Lansing to finish this work, "I think what

we're doing is sending a message to new and future leaders in Michigan that we know what conservation should look like in this State, and we don't need to forget that every two years." Thus, a resolution was signed in December by 25 parties, and a 5-page Conservation Vision was delivered to the Governor's transition team, along with the new leadership of the again-to-be-separate DNR and DEQ. What's in the 5 pages that I'm excited about? Here's a short list of what we think conservation should look like: public and private lands; wise use and development of renewable and non-renewable resources; regional differences (i.e., northern Michigan has different needs than urban centers of the south); and shared decision-making and leadership among public and private partners, regardless of traditional roles and authorities. I have to admit, the part I find most intriguing of all is this: the recommendations call for a new "conservation business plan" for Michigan. To me this concept really drives home the notion that conservation needs to be conducted as serious business in this State, with services, products, strategies defined, marketed to customers, and appropriately financed. What do you think? A link to the document is on CRA's website. I hope you will take a look, and share it with others as well! --- Amy Beyer

## Jordan River Mouth - Open Wide

In the late 1980s a foot bridge with salmon weir gates was built in East Jordan at the mouth of the Jordan River near the south arm of Lake Charlevoix. The gates are no longer in use, and trap woody debris and vegetation floating down the river. CRA worked with the City of East Jordan and Molon Excavating to remove the gates this fall, leaving the foot bridge intact. The removal allows for the natural movement of fish, wildlife, woody debris and sediment. This project was part of a \$63,500 effort to remove the defunct sea lamprey barrier and salmon weir on the Jordan River over the last 2 years. The MDNRE, Charlevoix County Community Foundation, NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant, Paul Young Chapter of TU, and Great Lakes Fishery Trust funded the overall effort.

## Great Lakes Stream Connectivity Receives Over \$3 Million Funding Award

Some of CRA's biggest dreams – for connected and fully restored healthy streams – are coming true. Thanks to an infusion of funding from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, CRA and our partners are taking on much larger, regional projects to remove barriers and improve road crossings and habitat in the northern streams of Michigan. Five of the largest funding awards, totaling just over \$3.5 million, involve partnerships with federal, State, and local agencies, and conservation partners such as Huron Pines and The Nature Conservancy. Agreements and grants from the Huron-Manistee National Forests, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. EPA, and the Sustain Our Great Lakes program are being used to restore the "connectivity" and habitats of many northern watersheds, including the Pere Marquette, Au Sable, Manistee, Two-Hearted, Betsie and Platte Rivers. CRA is overseeing the grants, and projects on the Lake Michigan side, while Huron Pines and The Nature Conservancy are coordinating work in the Lake Huron and Two-Hearted basins, respectively. CRA's

Director, Amy Beyer, says, "We are very pleased with the significant support, especially with local communities and businesses feeling the economy's downturn. We particularly appreciate that our federal agency partners recognize the good science and good economics involved in keeping the northern parts of the Great Lakes healthy. Healthy, connected streams and their corridors provide the best defense against future threats to the overall Great Lakes ecosystem. These streams provide the cleanest water inputs and highest quality habitats of the whole Great Lakes. Investment in the northern watersheds now is much more cost effective than waiting until they become highly degraded, when restoration costs skyrocket." More information on the individual awards can be found at CRA's website: [www.rivercare.org](http://www.rivercare.org).





## Removing the Manton Millpond Dam

This summer working together with the City of Manton, USFWS, and MDNRE biologists and permitting staff the first phase of the Manton Millpond Dam Removal project has been successfully completed. The impoundment drawdown began in June and over the next three months the first spillway was removed 6 inches at a time to ensure a slow drawdown of the impoundment releasing minimal sediment. The stream channel has now been formed through the old impoundment area and bottomlands have grown a lush vegetative buffer of native plants. With assistance from Mark Tonello and Chris Freiburger, MDNRE, final design plans are currently underway to complete the removal of the remaining spillway and deteriorated concrete of the dam in 2011.



## Pere Marquette River Watershed Gets A Boost

Lake County Road Commission gets the award for fixing the most crossings in less than a year! The US Forest Service ARRA and Fish Passage Funds and NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant provided \$536,800 and LCRC provided matching equipment and labor of \$191,400, to install 2 timber bridges and 3 concrete pipe culverts on Kinney Creek, Sweetwater and Tank Creeks. Work was focused on the tributaries which are nursery areas for naturally producing trout and sources of coldwater for the mainstream channel. All sites had culverts that were too small, short and often perched, blocking fish passage, and the steep road approaches were constantly washing into the streams. With the larger culverts and bridges in place, impounded sand is washing through the system revealing deeper channels with gravel beds upstream. As we were preparing for an onsite visit to Kinney Creek timber bridge, Jay Syrewicze, LCRC Superintendent, commented, "I think you're going to like how the site looks. The stream looks healthy and natural."



## A Beaver Island First

At a cost of \$32,000, CRA's first ever infrastructure project completed on Beaver Island at the same time removed an iconic road/stream crossing and improved passage for fish travelling between Lake Michigan and the creek. The jasper-tinted creek emptying into Iron Ore Bay had for years been crossed by an inspired combination of culverts in varying sizes and structural integrity. With anecdotal evidence pointing to the potential for coaster brook trout recruitment from upstream stretches of Iron Ore Creek to the big lake, the replacement of the only road crossing on the creek became a priority given that it crosses immediately adjacent to the mouth. A partnership between CRA, the Charlevoix County Road Commission, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, the Charlevoix County Community Foundation, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Kalamazoo Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and Gillespie Enterprises resulted in the replacement of the existing structure with one more conducive to fish passage as well as having an aesthetic appeal which complements the dramatic beauty of the location.

## Benzie Bridges

On a lovely September day, over 25 people came out to dedicate the Otter Creek and Aral Road timber bridge. This historic area used to be the site of Aral, a booming lumber town in the late 1880s. Today the land is part of the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, and the Otter Creek corridor is once again forested and now home to a variety of fish and wildlife species, including the brook trout. Bob Krenn hosted lunch at the event and many people proceeded to tour other sites completed under the EPA Benzie River Care Grant with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians. Burnt Mill Bridge over the Platte River was an important stop with the recent completion of this \$330,000 timber bridge. Benzie County Road Commission replaced an 8' wide culvert with a 54' span bridge, paved the crossing, and put in spillways to control sediment and return the river to a natural channel shape.



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

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## Please Join Us

The Conservation Resource Alliance needs your help. We all live, play, work, or visit in this beautiful corner of Michigan and it is our responsibility to care for our rivers, land, and wildlife. I believe that these gifts are what make this one of the most special places on the planet. If each one of us can find a way to help care for them, they will be enjoyed for many years to come. The simplest act to accomplish this is to support the good organizations that have strong and successful missions to restore and protect our natural resources. I hope that you consider CRA one of those groups and make a tax-deductible gift to CRA this month and in the upcoming year. Your contribution will go to work making a difference for the places that we all want our children and grandchildren to experience.

You can use the contribution form in this newsletter, give online at [www.rivercare.org](http://www.rivercare.org), or call your gift information in to us at 231-946-6817. We would also like to discuss helping you make CRA a part of your estate and planned giving considerations. Please contact us for more information. Thank you! – Matt Thomas, CRA Development Coordinator





## Coastal Riparian Corridor Benefits from Joint Venture

CRA along with regional partners the Land Information Access Association and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy have teamed up to protect the Acme/Yuba Creek Riparian corridor in northeast Grand Traverse County. The three groups jointly received a State of Michigan Coastal Management Program grant this past spring which will fund conservation planning and on-the-ground projects in the corridor.

CRA biologist Eric Ellis and Brian Bourdages, Farmland Protection Specialist with the GTRLC visited two properties this summer to assess the wildlife habitat needs of the properties. The farm owners have worked with the GTRLC to protect their farms with easements. A habitat management plan is being written for each property and will focus on invasive species removal, improving habitat for native pollinators, and planting native trees and shrubs that are compatible with the farming operations. Stay tuned for future project reports.

## Online Habitat Restoration Resources for Landowners

CRA often fields calls from landowners with questions on how to manage their property and improve wildlife habitat. CRA Biologist Eric Ellis and Americorps member (turned CRA Project Manager Assistant) Jodi Lindgren compiled information to help answer some of the more common questions people ask and posted it on the CRA website. Topics covered include invasive species management, land preservation options, native plant species, prescribed burning, deer management, and many others. To access this information go to the CRA website [www.rivercare.org](http://www.rivercare.org), scroll over the WildLink tab on the upper right and click on the Landowner Resources link.



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**Thank You For Your Support!**

## Looking Back - Looking Ahead

Eight years ago we scratched our heads as we sat around a table trying to figure out if CRA should put together a golf outing at Crystal Mountain. Knowing how much work such events are and not quite sure of what kind of response to expect, that early committee acted on faith more than experience when a decision was made to roll out the first Greens Fore Streams golf outing in 2004.

As it turned out, friends and partners from near and far have faithfully participated as players, sponsors, prize donors and volunteers. Over \$85,000 has been generated to directly benefit CRA's conservation programs from the generosity of this ardent following. Our 2010 Greens Fore Streams was a huge success and offered significantly improved conditions over the prior year's cold and wet weather. It is only after a tremendous amount of agonizing that we have decided to put this event on hold for the time being. Thank you to Crystal Mountain for offering this opportunity for fun while raising money for what we care so much about, to Scientific Anglers-3M, for being our generous title sponsor all these years, to all the businesses that sponsored holes and donated cool stuff, and to all those who participated and shared some great days on the links with us. We hope all of you will continue to support CRA while we brainstorm for the next event that might bring us back together for some fun.



## Conservation Resource Alliance

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# Stewardship Spotlight

## Krenn Bridge Company

Spend enough time driving around the back roads of northern Michigan heading to a favorite trout stream or mushrooming spot and you're likely to cross over one of those rivers on a rather nice looking timber bridge. CRA has been working hard for decades at replacing undersized and dilapidated culverts with new structures that offer benefits to the resource as well as safe passage for vehicles. One of CRA's most valued and trusted contractors is the Krenn Bridge Company. They have helped craft the right solutions for many of our road/stream crossing problems for years. Their specialty is custom designed timber bridges from their supplier, Wheeler Consolidated.

Bob Krenn and his crew of 8 employees deliver 80 to 100 bridges every year over a territory of ten states Based out of Vicksburg, Michigan, Krenn Bridge was started 53 years ago by Bob's father. We receive numerous comments about the aesthetic value of timber bridges, how they just make sense and blend well with the rural landscapes.

CRA is proud to have Bob Krenn and the Krenn Bridge Company as a partner and generous supporter. Check them out at: [www.krennbridge.com](http://www.krennbridge.com).

## Wishes Do Come True

Brad Barnes, President of Ferguson's Lawn Equipment (left) and Michael Witkowski, territory Manager for Bryan Equipment (right) worked together to fill two of CRA's three wishes published in the TC Business News by donating a Stihl chainsaw and BioPlus Oil. Thanks to Brad, Mike, and Lynn Geiger at TCBN for making this great gift happen!

