



P. O. BOX 282 • GRAYLING, MICHIGAN 49738

WINTER NEWSLETTER JANUARY, 2012

The purpose of this Association is to preserve and protect for future generations the Upper Manistee River system and its drainage as a world-class natural resource.

President's Message

by Jeff Steffey

"Aesthetically, the Manistee is one of Michigan's most attractive rivers. Its waters flow cool and clean, and its banks are forested with pine, cedar, spruce, poplar, maple and oak. In the fall, the brilliant warm colors of the hardwoods are pleasingly contrasted with the deep greens of the conifers." (*The Angler's Guide to Twelve Classic Trout Streams in Michigan*, GE Hendrickson (c) 1994). However, if you are reading this newsletter, you already know this.

I have read with interest, UMRA's history. Since its founding in 1966, the main focus of the Association has been to support the world-class resource we have. In the early years, it appears that the focus was on improving the health of a distressed river. While the river still has concerns, the health of the river has improved significantly over the 45 years of UMRA's influence. The current focus as suggested by its mission statement is "...to preserve and protect for future generations the Upper Manistee River system and its drainage as a world-class natural resource."

This newsletter provides an update on the wonderful work being done by the volunteer members of UMRA. UMRA is a not-for-profit volunteer organization.

While enjoying the river means different things to different people, we all love the river. Managing the health of the river and managing potential risks to the river is good for us all. Improving the health of the river (managing sediment traps, planting cedars, improving public access points) not only supports the fish population, but also supports the wildlife and scenery that we all enjoy. Being informed about contamination risks and taking appropriate action to minimize this risk benefits us all long term. Monitoring bugs and other wildlife tells us if our efforts are making a difference. Each of these items takes time and money to accomplish.

I hope that I have successfully influenced you to get involved. Involvement can be in many different forms. It has been said that there is success in numbers. At a minimum, I hope you care enough about the river to continue your membership and ideally recruit a friend. Historical records of UMRA show that membership was over 400 in 1996. We are currently at 240. We need general workers, bug collectors, grant writers, committee members, letter writers, cedar planters, and many others. We need liaisons to work with Trout Unlimited, local and state government, other not-for-profit organizations and others. Most importantly we need you. As you enjoy the river, (whether you are an UMRA member or not) please report any issue you see that may be a concern to the river so that we may take appropriate action.

I look forward to seeing each of you on the river. Say hi as you float by.

I'd be remiss if I didn't take a few words to thank Doug Fairbanks for his 4 years as President. I could not find when Doug became a member, however he has been a Board Member since 1992 and UMRA's president since 2007. Doug continues to serve as a Board Member.

River Care: '11 Summary

Don Buchanan

As I sit down to write this report the weather outdoors looks as though it should be a long time before we need to be thinking about our summer projects. However, we all know how fast time slips away, so I had better get busy. Our 2011 work season consisted of the usual maintenance issues along with several river improvement projects. Again this year the Kalkaska Conservation District was hired to perform the work on these projects. The usual repair and maintenance consists of user caused damage and deterioration of fences and stairways at several public access/egress locations along with several treefalls that had to be cleared and the debris repositioned to benefit the river.

This year we were able to remove the sand from two sediment traps. This is a very expensive undertaking to say the least. We were fortunate in that one of our board members, Chuck Hawkins, was able to raise a good share of the funding through his customers and the Orvis Corporation to cover a large part of the cost.

We have started what we hope to become a larger project in the future. This work will consist of building instream structures of large woody debris. These structures will replace some existing deteriorating structures and add new ones to deepen and narrow the river at these locations and impede the flow of sand downstream. At this time ten structures have been designed with construction work to begin in the early spring. As of now this work is being funded by the riparian land owner but we are hoping to get additional funding from other land owners and matching grants to continue this work up and down stream. This stretch of river just downstream from the Goose Creek Campground has become wider, slower and is braiding out causing many small streams and islands. This project should help in restoring the river to its natural flow. This work will be performed by the Kalkaska Conservation District and the Kalkaska High School SEEDS Program who have done our past instream structure work.

At this time we are meeting with some folks from the Conservation Resource Alliance from Traverse City. The CRA is a non-profit group that specializes in working with groups like ours and provides expertise in developing a master plan, prioritizing problem areas and seeking funding to solve these problems. At the present time the CRA is involved in building a three span timber bridge on Mecum Road over the North Branch. They are also in the lead in restoring the Flowing Well Trout Farm property. At this site they have removed at least 12 dams and several concrete structures and are restoring the flow of the North Branch back to its original location. We are hoping to establish this partnership so that we can repair and restore additional areas and help us to maintain the river in the future.

Anyone wishing to report any damage or maintenance needs, ie. Treefalls, erosion problems or damage at our access sites may do so through the Association's web site (UMRASITE.ORG).

Treasurer's Comments

Mark Rais

Our year to date income in 2011 is \$29,671.00. Contributing significantly to our income was generous donations for current projects and benefactors to the Restoration Committee, and specifically to their new Watershed project. Disbursements totaled \$27,056.00 which supported River Patrols, Portable toilets and the Restoration Committee. Net income thus is \$2,615.00. Our general fund balance is \$12,667.00.

The UMRA Foundation was created in 1996 as a restricted fund, with disbursements limited to earnings from the assets to help support the restoration and maintenance of our river. The Foundation's net assets currently amount to \$62,533.00, with undistributed earnings of \$12,513.00. Please consider an additional contribution along with your dues payment.

An audit of UMRA's financial records was completed in October 2011, and found to be complete and accurate.

Current UMRA Board of Directors and Advisory Council

Board of Directors/Term

Terry Blakely / 2013 (Secretary)
Dave Boberg / 2014
Don Buchannon / 2013
Doug Fairbanks / 2013
Chuck Hawkins/ 2012
Mark Hendrix / 2012
John Mount-Campbell / 2014 (Vice-Prez)
Mark Rais / 2012 (Treasurer)
Jeff Steffey /2014 (President)

Advisory Council/Term

Jim Anderson/2013
Ann Blakely / 2013
Bill Dean / 2012
Ed McCoy/ 2014
Tony Petrella / 2014
Tad Randolph / 2014
Al Slenk / 2012
Bob Thorsen / 2012

The **Emeritus Committee** consists of Jim Powers, Harry Olsen and Dave Weissenborn

2012 DUES ARE DUE!

We value your membership. Please use the enclosed dues envelope to pay your 2012 dues. Dues are for the calendar year and are **due at the beginning of each year.**

Finally, your big chance.....

As you have probably already discovered, there are two dues envelopes enclosed. No, we're not asking you to pay twice! We have included the second dues envelope to give you a chance at helping us out. We are always seeking new members. The more memberships we have the stronger we will be financially and, more importantly, the more influence as we will have in attempting to fulfill our Association's mission.

Please consider enlisting a neighbor or any others who love the Manistee River and want to see all of us "*preserve and protect for future generations the Upper Manistee River system and its drainage as a world-class natural resource.*"

You could also direct them to our website, UMRASITE.ORG

2012 Annual Meeting

For those of you who like to plan ahead, the 2012 Annual Meeting is tentatively planned for Saturday, August 18.

Lost Friends

Each year we attempt to remember and honor members that we have lost during the year. Since last Winter's Newsletter we have lost members H. William "Bill" Merrill, Sharon Vescio, Norman Amos and Donald Geiss. Bill Merrill served on the UMRA Board of Directors for many years and served many of those years as our Treasurer. We also lost several long time friends of the River, Bernie Nordlund and Todd Potter. Many generous donations were made to the Foundation by the families and friends in remembrance of these UMRA members.

FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTORS

Our heartfelt thanks to the following members who have contributed to the Upper Manistee River Foundation in 2011. Many non-members have also made memorial donations, often in memory of a lost loved one, and these donations are booked into the Foundation. All of these contributions build the fund to provide perpetual care of the River:

Dr. Jim Anderson
Glen Anderson & Family
Ken & Jean Bergman
Ann and Terry Blakely
James H. Burton, Jr.
Don & Adair Calder
Gary & Karen Crankshaw
Dr. William Dean
Tom & Ruth Dostie
Duane Elenbaas
Tom & Lorel Evans
Doug & Sherrie Fairbanks
Roger & Mary Fechner
Todd & Olsen Fletsmier
John Forte
Mr. & Mrs. James D. Glaspie
Mark & Valerie Hendricks
George & Nancy Ingram
Victor M. Ippolito
Mr. Dean Iverson
Dave & Peg Lehnen
Charles R. Lyon
H. William Merrill
Mason & June Miller
Bryan & Lavonne Moore
John & Jean Mount-Campbell
Brett & Anessa Nelson
Mr. & Mrs. Dane C. Nelson
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Nelson
Michael & Kathy Nolan
Harry Olson
Thomas N. Olivitt
Shawn Glen Pierson
Sara & David Pope

Robert Portenga
Mr. & Mrs. Tad Randolph
James & Louanne Reed
Ralph & Nancy Rucinski
William Sharp
Alan K. Slenk
Geoff Smith
Darryl J. Snabes
Anthony & Sharon Vescio
John H. Volz
Bob & Diana Vought & Amato
Tom & Peg Walbridge
Mr. & Mrs. David Weissenborn
Juanita Wennerstrom
Mark Wieland
Edward F. Wiest
Ray & Sue Woodard
John & Nancy Huckins
Donald & Cynthia Peitz
Dave & Janice Weissenborn
Barrett & Darlene Brown
Mr. & Mrs. William Howenstein
Ken & Cathy Hosner
Joan Harris & Children
Helen Mozer
The Nolan Family
Carol Yaw & Martha Kliebert
Steven Bernier
Laurie Young
Katheryn Caskey
James & Letty Ann Fiscus
Lee & Martha Kliebert
David & Marlene Wolf
Bob Vought & Diana Amato

Oil and Gas Pipeline Project

Bob Thorsen

I continue to work on a project that is intended to provide information related to the gas and oil pipelines within the Upper Manistee River Watershed. Unfortunately, the needed information is maintained in a piece meal fashion that I have not yet been able to distill into a useful dataset. I will continue my quest and I am hopeful that I will make some progress this winter.

2011 Annual Meeting a Success

Doug Fairbanks

The 2011 Annual Meeting was held on August 20 at the Bear Lake Township Hall. The event featured a fantastic pot-luck dinner and a successful fund raiser featuring raffle items, silent auction items and a live auction conducted by UMRA President, Doug Fairbanks. Attendance was down this year which was disappointing. The fund raising activities netted over \$4,200 for the Manistee River. The financial success was made possible by the hard work of the fund raising team of Chuck Hawkins, Bill Dean and Jim Powers and the generous donations of many local businesses, UMRA members and others. Please remember to shop at the businesses that are included in the following list of donors and perhaps mention a quick "thank you" to them and the individuals who donated items. The donors to the fund-raising effort include the following:

Medicine Shoppe
Don Buchanan
Fox Run Country Club
AuSable Eye Care
Grayling Country Club
Scheer Motors
The Orvis Company
Nolan's Tobacco – Traverse City
Northstar Auto Wash
David Rumveld

Spike's Keg O' Nails
Tad Randolph
Doug Fairbanks
Mark Hendricks
Grayling Car Care
Bloomquist & Associates,
Tony Petrella
Jerry McClain
Hawkins Outfitters
J J's Motor Mall

UMRA Website

Our web page and Facebook pages are finally in pretty good shape and seem to starting to link a lot of us together in the electronic age. In fact in 2011, we had several individuals use the web page and / or Facebook to contact UMRA regarding potential restoration activities, for membership and to make memorial donations to the UMRA Foundation.

We will be adding some pictures and possibly short videos to the web page in the next few months, so be on the lookout for those.

As was mentioned at the summer meeting, our web page now comes up within the top five when you search the words "Upper Manistee River" on Google, Yahoo, MSN and other web searches. This is encouraging as it will hopefully direct individuals that want information on the river to our site. In theory, thus increasing our membership.

Currently our Facebook has 51 "friends". Most of these individuals actually sought out the page and asked to join. This is more encouraging news, as it shows that people are interested in what we are doing and taking a look at us. I think the future for the facebook page will be to announce potential activities that UMRA has going to try to increase participation in events. I will start trying to post more items like that in the spring. Keep an eye out for those.

Visit our web site at www.umrasite.org

Our name on Facebook is Upper Manistee River Assoc

Please take a look at what we have going. If you have items, pictures or announcements you would like posted or for comments please email them to info@umrasite.org.

Manistee River Water Quality Monitoring

Bob Thorsen

The second volunteer water quality monitoring project of 2011 was held on October 1. Despite the chilly weather, we had a great turn out. The number of volunteers continues to grow and I am hoping to add a sample location on the North Branch at Mecum Road.

The use of river bug surveys to gauge water quality is widely accepted within the scientific community and the amount and variety of bottom dwelling river critters provide one of the best indicators of water quality. The information gained through the volunteer monitoring process is available to agencies such as the MDNRE for scientific evaluation and resource decision-making. While the intent of the program was to develop a legally defensible process and dataset, I truly hope we will never have to use the information to defend the health and well being of our river.

The survey and sorting process only takes a couple hours and it is quite fun and easy. The survey teams are led by knowledgeable and trained leaders who take the time to answer questions and ensure high quality results. This is a great outing for families and we especially welcome kids (good eyes!). Please don't be shy. The sampling collecting process is a great way to learn about the incredibly diverse underwater bio-system that exists everywhere in the river. Two sampling / sorting events are planned for next year on Saturday, June 2nd and Saturday, September 1st.

Please call Bob Thorsen (248) 318 5220 or email: sockeyebob@att.net; if you would like to volunteer or have any questions.

New "Fracking" Wells

Bob Thorsen

According to a news report there are two natural gas wells within the Upper Manistee River Watershed that everyone needs to be aware of and remain vigilant concerning any unusual activities or changes to the river. Fracking is short for hydraulic fracturing that involves pumping a specialized fluid into the rock formation under pressure. This process breaks or fractures the rock formation and releases pockets of natural gas. The fracking fluid can be toxic and has been reported to cause ground water contamination at other fracking sites. In addition, the fracking process requires a large quantity of water to operate and the "waste" fracking solution must be handled carefully and disposed of properly. One well is reported to be off of Sunset Trail north of M-72 and the other is off of Sunset Trail south of M-72. Both of these wells are very close to the North Branch.

A story on the wells can be found at:

<http://www.northernexpress.com/michigan/article-5745-another-round-of-fracking-in-northern-michigan.html>

Please call Bob Thorsen (248) 318 5220 or email: sockeyebob@att.net; if you have any questions.

Riverkeeper Program

Bob Thorsen

We are resuscitating the Upper Manistee River Watershed Riverkeeper program. I have a list of volunteers that I will be contacting this winter. I would like to expand the project to include the North Branch due to the recent developments that affecting that stream – Mecum Bridge crossing, the Flowing Wells restoration project and the new gas wells. The idea behind the Riverkeeper program is simply to expand the eyes and ears (and noses) of the river community and to help monitor the entire river. I also hope to assist with organizing local events to particular stretches of river (clean-ups, picnics, etc). Your ideas, input and involvement are critical to ensuring the success of the program.

Please call Bob Thorsen (248) 318 5220 or email: sockeyebob@att.net; if you have any questions.

A Comment Card is Enclosed

Please let us know your thoughts.

Cedar Plantings

by Howard Johnson

The Upper Manistee River Northern White-cedar Restoration Project has completed its first year in the Deward area. The purpose of this cedar tree planting and protection project is preserve and protects the cold-water fishery of the Manistee River by planting northern white-cedar seedlings along the river's edge. Cedars help maintain shade, cool the water, and provide erosion control by locking in the soil.

There were three separate plantings completed in 2011 on state owned land. The Sierra Club completed a planting of 50 seedlings in the spring, just upstream of Cameron Bridge. The crew leader for Sierra Club was Lorne Beatty. Mason Griffiths Founders Chapter of Trout Unlimited, lead by Bob Andrus, completed a planting of 50 seedlings in the fall of the year in their segment of the river. Also, the Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited completed a planting of 50 seedlings in September, lead by member Pete Middleton. All seedlings are in protective cages and are growing well. Each of these groups, in addition to the Anglers of the Au Sable, plan to accomplish similar plantings in 2012 & 2013. This initiative is part of the "Cedars for the Au Sable" project which is administrated by the Au Sable River Property Owners Association. Additional partners in this project include Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Forest management Unit and Huron Pines RC&D.

If you would like to plant a few northern white-cedars next fall on your own river property, please visit the "Cedars for the Au Sable" web site at www.cedarsfortheausable.org for an order form or contact Howard N. Johnson 989-753-6373. Also, if you would like to plant cedar seedlings with one of the groups on state land next year, please contact Howard. It is a great project for the whole family.

(editors note: Howard N. Johnson has been the prime mover of the "Cedars for the AuSable" program since its inception in 1997. The UMRA is just one of the river conservation groups that have supported this program for many years. We appreciate the work that has been accomplished by this organization.)

Ever wonder how to get in touch with our elected officials?

There may be issues that you would like to contact our elected officials about. Michigan currently has 38 state senators and 110 members of the House. If you have a letter that you would like to submit "officially" from the UMRA, please direct it to the Board of Directors.

Here's a small bit contact of contact info:

The site <http://house.michigan.gov/replist.asp> lists the State Representatives for each district and their Email address. If you enter this site and highlight the "Representatives" tab at the top of the screen you will be shown a spot to Click on to see the 110 districts.

The site <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/members/memberlist.htm> lists all the State Senators and their phone numbers and mailing addresses. If you click on "find your senator" and then click on "2003 districts" to see where the 38 Senate Districts are currently apportioned.

To find our elected officials in Washington, D. C. go to <http://www.contactingthecongress.org/> and click on Michigan on the U.S. Map that's shown there to see a listing of our two Senators and 15 Representatives.

("Contact Info" continues on the following page)

Elected officials (continued)

To contact the Governor:

Governor Rick Snyder
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

PHONE: (517) 373-3400

PHONE: (517) 335-7858 - Constituent Services

FAX:(517) 335-6863

E-MAIL: Rick.Snyder@michigan.gov

Several Non-Elected Officials

To contact the Natural Resources Commission go to
http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-39002_11862-26986--,00.html

To contact the State Bureau Administrator for the Fisheries Division of the DNR
Kelley Smith 517-373-3375 smithk@michigan.gov

To contact the Director of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Director, Rodney A. Stokes

Executive Office

PO Box 30028

Lansing, MI 48909

phone: [1-517-373-2329](tel:1-517-373-2329)

e-mail: DNR-Director@michigan.gov