



UPPER MANISTEE RIVER ASSOCIATION

P. O. BOX 282 • GRAYLING, MICHIGAN 49738

SUMMER NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2017

Visit our Website UMRASITE.ORG

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.

The UMRA Annual Meeting will be Saturday, September 2 at 9:00 A.M. at the Bear Lake Township Hall. Come early and join us for coffee and pastries.

(Please note, this is a change to the Saturday of the Labor Day weekend from the usual schedule of the meeting on the 3rd Saturday in August)

The meeting will feature numerous door prize gift certificates. We are expecting gift certificates from The Old AuSable Fly Shop, Northbound Outfitters, Grayling Restaurant, Spike's Keg O Nails, Tip N Mitten and Paddle Hard Brewery.

President's Message

Dave Boberg

All and all I would say I am pretty content with the current state of the UMRA and the health of our river. We have once again had a successful year in our projects and our fundraising thus far. We have also demonstrated that we are able to work on large projects (Portage Creek study) with very positive results.

Take a look throughout the newsletter; we have made some changes to our volunteer day and our annual meeting. On a project front, I think you will be quite pleased with the Restoration Committee's report and the work they are doing.

One of the most important harbingers of the health of our river is our bi-annual bug surveys and the results they provide. Please look through the newsletter for information on the fall survey. We now have all our historical data loaded online (there is a link on our website) and things are looking good.

To date we have no reported evidence of the New Zealand Mud Snail infestation in the Upper Manistee River. We are working with the Michigan DNR to help educate people on prevention and our surveys are there to see if we ever find them.

Our electronic and web presence seems to keep improving and we are able to use that more and more to get the word out about what we are doing and announcing meetings and events. Our current Facebook page has close to 1,300 followers and our website continues to improve as we add more information.

I am also really confident with the partnerships we have formed with many of other local conservation organizations and government entities. This gives all of us a much larger voice, should our voices need to be heard in a situation.

Our membership is slowly growing, a few new members here and there. I think I mentioned before, this is somewhat troubling, with all the exposure to the great things we are doing. However, I am very happy to report that our giving amount per member is growing year after year. I would say that means our members are happy with what we are doing. I continue to urge you to ask your friends and neighbors to join the UMRA.

Finally I am so grateful for all of the corporate donors that have made large donations to our current projects for 2018. I have listed them all on our website. Without them, we would not be able to take care of the river in the manner it needs. Take a look at these great organizations and give them a thank you, a donation or shoot some business their way.

Manistee Water Quality Survey – What the bugs can tell us

Bob Thorsen

The Spring Volunteer Water Quality Survey was held on June 3. The weather was unusually cooperative for the group of 24 volunteers that performed the survey. Bugs were collected and sorted, no one got wet and hopefully everyone enjoyed lunch.

Water quality sampling on the upper Manistee River occurs twice a year (**Next survey Sept 30**) at five locations within the watershed: Deward area, Goose Creek, mainstream above M-72, Portage Creek and the North Branch of the Manistee at Mecum Rd. The AuSable Institute monitors the river farther downstream.

A large variety and abundance of bottom dwelling river critters, otherwise known as benthic macroinvertebrates, are the best indicators of good water quality and a healthy river system. The use of river bug surveys to gauge water quality is widely accepted within the scientific community and the Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) has developed a well designed protocol for evaluating bodies such as the Manistee River. The process includes collecting, categorizing, identifying and maintaining samples and contributing survey data to the MiCorps database. The information gained through the volunteer monitoring process is then available to agencies such as the MDEQ for scientific evaluation and resource decision-making.

“Official” recognized survey data is critical for the long term protection of the Manistee river and this information will be used to detect changes in water quality that threaten that protection. The volunteer sampling process is the only tool available that provides long term reliable data concerning the health of the river. There is nothing else. It is up to all of us to protect the river and to maintain a defensible database of scientifically recognized information. The survey teams are led by knowledgeable and trained leaders who take the time to answer questions and ensure high quality results. There are no special skills or training required. We welcome everyone, especially families and kids.

Additional helpers are always needed and members of the local community and riverfront landowners are especially welcomed. This program needs volunteers to build on the ongoing success and to ensure perpetual protection of the river.

The 2017 Fall Manistee River Water Quality Monitoring Project is scheduled for September 30.

The group will meet at the Kalkaska Eagles’ patio (M-72 just west of the river) at 9 am and then return to Eagles at noon for a light grilled lunch. Bring a friend. Only you can protect the river!

Please contact Bob Thorsen at (248) 318 5220 or socketeyebob@att.net if you would like more information or to sign-up. Otherwise, just show up at the Eagles Club on October 7th Remember to bring a rain coat and rubber boots or waders.

- - - CHECK OUT THE LAST PAGE OF THIS NEWSLETTER TO SEE VOLUNTEERS AT WORK ! - - -

Stream Projects

Jim Anderson

UMRA river restoration efforts are going well. The SEEDs crew has been working on the river in the area of the Tree Farm. The crew of 4 is revisiting each of 43 structures that we built several years ago. This summer each of those structures are being evaluated and upgraded with additional cover and structure maintenance. The crew will complete their work by August. In addition, the SEEDs crew will return to construct a NEW access site at the CCC campground. UMRA is partnering with the DNR in an effort to replace the old upstream site and replace it with a much improved design just below the CCC Bridge. Work continues on Portage Creek in an effort to gather and record baseline data about Portage Creek. The data gathering of flora, fauna, aquatic life, fish identification, erosion issues and the geomorphology of the creek will be done by this fall and a final report will be published. Future funding to use that data gathered to determine Portage Creek needs is looking good. Best management practices (BMP) will then be initiated where needed. Several weeks ago a volunteer project day was conducted in conjunction with the Mason Griffith Founders TU Chapter. Volunteers cleaned up the old Z landing site, added additional rails at the Tree Farm slide across the rock crib and added a large log into the 3 Mile site rock crib to aid water craft across the crib and into the river. Coordination between the Guard and UMRA continues in an effort to finalize an agreement that will have the UMRA be the oversight and manager of the 2 sand traps the Guard has on Portage Creek. The HIA grant proposal is finalized and will be turned in for consideration for funding. The grant deadline changed from spring to fall. UMRA should know whether or not the proposal will be funded by early spring 2018.



Additional Rails at the Tree Farm



Added log at the 3 mile landing

New Zealand Mud Snails

By now most of you have heard about the infestation of the New Zealand Mud Snail (NZMS) into a lot of our rivers in Northern Michigan. We had an article regarding them in our last newsletter. To date, we are still very happy to report that there has been no reported evidence of the NZMS in the Upper Manistee River. We can only hope and pray that this remains the case.



You may have seen these signs posted at many access sites along the Manistee. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources has donated these signs to UMRA for deployment. The most important defense in fighting the NZMS is the education of people to wash their gear, boats and equipment.

If you enjoy time in multiple bodies of water, please wash and scrub your gear. That means waders, boots, shoes, boats, canoes and kayaks before and after using in the river. The act of scrubbing with a stiff brush to remove debris may be the most important part of the process. Please encourage all of your fellow river users to employ these processes as well. We all have a stake in this to protect our rivers.

River Clean-Up and Volunteer Day

Dave Boberg

We are going to try a bit of a different approach for our "Clean Up / Volunteer Day" this fall. Typically this event has been held on the third Saturday after Labor Day.

When first organized, the event involved assembling teams of river walkers to go down the river and pick up trash. What we found after several years was that we were not picking up much trash. This had nothing to do with the hard work of our volunteers, but was more likely due to the fact that there really wasn't that much trash. Additionally the river walking project is very tedious to organize, and if you don't get enough people to show up, it just doesn't work.

So we added in a few volunteer projects, added cleaning up at access sites, and brought in a paddling group to cover much more area of the river in a short amount of time. This is all well and good; again depending on a good number of volunteers, cooperation from state agencies, and that you have projects to complete.

Recently, our friends at Mason Griffith Trout Unlimited had a volunteer day which involved several projects that need attention on the Upper Manistee River. Those have been completed.

The paddling group still plans on making a trip down the Manistee to clean up. More importantly, the guys at Shel Haven Canoe Livery do a large scale river clean up right after Labor Day.

All that being said, we are not going to have this event in September. However, there is a more important item on our agenda. As most of you know, we do a volunteer bug survey event twice a year. With the ever looming threat of the infestation of the New Zealand Mud Snail (see article in this newsletter) in to the Upper Manistee River, we feel our bug surveys are becoming more and more important.

We are asking, encouraging and even begging for all of volunteer forces to show up to our bug survey date on September 30, 2017. Our turn out for the fall event has been notoriously low. We cannot stress how important this monitoring is to the health of the river and to look for invasive species. There is more information on the event in this newsletter. We hope to see you there!

Financial Update

Bill Dean

As of July 21, 2017, our year-to-date income is \$34,330.65. We have received generous contributions from the Mason Griffith founder chapter and the Elliot Donnelley chapter of trout unlimited, the Michigan Fly Fishing club, "friends " of Chuck Hawkins Outfitters, as well as many of our members. Our expenses amount to \$10,6344.32, however most of our summer expenditures are still to come; restoration committee expenses, porta potties, and river patrol.

The Upper Manistee River foundation has received donations of \$2,470 this year bringing our balance to \$79,538.39, with \$13,626.78 in undistributed earnings. We thank all of our friends and members for their generous support!

If your newsletter envelope contains a dues envelope it means that our records show that we have not yet received your 2017 dues. Please renew your membership today, as we appreciate your continued support.



Volunteers sample Portage Creek as part the MiCorps water quality monitoring project