



P. O. BOX 282 • GRAYLING, MICHIGAN 49738

# WINTER NEWSLETTER

## 2016-17

**Visit us at [UMRASITE.ORG](http://UMRASITE.ORG)**

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*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.*

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### ***President's Message***

*by Dave Boberg*

Well the snow has arrived on the Upper Manistee River. What I thought might turn out to be a mild winter with 70 degree days in October, has certainly proved me wrong.

2016 was what I would consider to be another very successful year for our restoration committee and the work they are doing to protect our valued resource. We continued our work on creating and improving access sites not only for safe access to the river, but more importantly to limit erosion and help to prevent sediment introduction into the river. I need to count, but I am pretty sure we are now done with our big work on all of the access sites. There will be maintenance and minor fixes here and there over the years, but this is a huge accomplishment to have all of those finished.

Once once again used the non-profit group, SEEDS, out of Traverse City go into the river between 612 and M72 to improve on and continue the work they had done two years ago. Our crew was really good this year, and they are all becoming quite the river stewards.

Our huge project that we are doing with the National Guard for the study and mapping of Portage Creek continued all summer, and that is really coming together nicely. We will continue that into next year.

All this work is very expensive and it could not have been completed without the generous donations of our membership. In addition we had several very large donors this year that we need to thank. Our gratitude and thanks go out to Mason Griffith Trout Unlimited, National Trout Unlimited, Elliott Donnelley Trout Unlimited, The Michigan Fly Fishing Club, The State Michigan DNR HIA Grant Program, and the National Guard.

We have several large projects planned for 2017 as well. We will revisit 43 instream structures for improvements in the Tree Farm area, continue our mapping and study of Portage Creek and produce our findings, complete several volunteer projects and start a study to find out what work needs to be done on the North Branch of The Upper Manistee River, specifically with Tag Alder eradication. The good news is that we have already secured funding for two of these projects.

Strange thing though, even with all of our great work the last few years, our membership numbers were reduced this year. So that is somewhat disheartening. I encourage you, if you care about the river, to encourage your neighbors, friends and family to join UMRA. If you have suggestions to increase our membership, for volunteer projects or for the annual meeting, please email us.

A lot of people have heard about the New Zealand Mudsnaills in some of our Northern Michigan Rivers. We are aware of this situation and are watching carefully. The good news is that 4 separate invertebrate studies were done on our river and its tributaries last year. None of these studies showed that these little critters are in the Upper Manistee River. It's probably false hope to say they will never arrive here though.

(President's message continued)

We are working with several partners on some education programs to instruct people on the prevention of transferring these from other river systems. At this time the most important thing is thus; if you are using your equipment (waders, boots, river shoes or boats) on multiple river systems, make sure you hose them off after using. Use a stiff brush to clean your boots. Then let the equipment air dry for 24 hours. If your pals are coming up to your place to use the river, they should be cleaning their stuff prior to getting in the river. There has been a lot of talk of which chemicals could be used to clean items, but I am not sure if anyone is really sure what the best thing is at this time. We will keep everyone updated on this situation as it evolves.

Please keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates. We are revamping our website and that should be completed around the first of February. So check that out as well.

On a final note, our long time Treasurer, Mark Rais, has decided to retire from that position. This position, like the secretary position, is one of the most thankless jobs in UMRA. Mark has done an exemplary job in this role and we thank him for his years of service.

## ***River Care 2016***

*by Jim Anderson*

Many projects have and are being addressed on the Upper Manistee River during the summer of 2016. River crews worked in the area of the Goose Creek and Upper Manistee campgrounds. In previous years approximately 63 habitat structures were either built or repaired. Those sites were re-visited by the crew to assess and maintain. (pictures of some of the River Care activities are shown on the following two pages) The plan for 2017 is to again put a crew in the river to do the same assessment and maintenance to structures in the area of the Tree Farm and Yellow Tree landing.

The SEEDS crew also revamped the 3 Mile Bend access site which was a HIA grant received by UMRA. A boat slide and rock crib was integrated into the existing steps. The crew has also upgraded an access site at the Tree Farm with HIA grant funds. A grant from the Michigan Army National Guard to provide base line data from Portage Creek is underway. This project is a partnership with other organizations; MI Trout Unlimited, TU's Mason Griffith Founders Chapter, Gahagen Nature Preserve and others to gather various types of data from Portage Creek and then make recommendations for needed improvements to Portage Creek.

Additionally, another successful river cleanup/project day was completed. Work was done in the Deward area, below M72 and at 4 Mile Bend. Many volunteers make this day a continuing success and their work is greatly appreciated.

A quick but important note: The boat slide project at the Tree Farm was funded by HIA funds awarded to UMRA. The drawing and original plan submitted were approved and money awarded. In order to actually construct the project, permit applications were submitted to both the DEQ and Natural Rivers. Work could not begin until revisions to the original plan were agreed upon. The fact that the original design was approved by one group and then not by other was very frustrating. The final ,mandated design resulted in a boat slide that was nearly twice as long as originally planned and an extensive amount of fencing, none of which was in the original design.

## ***2017 Dues are Due***

We value your membership. We have both an online option as well as the traditional dues envelope option for joining or renewing your membership. Enclosed is a dues envelope for your convenience. Dues are for the 2017 calendar year and are now payable.

**We have included Comment Cards because we love to hear from you.**

***River Activity Pictures - 2016***



***Three Mile Landing - Before***



***Three Mile Landing - After***



***Tree Farm - Before***



***Tree Farm Boat Slide - After***



***A few of the Bug Sampling Crew***



***SEEDS workers in stream***

***River Activity Pictures - 2016***



**SEEDS Workers**



**SEEDS Workers**



And as a reminder from the Summer Newsletter.....

A day was set aside to team up with the DNR, Mason Griffith TU, Americorp and SEEDS to repair a serious erosion site at the Goose Creek campground.

## ***Monitoring on the Upper Manistee***

*by Bob Thorsen*

The Fall Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Event on the Upper Manistee was held on Saturday, October 1st. It was a lovely morning with periods of light showers (of course).

The turn-out, while greater than the 13 who volunteered last Spring, was still surprisingly low compared to past events. The wonderful group of citizen scientists were in good spirits and did a great job collecting bugs followed by a hot lunch under the Eagles Club canopy!

The use of river bug surveys to gauge water quality is widely accepted within the scientific community. Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) has developed a protocol for evaluating rivers such as the Manistee River. Teams of volunteers capture and sort river dwelling insects (benthic macro invertebrates) to determine both the diversity and counts of the various critters. The information helps to monitor long term trends and overall health of the river environment, serving as "canaries in the mineshaft." 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 then available to agencies such as the MDNRE for scientific evaluation and resource decision-making.

"Bug" collecting is a very fun and educational event that is ideally suited for both the young and old and everyone in between. I hope that you have an opportunity to join us at a future event.

The 2017 Spring event will be held on Saturday June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2017, starting at 9 AM at the Kalkaska Eagles. All volunteers are welcome. This "forever" event is only possible through the continued support and participation of citizen volunteers. This volunteer monitoring project is the only comprehensive alarm system in place to protect the river. Please help to ensure the long term viability and stability of this effective "early warning" defense of the river.

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

## ***Financial Update***

*by Mark Rais*

As of December 2016, our year-to-date income is \$47,455.00. This amount includes \$10,500.00 of Habitat Improvement Grants through the State of Michigan. Other generous contributors include Mason-Griffith Founders chapter of Trout Unlimited, The Michigan Fly Fishing Club, Elliot Donnelly Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Kalamazoo Chapter of Trout Unlimited, The Boardman River Clean Sweep, as well as many of our members. Our expenses total \$40,839.00. Thus, our net income is \$6,616.00. River restoration expenses totaled \$33,500 for the year. Other large disbursements included river patrols, and Portable toilets. As of December 2016, the Upper Manistee River Foundation had a balance of \$76,616.00. Undistributed earnings for future Restoration Projects totaled \$13,490.00. (this amount is yet to be adjusted at year end). We continue to grow the Foundation through generous donations of those who support our river. Thank you.

## ***2017 Annual Meeting (schedule change)***

The Annual Membership Meeting is currently scheduled for September 2, 2017, which is the Saturday of the Labor Day Weekend. This is a change from our recent scheduling of the annual meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Saturday of August. We are making the change in order to try to encourage more attendance at the meeting.

## **2016 Donors to the UMRA Foundation**

Glen & Jean Anderson & Family Mark & Liz Banker Egel, Tom Barr, Gerri Ann and Terry Blakely David Boberg Linda Boberg James H. Burton, Jr. Brian & Margaret Casey Ronald Cucuro Dr. William Dean Tom & Ruth Dostie Doug & Sherrie Fairbanks David Falconer Rex C. Farver John Forte Mr. & Mrs. James D. Glaspie Mark & Valerie Hendricks Arthur S. Hesse Jr. Mr. & Mrs. W. K. Howenstein Chris and Sue Janowicz Susan Kornoelje	George & Karen Leshkevich Vance McCabe Michael & Kathy Nolan Thomas N. Olvitt Donald & Cynthia Peitz Lynn K. & Chris Polaczyk Sara & David Pope Robert Portenga Mark Rais Mr. & Mrs Tad Randolph James E. & Louanne G. Reed Jill and Jim Robnett Bruce & Christina Schlitt Darryl J. Snapes Gary and Nancy Torkeo John H. Volz Bob & Diana Vought & Amato David and Jan Weissenborn John M. Weissenborn Juanita Wennerstrom Robert C. & Mary J. Wismer Ray & Sue Woodard
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Note: Our apologies if you contributed to the Foundation in 2016 and we inadvertently omitted your name. Thank you to all who have contributed.

### ***UMRA Board of Directors and Advisory Council Members***

<b><u>Board of Directors</u></b>	<b><u>Term</u></b>	<b><u>Advisory Council</u></b>	<b><u>Term</u></b>
Jim Anderson	2017	Bob Andrus	2017
Dave Boberg (Prez)	2017	Joyce Hexton	2019
Bill Dean (Treasurer)	2018	Vince Caruso	2018
Doug Fairbanks	2019	Mark Hendricks	2019
Chuck Hawkins	2018	Chuck Hewitt	2018
Mark Rais	2018	Ed McCoy	2017
Tad Randolph (Secretary)	2019	Jim Montagne	2017
Jeff Steffey (V-P)	2017	Bob Thorsen	2018
Sue Woodard	2019		

#### ***Emeritus Committee***

Dave Weissenborn, John Mount-Campbell, Terry Blakely and Ann Blakely