



P. O. BOX 282 • GRAYLING, MICHIGAN 49738

# WINTER NEWSLETTER

## 2018-19

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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*

It is a very cold morning on the river as I type this. We were at 25 below zero this morning, and the river was about fifty percent covered in ice. I heard not too far downstream from us the river was completely iced over. Hard to believe the trout season opener is just over three months away.

We had another great year of accomplishments on the Upper Manistee River. Most of our work for the main stream this year was planning, permitting and design for the start of 2019's large project. However, we achieved great success with projects on the North Branch and Portage Creek. We have to say a big thank you to our friends at National Trout Unlimited as they completed a large culvert / road crossing replacement on Big Cannon Creek.

The summer of 2019 marks the start of a large two year in-stream project starting just down stream from the Tree Farm Area and working down to near Yellow Trees. This project was funded by a State of Michigan HIA Grant to the tune of \$88,000. We are very grateful to have been given this money to complete this work. The area we will be working in is much less accessible than some of the other areas we have done work, and the individual projects are much larger as well. We hope to have the over 60 individual projects of this plan completed by the end of 2020.

I would be remiss if I did not give a big shout out and congratulations to Joe Hemming and the Anglers of the AuSable Organization. They fought the good fight, stuck with it and achieved great success by stopping a commercial fish farm on banks of the AuSable river. Joe's work on this project earned him Fly Fisherman Magazine's Conservationist of the Year. Great job everyone on our sister river!

And now the big news.... About a year ago Jim Anderson and I approached Dr. Bryan Burroughs, Executive Director of Michigan Trout Unlimited. We had a dream, a plan, a vision or just a crazy idea to take a large five (or more) year project to do a work from Yellow Trees down to CCC Birdge. We knew we would need Bryan's credentials, knowledge and just plain help to start this project.

Little did we know that Bryan and one of our Board Members had been working with a very generous individual who had his sights set on financially helping out the Upper Manistee River for years to come. Well, it's starting. In 2019, Michigan Trout Unlimited will be partnering with UMRA, MGTU and other organizations to start a year long study and plan of the entire Upper Manistee River watershed. The goal will be to gather data, capture new data, and make a "plan" of projects for the entire river.

Once complete, in the fall of 2019, we will begin the permitting process for 2020. We could not have even started this project without the initial financial contributions of this individual and the hard work of Bryan and Michigan TU. This is just the start. Over the next few years, we will need even more support both with help and financing. We also plan to go after quite a bit of corporate money to help as well. We are very excited about this undertaking and cannot thank those that have planted this initial seed.

Enjoy the rest of your winter. Continue to watch our Facebook page for updates. Thank you all for your continued support.

## ***River Care 2018***

*by Jim Anderson*

The Manistee River and tributaries are doing fine. Portage Creek has been "cleared for navigation" from the gas pipeline, on Camp Grayling, to the confluence. More work that will target habitat improvements and bank erosion concerns will be done in the near future in cooperation with UMRA and the Camp Grayling Environmental staff. The North Branch of the Manistee has also been cleared for navigation from the Flowing Well property downstream to Kniss Rd. Portage Creek and the North Branch are both brook trout reaches that previously were congested with downed trees and beaver dams.

A recent "revisit" to two boat slide sites (Tree Farm and CCC Bridge) has resulted in modification requests being granted by Natural Rivers staff. The slides will be shortened in total length which will greatly improve the boat slide locations and ease of use.

This past summer approximately 40 sites have been identified on the mainstream of the Manistee from the Tree Farm downstream toward Yellow Trees. These sites are targeted for fish habitat rebuilds or new construction. Thanks to DNR staff, Michigan TU staff and many volunteer hours locations, mapping and design work has been completed. Crews will be in the river Summer 2019 after permits are approved by Natural Rivers and the DEQ. This habitat project is made possible by an HIA grant and will continue with more fish habitat work downstream to Yellow Trees landing during the Summer of 2020.

## ***Financial Update***

*by Bill Dean*

As of December 2018 our year to date income is \$45,371.88 with expenditures of \$36,463.79 for a net income of \$8,908.09. Our generous contributors include The Michigan Fly Fishing Club, Elliot Donnelley Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and "friends" of Chuck Hawkins Outfitters, as well as many other members.

Upper Manistee River Foundation has received 41 donations for a total of \$3,530.00. This brings our foundation total to \$84,072.93 with undistributed earnings of \$14,221.78. Once again, we thank all of our friends for their generous support.

## ***2019 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 2019 calendar year and are now payable.

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

*Clearing Portage Creek for Navigation*



*Building the New Ramp at the CCC Bridge*



**See the article by Jeremy Geist (last page) that relates to these photos**

Big Cannon @ Military Rd. (Kalkaska Co.)



Before



After

## ***2018 Donors to the UMRA Foundation***

Glen & Jean Anderson & Family	John & Jean Mount-Campbell
Terrence Bloomquist	Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Nelson
Thomas G. Boldt	Thomas N. Olvitt
James H. Burton Jr.	Donald & Cynthia Peitz
Brian & Margaret Casey	Lynn K. & Chris Polaczyk
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Steve Lowe	Ray & Sue Woodard
Hank Milius	

### ***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	2020		2019
Dave Boberg (President)	2020	Jeff Steffey	2021
Bill Dean (Treasurer)	2021	Vince Caruso	2021
Doug Fairbanks	2019	Mark Hendricks	2019
Chuck Hawkins	2021	Chuck Hewitt	2021
Mark Rais	2021	Dave Wilson	2020
Tad Randolph (Secretary)	2019	Jim Montagne	2020
Joyce Haxton	2020	Brian Pitzer	2019
Sue Woodard	2019	Dave Wilson	2020

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

Ann Blakely, Terry Blakely, Harry Olson

## ***Big Cannon Creek***

by Jeremy Geist,

*Great Lakes Stream Restoration Manager, Trout Unlimited*

Michigan is home to over 36,000 miles of stream, and many of those miles (nearly a third) are designated trout waters. As Michigan residents, it is easy to take this statistic for granted as we are accustomed to the vast opportunities the State has to offer to the trout fishing enthusiast. Access to our rivers via roadways is also abundant, making it relatively easy to enter into our favorite river stretch. However, when these two networks (rivers and roads) intersect, it is often problematic, having consequences to both the river and the road. This is generally because the design behind a river/road interface has historically been driven only by water flow, with the goal to pass the water under the road through the smallest and cheapest structure (e.g., bridge or pipe). Little to no consideration was given to other natural stream characteristics, such as sediment and organic matter transport, and fish and wildlife, which are fundamentally important to a 'healthy' stream. As a result, the typical situation found at a road/stream crossing is a dimensionally inadequate culvert (metal pipe) that is failing (e.g., rusting or collapsed) and impacting fish passage and natural stream processes. Putting a stream through a culvert that has a diameter less than the stream's natural channel width increases water velocities at the downstream end (similar to when you place your thumb at the end of a water hose). These increased velocities can make it challenging for younger and smaller fish to move through (i.e., velocity barrier), can cause stream bed scour at the immediate downstream end, and over time result in a perched culvert (i.e., vertically offset, waterfall effect). Side effects of a perched culvert include habitat fragmentation, blocked fish and other aquatic organism passage, and disruption of downstream natural material transport.

As our understanding of river science improves, the threats that face them are increasingly realized. Road crossings are one example and can be lumped into the larger "barrier" issue that also includes dams. Recent studies have shown that in the Great Lakes region there are 38 times as many road crossings as dams and roughly two-thirds are partially or completely impassable to fish. The take home message here is that river connectivity is fragmented by our road systems, and because we know that fish need access to multiple habitat types throughout a river system during various times of the year and their life span, we can conclude that our road networks are negatively impacting fish populations.

Trout Unlimited, in partnership with UMRA, MIDNR and the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is working towards improving connectivity and habitat in the Upper Manistee River. This past year, a severe road-stream crossing was improved on Big Cannon Creek. *Big Cannon Creek* is a tributary located in the upper portion of the Manistee River in Kalkaska County and offers high-quality cold-water habitat for trout and other fish species. The Military Rd. Crossing, located in the former town of Sharon, had two 3' x 5' corrugated metal culverts that had become vertically offset (perch height of approximately > 1.0ft) having adverse impacts to aquatic organism passage and stream ecosystem processes. TU collected topographic and geomorphic data, acquired necessary permitting in partnership with the Kalkaska County Road Commission, and replaced the undersized culverts with a 23' x 6' bottomless aluminum box culvert. A natural channel bed was constructed to mimic natural stream conditions through the culvert. The replacement of the culverts opened approximately 7.5 miles of upstream high quality cold-water habitat for trout and other fish.

UMRA provided financial support for the project which helped to secure additional state and federal funding to complete the project. TU and UMRA will continue the great partnership to prioritize and implement habitat improvement efforts in the Upper Manistee River.