



P. O. BOX 282 • GRAYLING, MICHIGAN 49738

WINTER NEWSLETTER

2017-18

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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.

President's Message

by Dave Boberg

Happy New Year! 2017 proved to be another great year for the Upper Manistee River Association.

We completed many in-stream projects for fish habitat, had two successful insect surveys on the river which incorporated many volunteers and completed the long anticipated launch at the CCC Bridge site. These projects were in addition to our annual items that always need addressed such as placing all the porta-potties along the Manistee River.

We have also completed a two year study of Portage Creek. We are happy to say the National Guard has also agreed to fund some of the projects that came out of recommendations from that study.

Our membership levels had dipped a few years ago, but we are on the way up again with about 200 active memberships. More importantly, we have been very successful in fund raising, as our giving amounts per member are almost double what they were 5 years ago. In addition, we cannot complete our work on preserving the river without the contributions of our current corporate sponsors. They are listed on our website at www.umrasite.org. We owe all of our members and donors a huge thank you!

We continue to form important partnerships with other conservation organizations and businesses that care about the Upper Manistee River watershed and the work we are doing. This will be valuable for years to come as we look to take on bigger projects which require a lot more labor and a lot more money.

When we look over our work over the last ten years, it is impressive to see that we really have “touched” a large portion of the river.

Starting in Deward, with the in-stream habitat work that was done years ago from a grant from Kalamazoo TU. We also monitor and maintain four sand traps in the Deward Tract. We have done multiple volunteer projects in this area at access sites and have planted hundreds (maybe thousands) of cedar trees in Deward.

County Road 612 down to Yellow Trees landing has seen over five years of fish habitat creation and restoration, as well as many erosion control projects.

We have also now re-done, built or improved all of the “launch” sites on the Upper Manistee River from M-72 down to the Sand Banks.

I am very proud of the work we have done and will continue to do in the years to come. Thank you for your continued support.

River Care 2017

by Jim Anderson

Lots of projects were accomplished during summer 2017. The conclusion of a two year study of Portage Creek was wrapped up with a 66 page written report. There were numerous subject matter experts hired to provide data regarding the current status of Portage Creek. Some of the data reported the status of macro invertebrates, vegetation, erosion sites, fish sampling, habitat, unauthorized access, road stream crossings and much more aerial footage. 2018 permits will be requested for fish habitat and erosion mitigation. Approximately 40 fish habitat sites in the Tree Farm reach of the river were visited and upgraded by the SEEDS crew. The fish habitat work has been noticed by many and positive comments are being given. "Open for navigation" permission was authorized by Natural Rivers and the DEQ for the North Branch of the Manistee River. The work began at Flowing Well and proceeded downstream to the Kniss Road bridge. More work needs to be done but it is a start! Another major accomplishment was the construction of a new boat slide and parking lot expansion at the CCC campground. The work was done in a partnership with the DNR and SEEDS crew. The DNR donated their effort with manpower and equipment for the project. Monetary donations from individuals paid for the SEEDS crew as well as project materials. A huge THANKS goes out to many! For 2018 we are hopeful to receive a HIA grant to do fish habitat work below the Tree Farm to Yellowtrees landing. Other work is also on the docket to continue our efforts to protect and preserve our wonderful river.

-----***Please check out the half dozen images of work on our river on page four***-----

Financial Update

by Bill Dean

During the current year we had 39 donations to the Upper Manistee River Foundation for a total of \$3,055. That brings our foundation balance to \$80,227.54 with \$13,711.41 in undistributed earnings. We once again thank our members for their support of this worthwhile endeavor.

As of 12/17/17 we have a current balance of \$44,005.03 in our checking account. Largest expenditures remain the ongoing river restoration projects, portage creek inventory assessments, CCC access improvement, and porta-potties. Generous contributions were received throughout the year from the Mason-Griffith founder chapter and the Elliot Donnelley chapter of trout unlimited, the Michigan Fly Fishing club, and friends of Hawkins Outfitters, as well as many of our individual members.

Manistee River Water Quality Survey – What the bugs can tell us

by Bob Thorson

The Fall Volunteer Water Quality Survey was held on October 7th. The weather was unusually cooperative for the group of 26 volunteers that performed the survey. Bugs were collected and sorted, no one got wet and everyone seemed to enjoy lunch.

Water quality sampling on the upper Manistee River occurs twice a year (Spring and Fall) 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. A primary objective of the stream volunteer monitoring program is to produce high-quality data to assist DEQ managers and staff in aquatic resource management decisions. This requires that all volunteers collect data on a core set of parameters using standard forms and consistent procedures. The DEQ has developed procedures for the collection and analysis of benthic invertebrate and habitat information. All groups participating in the state program are collecting data on stream habitat and benthic invertebrates. Invertebrates are identified to Order, as a minimum, and assessments (both invertebrate and habitat) are qualitative. 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.

Survey results are maintained online at: <https://data.micorps.net/view/stream/>. Simply enter the name of the

river section of interest and view the results. Please let me know if you have any questions regarding the data or information.

The 2018 Spring Manistee River Water Quality Monitoring Project is scheduled for June 2nd. 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 sockeyebob@att.net if you would like more information or to sign-up. Otherwise, just show up at the Eagles Club on June 2nd. Remember to bring a rain coat and rubber boots or waders.



Images of River Care Activities 2017-CCC Bridge, North Branch, Seeds Crew



North Branch Project

Seeds Crew Workers

2018 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 2018 calendar year and are now payable.

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

2017 Donors to the UMRA Foundation

Mark & Liz Banker	Bob & Diana Vought & Amato
Ann and Terry Blakely	David and Jan Weissenborn
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Gary and Nancy Torkeo	Rick Walsh
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Note: Our apologies if you contributed to the Foundation in 2017 and we inadvertently omitted your name. Thank you to all who have contributed.

UMRA Board of Directors and Advisory Council Members

<u>Board of Directors</u>	<u>Term</u>	<u>Advisory Council</u>	<u>Term</u>
Jim Anderson	2020	Bob Andrus	2020
Dave Boberg (Prez)	2020	Jeff Steffey	2019
Bill Dean (Treasurer)	2018	Vince Caruso	2018
Doug Fairbanks	2019	Mark Hendricks	2019
Chuck Hawkins	2018	Chuck Hewitt	2018
Mark Rais	2018	Dave Wilson	2020
Tad Randolph (Secretary)	2019	Jim Montagne	2020
Joyce Hexton	2020	Bob Thorsen	2018
Sue Woodard	2019		

Emeritus Committee

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