



# Catalyst

SPRING 2015

## Wood is Good

The short story is wood is good for our streams. It's good for fish and water-loving bugs and it's good for stream stability and water quality. Due to the legacy of logging and the current practice of over manicuring streambanks, many of our streams need more wood. That's why every year CRA feeds our streams.

We usually talk about this process as "enhancing instream habitat." It means we start by harvesting whole trees and then we place them in the water along streambanks. Sometimes they are secured and often they will naturally find a nook to occupy. Depending on the character and needs of each waterway, we measure this work both in length – how many feet or miles we added – and quantity of structures – or number of masses we added.

Last year, we enhanced instream habitat in several northern Michigan watersheds. We added over a mile of instream habitat in Bear Creek near 9 Mile Road, placed 40 structures in the Big Sable River, added 1,000 feet of instream habitat on the Little Manistee and added 50 structures along just under a mile of streambank on the Hersey River. This year, you'll find us on the Maple River, Pine River, Little Manistee River and Big Sable River.

Big thanks to all of our donors and the Michigan DNR – Habitat Improvement Account and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for supporting this work.

Interested in the long story? Visit us at [www.rivercare.org](http://www.rivercare.org)



## About CRA

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Contracted Chief Financial Officer

**Nate Winkler**  
Biologist

In 1968, Conservation Resource Alliance was established with one goal – to preserve and protect northern Michigan's waterways, wildlife, and forests for future generations. CRA is a private, not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Through our River Care™ and Wild Link™ programs, we restore and protect over 700 miles of rivers, 5,000 miles of tributaries and diverse forests throughout 4 million acres in Northern Michigan.

We've been able to care for this region's natural resources because our partners and supporters continue to be the backbone of our organization. Thank you to all of our members for supporting hands-on feet-wet conservation. If you haven't donated, please join us as a supporting member. Your commitment is critical to keep this important work moving forward.

[www.rivercare.org](http://www.rivercare.org)

## *Celebrate Conservation*

Friday, September 18, 2015

3:00pm – 6:00pm

Black Star Farms  
in scenic Leelanau County

Join us to celebrate the great work that is happening in northern Michigan at our Biennial Celebration. We'll provide delectable edibles, refreshments and an entertaining program to ensure the afternoon will be a hit. Maybe even some surprises! Registration is available online or by phone.

231.946.6817

## Building CRA Strength

We are excited to announce **two new position openings** this spring to build capacity for our programs and work with local watershed supporters. Please visit our website [www.rivercare.org](http://www.rivercare.org) to check out current openings and share with colleagues who may be qualified.

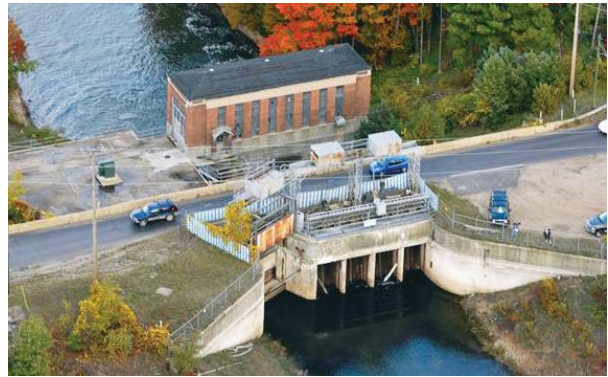


## The Big Three

This year, we have three multi-year initiatives in the spotlight with The Boardman: A River Reborn, Free Spanning the Maple River and the Jordan River Chestonia Bridge. These projects include a significant amount of fundraising, genuine partner collaboration and determination on the part of our staff and board to see them through. We are eager to see the next phases unfold on these remarkable journeys to free our waters.

### The Boardman: A River Reborn

The Boardman River Dam Removal Project in Grand Traverse County is the largest dam removal project in Michigan's history involving the removal of three dams and modifying a fourth. The completed project will result in re-connection of 160 miles of natural river and habitat fragmented by the dams for over 100 years. The project is guided and supported by an Implementation Team of eight local, state, tribal and federal partners. The Brown Bridge Dam was removed in 2012 and channel restoration and monitoring efforts continue in this stretch. The next steps include replacing Cass Road Bridge and removing the Boardman Dam. The bridge replacement is scheduled to begin in 2016 with dam breach and restoration the following field season. Be sure to visit the project website for the latest updates [www.theboardman.org](http://www.theboardman.org).



John Russell

### Free Spanning the Maple River

The goal in the Maple River Watershed is 100% connectivity – a rare and challenging opportunity. The main stem flows roughly 23 miles through Emmet County before flowing into Burt Lake and into the Cheboygan River Watershed. To date, we've completed three of the nine major projects that make up this initiative as well as erosion work and the addition of two miles of instream habitat. This year, CRA and partners will complete the installation of a timber bridge on Robinson Road as well as enhance six miles of stream habitat. Plans to tackle the largest obstacle on the river, the Lake Kathleen Dam, are also underway. Lastly, we are excited to share water quality monitoring data collected by the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians available on our website.



### Jordan River Chestonia Bridge

Known locally as Chestonia Bridge, two 16' wide culverts currently sit where Old State Road crosses the Jordan River in Antrim County. These culverts along with eroding streambanks and worn access trails are causing unnatural stream changes and speed up stream flow to the point where some fish and other aquatic species cannot get upstream. Both the health of the river and making this a safe, accessible site for recreationists are top priorities in building a full span bridge. Engineering designs are complete as CRA launches into the final fundraising phase. Thank you to the Charlevoix County Community Foundation, Frey Foundation, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act and the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation for supporting this initiative. Want to help? Contact CRA to support projects like the Old State Road crossing that benefit the water and people of northern Michigan.



## Off the Beaten Path – Bancroft Creek

A sizable portion of CRA’s work takes place on roads less traveled. Our goal on these roads is keeping our rivers and streams flowing underneath them. We recently completed a small timber bridge on Bancroft Creek, a tributary to the Boardman River. Located on private land, this project is a great example of how to make land management decisions that benefit both the landowner and environment.

Landowners Jack & Donna Rawlings contacted CRA after a culvert failed on their centennial farm. This not only meant they weren’t able to cross the creek that ran through their farm but also an unnatural amount of sand and sediment was washing into this high-quality tributary to the Boardman River.

CRA was able to navigate the Rawlings through the process of installing a timber bridge. The project was funded through a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service fish passage grant with match provided by the landowner. These funds were invested right back into the community through Michigan contractors including Benbow Concrete Construction of Kingsley, Bach Services and Manufacturing of Kingsley and Krenn Bridge Company of Vicksburg.



*The deck for the timber bridge is delivered replacing a failed culvert on Bancroft Creek.*

The result is a healthier watershed and improved farm. These win-win projects are the foundation of our work with private landowners. For more information on CRA’s private lands projects, please contact us at [info@rivercare.org](mailto:info@rivercare.org)



## Michigan’s Great Lakes Water Trails

Thanks to several regional projects funded by Michigan’s Coastal Zone Management Program, the Great Lakes State just got easier to explore for paddlers. Digital maps and information about water trails across Michigan are now featured at [www.michiganwatertrails.org](http://www.michiganwatertrails.org). The site, developed by the Land Information Access Association, includes 2,485 miles of water trails along Michigan’s Great Lakes coasts and 1,384 miles of water trails on inland waterways.



## Some Like it Cold – Conserving Coldwater Habitat

From the big open water of our Great Lakes to the secluded creeks of our headwaters, we are lucky to have a vast array of freshwater habitats. Some fish like bass, whitefish and pike thrive in our big lakes. Others like our brook trout depend on our coldwater streams. Keeping these habitats in balance is critical for a diverse fishery.

Less than 20% of rivers in Michigan's Lower Peninsula have coldwater characteristics meaning they are able to support coldwater fish species year round through even the hottest months of the summer. In contrast, there are over 100 warm water lakes in Grand Traverse and Kalkaska counties alone and more than 11,000 inland lakes in Michigan of which the vast majority are warm water.

The way we use the land often tips the balance toward warmer water. Places where water is artificially impounded, like behind a dam or backed up culvert, thermal pollution may arise. Thermal pollution is the degradation of water quality by changes in ambient water temperature. The impounded water is exposed to more sunlight which warms the water.

Temperature changes of even one to two degrees Celsius can cause significant impacts. Warm water typically decreases dissolved oxygen which is bad news if you breathe underwater. The decrease in dissolved oxygen can also be exasperated by increased plant growth, like algae blooms. Thermal pollution may also increase the metabolic rate of aquatic species; processes like enzyme activity speed up changing an organism's cellular biology. Some fish species will avoid areas altogether where the water is too warm thus decreasing biodiversity.

The rarity and sensitivity of coldwater habitat means we seize opportunities to stop thermal pollution. Projects like dam removal are at the top of our list because they restore coldwater conditions. The warm water species in these areas are able to migrate to the nearest suitable habitat which is usually not far. CRA strives to help stabilize the delicate balance between these habitats creating a healthy fishery for all.



Brook trout prefer water temperatures from 57 to 60°F

## Removing Barriers

CRA emphasizes real, tangible results. We spend a lot of time in the field managing projects that have a clear impact on our land and water. When we sit down at the end of the year, it's great to look back at the quality and quantity of work we were able to accomplish and 2014 did not disappoint.

With tremendous support from our partners and donors, we removed nearly a dozen barriers in our waters last year. We removed a defunct lamprey barrier on the Pere Marquette River and took out several obstructions including a crumbling dam on a Betsie River tributary. We also replaced culverts at two crossings on 40th Street over Sanborn Creek, a Platte Road/Brozofsky Creek crossing and a Lucker Road/Bowens Creek crossing. Lastly, we installed three timber bridges including one on Ely Bridge Road where the road crosses the West Branch Maple River, one on Nessen Road over the Little Betsie River and a private crossing on Bancroft Creek.

None of this would be possible without the support of our funders, donors, and members, the dedication of our partners and the hard work of our board and staff. Thank you!





Aquatic macroinvertebrates, like the stonefly pictured here, are indicators of water quality. Different types of macroinvertebrates tolerate different conditions and levels of pollution. Depending on the types of macroinvertebrates found, predictions about water quality can be made.

## Bridges are Great – Bugs are Better

Do full span bridges and culverts improve water quality? In the case of the Maple River, the proof is in the pudding thanks to the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. Since 2001, their staff has been monitoring the West Branch of the Maple River every other year. They track aquatic macroinvertebrates, phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, temperature, pH and more.

The program, funded through the Environmental Protection Agency, takes measurements at two sites of the West Branch Maple River, where it crosses US 31 and upstream at Ely Bridge Road. The findings show aquatic macroinvertebrate numbers and diversity took a sharp up-tick following the installation of timber bridge at Pleasant View Road and the culvert replacement at Robinson Road.

For more information, please contact Kira Davis, Water Quality Specialist, at [kdavis@ltbbodawa-nsn.gov](mailto:kdavis@ltbbodawa-nsn.gov) or at 231-242-1572.



### Yes! I Want to Support CRA and Practical Conservation! Enclosed is my CRA Membership contribution:

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**Credit card payments are also accepted online at: [www.rivercare.org](http://www.rivercare.org)**

Make all checks payable to: Conservation Resource Alliance  
10850 Traverse Highway, Suite 1180  
Traverse City, MI 49684

## Thank you!

### Welcome New Members!

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Chuck Kopinski  
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Illustration by Jennifer Thomas

# Thank You for Your Recent Support of CRA, River Care™ and Wild Link™

Ann Arbor Bivouac Inc.	Kimberly Balke	Robert Hector	Casey Ressler & Jim Morse
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## Conservation Resource Alliance

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## Stewardship Spotlight – Scientific Anglers

This section of our Catalyst newsletter has always been sacred space to highlight CRA's business partners and supporters. We have been fortunate to include many local, regional and national companies in our diverse mix of funders and on-the-ground conservation warriors.

Back in 2004, we told a little story about Scientific Anglers™, the legendary fly line manufacturer. Friends and anglers, Leon Martuch, Clare Harris, and Paul Rottiers founded Scientific Anglers™ in 1945. Their angling scientists and design team worked in partnership with fly-fishing legends to develop cutting-edge technologies and the ultimate fly line and related products ever since. Longtime supporters of CRA, the Midland, Michigan based company was recently acquired by Orvis from the 3M Corporation.



Scientific Anglers™ remains an independent front runner in the industry and one of CRA's valued conservation partners. Most recently, they contributed a River Care™ grant of \$5,000 to fuel our Free Spanning the Maple initiative, joining other private and public agency supporters of one of CRA's most ambitious, watershed wide, restoration efforts. A big thank you to Scientific Anglers™ for their long-term commitment to improving the angling experience with their product development and financial support!