



Conservation
Resource Alliance

Annual Report to Antrim County

Conservation Resource Alliance, May 2015

Under a contract for services with Antrim County, CRA carried out work related to water quality and habitat restoration during the past 12 months. Specifically, engineering, survey, community outreach, and fundraising efforts were continued in the large-scale project to replace the road crossing on the Jordan River at Old State Road. There are currently 101 road/stream crossings identified in the Jordan River Watershed, documented in detail in CRA's Road Crossing Inventory report. CRA has coordinated the replacement of five crossings over the last 10 years. **One of the most severe crossings remains on the Jordan main stem at Old State Road.** The site is comprised of twin 14 foot diameter culverts, with eroding embankments, and well-worn access trails. The culverts are undersized, and thus change stream morphology and create a velocity barrier to a variety of aquatic species at most stream flows.

The MDNR's "Chestonia Bridge access" is also one of the most widely used informal canoe/kayak launch and stopover sites on the Jordan River and is becoming hazardous to recreationists with the large, deep whirlpool that has formed at the outlet on the west side of the river. The Antrim County Road Commission wrestles with embankment erosion at the inlet and outlet, in the past using poured concrete and an aging timber retaining wall as stabilization measures. The road crossings upstream and downstream of Old State Road now have bridges on the main stem of the Jordan River; project partners have embraced replacement of the crossing with a free-span bridge.



Activities in Past 12 Months

In 2014, engineers from Prein and Newhof worked with local partners to complete design for the bridge. The proposed replacement structure is a 90' long single span concrete bridge built on a 30 degree angle perpendicular to the road to accommodate how the river approaches the road; no piers will be in the water. A bridge will allow for a natural stream bottom and over a 70% increase in channel width from the existing culverts. Soil borings, site survey and design are complete, with permit applications underway. The Charlevoix County Community Foundation and Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act funded the design phase, and 3 community-based meetings were held to gather input from partners including state, federal and local agencies, interest groups, landowners, and other non-profits.

Current cost estimates for the bridge construction phase is \$955,000, and CRA is actively pursuing funding through private foundations, state and federal sources to assist the Road Commission to take on the project in 2016.

To date, we have received funding and commitments totaling \$300,000 from private foundations and the Charlevoix Community Foundation. Another \$550,000 is pending in grant proposals.



The ideal bridge structure is similar to next crossing downstream - Webster Bridge over the Jordan River

Future Activities Currently, river access, although technically illegal, is allowed on private property adjacent to the county road right-of-way on the north side of Old State Road. The private landowner is growing weary of the streambank erosion, and widening of the river due to the heavy use. Recreational access issues are now being discussed and solutions explored through consideration of incorporating a boardwalk, fishing platform, parking area, creek bridge, and possible launch site immediately upstream on state land of the future actual Chestonia Bridge. Multiple divisions of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources including Fisheries, Parks and Recreation, Natural Rivers, and Forest Management are all working together with Friends of the Jordan River and Antrim Conservation District to gather public input on addressing recreational access at this site, with an initial public meeting held March 24th, 2014. This effort is running parallel to the crossing replacement, and will be funded under separate mechanisms as it evolves.

Other work CRA has completed in the County this year involves future planning for additional road crossing improvements on Green River, and work with the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy on potential multi-faceted projects in the Acme and Yuba Creeks watersheds. We are collaborating with the Michigan DNR, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Antrim County Road Commission, Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, private landowners, Friends of the Jordan River, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and other organizations.

More information can be found at CRA's website: www.rivercare.org