



Conservation
Resource Alliance

Annual Report to Antrim County Conservation Resource Alliance, July 2016

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, first phase of design for Cokirs Creek crossing, facilitated special work sessions to discuss the potential for a new recreation access with the MDNR and Antrim County Road Commission Manager, community outreach, collaborated in updating the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed Protection Plan, and final fundraising efforts for the large-scale project to replace the road crossing on the Jordan River at Old State Road. CRA has coordinated the replacement of six crossings over the last 11 years, with **one of the most severe crossings Jordan River at Old State Road scheduled for replacement in 2017**. The site is comprised of twin 16 foot diameter culverts, with eroding embankments, a deteriorating retaining timber wall, 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 one of the most widely used informal canoe/kayak launch and stopover sites on the Jordan River and has become 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.

The Jordan River crossing at Old State Road Project has incorporated the potential and need for a new recreation access. Currently, recreational users are accessing through private property adjacent to this crossing. This is considered trespassing and has caused increased erosion and road safety concerns.



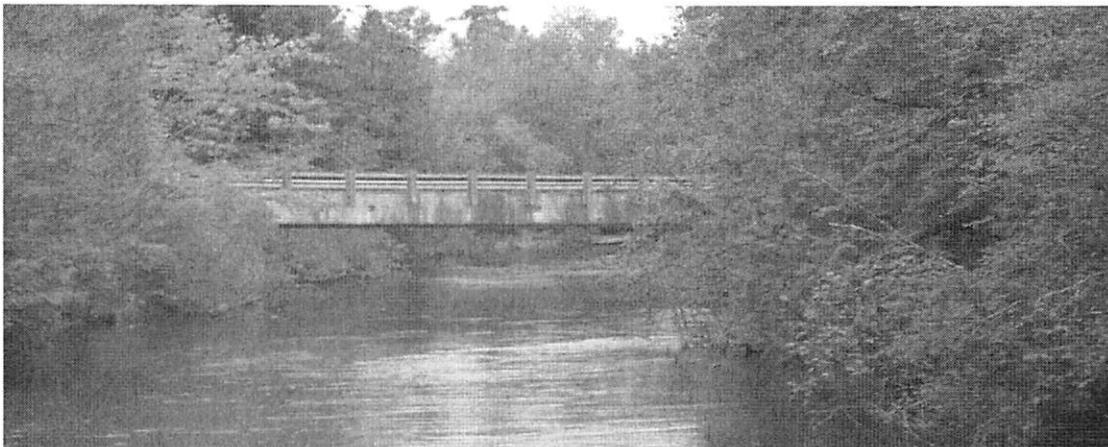
Above: Erosion caused by popular illegal access site on Old State Road.

Activities in Past 12 Months

CRA has facilitated partners' meetings for the Chestonia Bridge project to gather input and keep the community apprised of the design phase; design of a new Cokirs Creek crossing that can handle vehicle traffic has been added to the scope of work due to successful fundraising efforts and community need. MDNR is now also exploring funding options to include recreational access site design into design engineer, Prein and Newhof's current scope of work. A properly developed and located access site would eliminate erosion and trespassing issues while still accommodating paddlers, anglers, river guides, and other recreationists of the river. The private landowner is growing weary of the streambank erosion, and widening of the river due to the heavy use. Soil borings and site survey for the Cokirs Creek crossing has been completed. If MDNR pursues design of a formal recreational access site, they will host a public open house meeting. Construction of the future Chestonia Bridge over the Jordan River at Old State Road is expected to take place in 2017. Construction of the new Cokirs Creek crossing is also expected to take place in 2017, *contingent on construction bid numbers and funds raised*. Fundraising for the new Chestonia Bridge at the Jordan River and Old State Road includes grants from the following funders.

- Antrim County and Antrim County Road Commission in-kind CE
- USFWS Great Lakes Fish & Wildlife Restoration Act
- Charlevoix County Community Foundation
- Herbert H. & Grace A. Dow Foundation
- Frey Foundation
- USFWS Great Lakes Basin Fish Habitat Program
- Great Lakes Fishery Trust
- Sustain Our Great Lakes Program
- Towsley Foundation
- J. A. Woollam Foundation
- NRCS EQIP via Grand Traverse Band
- MDNR Aquatic Habitat Program
- Oleson Foundation

A total of \$40,000 for design and \$1,202,136 for construction has been actively raised by CRA to date.



Above: Jordan River at Old State Road will be similar to the next crossing downstream-Webster Bridge over the Jordan River

Future Activities. CRA will distribute an email update to partners once MDNR has determined if they can fund design of a recreational access site; we should know yet this summer. Design of the new Cokirs Creek crossing concrete box and permit applications are expected for completion in the fall of 2016. Bidding out construction for both the new Chestonia Bridge and Cokirs Creek crossing will happen sometime in the fall/winter of 2016 for a 2017 construction season. CRA will keep partners apprised of overall project progress, and will work with ACRC and MDNR on community outreach.

Other work CRA has completed in the County this year involves a new Jordan River Care Map, future planning for additional road crossing improvements on Deer Creek and the Green River, and will continue to collaborate and support the update of the Elk River Chain of Lakes Watershed Protection Plan.

We will continue to work with the Michigan DNR, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Antrim County Road Commission, Antrim Conservation District, private landowners, Friends of the Jordan River, the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, and other organizations throughout the next year.

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