

# Huron Pines

Conserving the Forests,  
Lakes and Streams of  
Northeast Michigan



2010 Annual Report



## Our Mission

Huron Pines' mission is to conserve the forests, lakes and streams of Northeast Michigan.

## Our Vision

Huron Pines is the recognized leader for developing projects and partnerships that restore, enhance and sustain the natural resources in Northeast Michigan.



# About Huron Pines

## Contact Us

Huron Pines  
501 Norway Street  
Grayling, MI 49738  
phone (989) 344-0753  
fax (989) 348-7945  
[www.huronpines.org](http://www.huronpines.org)



## Our Service Area

### Counties

Alcona • Alpena • Cheboygan • Crawford  
Iosco • Montmorency • Ogemaw • Oscoda  
Otsego • Presque Isle • Roscommon

### Watersheds

Alcona Black River • Au Gres River • Au Sable River  
Black River • Cheboygan River • Coastal Lake Huron  
Manistee River • Muskegon River • Ocqueoc River  
Pigeon River • Pine River-Van Etten Lake • Rifle River  
Sturgeon River • Thunder Bay River

*6,700 Square Miles*

*4,288,154 Acres*

*5,005 River Miles*

*172,800 Lake Acres*

*467 Shoreline Miles*

This organization is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Huron Pines prohibits discrimination in all of its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.



# What We Do

## The Year in Review

2010 marked an important year for Huron Pines. We saw a growing need for a responsive, aggressive approach to combat invasive plants (like the purple loosestrife we dug out of the Au Sable River, *left*) and we developed a program to do just that. We continued the excellence of the Huron Pines AmeriCorps Program, receiving national recognition for our innovative approach to achieving conservation results. We kicked off our small dams program and then worked on two important dam removal projects to restore coldwater streams. Our program to design and install Best Management Practices at road/stream crossings, absolutely essential to river protection, nearly tripled in size in 2010. Perhaps most important, we took the concept of incorporating all of the different types of conservation projects we do and wrapping them into large scale projects—our efforts in the Silver Creek Super Project and in the newly funded Rifle River Watershed Project are great examples of this more holistic approach.

Our all-volunteer Board of Directors made great strides for the organization, putting in countless hours to develop a vision for the future and lay the foundation for excellence in the years to come. And, with lots of input from our partners, we developed a “mega list” of projects to tackle over the next several years (see the map to the right). While those important projects add up to millions of dollars, we were encouraged this year as more foundations supported our work, more individuals came forward to help us out, and the size of the average donation by our individual supporters actually increased.

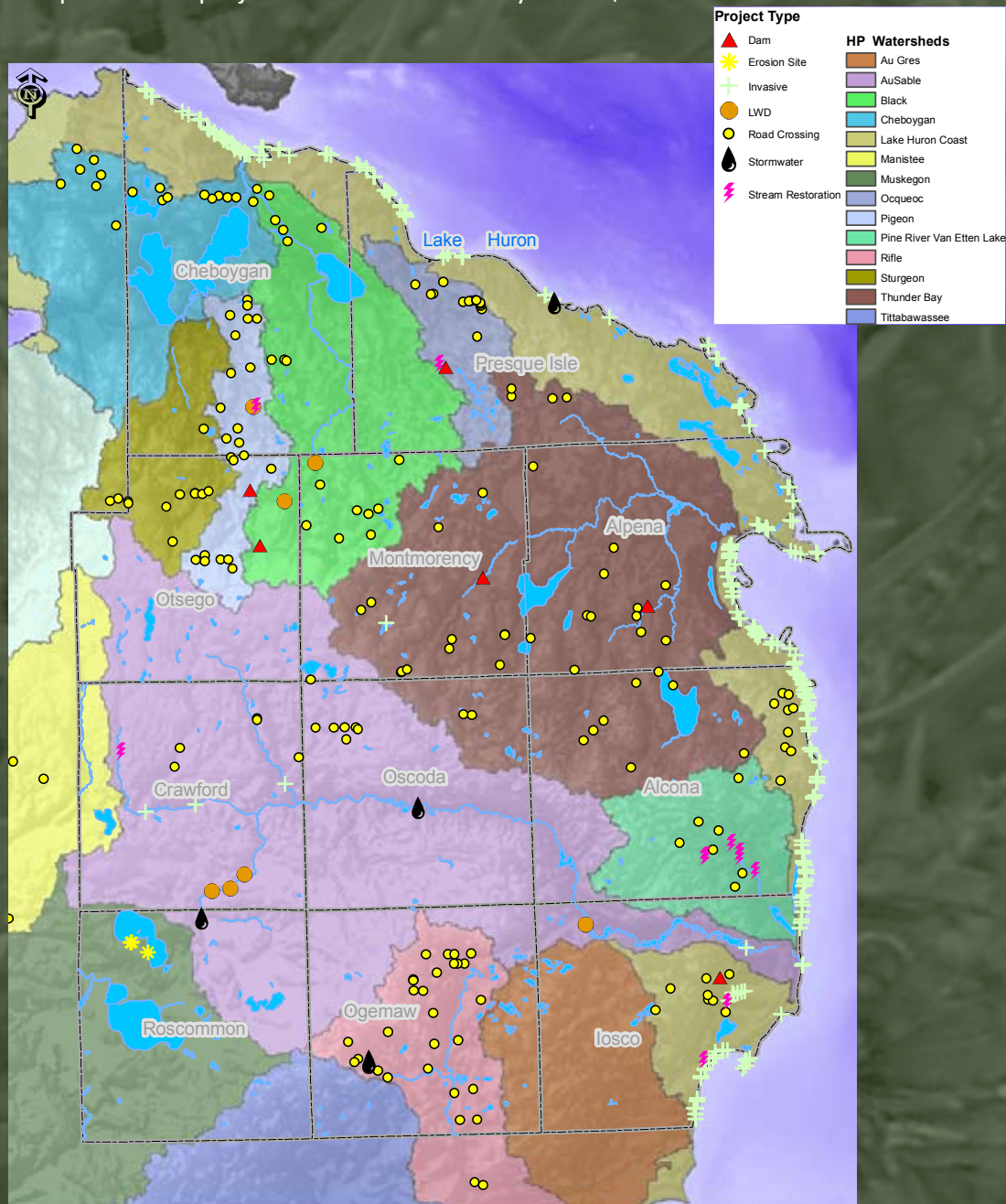
Thank you to all who helped us in 2010 to make our region a better place and please know that there is much to be optimistic about when it comes to natural resource protection, restoration and enhancement in Northeast Michigan.

**Brad Jensen**  
Executive Director

**Connie Schrieber**  
Board of Directors Chair

# Huron Pines Priority Projects 2011–2015

This map shows the many priority projects in our service area, identified through resource inventories and partner input. The total cost to complete these projects over the next five years is \$20.4 million.



# Hands On Impact

# Action Dynamic Lasting

## On-The-Ground Impact

Huron Pines is recognized for our ability to complete projects that directly impact our natural resources. We work to improve water quality, restore healthy habitat, and prevent pollution and erosion from harming the places we value in Northeast Michigan.

The Huron Pines Small Dams Program is a multi-tiered effort to better understand, inventory, prioritize and implement projects that minimize the impact of dams on the rivers and streams of Northeast Michigan. Through systematic dam inventories, we are determining their level of impact in the broader context of the watershed. Project selection then becomes more proactive and specific dams can be targeted for removal, maximizing the conservation value of funds raised for each project. With each dam removal, details and techniques of stream restoration continue to be refined.

*At the left,* resource professionals collect pertinent measurements during dam inventories. *Below,* Huron Pines AmeriCorps member Liz Padalino takes measurements to determine if a dam is a fish passage barrier.



## Miller Creek Dam

A landowner on Miller Creek in the Thunder Bay River watershed has a dam that is failing (*right*) and restricting fish from moving upstream. Huron Pines is currently working with this landowner, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Environment and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to facilitate the removal of the dam and the restoration of the stream. Phase I of the project included dewatering the dam to relieve pressure on the structure—because of the slow water velocity in the impoundment, it had been filling with sediment that is now settling and beginning to revegetate (*photos below*). Phase II will include the 2011 removal.

The Miller Creek project has been a great demonstration of the small dam removal process and has been used for refining our Great Lakes Basin Dam Inventory criteria.

**November 2009**



**June 2010**



## Myers Creek

A collapsed plastic culvert, along with nearly 6,000 cubic yards of fill and an upstream water control structure, created an earthen dam on this tiny stream that serves as brook trout spawning habitat and as a source of clean, cold water for the Myers Creek and Cheboygan River watersheds.

Through an agreement with the State of Michigan, Huron Pines took the lead in planning, implementing, and overseeing the restoration of these sensitive headwaters, beginning with emergency construction activities in October 2007. Restoration activity was completed in 2010, when contractors removed the last of the fill and the pipe itself, leaving 250 feet of the original streambed exposed for the water to flow freely. The banks were stabilized and seeded with a mix and will be allowed to revegetate naturally as local native plants recolonize. This project could not have been completed without the help of J&N Construction, who completed the project quickly despite the adverse conditions.

**June 2008**



**October 2010**



# *Watersheds*

## **Putting Dollars Where They're Needed**

# *Innovation*

There's no question that Northeast Michigan has been hit hard economically, and conservation dollars are hard to come by for the region. Often, large funding sources require matching funds from the project partners, in the form of cash and in-kind services. Huron Pines works with businesses, all levels of government, landowners, and foundations to take a dollar and use it to help raise another.

# *Resourceful Efficient*

When it comes to putting the shovels in the ground, we try to combine projects and address issues on a watershed or ecosystem scale wherever possible so that our funding can have the greatest impact.

# *Leveraging Funds*





## Silver Creek Super Project

Silver Creek, a tributary to the Ocqueoc River in Presque Isle County, is crossed over 10 times by roads and driveways in less than three miles of stream—and four of these crossings are known to be the worst contributors of sediment to the Ocqueoc River watershed.

Huron Pines first worked with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Environment and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to prioritize the sites to repair, with an estimated total cost of about \$600,000. A few thousand dollars from the Headwaters and Paul H. Young Chapters of Trout Unlimited and the Ocqueoc River Commission led to a meeting with the Presque Isle Road Commission and a commitment of \$125,000 and finally funding from the USFWS, MDNRE, Wolverine Power Cooperative, the Great Lakes Commission and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

*Below*, a brook trout found swimming upstream while a culvert was being replaced on Silver Creek. Fish passage to upstream reaches is a priority for many partners, while others are interested in other aspects of conservation. Our projects are designed to have multiple ecological benefits.



## North Branch Au Sable River

The North Branch Au Sable River watershed, similar to many coldwater streams in northern Michigan, is threatened by numerous natural and human-caused impacts.

The road/stream crossing sites selected for this project came directly from the inventory that was completed in 2008 and funded by the Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation.

We were then able to use the results of the inventory to apply for funding from the U.S. Forest Service to repair the highest priority sites. To further aid in the effort, the Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation pledged \$25,000 which was matched by \$25,000 from Anglers of the Au Sable and paired with \$50,000 from USFWS.

*Below*, a culvert on the North Branch that needs replacement. It is too small (restricting flow and causing bank erosion on either side), collapsing in the middle, and has too little fill above it, making the road surface dangerous for vehicles.



A photograph of three men in a field, likely engaged in a field study or environmental assessment. They are gathered around a white bucket, with one man in the foreground looking into it. The background shows tall grass and a concrete wall. The text 'Inventory', 'Proactive', 'Prioritize', and 'Organize' is overlaid on the image in various fonts and colors.

# *Inventory*

## *Proactive*

# *Prioritize*

## *Organize*

### **A Holistic Approach**

Over the past several years, Huron Pines has been prioritizing projects across our watersheds and counties. Because of our commitment to the watershed management planning process, we have many of the resource inventories already in place—with priority and estimated costs already included. We've continued to fill in the blank spots in our project "mega list" so that we can be ready for anything, including federal stimulus funds for priority projects.

Our Resource Advisory Group, consisting of retired and currently working resource professionals from multiple partner groups and agencies in Northeast Michigan, reviews and approves proposed projects before Huron Pines begins work. The group's input gives us a strong foundation to build a project plan using natural resource science and community needs. When it comes to completing projects, we look at how multiple priority projects can combine on an ecosystem scale to improve an entire watershed. Using the whole suite of conservation tools, from on-the-ground and in-the-water site restoration to working with landowners, we make our work lasting and effective at all levels.



## Pine River-Van Etten Lake

Seven sites in the Pine River-Van Etten Lake (PRVEL) watershed have been selected for improvement in order to provide upstream passage for fish and other

aquatic organisms while also reducing the amount of sediment delivered to the downstream portions of the Pine River. These sites were prioritized as part of a state-approved watershed management plan and then submitted for funding to the U.S. Forest Service through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which awarded \$1 million. Other project partners who provided in-kind services and funding include the Alcona County Road Commission, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Pine River-Van Etten Lake Coalition. Once completed, over 70 river miles will be reconnected for fish passage and 80 tons of sediment reduced per year.

*Above*, stream geomorphology was monitored at some of the sites to give a baseline of the streambed before construction.



## Rifle River Watershed Management

The Rifle River, which flows through Ogemaw and Arenac counties, has a long history of dedicated individuals coming together in order to preserve and protect the integrity of the watershed: over the past 15 years more than 20 organizations have been actively involved with watershed projects. Though great strides have been made to restore and protect the natural resources of the area, much remains to be done.

With funding through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, we'll be focusing on three main project components: update the watershed management plan, implement habitat restoration projects and conduct environmental stewardship programs. Our habitat work will be accomplished by implementing the highest priority projects as determined by field inventories and input from resource professionals, while working with watershed residents to promote land stewardship and water quality programs.

*Below*, stormwater outfalls like this one can affect the water quality of rivers and lakes. Sources of pollution and sediment from stormwater in the city of West Branch, situated directly over the Rifle River, will be addressed as part of this project.



*Coordination*

*Partnerships*

*Dedication*

*Leadership*

*Community*

## Working Together

Huron Pines fills a special niche—we easily work with project stakeholders of all types, coordinating projects involving both local individuals and large government agencies smoothly and effectively. We value partnerships because we know that everyone has a unique expertise or enthusiasm to bring to the table, and that's what makes our projects go so well.

From anglers interest groups to lake boards to recreation clubs, we help bridge gaps and bring people together for a common purpose: conservation of Northeast Michigan's resources.

Take our **Pigeon River Habitat Initiative**, for example. In over 10 years, we've worked together with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Environment, HeadWaters Land Conservancy, Little Traverse Conservancy, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Headwaters Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Pigeon River Country State Forest Advisory Council, and many more partners to protect and preserve buffer lands around the state forest. We're currently mapping and prioritizing parcels along with looking at local land use policies.

*Below*, Huron Pines board member Ned Caveney talks about forest stewardship with a landowner.



## Invasive Species

Our invasive species program is truly a partnership. In the summer of 2010 Huron Pines introduced the Huron Pines AmeriCorps Invasive Species SWAT team—at right, treating phragmites with herbicide.



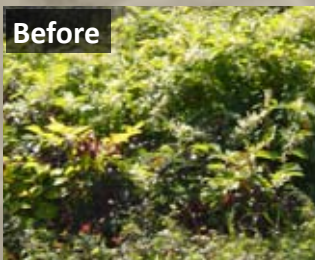
The team was tasked with fighting the three priority invasive species in our Cooperative Weed Management Agreement (CWMA). The CWMA was first developed by Huron Pines in 2009 and by the end of 2010 included 10 government agency, interest group, landowner association, and local government partners. The goal of organizing so quickly is the essence of our program: detect invasive species early and respond rapidly, preventing long, expensive efforts.

Our key partnerships through the CWMA brought funding and technical support to treat 33 acres of phragmites, 4 acres of buckthorn, and one patch of Japanese knotweed (*below*). The SWAT team met with over 100 landowners during their phragmites work and surveyed 30 miles of the Au Sable River for purple loosestrife with the help of the Au Sable River Property Owners Association. Through partnerships with local governments and interest groups, we were able to organize volunteer events to teach landowners about invasive species removal and begin expanding our reach for the 2011 season.

## Upper Black River

Over the years, foot traffic on the banks of the Upper Black River from people viewing spawning sturgeon was causing tons of sediment to fall into the river, covering spawning habitat for the threatened fish.

Completed this year, the three-year project brought together partners like Sturgeon for Tomorrow, Boy Scouts, Huron Pines AmeriCorps, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Environment and over 100 volunteers to help us aid the sturgeon by repairing the land. Three major erosion sites were repaired with cedar terraces, soil, mulch fabric, plants, rock riprap, and Large Woody Debris (LWD). Overall, more than 3,500 plants were planted and over 10,000 square feet of soil were covered with mulch, seed, and topsoil. Cedar terraces and rock riprap further stabilize the parts of the slope that received the most traffic, and LWD helps to deflect high-energy water away from the most sensitive open banks while providing cover for other fish and insects.



*Creativity*

*Quality*

*Innovation*

*Stewardship*

*Education*

## **Expanding Our Conservation Network**

In addition to our more typical on-the-ground projects, Huron Pines is constantly working to develop new programs and approaches to conservation issues. Whether it's bringing new voices into the conservation discussion through our volunteer projects or developing a program to bring young professionals to Northeast Michigan, we strive to think differently and solve problems in ways other than "what we've always done." Renewed enthusiasm from partners and excited individuals we haven't worked with before encourages us to continue fighting to keep conservation at the forefront in our service area.





## Huron Pines AmeriCorps

The inspiration for Huron Pines AmeriCorps came out of the realization that many of our conservation projects needed more hands.

These hands were needed

to recruit and train volunteers, complete on-the-ground restoration projects, talk to the public about conservation solutions and develop ideas into innovative new programs. That's why we partnered with AmeriCorps, a national service program that gives people the chance to apply their skills and knowledge toward helping others and meeting critical community needs. Huron Pines AmeriCorps alumni now boasts a membership of nearly 40 people who have served well over 50,000 hours strengthening Michigan's natural resources. As the sole environmental AmeriCorps program in the state, Huron Pines is creating a model for other regional organizations.

During the 2009-2010 program year, we placed 16 members at 11 different conservation organizations, providing the hands to get things done. From land conservancies to conservation districts, our members served across northern Michigan restoring wildlife habitat, fostering environmental stewardship, engaging volunteers and developing new programs.



## Volunteer Program

This year marked the first year of the expanded Huron Pines Volunteer Program. The program was directed at getting local communities involved in conservation projects while learning more about Huron Pines and the natural resources right where they live.

Every event was unique, covering the many different facets of our work to conserve the forests, lakes and streams of Northeast Michigan. Special thanks to our volunteer program supporters: the Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the Lowe's Heroes program.

In addition to our volunteer program, we also continued to host volunteer events for partner groups like Trout Unlimited chapters along with events that fit with our own projects.

In total, Huron Pines and Huron Pines AmeriCorps projects totaled about 875 volunteers giving over 3,200 hours of their time for conservation projects. The value of their time totaled over \$65,000, which shows a commitment that we can share with others who are considering investing in our conservation programs. Thanks, volunteers!





## Our Financial Strategy

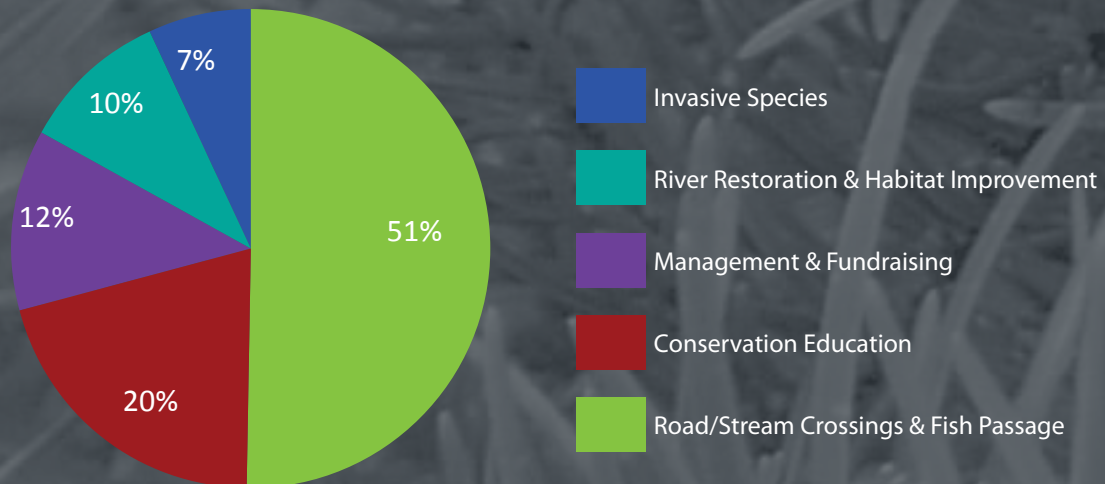
Huron Pines is proud of the quality and quantity of projects completed in 2009 and 2010. Careful management, budgeting, efficiency and experience resulted in a surplus at the end of both years. The Huron Pines Board of Directors knows the importance of reserves in building a sustainable organization. It is their goal to accumulate adequate unrestricted funds to provide security and seed money to further implement the lengthy “mega list” of projects that everyone would like to see completed in Northeast Michigan.



Grants have provided much of the funding for project costs, however most of the grants received required at least 25% in match. These matching funds have been met with contributed services and funds from Huron Pines and its various partners. Reserves are key to providing the bridge to cover expenses while match funds are sought. They are the cash flow to cover vendor payments while waiting for payments from grantors. They make it possible to develop projects and goals for the future.



The board and staff of Huron Pines have worked hard during these tough economic times to give our supporters the best “bang for the buck.” Thanks goes out to all of those partners, contributors and volunteers who have helped to make that possible. Hopefully the financial success of the past two years will provide the foundation to enable Huron Pines to further pursue its mission.





## Revenues

	2010*	2009**
Annual giving	\$32,385	\$30,835
Project contributions	118,803	249,624
Contractual services	66,292	61,632
Federal grants & contracts	799,250	281,187
State grants & contracts	261,550	391,305
Other support	676	612
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>1,278,956</b>	<b>1,015,195</b>

## Expenses

Program expenses	1,065,238	750,645
General and administrative expenses	135,124	139,874
Fundraising expenses	8,405	9,247
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>1,208,767</b>	<b>899,766</b>

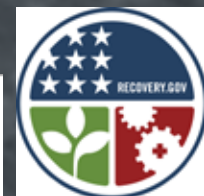
**Net income**                                 **\$70,189**                                 **\$115,429**

## Functional Expenses

Salaries & benefits	\$589,848	\$634,920
Project construction costs	485,767	139,479
Permits	2,705	2,929
Equipment	4,854	6,517
Rent	11,059	11,059
Repair costs	1,067	1,858
Travel	28,664	38,049
Postage	6,411	6,008
Insurance	17,519	13,882
Printing	17,054	15,612
Administrative costs (supplies, meetings, audit, training)	43,819	29,453
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$1,208,767</b>	<b>\$899,766</b>

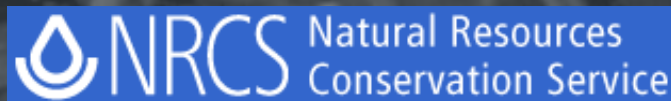
## Major Funders

The past year has been an unprecedented year for partnerships. Our staff has worked with over 100 watershed groups, recreation clubs, and state and federal agencies to get projects done and start new initiatives. In a time of limited state and local resources, partnerships have enabled us to pool funds to get more done with less.



\*2010 figures are projections for January 1 to December 31, 2010.

\*\*2009 figures are audited financials for January 1 to December 31, 2009.



# 2010 Contributors

The donors below allow our organization to do much of the important work you've heard and read about. Despite the recent economic downturn, we've actually seen an increase in the total size of our donations. We are deeply appreciative of the generosity of our supporters.

## Major Donors

### \$20,000+

Anglers of the Au Sable  
DTE Energy Foundation  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
National Fish and Wildlife  
Foundation  
The Elizabeth, Allan, & Warren Shelden Foundation

### \$5,000+

Freshwater Future  
Great Lakes Commission  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Paul H. Young Chapter of Trout Unlimited

## Watershed Champions

### \$2,500+

Challenge Chapter of Trout Unlimited  
Community Foundation for Northeast Michigan—Crawford County Lakes & Rivers Fund, Mr. and Mrs. O.B. Eustis Memorial Fund  
Rice Family Foundation/ Mr. and Mrs. Arthur L. Rice, III

## River Patrons \$1,000 -

### \$2,499

Au Sable North Branch Area Foundation  
Au Sable River Property Owners Association  
Eric Bankhead and Connie

## Schrieber

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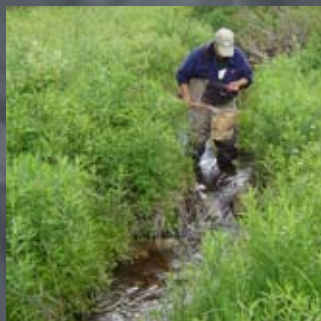
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### In Honor Of

Charles Crudginton from Anonymous  
Huron Pines Staff from Anonymous

In support of Jerry Rucker's efforts to assure quality habitat and fishing for the future through the Huron Pines organization from Gale Frazee

### In Memory Of

Floyd and Clara Benghauser from Karl Benghauser  
Mary McCarthy from Patrick and Judith Benson  
Edward Bozynski from George Bozynski  
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## **Our People**

Huron Pines added a new face to its high-energy staff this past year as Abigail Ertel joined the team following her two-year stint serving in our AmeriCorps program. Our organization counted on the contributions of numerous partners, contractors, seasonal staff members, and volunteers in 2010. We also had the help of 16 AmeriCorps members. We'd like to say thanks to the AmeriCorps member serving at our office in 2010, Liz Padalino (*below*), for the great help she provided. Finally, a special thanks to our two summer crews for all their hard work: the Invasive Species SWAT Team (Rachel Kole-da, Kristen Kozak, Greg McClure and Philip Prentice) and the River Restoration Crew (Ken Reed, Kyle Kennedy and Paul Martin).



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