

December 30, 2009

It's been a challenging ten days for those of us who love the Au Sable and Manistee Rivers. Two of the region's great, most staunch river conservationists have left us. On December 28<sup>th</sup>, former Huron Pines Board Member Joe Kutkuhn passed away at his home on the Manistee. Joe's tireless volunteer efforts, along with his scientific expertise, helped Huron Pines grow as an organization and helped us to more effectively implement projects to improve northern Michigan's coldwater rivers. With a doctorate in Fishery Management Statistics and his professional work experience with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Joe developed a number of practical projects that measurably improved water quality and fish habitat for the Au Sable and Manistee rivers. He coordinated a study of stormwater runoff impacting the City of Grayling, providing baseline data that would later lead to preventing stormwater pollution from reaching the Au Sable River. His work leading the Upper Manistee River Restoration Committee resulted in the rehabilitation of many of the streambank erosion sites on that river. Joe was also instrumental in obtaining State of Michigan Natural River designation for the Manistee and was a founding member of HeadWaters Land Conservancy.

As many of our river partners know, Joe's passing comes on the heels of another revered river conservationist, Rusty Gates. Rusty's work to protect the Au Sable through his advocacy efforts has led to increased protection for the river. He pushed tirelessly for issues like catch and release on the Holy Waters and protecting the integrity of the Mason Tract. His leadership at Anglers of the Au Sable and his support for the in-stream habitat improvement work that we do through Huron Pines was unmatched.

We could tell you much more about the other work they've done and the awards they've received, but know this: Although they were well recognized, what both Joe and Rusty were really good at was how to work very effectively *behind the scenes* to bring key partners together, raise funds for projects, and cut through the red tape to bring projects to fruition. And they both did it tirelessly. We have found that those are very rare skills indeed; all of us at Huron Pines will miss the efforts of both these men very, very much.

Brad Jensen

Executive Director

Huron Pines

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

### **Pigeon River Milestones: 10 years, 100+ landowner site visits**

Imagine you're out for a hike in a lush wilderness where pine and oak trees soar above you, and where cold, clear rivers revered by fisherman across the country bubble as they slide majestically by. You bend down to change the lens on your camera so you're ready for that perfect shot, and when you stand back up again you find yourself face to face with an elk! It almost sounds too good to be true but Arch Reeves doesn't have to imagine what that might be like, because he has lived it. His eyes twinkle as he lets out a soft chuckle. "To this day I haven't figured out how my wife ran away that fast!" he says. It is moments and memories like this that keep Reeves heading out to the Pigeon River State Forest almost every day of the year.

Read how Arch Reeves helped bring partners together to create the [Pigeon River Habitat Initiative](#) ten years ago and where the program is today by visiting [Pigeon River Milestones](#).

Please contact Eric Nelson at 989-344-0753 ext14 or [eric@huronpines.org](mailto:eric@huronpines.org) if you are interested in learning more about the Pigeon River Habitat Initiative, scheduling a free site visit, or making a donation to the program.

### **2010 Huron Pines Annual Meeting- Gaylord, MI**

Did you receive your 2010 Huron Pines Annual Meeting invitation in the mail yet? Please join us in kicking off 2010 at the [Huron Pines Annual Meeting](#) on Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup> from 10:00am-1:30pm (registration begins at 9:00am). As attendees from the past few years have told us, it is the event to meet and exchange ideas with conservationists and community leaders from all across the region. This year's keynote address is "Michigan's Conservation Future" by Rebecca A. Humphries, DNR Director with special guest remarks on watershed planning by Robert Stuber, USDA Forest Service. Come early and try our new interactive river model! Registration fee is \$10.00 including lunch. Please register by January 29<sup>th</sup>. [Online registration is available.](#)

The Gaylord K of C Hall is located at [2573 Wilkinson Rd.](#)

### **Upcoming Events and Workshops**

**January 22-23, Stewardship Network Annual Conference:** Join fellow land managers, ecologists, volunteers, homeowners and nature lovers of all kinds for the Stewardship Network's energizing and informative annual conference: The Science, Practice & Art of Restoring Native Ecosystems! The group will be partnering with the Midwest Invasive Plant Network to host their 2010 conference on Friday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> in East Lansing, MI. For more information, please visit the conference website at [www.StewardshipNetwork.org/2010Conference](http://www.StewardshipNetwork.org/2010Conference).

**January 18-May14, Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Identification Course:** Kevin Cronk, the Monitoring and Research Coordinator at [Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council](#), is leading a class at NCMC in Petoskey. Participants will learn to identify most aquatic insects, crustaceans and other macroinvertebrates found in Northern Michigan lakes and streams to the family level. The class will be held on Fridays from 9am to 1pm. The semester starts on January 18 and ends on May 14 and steps for registration can be found at: <http://www.ncmich.edu/studserv/regsteps.asp>.

**March 6, Snowshoe hike through Pigeon River Country:** Local naturalist and Pigeon River State Forest historian, Joe Jarecki, will lead participants on a snowshoe hike through beautiful Pigeon River country on Saturday, March 6 from 10:00am to 12:30pm. This event is hosted by HeadWaters Land Conservancy. For more information, call (989) 731-0573 or email [land@headwatersconservancy.org](mailto:land@headwatersconservancy.org).

### **Support Conservation in Northeast Michigan Today!**

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*Huron Pines is a nonprofit organization whose goal is to conserve the forests, lakes and streams of Northeast Michigan.*

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