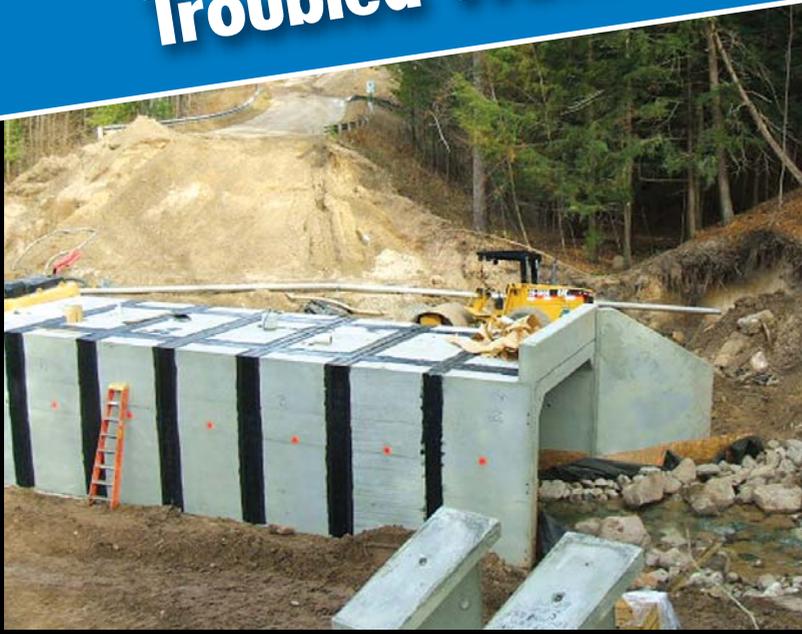


Bridge Over Troubled Water



PROJECT: Excavation

CHALLENGE: Establish new natural fish habitat for conservation alliance near existing stream

SOLUTION: Careful construction and coordination with several agencies

LOCATION: Silver Creek - Cadillac, MI

PARTNERS: Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA), Lake County Road Commission, Wade-Trim

It's not every day that a company has the privilege of establishing miles of new natural animal habitat. But thanks to a partnership between the Conservation Resource Alliance (CRA), Lake County Road Commission, Wade-Trim, and Team Elmer's, hundreds of thousands of fish and other species now have miles of new tributaries and spawning habitat along the Silver Creek outside Cadillac.

The "before" scene at Silver Creek was not pretty. Some eighteen feet below the road, the creek had been blocked, with fish unable to migrate downstream to the Blue Ribbon Trout Stream-designated Pine River. And, the culvert itself needed replacement. According to the US Forest Service, it represented the worst crossing in the entire watershed region.

What ensued was a true public-private partnership, as the Road Commission worked with the CRA to solve the problem. Ultimately, funding came from a variety of sources, including the US Forest Service, the Fish & Wildlife Service, National Forest Foundation, the State of Michigan, the County, and private sources.

Wade-Trim, engaged as the design engineer, turned to Team Elmer's to complete the project.

Workers from Team Elmer's had to not only handle the 18-foot drop from road to river, but also excavate ten additional feet below the existing creek bed for new culvert arch foundations. The creek itself was re-routed, with bypass pumps installed to ensure sediment did not disturb the creek during the process. The challenging project was made even more "interesting" as two inches of rain fell during the re-routing process.

"It was nasty and it was quite the project, but an important one," said the CRA's Chris Pierce.

Now complete, the project serves as a source of pride for the organizations involved and for residents of the region.

"It opened up five miles of spawning habitat and several new tributaries, so it's been a success," added Pierce, whose organization is dedicated to maintaining natural beauty and ecosystems while simultaneously nurturing the economic vitality of northern Michigan.

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