

## A Forest Stewardship Story About Water



Dead River Campers Inc. (DRCI) was incorporated by 400 shareholders to purchase and protect 7,743 acres of forest and water in the Dead River Hoist Basin near Marquette. DRCI bought their property in 2000 from Longyear, which had been a good steward of the land for decades. Many of the current DRCI shareholders had been leasing forest land along the Hoist Basin from Longyear for their recreational use since the 1920's. The shareholders now own small residential lots (one to five acres) around the reservoir and hold more than 3,000 forested acres in common. DRCI owns more than eight miles of frontage along the Dead River and they manage their forest land to provide wildlife habitat, forest products, clean water, and regulated water levels for the Upper Peninsula Power Company at the Hoist Dam.

Dead River Campers Inc. began selling some timber directly to a local forest products company shortly after they bought the land. Jim Grundstrom, the current president of the DRCI board, says "The company was a great neighbor with good loggers, but we wanted to work with a consulting forester to manage our forest and optimize our income." The board asked the DNR for a list of consulting foresters and solicited bids from nine local foresters. DRCI hired Green Timber Consulting Foresters in 2014 to help them manage their large forest for timber, wildlife and water. Justin Miller, the president of Green Timber, recommended that DRCI develop a Forest Stewardship Plan for their property because the plan is simple yet comprehensive, and the DNR also offers a partial cost share to lower the total cost.

Jim reports, "We are thrilled beyond our wildest dreams with the quality of our Forest Stewardship Plan. Green Timber did an excellent job mapping our large forest into smaller management units and giving us the knowledge and resources that we need to make better decisions." Green Timber also enrolled the DRCI forest into their Tree Farm group to certify their sustainable forest management. DRCI maintains a 300 foot wide greenbelt around the Hoist Basin to protect the water quality and the scenic value of the watershed. DRCI has 3,035 acres in the Commercial Forest program to lower their property taxes and to provide public access for hunting and fishing. Jim reports, "The DNR staff in Lansing have been very helpful and our local Conservation Officer also helps us manage the visitors that we have at our two public access sites." Dead River Campers Inc. is using their Forest Stewardship Plan to help them accomplish their goals to preserve their forest land and to protect their watershed for generations to come.

In 2014, the Michigan Forest Stewardship Program helped landowners like the Dead River Campers Inc. develop 265 Forest Stewardship Plans covering almost 57,000 acres around the state. Call the DNR Forest Stewardship Coordinator at 517-284-5884 or explore [www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship](http://www.michigan.gov/foreststewardship) to find a professional forester or wildlife biologist near you who can help you manage, protect and *enjoy* your forest.