

Watershed

REPORTER

PARTNERING TO PROTECT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

FALL 2013

TRANSITIONS

REBECCA FEDEWA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Rebecca Fedewa

One of the best parts of working at the Flint River Watershed Coalition is the great group of people that come to work with us, either as volunteers, board members, donors, members, partners, or staff. The passion, dedication, and love you all bring to the Flint River and its watershed motivate us to keep working every day in our mission to protect, preserve, and improve this freshwater treasure that flows through our communities.

You may have noticed some new faces and new voices here at the FRWC. Over the summer, we were incredibly fortunate to work with both the Boys and Girls Club and the Flint and Genesee Chamber of Commerce to employ two wonderful interns. This year, George Lumpkin III and Cochise Hardy, both now in their senior year at Hamady High School, provided their brains and brawn to many of our summer programs. They also worked tirelessly to keep our local River Bank Park free of litter. Additionally, we were joined by Patrick Murphy this summer. Patrick is an undergraduate student at Oakland University, and he put his expertise to work, conducting a great deal of research, helping us through the identification of

our spring benthic macroinvertebrate collection, and performing many other invaluable tasks around the office. We really enjoyed having all three join us this summer, and already miss their great attitudes and smiling faces. We wish



Summer interns Cochise Hardy, George Lumpkin III, and Patrick Murphy

George, Cochise, and Patrick good luck and best wishes as they transition back to their studies this fall.

We've also seen some big changes at the staff level. In August, we bid a fond but bittersweet farewell to two of our valued colleagues, Casey Foote and Holly Rosser. Casey served as our very first Development Director, and helped build our major donor base as well as organized a variety of fun and engaging events for members. Holly worked on many of our education and outreach programs – including GREEN, our annual clean up,

and our storm drain stenciling program. We are sad to see them go, but excited about the next chapter in their lives.

These transitions mean we also have some new faces! Please help me welcome Stephanie Nummer and Sondra Severn. Stephanie is taking on GREEN, stenciling, and the spring clean up. Stephanie has a strong background in education, and is finishing her degree at UM-Flint this spring. Sondra is filling a new position with the FRWC, managing two projects we are carrying out in partnership with Michigan State University (see page 4 for more info). Sondra has worked with several nonprofits in the Saginaw Bay region, and will graduate this December from UM-Flint.

Both Stephanie and Sondra have hit the ground running, and we are very excited about the new skills and perspectives they bring to the FRWC. That's what transition is all about, and it takes the great people of the FRWC to carry it through.



Stephanie Nummer



Sondra Severn

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The Watershed Reporter is published quarterly by the Flint River Watershed Coalition. The Coalition is dedicated to promoting the importance of protecting our natural resources. It works closely with public and private agencies and citizens' groups to carry out its mission.

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Please recycle!



FRIENDS OF THE FLINT RIVER TRAIL



As you read this, the 'official' bicycling season is drawing to a close. The trees are starting to turn, and the rides only get more beautiful! Our Sunday rides run through the end of October, starting at 2 PM at the Flint Farmers' Market.

Our final 'Third Saturday' ride is October 19th. It is the longest and hilliest of the year. Riders meet at 10am at the YMCA in Milford, MI – and from there head to Kensington Metro Park and Island Lake Recreation area – all on a continuous trail of about 33 miles.

Rides have been more popular than ever this year! We average about 45 riders per week on Sunday, with riders coming from 29 different zip codes. The Saturday rides are getting larger also, with an average of about 25 riders per month.

With the virtually certain move of the Flint Farmers' Market in the spring, we have not yet finalized where we'll begin our rides next year. One thing is sure: The trail clean up will occur on the last Saturday in April, at the Vietnam Veterans Park on the west side of the river between Hamilton Ave. and Longway Blvd.

The first ride of 2014 will be on the first Sunday in May – as they have been for over 15 years.



STORM DRAIN STENCILING IS UNDERWAY

The Flint River Watershed Coalition is out and about across Genesee County reminding residents that all drains lead directly to their nearest river or stream. With support from the Genesee County "Our Water" program, we're partnering with a variety of groups and individuals to stencil as many storm drains as possible. This project educates neighborhoods about the storm drains on their streets – these drains collect the rain water that travels on the streets, picking up pollutants such as trash, oils, and fertilizers, as it makes its way to our rivers.

So far, about 130 drains have been stenciled as a visual

reminder to the public of where the storm water drains. The seven volunteer sessions that have occurred over the past two

months have allowed us to reach over 700 homes. Besides stenciling the drains, we provide literature that describes ways to decrease the amount of pollutants in our storm water runoff.

It's not too late to volunteer! Your group can help us get the message out that protecting our storm drains helps prevent the number one source of pollution in our watershed – i.e. non point source or runoff pollution. The volunteer session includes a short training period and will last between one to two hours. Contact Stephanie Nummer if you are interested in participating or if you have any further questions. 810-767-9491 or snummer@flintriver.org.



FALL WATER MONITORING

Fall Monitoring is here!! Our fall season is about to begin, but there is still time to get involved! The FRWC and our water monitor volunteers will spend 2 weeks conducting water quality monitoring at 34 sites around the watershed. Volunteer monitors visit their site and complete site assessments, and will collect benthic samples (such as stonefly and mayfly larvae) from their location. The samples are then taken back to one of our lab locations in Genesee or Lapeer County for identification, and those identifications are then verified by our Master Identifiers. From that information we are able to tell how healthy our local streams are and if there are any areas where benthic scores have dropped. We share our results with several local and state agencies. This information is available on our website under the Water Monitoring tab.

It is never too late to volunteer and get involved. This is a fun and interesting way to make a difference in the watershed and to get family and friends involved in protecting our precious waterways. To find out more about water monitoring, contact Jaime Welch at 810-767-7140 or at jwelch@flintriver.org. If you are new to monitoring, we will walk you through the process and pair you up with an experienced monitor at one of our sites.

Our lab days for monitoring this fall will be Thursday, October 3rd from 2-6 pm, and Saturday, October 12th from 12-4 pm in Genesee County and on Saturday, October 5th from 12-4 pm in Lapeer County. With 34 sites around the watershed, there are plenty of locations to choose from and there are always openings for new volunteers. Monitoring only takes a few hours but makes a difference that lasts. Come join us in the river and find out how your local streams are doing. There's a spot waiting for you!



NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE FRWC

The FRWC is teamed up with Michigan State University on two great projects: The Institute of Water Research (IWR), and the Planning & Zoning Center (PZC).

The project with IWR will bring a remarkable mapping tool called ELUCID (Environmental Learning Using Computer Interactive Decisions) to area farmers, students, government and nonprofit agencies, and anyone else interested in learning what impact various land use practices can have on our water quality.

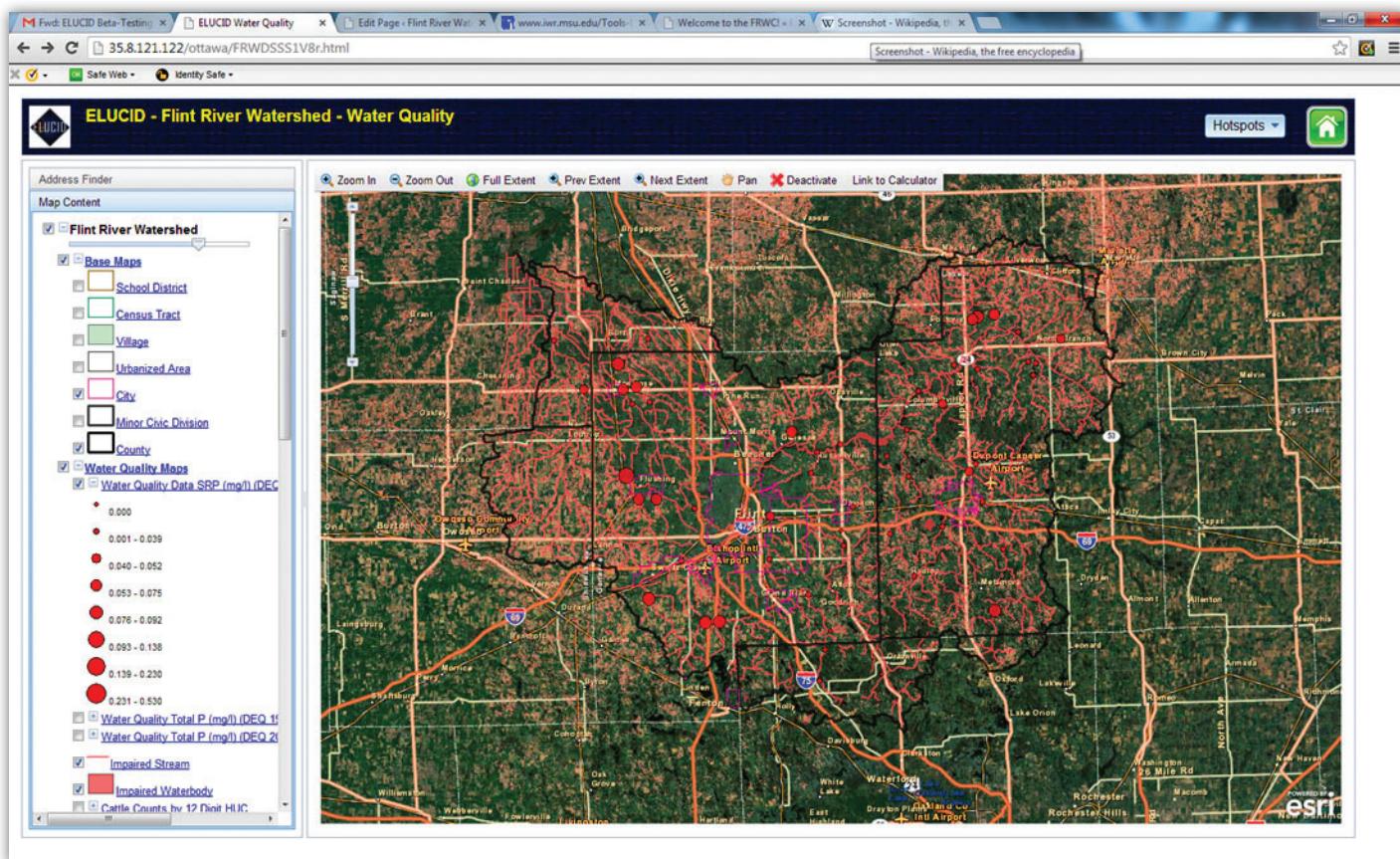
ELUCID is a fun, user-friendly, web based program that will aid technicians in identifying areas that hold the greatest potential in improving water quality. To learn more about this project visit our website at flintriver.org under Programs, Mapping Tools. ELUCID is not yet live, but check back soon. We'll announce the program's availability on our web page, our Facebook page, and through our email newsletter the Ripples.

Our project with the Planning and Zoning Center allows us to reach out to communities that surround Flint's three lakes: Thread Lake, Flint Park Lake, and Kearsley Reservoir. The staff

of the PZC also brings its expertise to the City of Flint master planning process, where they've helped identify key provisions to protect, preserve, and improve the Flint River and its streams as they flow through the city.

The City of Flint is fortunate to have these abundant water resources. Together with the PZC staff, the FRWC is engaging directly with the residents that live near and use these beautiful lakes. So far we've had a great amount of support and interest from Flint residents and look forward to working more with all who feel these lakes are an integral part of their city and our watershed. If you see us out or in YOUR neighborhood, stop and say "Hi"! For more information on this project and how you can get involved please visit our website at flintriver.org under Programs, Planning & Zoning or contact us directly at 810-767-6490.

We are thrilled to be working with MSU on such exciting projects! We are confident that our work with them will create a positive outlook on the value and quality of our watershed.



"To cherish what remains of the Earth and to foster its renewal is our only legitimate hope of survival."
- Wendell Berry

FANTASTIC SUMMER PADDLES



What a fantastic summer for paddling the Flint River! From Flushing to Birch Run, downtown Flint to Montrose, it was great to experience the beauty of the river and make friends with the wonderful people who came along on our paddling trips. Participants saw bald eagles, muskrats, turtles, fish, and enjoyed the scenery that gives that "up north" feeling right here at home.



The FRWC Paddles are made possible by the Genesee County Drain Commission through the 'Our Water' program and we greatly appreciate their continued support. This summer the weather cooperated and we hosted 8 paddling trips between May and September. Each trip takes us to a different part of the watershed, giving participants a chance to see all the diversity that the Flint River has to offer and an opportunity to better understand why this resource is so important.

We've had participants tell us how floating down the Flint River changes them. It gives them a sense of stewardship, of

ownership, that this is "their" river and it deserves protection. This point was driven home as a paddle group encountered some unusual trash in the water during their respective journeys. Participants would stop and grab many an interesting find, including a fire extinguisher, a child's Barbie jeep, several lawn chairs, and a bucket. All of these items (and more) found their way into a canoe or kayak and were disposed of properly at the end of the trip. It was great to see people doing this not because they were asked to but because they wanted to. The FRWC has "Creek Clean Up Crews" in Lapeer and Genesee counties that have been hard at work keeping our river clean and navigable and are always looking for help with their efforts.



We look forward every spring to getting into the water and seeing what has changed from the previous year. The river is always changing, always evolving, and always beautiful. We will be starting our trips back up in May 2014, so mark your calendars now and set aside the 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month to paddle with us!

GREAT TIME TO BECOME A MEMBER

River Life is Hard, But Someone Has to Do It

- bugs to count ...
- tires to reclaim ...
- garbage to gather ...
- storm drains to stencil
- kayaks to paddle
- bike trails to be explored

You get the idea.

Summer is the most fun time of year. The friends and families (and staff) of the Flint River Watershed Coalition are out on the river! You'll see river enthusiasts every week on every stretch as we participate in the programs that are so critical to preserving our watershed. As a result, the summer is also a slow time for membership. The weather is much too nice to think about renewing

your affiliation with the organization, and that's fine. We get it. So, SPECIAL KUDO's go out to the individuals and businesses below who supported us by making membership payments. Thanks to them from the bottom of our river-loving hearts!

They are:

- Linda Berker *****
- Mark Bilodeau *****
- David Churchill *****
- Raeann Gatenby**
- Tim Larkin *****
- Mass Transportation Authority *****
- Peter Osborne**
- Jeanne Pepper & Tom Herman*****
- Diana Phillips *****
- GM Foundation *****
- Lisa and Doug Schultz *****
- Karen Spinney**

Allan Taylor

Fred and Alycemae Townsend

Pedals to Paddles ***

Wade Trim, Inc. ***

Dale Wolfgram

Don't let these people show you up. Right now, cut the membership application out of this newsletter and make sure you:

.... write us a check

.... donate on line

.... call us with your credit card number

.... stop in the office with your payment

Thank you so much, and go have FUN on your Flint River!!

**** Denotes a membership payment of \$100.00 or more.*

Become a Member of the FRWC now! MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION - FALL 2013

name _____

organization _____

address _____

city/state/zip _____

phone (h) _____ (c) _____

email _____

student \$10

individual \$25

family \$40

river sponsor \$100

river patron \$250

watershed protector \$500

watershed guarantor \$1000

other \$ _____

Some companies will match an employee contribution to an eligible charity or non-profit organization. Please check with your employer to obtain a matching gift form, if applicable.

Your support is sincerely appreciated. The Flint River Watershed Coalition is a not-for-profit organization with 501(c)(3) tax exempt status. Your contribution is deductible.

Please make checks payable to: **Flint River Watershed Coalition or FRWC, 400 N. Saginaw Street, Suite 233 Flint MI 48502**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

The FRWC Board of Directors meet at 8:30am on the third Friday of every month. Meetings take place at the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Administration Building .

The Lapeer Chapter of the FRWC meets at 7:00pm on the third Tuesday of every month.

Sat Aug 17, 2013	10:00am – 12:30pm	Fun Times on the Flint River Paddle - University Ave to River Road
Sat Sep 7, 2013	10:00am – 1:00pm	Welcome in Fall Paddle - Mitson to Flushing
Sat Sep 14, 2013	9:30am – 12:30pm	Benthic Monitoring Training - For Mar
Sat Sep 21, 2013	10:00am – 1:00pm	Celebrate the Fall Colors Paddle - Flushing to Montrose
Thu Oct 3, 2013	2:00pm – 6:00pm	Monitoring Lab Day - MSU Extension
Sat Oct 5, 2013	12:00pm – 4:00pm	Lapeer Monitoring Lab Day - Willows at Chatfield School
Tue Oct 8, 2013	7:00pm – 9:00pm	Thread Lake Visioning Session - International Academy of Flint
Sat Oct 12, 2013	12:00pm – 4:00pm	Monitoring Lab Day - MSU Extension
Tue Oct 15, 2013	9:00am – noon	
cont'd	1:00pm – 4:15pm	ELUCID Training - Computer Lab 2121, MCC Regional Technology Center
Thu Jan 30, 2014	6:00pm	FRWC Annual Gathering "Celebrating 25 Years Of GREEN"

For more detail on the location of these events, please call the offices of the Flint River Watershed Coalition:
 (810) 767-6490 or email us at info@flintriver.org

*Sign up for our e-newsletter, *The Ripples*, by visiting our website: www.flintriver.org*

THE SEASON FOR GREEN IS COMING

With the start of the school year, the season for GREEN is right around the corner! We are currently looking for teachers and mentors to participate in this great learning opportunity for the youth of the Flint River Watershed.

If you are a teacher interested in bringing field testing into your classroom, an environmental professional eager to share your knowledge with others, or just seeking to volunteer time to a great project, then GREEN is what you are looking for. There are opportunities to participate for everyone. For information about GREEN, becoming a GREEN teacher or mentor, or volunteering please contact Stephanie Nummer at: summer@flintriver.org or 810-767-9491.



Tom Hutchings working with GREEN students in the field.



400 N. Saginaw St., Suite 233
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Mark Your Calendar!
FRWC Annual Celebration
Thursday January 30, 2014
"Celebrating 25 Years of GREEN"

VOLUNTEERS HELP CLEAR TIRES AND LITTER



With low water levels, a large number of tires under the Dort Highway bridge became exposed and were just begging for removal. A group of volunteers (part of our Genesee Clean Up Crew) got together and in one afternoon pulled over 50 tires out of one small stretch of river. They also filled up several bags with trash that was littering the banks in the area. We would like to say thank you to both our Genesee and our Lapeer Clean Up Crews. Their hard work keeps our watershed beautiful.