

The Watershed Reporter

What a Difference Three Days Make!

From Executive Director Rebecca Fedewa

The board and staff of the FRWC has long been grateful for the support of our members who over the years have volunteered for our programs, provided



Rebecca Fedewa
the organization we are today without your long-term and committed support, and for that, we thank you!!

Today, our numbers have almost doubled and we are so excited to welcome all our new supporters -- the Flint River Watershed Coalition is now 508 members strong.

valuable financial support, and helped us spread the word about the watershed. We wouldn't be

Thank You to all our new and renewing members who came out to visit during the Flint River 500, purchased raffle tickets, and pledged support for our tire pick-up. And a special thanks to FRWC board member Brent Nickola, who lived on a makeshift raft in the middle of the Flint River until we reached our membership goal of 500. We called him off the raft just after 3 PM on Sunday, September 20th, and before he could even make it back to shore we were up to 504. You can read more about the event on pages 6 & 7 of this newsletter.

A very warm welcome to all our new members! Inside this and subsequent newsletters, you'll hear more about all the FRWC programs and activities. You'll learn about our fun education and outreach programs. You can read more about that status of state and national issues that impact our

watershed. And we keep you informed about opportunities to get out and enjoy your watershed.

If you haven't had a chance yet, please also visit our website at www.FlintRiver.org where you will find even more information about your watershed and the programs of the FRWC. While there, sign up for our email list to receive periodic updates about happenings in the watershed. And if you are on Facebook, consider becoming a fan of our page.

As the "voice of the Flint River," the FRWC strives to provide our members with all the current information they need to help us protect, preserve, and improve the Flint River Watershed. We're so glad you are with us.

Thanks again to all our friends!

Monitors Score!

The Benthic Monitoring process this fall season was once again a great success! With the help of 49 volunteers, we obtained data from 6 sites in Lapeer County and 20 Genesee county sites. A few monitors assisted at multiple sites, and the addition of 19 new players this fall contributed to a winning season.

"It is always an enjoyable experience," says Bob Simpson, a frequent monitor for the FRWC. Bob also serves as a mentor to new monitors, and this fall he got his

daughter and her family to participate in the collection process. From father, to daughter, to granddaughter--each one was able to assist with monitoring.

Through the combined efforts of trained volunteers and assistance from UM-Flint Professor Dr. Gary Pace, we once again obtained valuable data that tracks the health of our watershed. Thanks to all who participated. Complete monitoring results will be available on our website www.FlintRiver.org soon!



Denny Crispell successfully collects samples.



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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 the public and with private agencies and citizens' groups in carrying out its mission.

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FRWC Board meetings are held the third Friday of the month at Mott Community College in the Genesee Room of the Prahl Conference Center.

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Please Recycle!**



newsletter design & layout by Jon Wood

10 Questions With FRWC Board Member Carol VanBuren



1. Why are you a member of/work for /volunteer for the FRWC?
Because I wanted to do whatever I could to help FRWC mission and vision.
2. What FRWC programs do you participate in?
I just participated in my first of many membership drives, and I will start the Bike trail next year.
3. When did you first get involved in the FRWC?
Interest in one of our treasured resources became apparent when I met the Executive Director of FRWC. She explained the mission and the vision, and I knew I wanted to become a part of FRWC to learn more about our watershed and help.
4. What's your favorite part of the watershed?
I don't have a preference at this time.
5. What is the most interesting thing you have seen in the watershed (wildlife, garbage, someone doing something unexpected, etc.)
Board member Brent Nickola, sacking out on the river for the weekend membership rally.
6. What's your favorite river (any river) memory?
I don't know the name but as a child when I was sent off to summer camp; I always enjoyed the view of the river that never seem to end.
7. What worries you most about the watershed?
That we don't respect it.
8. What gives you the most hope?
That there are solutions, we just need to find them.
9. If you could change one thing to help improve the watershed, what would it be?
To help get the word out that we should all help and learn how to keep our watershed clean
10. Who is your river/watershed/environmental/conservation hero?
Rebecca Fedewa (smile)



Goals of the FRWC

1. Educate the public about water quality and ecosystem protection and appropriate use of land and water resources.
2. Protect, promote, and advocate use of the Flint River watershed through such means as monitoring, water watches and pollution compliance referrals.
3. Involve citizens, governments, organizations, institutions, and businesses to protect land and water resources.
4. Ensure adequate and stable financial resources.
5. Maintain sufficient human resources and organizational infrastructure.

We're the Voice of the River: Join The Chorus

Chairman's Update: Jack Minore

The Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC) strives to be "the Voice of the Flint River" – seeking always to encourage practices that will both preserve and protect this valuable water asset in mid-Michigan. People often lack an understanding of the importance of the river in the broader scheme of things. When I ask groups,



Jack Minore

"How many of you think that it's important to protect the Great Lakes?"
– every hand goes up. But when I ask the same question about the Flint River, the

response is far less enthusiastic. The connection between the two is often lost. If there is one lesson I would hope people take from their involvement with the FRWC, it is this: that ditch or the catch basin in front of YOUR house is a headwaters of the Great Lakes! Every bit of 'crud' that goes into that ditch or catch basin is a pollutant that affects water quality in Lake Huron. It may be 'innocent' pollution such as lawn fertilizer run-off -- inevitable pollution such as oil, salt or grime from cars – or 'deliberate' pollution such as that half-can of oil dumped down the nearest storm drain.

There are, of course, other problems. People who flush left over medications down the toilet are contributing to a growing and serious problem. Even the use of some cleaners contributes to pollution. While almost everything that goes down our house drains is largely cleaned at the area treatment plants, some chemicals and some

components in everyday products simple cannot be completely removed. We have hazardous waste collection days for those items, and it is critical that whenever there is a doubt about environmental safety we use care.

Some pollution is inevitable, but acting as the "Voice of the River", the FRWC seeks to help educate people on good land and water practices to protect and preserve water quality – and to advocate for better planning and practices towards that same end.

The success of our efforts depends, in large part, on the contributions of our members. YOU can become one of 'our' educators by helping to spread the word about better water and land practices. And YOU can volunteer your time and contribute money to help sustain the FRWC programs. We need YOU to add YOUR voice to ours: join the chorus!

I especially want to welcome the many new members from our Flushing event of late September, and to thank you for helping us reach our goal of 500+ members. I invite you to extend your membership, to become more involved in the various activities we have planned, and to suggest ways we can do an even better job to preserve and protect the Flint River. We look forward to your comments, your ideas and your participation in all of our programs.

"The Last Child in the Woods"

A Commentary by Jack Minore

"The Last Child in the Woods" is an interesting book with a far more interesting premise. Author Richard Louv has written a book based on the premise that today's children have lost touch with nature. Indeed, for me, the most compelling aspect of the book is his use of the term, nature deficit disorder. The book opens with the author asking a group of children whether they would rather play outside or inside. Most said inside: one boy explained his choice, "that's where all the electrical outlets are." Children, the author notes, are forbidden to play in the woods, in parks, or in nature in general. They have lost the sense of connection between humans and the rest of the natural world. It's a thought provoking concept. We can all picture the ten year old in front of his TV or holding his game-boy while avoiding all outdoors play.

Reading the book brought to mind the great programs provided at For-Mar by the Genesee County Parks. Such programs as the "Knee High Naturalist" or the "Family Night Hikes" and several variations. The mere presence of this nature preserve and its storehouse of natural treasures in the parks building provide a great introduction to the natural world if we are willing to insist that children take advantage of its presence and programs.

Of course we don't need the preserve if we are willing as parents and grandparents to strike out on our own to introduce children to the natural world. Natural and public settings like For-Mar, and other public spaces across our watershed, however, provide the opportunity and make the task easier.

Come and read our blog at



River Views



This old photo shows the Flint River and a "pleasure" boat that once ferried Flint folks to Hitchcock Grove. People used to enjoy the river quite a bit! This photo is from the early 1900's. Apparently there were several such boats at that time. "Cap" Foster owned and ran the "Caprice," a 100 passenger steamer that ran from above the Hamilton Dam to Hitchcock's Grove, a favorite picnicking place.

It is unclear whether this is a photo of the "Caprice" or W.H. Smith's boat, the "Dawn" (also a steamer that ran for pleasure parties on the river). The "Mego" was another, gasoline powered launch that ran the river for many years, as did the "Genesee" and the "Belle," all of which were operated by Louis Smith and W.H. Smith.

Lapeer Happenings

The Summer of '09 will long be remembered in Lapeer County for the flooding which occurred on the South Branch and several tributaries in early August when we received 6" to 10" of rain in an

high water caused a number of trees—that we had cleared several years ago—to dislodge and move downstream to block the river in new locations keeping the FRWC and Lapeer Rotary volunteers

busy re-doing areas cleared early in the season. Student volunteers from Chatfield and Bishop Kelly schools worked on the section from Rotary Park to Saginaw St. in Lapeer clearing 15 tires and lots of trash.

We were fortunate to get a number of new volunteers for the stream obstruction removal and habitat restoration project this year and their hard work is greatly appreciated. From late Spring through the middle of October a total of 435 volunteer hours were expended

scouting the river, clearing 16 large jams, and 30 small to medium jams. Many more hours were spent maintaining equipment and contacting river property owners to gain access and keep them informed about our progress.

More people are going out and enjoying the river every year as we get more sections opened up for easy, safe passage. Currently the river is clear from Rotary Park to Saginaw St. in Lapeer and from Millville Landing west of Lapeer to the Holloway Reservoir in Columbiaville. There are numerous easy access points all along the South Branch and the scenery is beautiful the entire year. By this time next year we hope to have the entire South Branch cleared including the stretch from Mayfield Rd. to Millville where we have not done much work in the past few years. Get your canoes and kayaks out and enjoy the river!



Get your canoes and kayaks out and enjoy the river!

18 hour period. Hundreds of homes were damaged, roads were closed, and a "local state of emergency" was declared. Tons of trash, old tires, lawn furniture, City Parks Dept. picnic tables, and uprooted trees were washed downstream. The

FRWC Fights Pollution

Water pollution caused by bacteria, sediment, plant nutrients, pesticides and heat are threatening or impairing the use of the South Branch subwatershed for sustaining wildlife habitat and recreation (swimming, boating, fishing, etc.). The pollution mainly comes from agricultural and urban precipitation runoff from rain, snowmelt and soil erosion from exposed farm fields and unstable stream banks. Other significant pollution sources include urban storm drain discharges and failing septic systems.

Similarly, water pollution caused by bacteria, sediment, plant nutrients, pesticides, and heat is threatening or impairing the use of the Gilkey Creek



Wetlands in the Flint River South Branch subwatershed

subwatershed for wildlife habitat and recreation. Sediment pollution is also impairing the use of the Swartz Creek subwatershed for sustaining wildlife habitat.

To solve these problems, the Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC) is partnering with several organizations to implement comprehensive management plans that outline the various types of best management practices (BMP) that can reduce water pollution. Some are for controlling agricultural pollution, and others are for controlling urban stormwater runoff. BMPs on farms include reducing the exposure of soil to precipitation and growing plants to filter pollution, especially near lakes and streams. Urban BMPs include detaining and diverting stormwater and minimizing the amount of pavement in new land

developments. Other BMPs include better septic system sighting and maintenance, improved road crossing construction, wetland and stream restoration, and education for the public and local governmental officials.

In the South Branch, the Six-Rivers Regional Land Conservancy has already obtained a large grant from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to implement portions of the plan. The Lapeer Conservation District will submit a request this fall for additional DEQ funds for implementing the South Branch plan. The MDEQ also has invited the FRWC and the Genesee County Drain Commission to apply for grants to implementing the Swartz Creek plan and Gilkey Creek plans.

Key Partners

South Branch

Lapeer Conservation District; US Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); Six-Rivers Regional Land Conservancy; University of Michigan - Flint Center for Applied Environmental Research (CAER)

Swartz Creek

NRCS; Genesee County Drain Commission

Gilkey Creek

CAER; The Ruth Mott Foundation; Genesee County Drain Commission

Want to see photos of your watershed?



www.flickr.com/photos/frwc/

What if the FRWC had a penny for every time you searched the Internet?



Here's a new easy way to raise money for the Flint River Watershed Coalition. Just start using GoodSearch.com as your search engine and online shopping mall. Every time you search the Internet or make an online purchase at one of their partner merchants, GoodSearch makes a donation to the FRWC. It's powered by Yahoo! so you get great search results!

Flint River 500 a Resounding Success!



This way to the Flint River 500!!

For some folks, good fortune is reflected in their "lucky" number. For FRWC board member Brent Nickola, that number on September 20 was 504.

That was the final tally announced at the close of the Flint River 500, FRWC's three-day membership drive that began on Friday, September 18.

Nickola, alumni relations manager at the University of Michigan-Flint, kicked off the event by voluntarily stranding himself aboard a makeshift flotilla anchored where the river -- one of mid-Michigan's largest tributaries -- winds through Riverview Park in Flushing. His goal: To stay on the water until FRWC had effectively doubled its membership to at least 500.

For the next 44 hours, Nickola worked, slept, ate, fished and entertained onlookers as new memberships came in. FRWC supported the effort by holding a number of activities at the park, including a fish fry, minnow races, fly fishing and tying demonstrations, a kayak and canoe rally, raffle drawing and an outdoor screening of the Disney film, "Finding Nemo."

Volunteers also participated Saturday in a clean-up of the river just upstream from Nickola's raft, removing more than 70 discarded tires and several hundred pounds of

rusting metal and other trash.

After enduring a second night of temperatures dipping near 40 degrees, Nickola woke Sunday morning to bright sunshine and a steady flow of new memberships. At roughly 3 p.m. the call was made: the FRWC's membership had reached 504.

"This has been an incredible weekend," said Nickola after being showered with cheers -- and bursting water balloons -- as he

Bilodeau of Davison, a water sports enthusiast who recently moved to the area from southeastern Michigan.

"A friend told me, 'You don't want to get in the Flint River, it's polluted,'" Bilodeau recalls. "I remember when the Clinton River had the same stigma and how people never dreamed it could again be a river of beauty and fishing. But that community blew that idea out of the water."

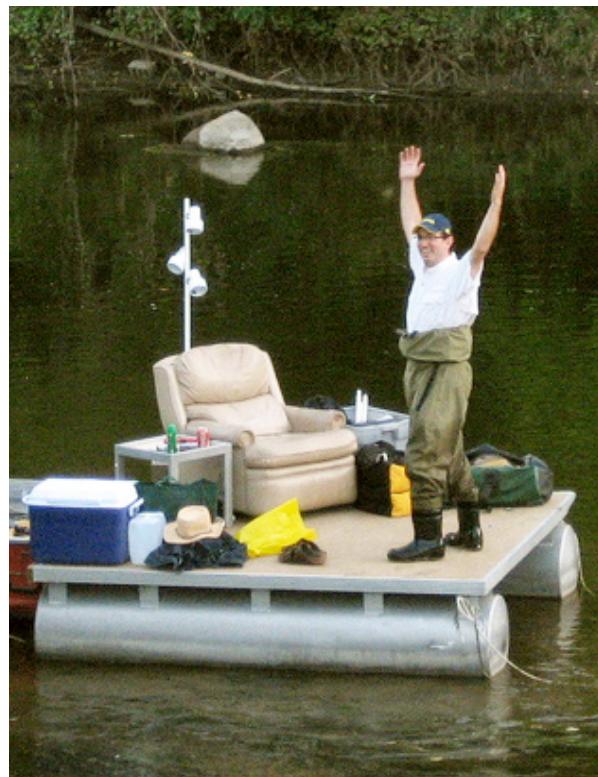
He then learned about the Flint River 500 after reading a recent FRWC newsletter and decided to participate. At the event, Bilodeau learned more of the coalition's efforts to secure the watershed's future and decided to become a member.

"I understand the importance of river ethics and health, as well as clean up efforts," he said. "I want to be a part of that work with the Flint River."

Bilodeau and the other new members will be key to the future of the coalition and the river, said

Rebecca Fedewa, executive director of the FRWC.

Our members provide a critical voice for the river, raising awareness of the watershed as a community asset, as well as responsibility," she said. "We're glad to add these new members to the FRWC family, just as we were glad to send Brent home for a shower and a good night's rest."



Brent Nickola really "roughing it" on the river!

arrived back on shore. "The folks who came out learned that the Flint River is a great place to bring the family, spend the day and just have fun. And they left with a better understanding of the role we each play in keeping the river that way."

Such was the case for Mark



FR500!



Above: Riley McLincha provides late night entertainment

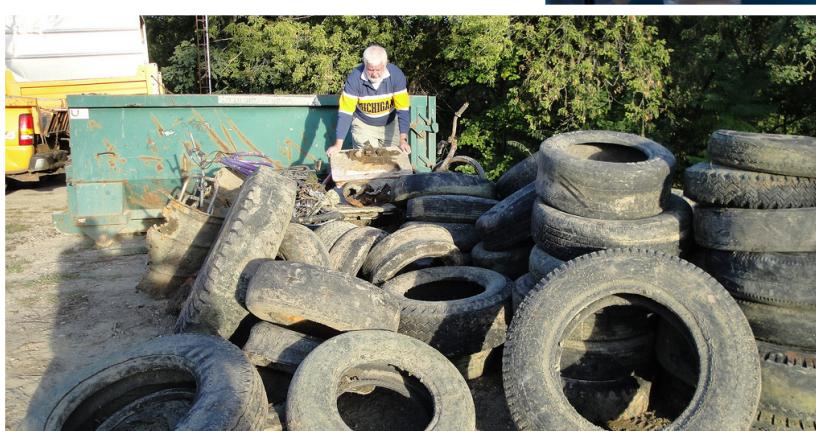
FR500!

Right and above right:
Lots of family fun
was had at the
minnow races.



FR500!

Left and below:
It is never too early to
start teaching the little
ones to tie flies.



Above: Jack Minore surveys some of the debris from the clean-up effort.



(Joe Rathbun of the Michigan DEQ demonstrates methods to determine stream bank stability on the Gilkey Creek)

Stream Profiling on the Gilkey Creek

The FRWC is partnering with the Center for Applied Environmental Research to conduct an in-depth stream profiling analysis of the Gilkey Creek. In tech speak, the analysis measures the health and hydrologic stability of the creek using the Bank Erosion Hazard Index as well as other qualitative measures. Generally speaking, the analysis provides information on how stable the Gilkey Creek's banks are at 11 sites throughout its watershed. This information will help us measure progress of any improvement projects that take place in the Gilkey Creek watershed.

Not too surprisingly, our first year

of monitoring results show that stream instability worsens as you move downstream in the Gilkey, with the exception of the portion of the creek that runs adjacent to the Applewood estate. This somewhat anomalous result is due to the massive restoration effort at that site. The full monitoring report will be available on our website in the coming weeks.

In addition to this work, the FRWC hosted a "train the trainer" seminar on the methods of steam profiling. Joe Rathbun from the Michigan DEQ led the session that drew over 30 participants from as far as Benzie County and Grand Rapids.

Friends of the Flint River Trail

The Friends of the Flint River Trail (FFRT) wrapped up their Sunday rides – as usual – the last Sunday in October with a 'cider and doughnuts' outing. It's been another successful season on several fronts. For starters, there were new 'first-time' riders virtually every week – sometimes as many as 7-8 first timers. Most returned a few times and others began to use the trail on their own following the initial ride with the Friends group.

We also saw progress on a number of improvements that the FFRT has been advocating for the past few years: some new curb cuts, removal of poorly placed bollards, new signage, and a handful of other repairs. Efforts to expand the trail also



saw considerable progress. While it may be some time before we actually see pavement on the ground, property acquisition, pre-engineering, funding requests and/or approval all occurred on several additions and/or extensions, including sections that will run:

- *west to Kettering University and Ballenger Highway (the first step on connecting to Flushing),*
- *north in the Genesee County Parks from Stepping Stone Falls, and*
- *south from downtown to the south city limits.*

Although not connected to the Flint River Trail, we are pleased to see progress throughout the County! Three miles of trail were opened north of Clio to the Genesee / Saginaw County line (the Trolley Line Trail) – and work is virtually completed on the Otter Lake to Millington portion of the Southern Links Trail out of Columbiaville.

As usual, the 2010 trail activities will start with a major trail cleanup on the last Saturday in April in preparation for our initial Sunday ride – the first Sunday in May (and continuing every Sunday through October). Questions or suggestions on special rides may be directed to either Bruce Nieuwenhuis (bnbaton@gmail.com) or to Jack Minore (jacksonmin@aol.com).



Who said 500 was enough?

We now have 508!

Riding the Wave of New Memberships!

The dust isn't even settled on the Flint River 500 yet, but the memberships keep coming in. As it stands now, there are 508 members in the Flint River Watershed Coalition. That's an increase of four or five just since the Flint River 500. In the next newsletter, we'll include a complete listing of all of our members, as our way of acknowledging our new and renewing friends and family.

You will read a lot about our great membership event in September in other sections of this newsletter. We just cannot say enough about this successful weekend. But the enthusiasm and energy that was generated by the activities in Flushing last month in no way

overshadow the hard work and loyalty that has been shown by our core members. Each year, there is a solid group of individuals, families, and businesses who continue to demonstrate their support for the vision, mission, and good work of the Flint River Watershed Coalition. They faithfully send us their membership renewals by contributing \$25.00, \$50.00, \$100.00 or \$250.00 each year. We sincerely appreciate their continued commitment to the FRWC.

Our focus in the coming months will be to really enhance the membership experience of our new friends so that they can be added to the members who have been our long term supporters.

Then, on to 750!



Flint River Watershed Coalition Membership Application

I am pleased to become a member of the Flint River Watershed Coalition:

Name _____
 Address _____
 Organization _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Telephone (h) _____ (w) _____
 Email _____

Enclosed are membership dues for:

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$ 10	<input type="checkbox"/> River Patron	\$ 250
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$ 25	<input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Protector	\$ 500
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Group	\$ 40	<input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Guarantor	\$ 1000
<input type="checkbox"/> River Sponsor	\$ 100		

I have enclosed an additional gift of \$ _____.

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 tax deductible. Please make checks payable to:

Flint River Watershed Coalition or FRWC
432 N. Saginaw Street, Suite 238
Flint, MI 48502

Stocking Stuffers!

FRWC Hats

Show your love for the river!

Hats are only \$12.00 each and shipping is just \$3.00 no matter how many hats you buy!

Send check or money order to:

Flint River Watershed Coalition
432 N. Saginaw St. Ste 238
Flint MI 48502



Order Form

Name _____
 Address _____
 City/State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____

I have enclosed a _____ check or _____ money order for:
 NUMBER OF HATS _____ x \$12.00 Subtotal _____
 Plus shipping \$3.00
 Total _____

Making Your List? Check It Twice!



It's that time of year again – time for holiday gift giving! This year, when you are trying to find the perfect gift for that hard to shop for person on your list, please consider a gift membership to the Flint River Watershed Coalition. You can dedicate a gift using your credit card from our website (www.FlintRiver.org), or make arrangements by calling our office at (810) 767-6490. We'll send your recipient a welcome package that includes this lovely gift certificate and copies of our most recent newsletters. For gift memberships of \$100 or more, we'll also include one of our popular FRWC hats.

Happy Holidays from the FRWC!!

News From Lansing

(excerpts from the Michigan Wetland Action Coalition monthly newsletter)

MICHIGAN'S WETLAND PROGRAM SPARED

With the governor's signature, Michigan's wetland protection program will not be returned to the Federal government. The legislature passed a bill that will keep Michigan's wetlands program running at the state level for an additional three years.

Some of the specific changes have sunsets, meaning they expire at the end of the three years in October 2012. While there are items of concern in this bill, and it is certainly not ideal for the utmost protection of our wetlands, it does retain Michigan's wetland protection program. Keeping authority to administer Section 404 is imperative because more wetlands would be a risk under

federal control at this time, due to the jurisdictional issues from SWANCC and Rapanos.

BUDGET FOR MICHIGAN'S NATURAL RESOURCES

Unfortunately, the retention of the wetland program is the only good news for natural resources in a budget deal that includes drastic reductions in general fund support for Michigan's public health, water protection and natural resources management. In the case of the Department of Environmental Quality the cuts amount to a 39% reduction in general funds. More than \$196 million was cut from the joint state Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Natural Resources budget.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Governor orders consolidation of DNR and DEQ into one department. Governor Jennifer Granholm has signed an executive order that will combine the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality into one. The new department will be called the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality. The consolidation is expected to save the state an estimated \$1.5 million dollars. The Governor's spokesperson, Liz Boyd says the savings could be greater. Boyd says at this time it's not known how many jobs will be cut.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH	DATE/DAY	EVENT
NOV	1 SUNDAY	FRP Club Paddling Trip: Shiawasee River to GEEK Park to Shiatown Dam
	11 WEDNESDAY	FRWC Education/Flint River GREEN Committee Meeting
	14 SATURDAY	FRP Pool Session at YMCA, Downtown Flint
	17 TUESDAY	FRWC Annual Clean Up Committee Meeting (Lapeer)
	17 TUESDAY	Lapeer FRWC Chapter Meeting
	20 FRIDAY	FRWC Board Meeting
DEC	2 WEDNESDAY	FRWC Education/Flint River GREEN Committee Meeting
	5 SATURDAY	FRP Pool Session at YMCA, Downtown Flint
	19 SATURDAY	FRP Pool Session at YMCA, Downtown Flint
JAN	6 WEDNESDAY	FRWC Education/Flint River GREEN Committee Meeting
	9 SATURDAY	FRP Pool Session at YMCA, Downtown Flint
	15 FRIDAY	FRWC Board Meeting
	19 TUESDAY	FRWC Annual Clean Up Committee Meeting (Flint)
	23 SATURDAY	FRP Pool Session at YMCA, Downtown Flint
	28 THURSDAY	Annual Meeting Dinner

NOTE: Pool sessions at the YWCA are for kayak lessons - Contact Eric Hall for more information 810 423-4774.

Save the Date!

FRWC Annual Meeting and Silent Auction



Thursday January 28th 2010
6-9 PM

Davison Country Club

9512 Lippincott Blvd. at the Corner
of M-15 and Lippincott, just south of I-69

**Friends and Guests
are welcome to attend.**

The cost is \$30 per person.

Reservations are required
by January 25th, 2010.
Call (810) 767-9559 or
email: ewesthoff@flintriver.org

Avoid the Rush -- Make your reservations now!



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