



Flint River
Watershed Coalition

432 N. Saginaw St., Ste. 1001
Flint, MI 48502 / 810-767-6490

www.flintriver.org

The Watershed Reporter

Partnering to protect our natural resources

July 2006

CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

OLOF KARLSTROM

We have had a great second quarter this spring. Many thanks are due to Bill Welch of the ISD for his coordination of Genesee GREEN. Thanks are also due to Dennis Zawol for his work on the spring river clean-up and to Dennis Zicha for his work on the Benthic Monitoring Program. As always, thanks are due to Sue Kubic who has been very helpful in working on the clean-up and obtaining the grant money to support it. Our appreciation also goes out to the Lapeer Committee for its continuing work on the river clearing and for the "Wild Lapeer" Days.

My personal thanks to Jack Minore for his extraordinary commitment to the FRWC this past year and a half. We wish him every success as he pursues the Senate seat being vacated by Senator Emerson. Steve Montle has proved to be an equally adept and energetic worker as he assumes the Directorship of the organization.

Environmentally, it seems that rivers and their watersheds are gaining far more attention. Recent articles in publications of the Nature Conservancy and the Sierra Club express concern for and involvement in rivers, their watersheds and the Great Lakes. Other publications and articles have appeared concerning the precarious state of the Great Lakes. Our efforts to preserve and protect the watershed are extremely important to that endeavor. As our departing Executive Director likes to remind me, "the catch basins and ditches in front of our houses are the 'headwaters of the Great Lakes', and these headwaters demand our concern and our protection!"

Flint Watershed Coalition and UM-Flint's CAER collaborate on "Amazing U" program

by Steve Montle and Brent Nickola

Think you know the Flint River? This was the question asked by University of Michigan-Flint's "Amazing U" program; and not surprisingly, many folks found that they in fact didn't know all that the river had to offer.

The program, which was led by U of M - Flint's Brent Nickola, began with a short educational discussion about the geology, ecology and pollution issues in the Flint River and its watershed. The Participants were then helped into their canoes for a beautiful two hour paddle beginning in the City of Flushing. Along the way several stops were made to examine various points

of interest and to give some needed rest to the paddlers.

After some beautiful weather and stunning scenery, several canoeists were overheard remarking that it felt as if they were "Up North"

Brent Nickola talking about the geology of the watershed to 24 canoe trip participants.

because of all the wildlife and tranquility that the river provided. It was amazing to the participants that all this beauty existed so close to home.

After maneuvering some difficult rapids with the help of Matt Bohlen and Nick Yinger the group landed in the Flushing Nature Park where park manager, Tom Enright, treated them to a tour of the native plants of the park.

Before leaving the park to be shuttled back to their cars, the guests expressed great surprise at the secret jewel they had just discovered. This trip was the first of many that the Center for Applied Environmental Research and Flint River Watershed Coalition will be conducting over the next several years. Given the responses of all who attended we have found a great new venue to promote recreation and watershed stewardship.



Gasoline prices, obesity and land use: how they are connected!

by Jack Minore

These three national problems are indelibly interwoven. We already know that our Land Use patterns contribute to serious problems with water quality. Every time we turn a 40 acre field into a 40,000 square foot roof and 30 acres of parking, we increase dramatically the run-off into our waterways - and, the volatility of the area downstream - creating more erosion and more sedimentation in the water. But how does land use contribute to the growing problems of obesity (good pun, eh?) and the increase in gasoline prices.

If we look back 50-60 years, most Americans lived in fairly compact areas - cities and small towns. We walked to the neighborhood grocer, dry cleaner, barber, drug store and, sometimes, even a neighborhood restaurant. Walking was the norm - and it was healthy for us. We didn't realize that we were fighting obesity, but we were. In my neighborhood in north Flint, I had the choice of three drugstores, three small (but full line) grocery stores, two barber shops, one bar, a full lunch dairy bar, a pizzeria, a furrier, two dry cleaners, two meat specialty shops, two hardware stores, at least two physicians and one dentist - all within an easy 5 block

walk. We walked to all of these, and we only got the car out to shop at the neighborhood A&P supermarket because at 10 blocks - it was too far to carry home the once a week full shopping. As kids, we rode our bikes or walked to the park, the tennis courts and to school. Obesity was not an issue (though kid photos of me will show me as a bit of a little Chubby!).

And, of course, there was little demand for gasoline since we walked to fulfill almost all of our commercial needs.

Sometime in the '60's, however, many Americans gave up our 50 X 100 foot lots and moved out to two acre lots in the "country". A few years later, the trend was for fully developed subdivisions - with large lots and no conveniences. We - virtually all of us - had to get into the car to pick up a loaf of bread or a quart of milk -- to visit the pharmacy - to drop off the dry cleaning - or to get to the barber or beauty shop. In most cases, we couldn't even take a bus from our subdivision house to downtown - or, later, to the mall.

And slowly, because of the changing land use patterns, American families all needed a second car just for

errands. The demand for gasoline grew, as did our children's girth. Later still, we traded in the nice little subdivision for bigger ones. (Just when did 5,000 square foot homes with three car garages become the "norm"?)

The subdivisions got bigger and they spread further out. We began to build schools on vacant land far from the students, and now everyone has to drive or ride a bus to school. The malls got bigger and bigger; the chain businesses clustered together, and neighborhood stores began to disappear (not counting the critically needed "party stores" which provide beer conveniently!).

We all ride everywhere, now. The results: more demand for gasoline - hence higher oil prices: less walking - hence more obesity. And both can be traced back to land use patterns. Perhaps the "new urbanism" or the more popular "walkable communities" can reverse the trend. But much of our future - ***more than just water quality*** - depends on the land use patterns we implement today. (For on-going information about land-use patterns, I encourage you to check out the Michigan Land Use Institute <mlui.org>).

Thanks to volunteers, river clean-up successful

I want to thank all the people that gave up time to make this year's River Clean-up a success. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality through Great Lakes Commission has generously given us a grant to cover the costs this year. I am happy to say we had over 225 volunteers come out and pick up trash along the river at eight different sites from the City of Lapeer to Flushing County Park. Most

of the sites were concentrated on the Flint River within the City of Flint.

Over 2,436 Ft³ of trash was picked up and pulled out of the Flint River and its tributaries. If the bags were stacked to the ceiling it would fill up more than two standard bedrooms. Other items removed were part of a couch, many tires, and a railroad tie. I was very encouraged to see that besides the efforts at our sites, there

were other clean-ups, and neighborhood beautification programs going on throughout the watershed. Once again, thanks to all those that gave up a couple of hours on a beautiful Saturday to pick up trash. Together we can move mountains...of trash.

Suzanne Kubic
River Clean-up Co-Chair

Membership is key to success

A strong membership base is critical to the success of the Flint River Watershed Coalition. The following is a list of new and returning members.

We sincerely appreciate the pledge to protect, preserve, and improve the Watershed that has been demonstrated by these individuals, families, groups, and corporations through their financial support of the Flint River Watershed Coalition. Thank you to all!

Your name is important to us! If your name has been misspelled, incorrectly listed, or omitted, please accept our apologies and bring the error to our attention so that we can correct our records, 810-767-6490.

New Members

Brenda Battin
Judge Duncan Beagle
Robert Beckley
Carl and Karen Bekofske
Mary Christian
Genesee Institute
Terry and Cindy Henry
Cheryl Hobson
Bentley H.S. Environmental Science Class

Bess Hurand
Denise Kremlick
Robert LaCross
Paula LaFountain
William Moeller
John Mrozik and Heather Sisto
Gerald and Marsha Natzke
Walt and Edythe Peake
Diane Peplinski
Garry and Lisa Pringle
James and Mary Jane Richardson
Rotary Club of Lapeer
Sharon Sawyer
Sierra Club - Nepessing Group
Terry Skoglund
Vickie Tucker
Dayne and Carrie Walling

Renewing Members

Nancy Byder
Mary Joan Dunlap
Ronald Easterwood
Freeman Greer
Thomas Herman and Jeanne Pepper
Marsha Kump - The Whiting Foundation
Lisa Lucky
Phil Shultz - Shultz Fluid Power
Paul Wenstrom
Dennis Zawol

Please let us know if you have a change of address; e-mail the change to ewesthof@umflint.edu or send it to: FRWC, 432 N. Saginaw St., Suite 1001, Flint, MI 48502

Grandpa saves bike path

During the June 3rd Gilkey Creek clean-up, a spry Flint Eastside grandfather, wading in waste-deep flood waters, cleared a massive log jam in the creek in Kearsley Park all by himself, barehanded, without the aid of any tools, not even a saw.

Flooding in the creek, deflected by the jam, was eroding the stream bank and threatening to wash out the new paved bike path in the park. He had to save the path for his granddaughters, who regularly accompany him on trips to the park.

Before the day of the clean-up, he and a good neighbor, cleared the logjam together and piled many heavy logs onto the stream banks. When he returned on the day of the clean-up, the logs had all been thrown back into the creek. Undeterred, he jumped into the creek and removed them again, while other cleanup volunteers hauled them away. This inspirational story exemplifies both the strength of this grandfather's love for his granddaughters and the Eastside community spirit.



FLINT RIVER WATERSHED COALITION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Address _____ City/Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Please check one

<i>Student</i>	\$10.00
<i>Individual</i>	\$25.00
<i>Family/group</i>	\$40.00
<i>River Sponsor</i>	\$100.00
<i>River Patron</i>	\$250.00
<i>Watershed Protector</i>	\$500.00
<i>Watershed Guarantor</i>	\$1,000.00

The Flint River Watershed Coalition is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt, 501(c)3 organization. Your contribution is fully tax deductible. Please make checks payable to:

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432 N. Saginaw Street, Suite 1001
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Spring stream monitoring project successful

by Dennis I. Zicha, Monitoring Committee Chairman



Once again this spring our semi-annual stream-monitoring project was a success. Monitoring was conducted on Saturday, April 29 and the following Wednesday, May 3. Volunteers at some Lapeer County sites participated on other days to scheduling conflicts on Saturday.

We sampled 22 of our 30 total sites (74%), 14 of 19 primary sites and 8 of 11 headwaters sites. A total of 51 volunteers participated with 17 people participating for the first time. Six teams went out on

Saturday and ten teams on Wednesday. The remaining six sites were sampled on other days.

The overall stream quality rating (Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent) for sites sampled this spring improved at eight locations and declined for only four streams. Ten locations remained the same as last spring.

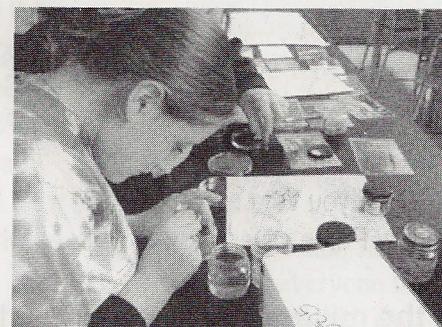
We also conducted volunteer monitor training on Earth Day, April 22, at Mott Community College. 11

people attended the session, which included a field procedures and sample collection activity led by Darren Bagley as well as a laboratory identification session taught

by Dr. Gary Pace from UM-Flint. A special thanks is also due to Dennis Zawol, without whose kind assistance

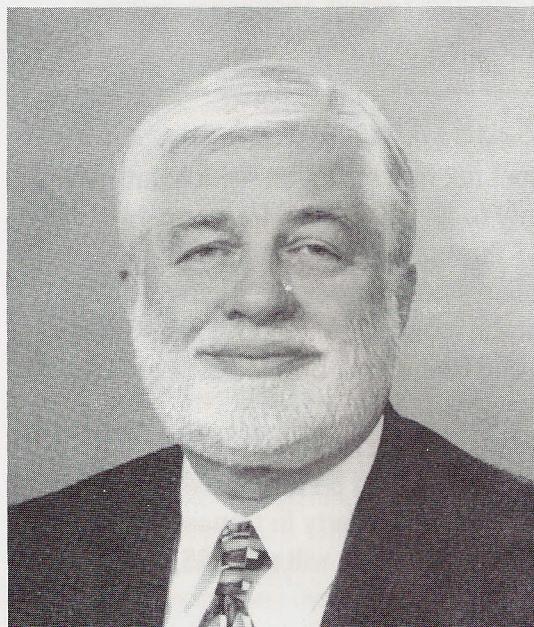
the session would not have happened.

Our fall stream monitoring is scheduled for Saturday, September 30



and Thursday, October 5. Please note these dates on your calendars and plan to participate. You will be hearing more about the fall session as we get closer to September.

Special thanks especially for all our volunteers whose participation makes this critical activity possible. Please spread the word about this program to your friends and family so we may expand our roster of volunteers. Thanks once again for helping to make a difference. I hope to see you in the fall.



JACK MINORE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

JACK MINORE

For this, my last report as your Executive Director, I will make it short and simple. Thank you! I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve for this past year and one/half, and I hope that you will consider my service satisfactory. We have accomplished a number of good things, but there is still much to be done.

Perhaps my most important contribution has been to assure that I leave the organization in good hands. With Steve Montle at the helm - and ably assisted by Edythe Westhoff - I believe that the Watershed Coalition can prosper! But, it is important to remember that this is a member-driven organization, not one that is staff driven. I know that each of you reading this will continue to make a commitment to keep the organization both going and growing!

It's been my pleasure to serve. Thank You!

Answers to your questions about the Genesee County Parks millage renewal...VOTE AUGUST 8th



Flushing County Park

This ballot question is long. What does it really mean?

If you vote yes, you agree that the Genesee County Parks millage should be renewed for 10

years. If you vote no, you do not want the Genesee County Parks millage to be renewed when it expires in 2006.

If the millage renewal request is approved, will my property taxes increase?

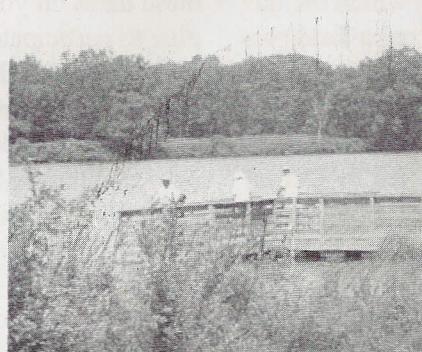
No. Your taxes will not increase. You will continue to pay the same amount in taxes to support the Genesee County Parks as you have since 1987.

How much does the Genesee County Parks millage cost?

The average Genesee County homeowner pays approximately **\$28.63 a year** in taxes to the Genesee County Parks. That's about **8 cents per day**.

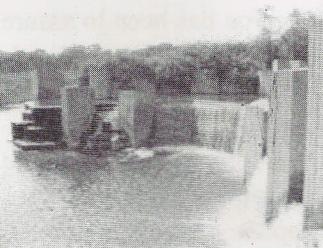
What will the millage renewal be used for?

If approved, the Parks and Recreation Commission will use the millage renewal to help it operate, maintain, and patrol Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission facilities and programs.



Buell Lake County Park

Does the Genesee County Parks millage renewal pay for all of the costs of operating, maintaining, and patrolling Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission facilities



Stepping Stone Falls

and programs?

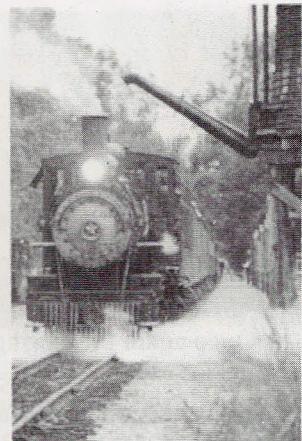
No. The millage renewal, if approved by the voters, pays for a little over half of the cost of operating, maintaining, and patrolling the Genesee County Parks. User fees, endowments, and grants also support the budget, but are not enough to keep the parks open without support from the millage.

What will happen if the Genesee County Parks millage renewal is not approved by the voters?

The Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission will not be able to maintain, patrol, or operate Genesee County Parks and Recreation facilities and programs. If the millage renewal is not approved by Genesee County voters, the Commission must close all of its parks and facilities, including Crossroads Village and the Huckleberry Railroad, For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum, boat launches and beaches.

Where can I learn more about the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission?

You can call the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission at 810-736-7100 or visit our website at www.GeneseeCountyParks.org.



Crossroads Village and Huckleberry Railroad

BALLOT QUESTION:

Shall the present tax rate limitation, which authorizes Genesee County to levy 0.4849 mills, be renewed for ten years, 2007 through 2016? The Parks and Recreation Commission intends to use the renewal millage to operate, maintain, and patrol Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission facilities and programs.

A levy of 0.4849 mills would be for \$0.4849 per \$1,000 on the taxable value of property in Genesee County. It is estimated that 0.4849 mills will raise \$5,199,014 in the first year of the renewal.

Yes

No

FRWC Board of Directors

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

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