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www.flintriver.org

The Watershed Reporter

Partnering to protect our natural resources

Spring 2007

FRWC-Lapeer Committee and Rotary Club of Lapeer receive DNR award

The Flint River Watershed Coalition-Lapeer Committee and the Rotary Club of Lapeer were honored this spring as Department of Natural Resources' Partners in Conservation for their work on protecting, improving and preserving the watershed.

"The Flint River Watershed Coalition and the Rotary Club of Lapeer show us that rolling up your sleeves and pitching in to make an important resource usable again for recreational purposes is vital to an area's quality of life," said DNR Director Rebecca Humphries. "State government cannot do it alone, and we need active partners like these two groups to spur on conservation work in the area that benefits us all."



Accepting the Partners in Conservation Award (from left to right) - Kathy Smith, Earl Gravlin, Dave Woolfenden, Steve Montle, and DNR Director Becky Humphries.

in an environmentally friendly way and re-positioning structure to reduce erosion and create new fish habitat.

In 2003, the Lapeer Committee approached the DNR's Fisheries Division to restore the navigation on the south branch of the Flint River. Historically, the river had supported a canoe route which was no longer accessible due to the development of numerous logjams.

Under the guidance of the DNR, the Lapeer Committee developed a strategic plan for stream obstruction removal that included obtaining permission from multiple landowners. During the next three years, members of the Lapeer Committee worked to clear and re-position structures contained in 75 to 100 logjams for an estimated 15 miles of river. The volunteer effort toward this project is estimated at 500 hours.

The Rotary Club of Lapeer joined the partnership in 2005. In the summers of 2005 and 2006, the Rotary Club organized 20 different outings to assist the Flint River Watershed Coalition and the DNR with removing stream obstructions. In 2006, the Rotary Club efforts accounted for 300 hours of volunteer service removing obstructions from 60 areas along the river. DNR officials said without their assistance, the project would be significantly behind schedule.

10th annual river rescue and clean-up: Saturday, May 12th, 9am - 1pm

Join us on Saturday May 12th, for our 10th Annual River Rescue and Cleanup. This year we will again be hosting Genesee County cleanups sites from 9:00am - 1:00pm at: Vietnam Veterans Park in Flint, University Of Michigan Flint Campus, Holloway Reservoir Dam, and Riverview Park in Flushing.

In Lapeer County we have added several locations, making a total of eight sites for Lapeer alone. Preliminary 2007 sites will cleanup from 10:00am-1:00pm and include: Rotary Park, Home Depot/Kohls, Cramton Park, Hunter's Creek and Saginaw St., South Branch Linear Path Extension, Restaurant Row, North Branch, and Schicker/White Drain. Also new this year, all Lapeer Volunteers will meet at the Pix Theatre for a post cleanup party from 1:00pm-2:30pm.

If you need any further information, please contact the Watershed Coalition at (810) 767-6490, or on our website at www.flintriver.org

We hope to see you there!

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CreekFest coming to downtown Ortonville June 9th



Ortonville's fifth annual CreekFest celebration will be held on Saturday, June 9. Now a major event of the Ortonville Downtown Development Authority/Main Street, CreekFest is enjoyed by young and old alike with activities centered primarily around and about Kearsley Creek, the Old Mill and the Brandon Fire Department in the village's historic downtown.

Kearsley Creek is a designated trout stream, and our family-friendly activities include introductions to a variety of wild critters and creek-related crafts; decorated village-mascot and poetry contests; food; storytelling; gymnastic, Celtic-dance and bat-show performances, and minnow and yacht races for the children. Acoustic roots musicians Steppin' In It and Dean Rutledge, described as a "classic blast from the past," will provide musical entertainment.

New additions for 2007 include a CreekFest market showcasing vendors of quality, natural, handmade products combined with the debut of the CreekFest art show featuring the work of local artists.

CreekFest is a full day of fun starting with a pancake breakfast at 8:00 a.m. at the Ortonville United Methodist Church and ending with musical performances and the decorated village-mascot auction on the Old Mill Porch around 4:30 p.m. However, there's much happening in-between!

Come join us for CreekFest, a River Day event and Phase II Storm Water Management Initiative that raises awareness of the importance of protecting our waterways and educates our citizens on ways to improve and preserve the quality of our water in northwestern Oakland County.

For information, contact Co-chairs Don & Connie Stalker, 248-627-9549 or log onto www.ortonvilledda.com.

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Authority/Main Street**

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Don & Connie Stalker
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"to raise awareness of the importance of protecting our waterways and educates our citizens on ways to improve and preserve the quality of our water in northwestern Oakland County."

Pat Parrot and Joe Leonardi recognized for contributions to the watershed at annual meeting

"They protect, preserve and improve our watershed throughout the year."

At the FRWC Annual meeting, two members were recognized for their extraordinary efforts in 2006.

Pat Parrott received the Dr. Gary Pace Volunteer of the Year Award, for a canoe launch project he led in Flint Township. Through Pat's hard work and dedication, the public can now enjoy canoe access to the Flint River close to the urban center of our watershed. To see the results of Pat's work, visit the Riverview Canoe Landing located on Mitson Blvd. just south of Flushing Rd. in Flint Township.

Joe Leonardi was awarded a special honor as the first recipient of, and

namesake for, the Joe Leonardi Leadership Award. The purpose of this award is to recognize the efforts of someone who, through their work, enables others to accomplish great things. Joe was a natural fit for this award since his work on the South Branch has enable thousands of volunteer hours and the clearing of several miles of stream. It is planned that by mid-summer 2007, the South Branch will be largely cleared of obstructions from the City of Lapeer to Holloway Reservoir near Columbiaville.

Thanks to both Joe and Pat for all

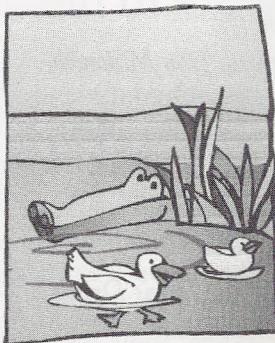
you do to protect, preserve and improve our watershed throughout the year.



Olof Karlstrom and Steve Montle present the Dr. Gary Pace Volunteer of the Year Award to Pat Parrot and the Joe Leonardi Leadership Award to Joe Leonardi.

It's time to sign up for spring stream monitoring, call now

Our Spring 2007 Stream Monitoring sessions will be conducted on Saturday, April 21 and on the following Wednesday, April 25.



Laboratory hours for your sample identification will be from 10 AM until 4 PM on Saturday and from Noon until 6 PM on Wednesday. The lab is located in Room 261 of the Murchie Science Building on the UM-Flint campus.

Please sign up for your site with Dennis Zicha at (810)

953-4954 or by e-mail at dzicha@comcast.net. If you would like a site in Lapeer County, please contact Diane Peplinski at (810) 688-3347 or dianeskimay@yahoo.com.

Spring means bicycle time, at least to many of us!

by Jack Minore

The regular Sunday bike rides of the Friends of the Flint River Trail (FFRT) start on May 6th and continue every Sunday - May through October. They start at 2:00 pm at the Flint City (Farmers') Market. This year, in an effort to accommodate both novice and more experienced riders, there will be dual rides: one of 13+ miles at an 11-14 mph pace; and a shorter / slower ride for beginners and families with younger children. There is no fee and no advance registration is required. Just show up with a decent bike - and, though not required, helmets are strongly encouraged.

The longer ride is usually from the Market to Bluebell Beach or Stepping Stone Falls and back (about 13 miles). The shorter ride will not go past Dort Highway - and with some variations depending on the participants, will be about 3-5 miles in length. All rides start and end at the Market - where refreshments will be available. In addition, the FFRT organizes occasional Saturday rides to other trails in mid-Michigan. In the past we have ridden the Pere Marquette Trail in Midland, the Clinton River and the Paint Creek Trails out of Rochester, the Lansing City Trail and the Bay City Trail - among others. The schedule for those rides is in development.

Lunch provided for FFRT sponsored trail clean-up scheduled for April 28th

In preparation for the ride season, the FFRT is sponsoring a trail clean-up on Saturday, April 28th, beginning at 9:00 am at the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial Park on the west side of the Flint River just south of E. Hamilton Avenue. Participants are encouraged to bring shovels, rakes, trimmers and gas operated blowers and/or saws. Lunch will be provided at about 12:30 pm at the Park. Everyone is invited - and encouraged - to assist in preparing the Flint River Trail for the season.

From the Executive Director

Steve Montle

With our busy time of year upon us, I'm very excited about our upcoming spring schedule. Since warmer weather is surely on the way, we are ready to hit the outdoors again this year and take action to improve our water quality. Please join us in spreading the word about water stewardship and bring a friend or two to some of our events this spring and summer.

- | | |
|------|--|
| 4/17 | UM-Flint Earth Day - 10am-2pm - UM-Flint |
| 4/21 | Benthic Monitoring - TBD - County Wide |
| 4/21 | Earth Day Celebration - 9am-2pm - Mott CC |
| 4/25 | Benthic Monitoring - TBD - County Wide |
| 4/28 | Wild Lapeer Days - 10am-4pm - Lapeer |
| 5/11 | GREEN Summit - all day - Mott CC Tech Ctr |
| 5/12 | River Cleanup - 9am-1pm - 10 sites |
| 6/9 | Ortonville Creekfest - 10am-5pm - Ortonville |

I hope to see you on the River!



Olof Karlstrom and Libby Maynard with guest speaker, Dr. Michael Wiley, at the Flint Watershed Coalition's Annual Meeting held at the Davison Country Club in January.

Green Arts Project presents spring trips and courses

by Sherry Hayden

This spring the Green Arts Project will host exciting courses and field trips through the UM-Flint Amaizing U non-credited lifelong learning program. Green Arts Project Amaizing U classes focus on environmental awareness, education and action, through artistic and creative expression.

Beginning April 11 you can register for these classes at (810) 767-9490 or register online at www.AmaizingU.com.

Artful Gardening: Month-by-Month Cost: \$75 for 5 sessions

Claudia Mach, award-winning artist, Advanced Master Gardener, and creator of Artful Gardening, offers a once-a-month class focusing on environmental awareness. The classes meet monthly on Monday evenings from 6:30-8:00 p.m.: May 7, June 11, July 9, August 13 and September 10 at Pierce Park Community Center.

Nature and Wildlife Photography Presentation Cost: Free

Charles St. Charles III, an award-winning nature photographer, adventurer and educator is back. The free presentation will be held Friday, May 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the UM-Flint William S. White Building Room 1250. The Ruth Mott Foundation is funding this presentation as part of its Green Arts Project. Although there is no charge, you are requested to register at (810) 767-9490 or online at www.AmaizingU.com.

Flint River Trail Hike Cost: Free

Steve Montle of the Flint River Watershed Coalition will lead a 2-3 mile walk along the Flint River Trail around the UM-Flint campus, beginning at Farmer's Market. He will discuss the biodiversity and water ecology of the river. Dress for the weather and wear comfortable walking shoes. The hike will take place Thursday, June 7, 5:30-7 p.m. Meet at Farmer's Market in Flint.

Canoe the Flint River Cost: \$35/person

Take a guided 2-1/2 hour paddle down a scenic section of the Flint River with river guides Steve Montle and Brent Nickola. Two sessions, one in the Lapeer area on Tuesday, June 26, 6-9 pm; and one in the Flushing area on Wednesday, June 27, 6-9 p.m.

Digital Nature Photography Workshop Cost: \$115

Charles St. Charles III will instruct hands-on and on-line sessions in June. Learn about photographing Michigan wildlife and landscapes, and the science behind the subjects. The hands-on sessions meet Fridays, June 1 & June 22, 6-8:30 p.m. at UM-Flint in the William S. White Building Room 3145. The Ruth Mott Foundation is subsidizing the workshop fees so the discounted cost of the entire workshop is \$115.

Tell your story about the Flint River Cost: Free

Share your memories or experiences with the Flint River in a story circle. Your story may be featured in a local theatre or video production in conjunction with the Green Arts Project.

Green Arts Project Community Council Cost: Free

This social network provides interaction between the environmental and arts communities. Members of this group meet monthly to create and promote events to raise environmental awareness through the arts.

In April members will volunteer at Mott Community College Earth Day events 9 am-3 pm on Saturday, April 21, and at Wild Lapeer from 10 am-4 pm on April 28. We will guide kids in creating handprint-painting large canvases while we teach them about the watershed. To join in the fun or to learn more, call (810) 767-1455.

The Green Arts Project is managed by UM-Flint University Outreach's Center for Applied Environmental Research, and is funded by the Ruth Mott Foundation. Register at (810) 767-9490 or online at www.AmaizingU.com. for any of the above classes.

FRWC

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Newsletter Editor

Roxy Moreno

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

FRWC Board meetings are the third Friday of the month, January through June, at Mott Community College in the Genesee Room of the Prahl Conference Center

Non-motorized trail planning and promotion continues

by Jack Minore

Last year, one of the bicycle ride highlights was the opening of the new Stepping Stone Falls Trail - which connects to the Flint River Trail and which is part of the Genesee County

Parks Trail System. The County Parks system has more expansion of trails in the works. In addition, thanks to the County Planning Department, a coordinated effort at

expanding and connecting non-motorized trails across Genesee County is continuing. It's a ways down the road, but a major connected trail system is part of the vision of the county.

National Bike Week observances, May 14 - 20

In cooperation with the Smart Commute Committee (a part of the state fitness program) Flint and Genesee County will be participating in several events connected with National Bike Week - May 14 - 20th. A kick-off event is scheduled for noon at the "big tent" or former skating rink at UM-Flint's University Pavilion. Exhibits, door prizes, and support for biking will be included. Wednesday is "Bike to Work Day" and area residents are encouraged to both bike to work and to lobby their local governments for safe biking routes on city streets - bike lanes / signage / trails / etc. There will be an "all wheels" parade in downtown Flint on Saturday - trikes, wheelchairs, roller blades, bikes, etc -- are all invited to participate! On Sunday, May 20th, the regular FFRT bike ride will include a tour of downtown developments and historic sites. That ride will start, as all FFRT Sunday rides do, at 2:00 pm at the Flint City (Farmers') Market.

Brent's fish story...it was how big?

Over the past year I rediscovered my passion for fishing. I can't say that it happened at a particular place or time but rather over the course of the entire year.

Early last year a buddy told me to put a couple of dates on my calendar -- he wanted to take me fishing. I reluctantly reserved the dates and complained about being behind on a grant report. As the trip approached, I found myself reminiscing about fishing as a youth and the time spent with family on the water.

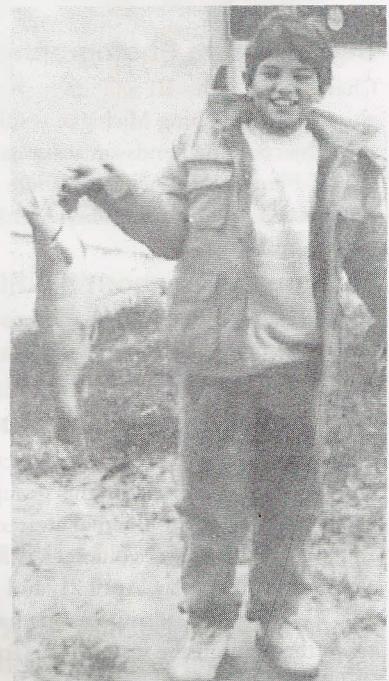
On the weekend of the trip we loaded up the car and headed out for the world famous Au Sable River. We donned our leaky waders, strung up our rods and stepped into the moving water looking for our trophy. About halfway through the day, with only one fish landed, we admitted to one another we were not necessarily there to catch fish. We were there to catch up with each other, talk about our lives and maybe if we were lucky, catch a fish or two. On the way home I promised myself to do more fishing in the upcoming year. I just had to figure out how to free up more time.

Several weeks passed while I took care of jobs around my new home. Each time I climbed a ladder or swung a hammer I said to myself, "Man, I'd rather be fishing." But with all of the new responsibilities, how would I ever find the time to get up north for the weekend? I soon discovered it was going to be easier than I expected.

One Saturday in June I woke up with a list of chores waiting for me. I sat on my couch considering where to start, and as usual, wished I could go fishing instead. I thought, "I wonder what the Flint River has to offer." It dawned on me that I had read just about every report on the river, but I had never fished it before. I grabbed my waders, rod and tackle. On my way out the door I kissed my wife and told her I was going fishing. Puzzled, she immediately asked, "Where?" I responded, "The Flint River."

I must admit my expectations were less than optimistic. But after about 30 minutes I realized I didn't need to go up north to go fishing, I just had to step in my local river. On that June morning I hooked and landed 11 Smallmouth Bass and a couple of Walleyes. The big one of that day, a 16-plus-inch bruiser, attacked my Panther Martin spinner from behind a large rock with one of the biggest aerial displays I have ever seen by a fish. The workout he gave my gear was one of the best I have ever had with an inland waters fish. Shocked by my success, and the size and health of the fish I had landed, I could hardly contain my enthusiasm.

Since that morning I have had the opportunity to introduce friends and family to fishing on the Flint. I have spoken with numerous bystanders who are shocked by the sight of a fishing rod bent over by the force of a Flint River Smallmouth. I have been provided with wonderful conversation and opportunities to solicit memberships from other anglers who are interested in protecting the river. But what I think is most important, is that I discovered a place just down the road from my house to relax, visit with friends and oh yea.....catch a couple of fish!



New members of the Flint River Watershed Coalition

Nicole Borcherding
Kirk Braun
Corlin Builders, Inc., Khalil Saab
Phil and Betty Forsyth
John Gault
Thomas Haley
Raymond and Kathleen Kelly
Melville Kennedy
Tony Mansour
Daniel and Janet Pope
Mary Porte
Patricia Seitz
Maureen Shoemaker and family
Harold and Debra Golden Steinman
Michael Wiley
David and Victoria Wilson
William Winiarski

Renewing members of the Flint River Watershed Coalition

Brian and Dorie Barkey
Robert Beckley
Nancy Byder
Bob and Chris Carlyon
Community Foundation of Greater Flint, Kathi Horton
Leo and Genevieve Dorr
Wanda Dowdall
Ryan Eashoo
Ken Elwert
Carolyn Heidemann and Carl Haas
Henry and Dorothy Hickman
Arthur Hurand
Tyler Jamison
Rob Jewell
Peggy Johnson
Linda Johnson Barnes
Senator Dale E. Kildee, 5th District, Michigan
Robert LaCross
Dr. Robert McAllister
Sara McDonnell
Jack Minore
John Moldovan
Bruce Nieuwenhuis
Rowe Incorporated, John Matonich, CEO
Paul Rozicki
Joni Scramlin
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Arvid Tronnes
Union Printing Co., Lewis Driskell
Wade Trim, Brian Slater
Paul Wenstrom
Dennis Zawol



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