

**"Riding together in
Flint and Genesee
County"**

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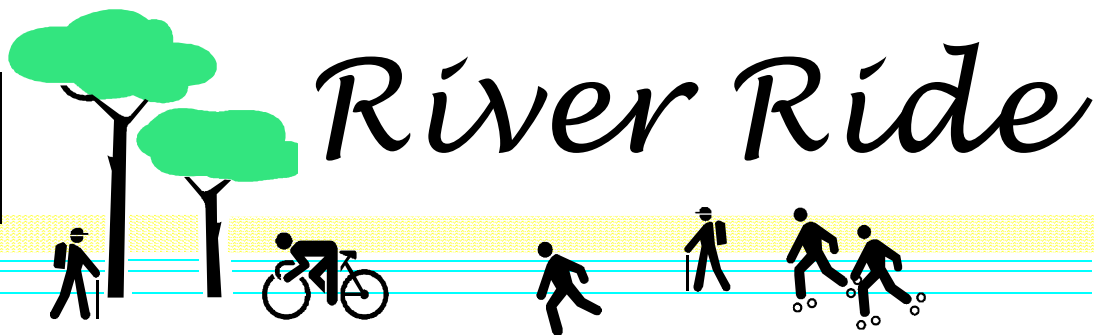
Upcoming Special Events/Rides



**Saturday, April 30,
River Trail Clean-up**

**Wednesday, May 18,
Ride of Silence**

**Wednesday, May 25,
Bicycle Advocacy
Day**



One Ride with FFRT and I was Hooked!

By Vicki Sacharski

I have always loved riding my bike on little jaunts through my neighborhood, but I never considered myself a serious rider.

One Saturday while I was at the Farmer's Market in downtown Flint, I discovered the Flint River Trail and the bike rides that take place there every Sunday, May through October. I knew I was interested, but I wondered who attended the rides, how long the rides were and how fast and how hard. It took me a few weeks to get my courage up, but I finally decided to take my bike to the Farmer's Market one Sunday to check it out.



I was first greeted by Jack Minore, who after asking if this was my first ride, took my name and address. As the time neared to start the ride, Bruce Nieuwenhuis welcomed all new riders and asked them to introduced themselves to the group and say where they were from. Then we were off!

That first ride was to Stepping Stones Falls, up one side of the Flint River and back down on the other side. The ride answered all my questions. There were about 30 riders that day. The riders were all ages young and old. There were many different kinds of bikes from fancy road bikes to one rider's bike that had coaster brakes and no gears and was at least 50 years old.

Being new to group riding, I really didn't know what to expect. The group is lead by an experienced rider and followed by sweeps to make sure no one is left behind. The pace is comfortable but enough to be good exercise. Then to top it all off, when you get back to the Farmer's Market, they get out the juice and cookies and everyone takes a little time to visit before going home.

One ride with The Friends of the Flint River Trail and I was hooked! I am so anxious for the 2011 biking season to begin. I will be there on Saturday, April 30th for the Spring Trail Clean-up and hope to meet all of you at the first Sunday ride on May 1st.

Ride of Silence on May 18

By Jack Minore



On Wednesday, May 18th, the Friends of the Flint River Trail will join cyclists from around the world in what has become an annual event, the “Ride of Silence” (ROS). The ROS was started in 2003, in Texas, to commemorate a lone bicyclist killed by a bus on a virtually empty road. Since then it has grown to hundreds of rides across the nation and the world. There will be about 30+ commemorative rides in Michigan alone. Genesee Wanderers has hosted a ride for several years in Lennon: the FFRT held its first ROS last year. The FFRT ride will start at 6:45 at the Flint Farmers’ Market and will be about 10-12 miles in length. Riders

are encouraged to wear black arm bands; the ride is slow made and in silence.

The rides are scheduled during ‘National Bike Month’ and ‘Smart Commute Week’. During that week, people are encouraged to use mass transportation, walking and cycling for at least some of their errands and/or commutes. Research has shown that the vast majority of automobile trips/errands are less than three miles in length – and easy ride and/or a healthy walk.

Raise YOUR Voice

by Jack Minore

Cyclists are encouraged to join with others on May 25th for the annual ‘Lucinda Means Bicycle Advocacy Day’ at the State Capitol. Members of the League of Michigan Bicyclists, the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, and the Michigan Mountain Bicyclists Association will spend the day lobbying the legislators and advocating for various safety and other cycling related issues and proposed legislation. Among the issues likely to be discussed will be funding for trails and bike lanes, inclusion of a bike-safety unit in Drivers’ Ed courses, and increased penalties for careless driving resulting in injury or death of cyclists. Many of the participants will ride to the Capitol from the MSU campus, then spend the morning visiting their legislators with talking points and issues of concern to bicyclists. Lunch on the Capitol lawn follows. Details will be available on the League’s website www.lmb.org or on the Trails Alliance site www.michigantrails.org as well as at our Sunday rides closer to the May 25th event.



The Friends ride every Sunday at 2:00 p.m. beginning at the Flint Farmers’ Market. Rides are scheduled through the last weekend in October. Hope to see you there!



Thanks for Your Continued Support

by Linda Johnson-Barnes

With this year's trail clean-up approaching fast (April 30th) and looking back on last year's cleanup, I realized that I did not send out "Thank You" cards. As many of you may or may not know, last year I was faced with a serious health challenge. Learning of and dealing with my health challenge consumed much of my time and energy. I was so consumed that it did not dawn on me until recently about the "Thank You" cards. To many it is not a big deal. To me, it is a big deal. I truly thank each and every one of you for your time, assistance and continued support in helping the Friends of the Flint River Trail with our cleanup efforts.

Last year, lunch was provided by HealthPlus of Michigan, Meijer's (Pierson Road Store), and Kroger Food and Pharmacy (Pierson Road Store). Please know the Friends of the Flint River Trail thank your organization for your support and for a great lunch!

One has not had a hotdog until you have a hotdog grilled by my sister, Janice, and her husband, Robert! Assisting the Grill Masters with setting up for lunch were Beecher Scholarship Incentive Program students, Tiphannie, D'Asia, and my daughter, Leecia. Also joining me were my great nieces, Shaniya (Ms. Peppermint Stripes) and Joi (Ms. Bubblegum). They appeared to have a great time providing sweet treats while assisting me with checking on the volunteers and distributing garbage bags (provided by Keep Genesee County Beautiful) as needed.

The Friends were also joined by our regular volunteers, as well as volunteers joining us for the first time. Please know your support last year, and the years ahead, is greatly appreciated. It is people like you who continue to make a great difference in our community. Keep up the good work!



Statement of Purpose

The Friends of the Flint River Trail

We promote:

- Greater use of the trail through improved safety, maintenance, and publicity.
- Healthy lifestyles by promoting bicycling to new and existing cyclists as transportation and recreation
- Improved facilities along the trail
- Extension of the trail's length and movement toward a city/county trail system.

Trail Maintenance

by Bruce Nieuwenhuis

In order to keep the trail safe and pleasant to ride, the FFRT has regularly assisted the City of Flint Parks Department by having volunteers trim back branches, sweep off glass, mow next to the trail, remove fallen branches due to storms, and remove unwanted items dumped on and near the trail. We have kept a record of the time spent doing these tasks because it can be used as an in-kind contribution when requesting grants for trail improvement. Over 246 individual hours were logged last year.

Several riders have offered to help in these activities, and this summer we will try to develop a volunteer list and a schedule for work days. Weed and branch growth is determined by both rainfall and sunshine, so the schedule will be somewhat flexible. Those willing to help should give their names and contact information to Dave Beaulieu, who will be coordinating this effort. The FFRT has a chain saw, gas blowers, hand trimmers and saws, and other tools to use.

Work times are likely to be weekday mornings from 9:30 to 1:00 or so, as the need arises. Those interested in "adopting" a specific section of the trail and keeping it maintained can do so on their own time.

Lots to Do in the Watershed

By Rebecca Fedewa



You know from your bicycling trips riding along the Flint River that we have an amazing resource right here in our own back yards. In addition to the trail, the FRWC has lots of fun recreation and education opportunities for you to take advantage of throughout the watershed, so come on out and join us when you aren't riding.



Join us for water quality monitoring - help us gather valuable data on the health of our rivers. Monitoring takes place April 30th and May 5th. No experience necessary. We provide a free training on April 13th and will outfit you with all the equipment you need. This is a fun, family friendly activity that gets you in your local stream, looking for all the cool critters that live under the rocks and branches in the water. Contact Jaime Welch at the FRWC for more info: jwelch@flintriver.org or 810 767-7140.

Flint River and Community Clean Up - Join us Saturday May 21st for our annual Clean Up, at various sites throughout Genesee and Lapeer Counties. Our annual clean up makes a huge difference in the health of our watershed, and we couldn't do it without volunteers like you! Contact Sue Lossing for more info: slossing@flintriver.org or 810 767-9491.

Canoe and Kayak Trips / River Walks - We will be organizing up to 6 paddling trips and six walks this summer. Check our website calendar for dates and times at www.FlintRiver.org.

We also have a few celebrations planned for the summer and fall. Become our "fan" on Facebook and/or sign up for our listserv from our website to stay up date on all the great events happening throughout YOUR Flint River Watershed.



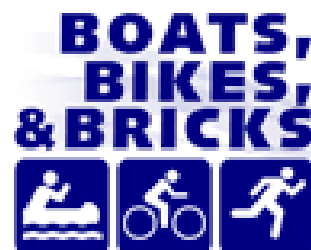
Boats, Bikes & Bricks 2nd Annual Triathlon

by Cathy Lancaster

Looking for an exciting twist on triathlons? Sign-up for the Flint River Corridor Alliance's (FRCA) 2nd annual triathlon along the Flint River held on Saturday, June 18th at 8am. The "Boats, Bikes and Bricks" race is a non-competitive 12K race that showcases recreational fun that the Flint River Corridor offers area residents. The race has begun to attract visitors to the region.

According to the FRCA website, the triathlon will start with a run through the Mott Park neighborhood, followed by a canoe or kayak paddle on the Flint River. The final leg of this triathlon is the bike race on a section of the Flint River Trail. Following the triathlon there will be an after-party at the Mott Park Golf Course Clubhouse.

Registration is available online at the FRCA website, www.frcalliance.org. The fee is \$25 per person and you must bring your own equipment. Canoe and kayak rental information can be found on the FRCA website as well.



Official FFRT Sunday & Saturday Rides

by Bruce Nieuwenhuis



The Friends of the Flint River Trail's Sunday rides will begin this year on May 1st at 2:00 pm starting at the Farmers' Market. The rides will be held every Sunday at 2:00 through October 30th. There will be several standard rides: one to Blue Bell Beach and back, [about 12.5 miles]; one through UM campus, through Mott campus and to Stepping Stone Falls and back, [also about 12.5 miles]; another to the village of Genesee for Ice Cream, [about 17 miles round trip]; and one past Attwood Stadium, and Kettering to Ballenger Highway and back [distance fixable depending on additions on the way back]. We will also do at least one ride partly on city streets to ForMar, and possibly some rides through the East-Court residential streets.

We intend to have a shorter ride for new riders and those with small children who would prefer a less strenuous ride during May as the need arises. Riders will be divided into manageable sized groups to make street crossing easier and safer.

We will continue to have sweeps to assist with bike problems like flat tires and chain adjustments. We ask that riders come with their bikes in good condition and tires pumped up although we will have pumps at the market for those who might need air. It might be a good idea to take your bikes to a local bike shop for an annual tune up to make sure they are safe and working well. We strongly encourage *helmets*. It is a much safer and smarter way to ride, especially with rough patches of road and trail.

For variety, and to introduce riders to other near-by trails, the FFRT leads *Second Saturday Rides* each month; usually within an hour's drive from Flint and starting at a designated trail head at 10:00 AM.

The first Saturday ride this year will be on May 14th on the Southern Links Trail. Meeting at the trail-head in Columbiaville, MI. The Southern Links is a still new 10 mile trail from Columbiaville to Otter Lake and on to Millington. It is ten miles out and ten miles back, a pleasant and leisurely 20 miles in all. June 11th, we will go to the Saginaw's St. Charles Trail, meeting at the trailhead on Strobel Rd on the South side of Saginaw, also a 20 mile total ride. On July 9th we'll ride the Lansing River Trail, meeting at Potter Park. Directions will be available at the Sunday rides and directions will be posted on our FFRT Listserv (see back page for details). August through October Saturday Rides will be announced later on in the season.

Support Your Parks: Including Trails

by Jack Minore

Renewed your license plates yet this year? If you have a birthday coming up, and you register the car, be sure to check the \$10 passport fee on the application. It replaces the annual State Park fee. By donating, you get a marked license plate that allows you into any state park and many other facilities. The money goes to the parks and to other Natural Resources sites, *including bike trails*! And it's a real bargain. The old state park fee was twice that amount. That \$10 actually helps support (a) 133 state forests campgrounds; (b) about 1,000 miles of trails; (c) Over 1000 boat launches; (d) Historic and cultural sites in state parks; and, (e) parks in local communities. More information can be found online at: www.michigan.gov/recreationpassport

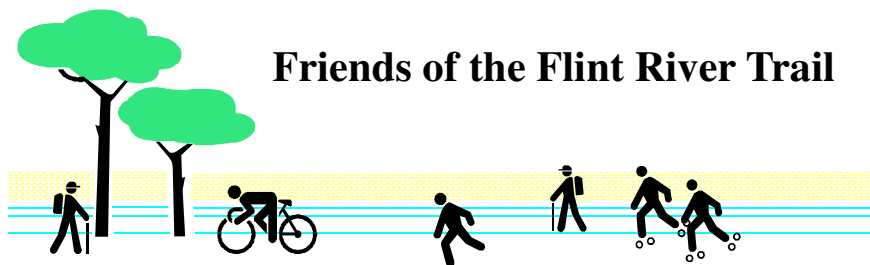


River Ride

Friends of the Flint River Trail
c/o Flint River Watershed Coalition
400 North Saginaw Street, Suite 233
Flint, Michigan 48502

Contact Bruce Nieuwenhuis at
Phone: 810-742-0071
E-mail: ffrtinfo@yahoo.com
<http://flintriver.org/blog/chapters/friends-of-the-flint-river-trail/>

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Friends of the Flint River Trail

Looking Forward to Sprucing Up the Bike Trail

By Linda Johnson-Barnes



The Friends of the Flint River Trail will have their annual bike trail cleanup on **Saturday, April 30, 2011, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.** in preparation for the Sunday afternoon bike-riding season. Volunteers are asked to meet at Veteran's Park prior to the start of the cleanup to sign-in, obtain garbage bags, and any last minute instructions. Keep Genesee County Beautiful will provide the garbage bags, and the Friends of the Flint River Trail recommends you bring your own drinking water and work gloves. The following equipment will also be helpful: wagons, wheelbarrows, carts, brooms, dustpans, shovels, leaf rakes, loppers, pruning shears, leaf blowers, and saws. After the cleanup, lunch will be provided at Veteran's Park.

Last year, the Friends of the Flint River Trail were joined by volunteers from HealthPlus of Michigan, Inc. and their family members, Empowered Believer Worship Center Church, Beecher Scholarship Incentive Program, and many other new and former volunteers. The trash collected by the volunteers was hauled to Veteran's Park where the City of Flint's Sanitation Department was patiently waiting to take the trash to its final destination. This year, if you would like to join us, or would like more information regarding the bike trail cleanup, please contact Linda at 810-695-7777 or 810-785-1046.

The FFRT is an official chapter of the Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC) and this Winter the **FRWC website** was updated and includes a new site for FFRT. Check us out under the "Chapters" tab at the top of the page at www.flintriver.org.

If you are on **Facebook**, please join our group page; just search "Friends of the Flint River Trail," and you will find our page with our logo for the profile picture.

As always, we would like to encourage you to join our FFRT Listserv on **Yahoo**. You can request to join by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/FriendsFlintRiverTrail> or by emailing ffrtinfo@yahoo.com.

