



FLINT RIVER
WATERSHED COALITION

Watershed Reporter

December 2007

Partnering to protect our natural resources

www.flintriver.org



**Steve
Montle**
Executive Director

Why I have hope for the river's future

2007 was a busy year for both our organization and myself. In addition to our normal cleanups, monitoring, school programs, education and outreach efforts, the Board of Directors took on the enormous task of creating a new strategic direction for the organization and the work we do. On top of all of this, my wife and I had our first child, Ashleigh, on May 25.

However, despite the interruptions of work and family, there was a full season of fishing to fit into a very short summer.

For me, fishing is the best indicator of the overall job we are doing in protecting, preserving and improving the Flint River and its watershed. Standing

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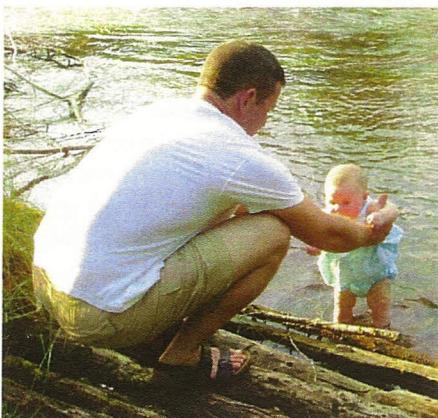


Photo by Laura Montle

Steve steadies Ashleigh, then 3 months old, on her first dip in the river.

Thanks to our 10th Anniversary sponsors

As a Board, we are grateful to the many who stepped forward as sponsors for our 10th Anniversary Celebration.

During September and October more than 200 supporters including experienced water enthusiasts, river novices, and concerned environmentalists participated in our anniversary activities by walking, canoeing, biking and cruising on the Genesee Bell. Together we raised \$22,660 to help lay the financial groundwork for the next ten years.

We have come a long way since our incorporation in 1997. Much of this has been summarized by our Executive Director, Steve Montle who, between assisting his wife and developing parenting skills, has done



Photo by Linda Johnson-Barnes
The Flint River Trail is a popular destination.

a wonderful job in directing the activities of the coalition as it seeks to become the voice of the river.

-- **S. Olof Karlstrom**
FRWC Board Chairman

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Partnering to Protect Our Natural Resources

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, January through June, at Mott Community College in the Genesee Room of the Prahl Conference Center.

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Hope

Continued from Page One

out there in the middle of the river in a pair of waders, or floating slowly down stream with a rod and reel in a canoe, gives a certain perspective on where we stand, where we could improve, and what we would like to see happen with this resource in the years to come. The experience of fishing has become my report card for our work on this river.

For 2007, I will grade us a "B." I started the year with a successful stretch of fishing in May. The flow in the river was unstable after spring rains, and the water too cloudy from the storm water, but for the most part the fish were plentiful. We saw Pike and Walleye mixed in with the usually abundant Smallmouth Bass. But it's the cloudy water that needs to be addressed. After a big rain storm, the river can stay cloudy for over a week.

This phenomenon is a result of how society manages its stormwater. In the future we have to do a better job. There are many things we have to do to address this problem, but now is the time for us to get to work. The longer we wait the less fish we will catch.

Summer, with its lack of rain, saw the river clear up to what many experienced fishermen

have said is the most underwater visibility they have ever experienced in the river. It was a new experience for me to be able to see a big Bass sitting in the current, then watching it chase the lure down and strike it; what a thrill!

However, the clear water also exposed the abundance of weeds we have in the river. These weeds are a result of excessive nutrients being placed into the river system, often through overuse of lawn, garden and farm fertilizers.

We need to teach folks that more is not always better when it comes to fertilizing. What goes into the storm drains and ditches will eventually find its way into the river.

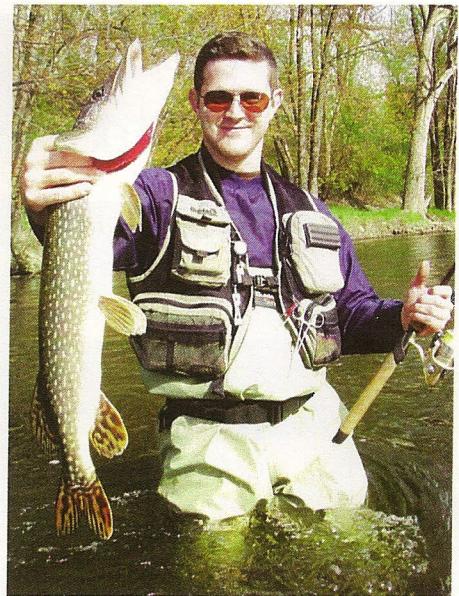


Photo by Brent Nickola

Steve lands the big one at his secret fishing hole in the Flint River.

As the drought continued past summer and into fall, we saw water levels drop off and canoeing became tricky. A lack of rain, adjustments to the dam system and several other factors likely played roles.

But it was an event in the fall when the river made a big impression on me.

One Saturday in September, I met an avid fisherman and sportsman who

had lived and worked near the river for 20 years, but had never fished it. Luckily, on his first day on the Flint, the fish

**More is not always better when it comes to fertilizing.
What goes into the storm drains and ditches will eventually find its way into the river.**

were biting and the weather was beautiful. The three of us who were out that day must have landed 30 or more fish between us.

Over the month this same guy fished the Flint two or three times a week. He started talking about how we need to do more to protect the river. He joined the Watershed Coalition and has become one of the river's greatest advocates.

From my perspective, the river made a convert that day; and we all will have his help as we move forward protecting the resource.

That is how it's supposed to work, and that is why I have hope.

Thank you for protecting our watershed

The Flint River Watershed Coalition continually seeks out new members and to sustain the interest and involvement of our current members. The staff and board work to ensure membership levels are on track to meet the commitments we have made to our financial supporters and to the community. New membership materials have been developed to explain

more effectively the mission and activities of the organization. Let us know if you have friends or colleagues who would be interested in joining the Flint River Watershed Coalition.

We would be glad to contact them or send them introductory materials. Or, we invite you to pass along a copy of this newsletter and invite them to join.

New Members

Kathy Beebe
Judy Csapo
Flushing Optical
Dennis & Lynne McCarthy
Terry Reechko
Renee Zientek

Renewing Members

Applewood Estate
Darren & Autumn Bagley
David Ballentine
Mary Bennett
Harry Blecker
Mary Brown and Family
Senator Deborah Cherry
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Roxy Moreno
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Mott Community College
Leo Pavaglio
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Jeanne Pepper and Thomas Herman
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You are important to us!

We apologize for errors and work to get it right. Please send corrections and omissions to: ewesthof@umflint.edu or call (810) 767-6490 or send it to:

FRWC
432 N. Saginaw St.
Suite 1001
Flint, MI 48502

I want to support the Flint River Watershed Coalition!

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$10 | The Flint River Watershed Coalition is |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$25 | a not-for-profit, tax-exempt, 501 (c) 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family or group | \$40 | organization. Your contribution is fully |
| <input type="checkbox"/> River Sponsor | \$100 | tax-deductible. |
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Flint River Watershed Coalition
432 N. Saginaw Street, Suite 1001
Flint, MI 48502

Please make your check payable to
Flint River Watershed Coalition

(810) 767-6490



Save the date!

**FRWC Annual Dinner Meeting
and Silent Auction**
Thursday, January 31, 2008, 6-9 pm
Davison Country Club

9512 Lippincott Blvd.,
Corner of M-15 and Lippincott just South of I-69

With special guest: Andy Buschbaum

Andy Buschbaum is Director of the National Wildlife Federation's Great Lakes office. This regional leader is a key advocate for protecting Michigan's Great Lakes. He plans to speak on the critical issues facing the Great Lakes Eco-system and what citizens and citizen groups can, and should, do to protect our waters from the many threats they face.

Friends and guests are welcome to attend

The cost is \$30 per person

RSVPs required by January 28, 2008

Call (810) 767-6490 or email ewesthof@umflint.edu

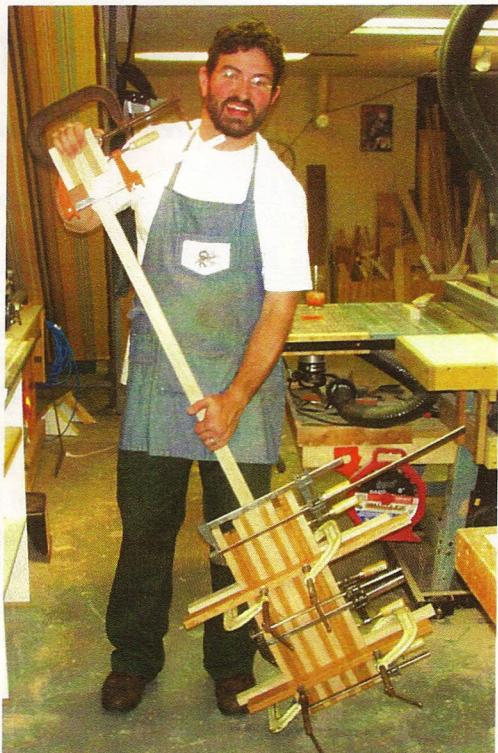


Photo by Christina Nickola

Brent Nickola displays the form he used to create a cedar-and-oak paddle that will be auctioned to raise funds at the FRWC's Annual Meeting January 31, 2008.



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