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# The Watershed Reporter

Partnering to protect our natural resources

January 2007

## FFRT caps off another successful trail ride season with over 900 participants

by Jack Minore

The Friends of the Flint River Trail (FFRT) ended their organized rides on a chilly October 29th with a handful of hardy souls braving the cold. That ride capped another successful ride season for the FFRT. Over 900 riders participated in the Sunday rides between May and October – and over 100 participated in the newly organized Thursday evening rides this summer. Those totals include at least one new rider for every Sunday throughout the summer – and 236 separate riders in all. (The 900 riders includes repeat riders.) There were 34 different zip codes represented in the ridership; and more than half of the riders were from outside the City of Flint. The rides begin at the Flint City (Farmer's) Market every Sunday – May through October and will resume again in May of '07. A trail clean up will be scheduled in late April.

There have been several highlights for bike riders this summer. Tops, perhaps, is the new trail to Stepping Stone Falls in the County Parks system – a spur from the Flint River Trail to Bluebell beach that crosses the Flint River and takes a winding, wooded route to the Falls. In addition, there is an on-going effort to make Flint a more walkable/ridable community by adding bike lanes and staking out “safe routes to schools” which could include bike paths.

Of greater long-term importance has been the emergence of a Countywide trail planning and coordinating effort, spurred by the Genesee County Planning Department. Efforts of many communities will be coordinated so that a connected trail system may emerge across Genesee County over the next decade. Top priority may go to a rail trail west from downtown Flint to the Genesee Valley Mall area; additional sections of a long planned trail around Mott Lake and then east to the Holloway Reservoir and beyond; a trail south from Flint into Grand Blanc Twp and several connecting trails around the County — mostly centered in the small cities that either have trails or have them in the planning stages.



At the end of a long ride, ice cream is FFRT's reward at Ms. Smitty's Diner in Genesee.



FFRT riders resting along the Flint River Trail on one of their weekly Sunday rides from May-October.

## FRWC annual meeting Davison Country Club-Jan. 25

This year the Flint River Watershed Coalition will host its Annual Meeting and Silent Auction at the Davison Country Club on January 25th, 2007. Bidding will begin at 6:00 and be followed by dinner, election of officers, awards, and a great speaker finishing up around 8:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend and we encourage everyone to bring along friends and relatives who are non-members.

The cost for attending the event is \$30 per person which includes admission and dinner (cash bar will be available); please RSVP to Edie Westhoff at [ewesthoff@umflint.edu](mailto:ewesthoff@umflint.edu) no later than January 15th.

While we already have many great auction items for the event, we can always use more donations for the auction. If you have an item you would like to donate, please contact Steve Montle or Edie Westhoff at (810) 767-6490 or by e-mail at [smontle@umflint.edu](mailto:smontle@umflint.edu). Davison Country Club is located at 9512 Lippincott Blvd., on the corner of M-15 and Lippincott just South of I-69.

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**CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE****OLOF KARLSTROM**

**"They're taking this clean water and selling it back to us. They're making us scared of tap water, something that is perfectly fine. It's pretty much immoral."**

Springfield Ontario High School Student

For this issue I decided to do a review of the various sources of information available to us via the internet and in various newsletters. There are many, beginning with the "Michigan Environmental Council" ([www.mecprotects.org](http://www.mecprotects.org)), the "Northwoods Call" (available by subscription at 00165 Turkey Run, Charlevoix, MI 49720) with the motto, "An admittedly biased newspaper; dedicated to the proposition that there is only one side in any issue involving natural resources...NATURE'S!", MLive.com, and "The Michigan Prospect" ([www.michiganprospect.org](http://www.michiganprospect.org)), Michigan's Echo ([www-data@www.matrix.msu.edu](mailto:www-data@www.matrix.msu.edu)), "Sierra" the Sierra Club magazine and "Clean Water America" ([mail@cleanwateramerica.org](mailto:mail@cleanwateramerica.org)).

Some, like the "Northwoods Call" focus on politics and the environment and want more from Governor Granholm on environmental issues and a re-integration of the DNR and the Department of Environmental Quality. Others are very concerned about the Federal Clean Water Act and diversion of Great Lakes Water, even to those communities living within the Great Lakes Watershed. In Fact, the Great Lakes remains a large concern as it must deal with the invasive species coming into the lakes through the ballasts of foreign freighters. Additionally, there is concern over the invasion of the Asian Carp trapped right now in the Chicago Canal leading to the Mississippi River.

On a more local level, and moving inland is the fight going on to protect our local rivers, the fueling source of bottled water. Nestles, according to the Muskegon Chronicle, currently bottles about 270 million gallons of underground spring water at its Stanwood facilities in Mecosta County. It wants permission to pump another 70 million gallons from the headwaters of two trout streams flowing into the Muskegon River. If approved, according to the news article and company documents, it would reduce the flow of the Muskegon River by 70 million gallons.

Question for the experts, is that a diversion as defined in Federal legislation which defines diversion as any water diverted out of the lake and further states administratively that diversion occurs when water is removed from the lake but not returned. The moral issue was best described by a Springfield, Ontario, high school student when he urged the United Church General Council to take an official stand against bottled water saying: "They're taking this clean water and selling it back to us. They're making us scared of tap water, something that is perfectly fine. It's pretty much immoral."

That being said, you can get purified water from your tap by purifying it yourself. Simply write Ask Glen, Master Handyman Press, PO Box 1498 Royal Oak, MI 48068 or e-mail: [askglen@masterv handyman.com](mailto:askglen@masterv handyman.com)

**Bulletin:** Membership is now over 225; bring a friend to our annual meeting on January 25th, we need to reach 300 members this year.

## Short course invites local experts to speak on Flint River topics: February 28 through April 4

*Discussion topics: biology, geology, history, policy and volunteer opportunities*

Do you want to learn more about the Flint River? The Flint River Watershed Short Course will discuss the biology, geology, history, policy, and volunteer opportunities of the Flint River and its watershed. The classes will be held on Wednesday evenings from 6-9 at the MSU Extension - Genesee County Office office. The classes will be taking place from February 28th until April

4th. We will bring in local experts on topics ranging from the fish that live in the Flint River, to how glaciers set the groundwork of a river that flow both north and south, to what legal protections are in place to preserve these precious resources. The cost of the program will be \$85. For more information contact Darren Bagley at [bagleyda@msu.edu](mailto:bagleyda@msu.edu) or 810-244-8524.

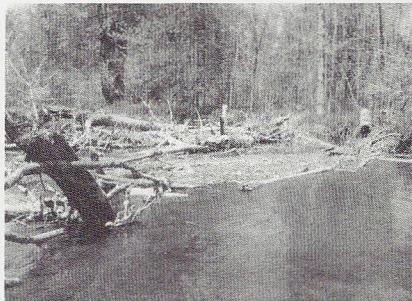


*Volunteers help remove debris from the South Branch of the Flint River.*

## South Branch Flint River partners are committed to maintenance of the river

As many of you are aware, the Flint River Watershed Coalition has been involved for the past 3 years with restoring navigation and improving aquatic habitat on the South Branch Flint River in Lapeer County.

In the late 1980's, the historic canoe route from downtown Lapeer to Holloway Reservoir became dys-



*This is "before" the logjams were removed by volunteers who have worked countless hours to remove trees and massive blockages.*

functional due to numerous logjams.

Members of the FRWC-Lapeer Committee, joined forces with the Lapeer Rotary Club and MDNR, Fisheries Division to develop a plan for the strategic

removal of these logjams, which would preserve aquatic habitat and allow for canoe navigation. During the summers of 2004 and 2005, significant efforts resulted in portage-free navigation of the river downstream of Lapeer and through areas of the Lapeer State Game Area.

Targeted areas for 2006 included the previously cleared reaches as well as the river reach from M-24 to Flint River Road. The M-24 to Flint River Road river reach posed a variety of challenges for workers. A preliminary canoe trip identified 57 areas of concern ranging from single trees to massive blockages. In addition, the entire 7-mile reach was under private ownership and multiple permissions were required.

After meeting with landowners, workers successfully secured 63 permission forms granting access to the river. From June through October, workers braved the elements and were able to clear all targeted areas where permission was granted. A total of 40 separate efforts and 1,280 hours were devoted to



*This is what the Flint River looks like "after" it was cleared of logjams and debris and now allows for canoe navigation.*

*continued on page 5*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - STEVE MONTLE

During 2006, my first year as Director, I feel very lucky to have met the many great people who make up the Flint River Watershed Coalition. Additionally, I feel privileged to have had the assistance, and patience, of literally dozens of community members, volunteers, and local leaders as I became acclimatized to my new position. However, the experience that I am most appreciative of is my introduction to the Flint River as a tremendous natural resource and area of opportunity for our community.

Having lived in the Flint area nearly my entire life, I have been well aware of the Flint River for many years. Nevertheless, during this past year I was able to get to know the river in ways I had never considered. In the early summer, I was lucky enough to be involved in several canoe trips sponsored by U of M-Flint's Center for Applied Environmental Research. These trips included many community members and students, who - for the most part - had never been on the river. After a few minutes of getting over the initial concerns about water quality and canoe safety, the new canoeists would be sent off on about a 2 hour float. The almost universal comments made by these folks during the trip was some variation of "I had no idea the river was this beautiful" and "it feels just like up-North". By the end of each trip, people would be asking questions about how the River could be improved or protected. Once they had been introduced to the beauty and value of the river, they immediately became concerned about protecting this resource.

Similarly, I began fishing for Smallmouth Bass on the Flint River in the Flushing City Park this summer. As I was fishing, nearly every trail user would stop to watch; many would then ask questions about how I was doing and what I was catching. Most were surprised to learn that the area is a fantastic fishery for a variety of fish. Several conversations led to discussions of how the river is doing, and how we can make it better.

I relay these stories to you because we in the environmental community often spend enormous amounts of energy, effort, and money attempting to get people to become better environmental stewards for a resource they have little or no knowledge of. But I have found, when we put people in contact with the river as a valuable recreational resource, and educate them about how this resource can be improved through their actions, in many cases we will have already accomplished our goal of creating better stewards.

We must understand that people will only protect our resources if they are aware of the value of those resources. In 2007, I welcome you to join me in spreading the word about the Flint River by getting more people active on the river. From my experience, as people begin to come into contact with the water more often, they become increasingly concerned with the quality of that water. It is my goal that throughout the next year the FRWC, and all of our members, will make it a priority to raise awareness of the river and get our friends and neighbors out on the river.

Have a happy new year and I'll see you on the River.

# Fall stream monitoring nets 15 new volunteers

*University of Michigan-Flint environmental students participate; field four teams and cover four sites, just like veterans*

by Dennis I. Zicha, Monitoring Coordinator

This fall's stream monitoring project took place on Saturday, 30 Sep and Thursday, 5 Oct. A total of 44 volunteers participated, 15 for the first time. We managed to collect critters from only 16 of our 30 established monitoring sites, a disappointing 53%. Of those 16 sites, 11 were primary locations and five were headwaters sites. For those of you who enjoy numbers, eight sites were sampled Saturday, three sites on Thursday, and five were done on other days.

For the first time in several years, Mother Nature was not too cooperative, as we had an overabundance of rainfall that week. Five other sites scheduled for Thursday sampling (with monitoring teams assigned) could not be completed due to high water levels resulting from the 1.29 inches of rain recorded at Bishop Airport in the preceding five days. However, one dedicated team took time from their busy schedule the following Monday to complete their site. Many thanks, Fred and Alyce Townsend, for your extreme devotion to this effort.

The pre-sorting and bulk sample transport to the lab at UM Flint managed by Marian Listwak for the Lapeer County volunteers worked very smoothly. Thanks, Marian, for all your help.

How did we get 15 new volunteers? Easy. Professor Richard Hill-Rowley at UM Flint arranged for twelve of his students to participate on Saturday. They fielded four teams and covered four sites just like veterans. We plan to continue this practice next fall.

As for water quality results, the overall stream quality rating (Poor, Fair, Good, Excellent) improved at two locations and declined for three streams. 11 locations remained the same as last fall.

Snow and cold is here now (or hopefully will soon be), but Spring 2007 will arrive before we realize it. We plan to hold a volunteer training session on **Saturday, 21 April** in conjunction with the Earth Day activities at Mott Community College. Exact monitoring dates have not yet been determined but most likely will be during the first week of May. I'll be sure to let you know when firm dates have been set.

Most importantly, I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to all our volunteers for their valued participation. Many of you have been involved for several years and I am awed by your dedication. None of our monitoring would be possible without you sacrificing your precious time and your keen interest in what we do. Thanks again! See you in the spring.

## FRWC Board of Directors

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Roxy Moreno  
Brent Nickola  
Fred Townsend  
Bill Welch  
Dennis Zawol  
Dennis Zicha

**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

## South Branch Flint River

*continued from page 3*

stream obstruction removal this summer.

The result of this year's effort is a relatively portage-free canoe route from Lapeer to Holloway Reservoir. Recommended canoe ventures are:

Lapeer Rotary Park to Millville Canoe Launch (estimated 7 miles, 5 hours). A few obstructions may be encountered immediately upstream of Millville Canoe Launch due to landowner refusal to access property.

Millville Canoe Launch to Norway Lake Road Access Site (estimated 6 miles, 4.5 hours). All obstructions cleared as of October 2006. Rest at the Oxbow Campground in the Lapeer State Game Area.

Norway Lake Road Access Site to Klam Road Access Site (estimated 3 miles, 3.5 hours) - Three small logjams will be part of work scheduled for 2007.

Klam Road Access Site to Holloway Reservoir at Columbiaville (estimated 1 mile, 1 hour) - Obstruction free with a

slow current as you enter the tail waters of Holloway Reservoir.

The South Branch Flint River Stream Obstruction Removal Project has been a true testimony of public stewardship and partnerships. The FRWC is proud of its partnership with MDNR, Fisheries, the Lapeer Rotary Club, and all the landowners who have supported our efforts. On December 4, the FRWC recognized volunteers and landowners with an Appreciation Night in Lapeer. A group of 30 heard comments from FRWC, Executive Director, Steve Montle, MDNR, Fisheries Division, Lake Huron Basin Coordinator, Tammy Newcomb, and were treated to a before and after slide presentation by MDNR, Fisheries Biologist, Joe Leonardi.

More trees will fall into the river and new obstructions will develop. However, the partnership is committed to continued maintenance to keep the South Branch Flint River navigable. If you are interested in participating with stream obstruction removal, please contact Joe Leonardi at <leonardi@michigan.gov>.

## Third quarter of 2006 successful membership period for FRWC

The FRWC reached a total membership level of 225 individual, families, and groups as of the printing of this newsletter. This is an increase of over 75 percent when compared to the same time last year. The FRWC is reaching out to so many new people who are choosing to become members of the Coalition, and at the same time are very pleased to see that existing members are choosing to renew their membership and continue their involvement with the FRWC. A special thanks goes out to the numerous members of the Friends of the Flint River Trail who responded so generously this fall to our request to join the FRWC.

A large, involved, and interested membership is critical to our ability to carry out our watershed programs. We could not fulfill our mission without our supporters. In addition, our sources of funding and grants look at our ability to maintain a viable membership base as one of their key measurements of our success. We are looking forward to 2007 and continued growth in membership. If you know of anyone who may be interested in the activities of the FRWC, please pass this newsletter on to them along with the membership application, or call our office and let us know.

The following individuals, families, and groups joined the FRWC or renewed their membership in the third quarter. Welcome to the new members, and welcome back to the renewals!

## New and renewing members of the Flint River Watershed Coalition

### New Members

William Baker  
David Ballentine  
Mary Bennett  
Mary Brown and Family  
Herman and Donna Caldwell  
Joyce Clevenger  
John Dempsey  
Bradley Eshbaugh  
Christine Gardner  
Myrle Gorsline  
Earl Gravlin  
Donald Grignani  
Christopher Harbowy

### New Members

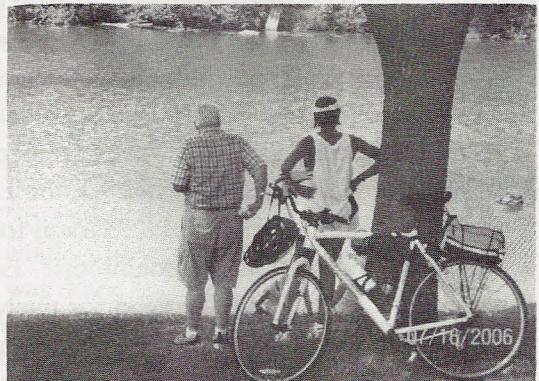
Kenneth Hinze  
Ben and Karen Howells  
Jack and Felicia Jackowski  
Kathryn Koegel  
Cathy Lancaster  
Jarrett and Doris Lewis  
Eugene Lindstrom  
David Mansfield  
Vivian Meitron  
Lyle and Sandra Rauh,  
*Grand Legacy Homes*  
Jim Richardson  
Donald Rockwell

### New Members

Paul Roetter  
Michael and Virginia Rucks  
Charles and Geraldine Rudduck  
Richard and Katherine Saunders  
Beverly and Ben Schultz  
Elizabeth Shaw  
Hal Thorson  
Jolyn Vita  
Dennis Weiler and Donna Raney  
Carrie Wenta

### Renewing Members

Harry Blecker  
Dawn Cleary



*Friends of the Flint River trail take a break at the bank of the Flint River on a Sunday afternoon ride.*

### Renewing Members

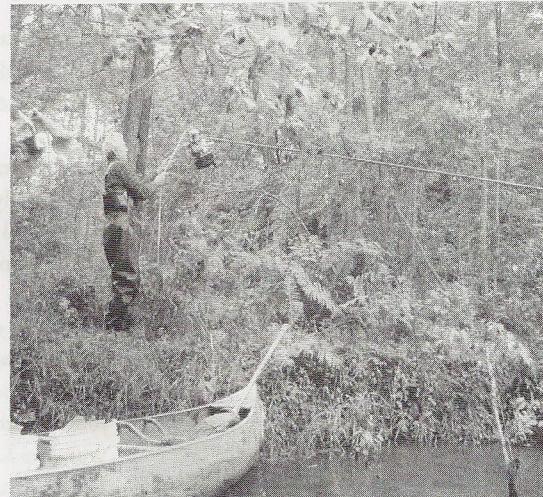
Robert DePalma,  
Groveland Township of Oakland County  
Stephany Diana  
Deborah Elliott,  
Applewood, Ruth Mott Foundation  
Dan Emerton,  
UAW Local 599  
Thomas Enright,  
Flushing Township Nature Park  
John Freeman  
Genesee Intermediate School District  
Ted Hammon,  
State Representative  
John and Jan Hartranft  
James and Mary Ann Helmstetter  
Jennifer Hill  
Jack Hinterman,  
Holloway Lake Association  
Michael Kelly,  
Mott Community College  
Michael and Kay Kelly  
John Kreucher

### Renewing Members

Susanne Kubic  
Amanda Kurzman  
Gerry and Shelly Masters  
Riley McLincha  
Amy McMillan,  
Genesee County Parks & Recreation  
Stephen and Laura Montle  
Donald Mosher  
Brent and Christina Nickola  
Leo Paveglio  
Janet Praefke and Joel Geda  
Joel Rash  
Kelly and Lois Revenaugh  
Lois Robbins,  
North Oakland Headwaters Land  
Conservancy  
William Sharpe,  
Friends of For-Mar Fdn.  
Jonathan Shaver and Amber Carey  
Mickey Shepp  
Paul Torre

### Renewing Members

Dennis and Brenda Zicha



Many volunteers monitored the Flint River and gave 1,280 hours to obstruction removal in 2006.



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