



# Huron River Report

Published quarterly by the Huron River Watershed Council  
1100 North Main Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

**Summer 2011**

New HRWC Ad Campaign p. 3  
Dam Program Partnerships p. 5  
Huron River Water Trail p. 10

## Freshwater Sponges

Learn to identify this curious inhabitant of the Huron River

Sponges are a common site on coral reefs — beautiful plant-like organisms of all sorts of bright colors. Of course, sponges are not plants or algae at all, but a very simple type of animal. Of the approximately 10,000 known species of sponge, almost all of them are only found in marine (salt water) environments. However, 150 species of freshwater sponges are known, with 30 species occurring in North America. Sponges can even be found in the Huron River!

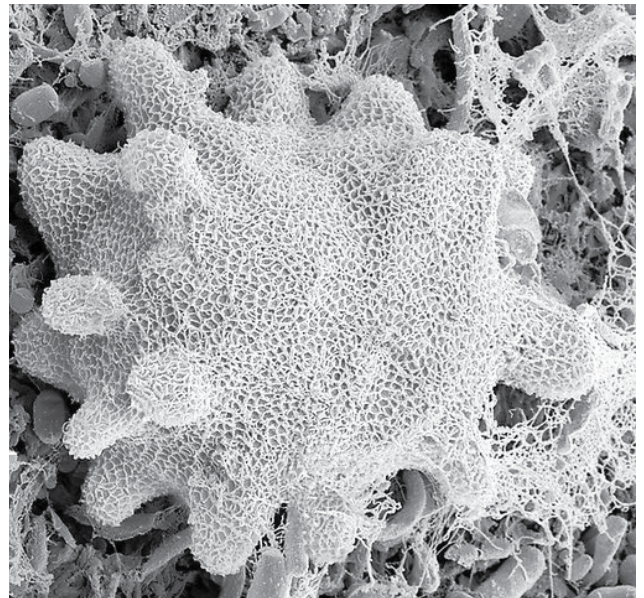
### WHERE TO LOOK FOR SPONGES

Sponges typically live in still waters like lakes and wetlands, but they can also live in larger rivers and in streams near lake outlets. They do not thrive in areas with high wave action or fast currents. Sponges can grow on a variety of hard, stable surfaces; common substrates include large rocks, sea walls, and dock supports. Surprisingly, they have even been found attached to zebra mussels.

### TRAITS OF A SPONGE

Freshwater sponges are often green from the algae living inside their tissues, but they can also be yellow or brown. They vary in size from

*continued on page 3*



*A freshwater sponge viewed through a scanning electron microscope.* photo: Science Photo Library

## Meet HRWC's Storm Chasers

Monitoring program designed toward understanding storm runoff

Anyone spending time watching the Weather Channel or even local news has probably seen segments on thrill-seeking individuals who search out pending storms to collect exciting video, images or data to better understand unusual weather phenomena. HRWC has its own cadre of volunteer storm chasers and is now entering its third year of data collection on spring and summer storms. These intrepid volunteers are called into action with short notice and chase down critical information in conditions most would find challenging or downright scary. Heavy rain is par for the job. Lightning, winds and slick surfaces also present unique challenges for the brave crew.

### WHY DO THEY DO IT?

While it is clear that this special breed of volunteer possesses the courage (some say insanity) to brave the elements, it is not only cheap thrills that motivate them. HRWC's storm chasers are collecting data critical for developing an understanding of storm runoff dynamics. It is well known that summer rainstorms can generate runoff that carries high concentrations of pollutants (including phosphorus), cause erosion of stream channels, and wash bacteria into streams and the river. What is not known is how these dynamics play out specifically across different parts of the watershed.

By collecting water samples and stream flow measurements throughout a storm, HRWC staff can calculate the pollutant load generated during different sized storms and compare those to loading during dry conditions. This data helps HRWC staff determine which tributaries are generating the greatest amount of runoff pollution and under which conditions. The data also aids HRWC and its watershed partners in determining how investments in pollution reduction practices like "green infrastructure" (e.g. replacing impervious surfaces with trees and plantings), large and small-scale stormwater storage and infiltration, and policies such as fertilizer ordinances are working.

*continued on page 4*

# Table of Contents

## Featured Articles

Freshwater Sponges .....cover  
Learn to identify this curious inhabitant

Meet HRWC's Storm Chasers .....cover  
Monitoring program designed toward understanding storm runoff

Is That A New Cape You're Wearing?.....3  
HRWC rolls out h2o heroes campaign

HRWC Takes the Lead on Dam Program Improvements .....5  
Eighteen river and conservation organizations recommend changes to state agencies

HRWC Annual Meeting .....6  
Dedicated stewards honored for their service

River Stewards Speak Up .....7  
Local advocates for water resources

Paddle the Huron River Water Trail.....10  
...with the occasional portage

## Regular Features

Know Your Board Representative.....8  
Matt LaFleur, Village of South Rockwood

Laura's Stream of Consciousness.....9  
An update on HRWC projects and activities

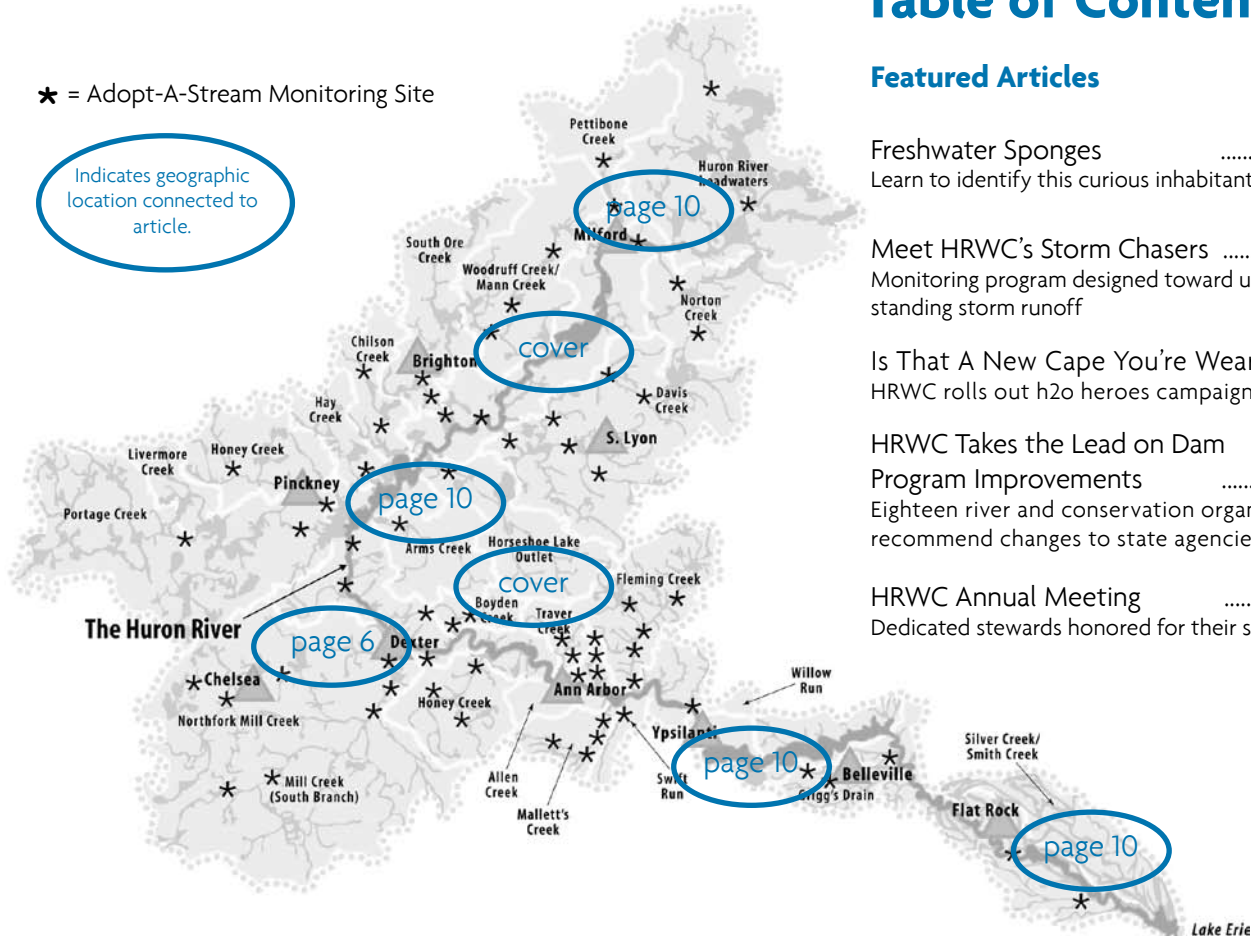
You Make the Difference! .....11  
Become a member of HRWC

Thank You! back cover

The content of this newsletter is prepared by HRWC staff and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of HRWC board members.

★ = Adopt-A-Stream Monitoring Site

Indicates geographic location connected to article.



## Events

Friday, June 10, 6 – 9 PM

### Mayor's Green Fair

Downtown Ann Arbor  
Pam: plabadie@hrwc.org

Thursday, June 23, 5:30

### HRWC Executive Committee

The NEW Center, Ann Arbor  
Laura: lrubin@hrwc.org

Friday, June 24, 5:30 PM

### Jolly Pumpkin Pre-Party

Mel: mring@hrwc.org

Saturday, June 25, 11 AM – 6 PM

### Single Fly Tournament

Mel: mring@hrwc.org

Sunday, July 17

### Huron River Day

Throughout the watershed  
Details at [www.a2gov.org/hrd](http://www.a2gov.org/hrd)  
Pam: plabadie@hrwc.org

Thursday, July 21, 5:30

### HRWC Board Meeting

Location TBD  
Laura: lrubin@hrwc.org

Friday-Sunday, August 19, 20, 21

### Ypsilanti Heritage Festival GREEN Tent

Riverside Park, Ypsilanti  
[www.ypsilantiheritagefestival.com](http://www.ypsilantiheritagefestival.com)  
Pam: plabadie@hrwc.org

Keep up to date this summer at [www.hrwc.org/events/summer-events/](http://www.hrwc.org/events/summer-events/)

[www.facebook.com/huronriver](http://www.facebook.com/huronriver); [www.twitter.com/hrwc](http://www.twitter.com/hrwc)

HRWC offices are located at the NEW Center  
1100 N. Main Street in Ann Arbor  
Call (734) 769-5123 or visit the HRWC website for directions

# Freshwater Sponges

continued from cover

smaller than one inch to larger than three feet, and they vary in shape from finger-like projections to flat encrusted blobs. Sponges are strong enough to be picked up without falling apart because their bodies are reinforced with calcium or silica spine-like structures called spicules. (This trait is helpful in determining if a large green mass is algae or a sponge - algae readily breaks apart.) Sponges are most commonly found in the summer or early fall during their growing season. They are not easily seen in the winter, because in late fall sponges lose a lot of their mass and enter into a hardened dormant state while waiting for more hospitable conditions.

## **SPONGE SIMPLICITY**

Sponges are considered “simple” animals because they do not have organs or differentiated tissues. They do not have circulatory, respiratory, digestive, and ex-

cretory systems. Rather, they create water flow through the body that supports all these functions. Some sponge cells contain flagella (small whip-like hairs) that can create water flow, enabling the sponge to control the current by opening and closing intake and outtake pores. Because they are filter feeders, water flowing through sponges also provides nutrition in the form of delicious bacteria-crusted organic material, such as bits of leaves, wood, and algae.

## **THE ROLE OF SPONGES IN THE RIVER**

Sponges serve as food for a variety of aquatic invertebrates, including caddisflies, midges, and spongillaflies. Spongillaflies are an obscure group of insects that crawl over a sponge's surface and feed on the sponge tissue with their piercing mouthparts.

## **Is it really a sponge?**

If you think you have found a freshwater sponge, put a tiny piece of it in a baggie and bring it to HRWC. A sponge will feel more solid than algae; the spicules give a sponge substance and it will not fall apart in your hands. We should be able to see the spicules under a microscope to help confirm the sponge's identity. Sponges are a sign of clean water — knowing where they are found can help us encourage others to protect those areas.

Though sponges inhabit the Huron River and its tributaries, their extent and species are not well-known since sightings of them tend to be opportunistic. No formal study of sponges is underway. In fact, freshwater sponges are not studied much anywhere, so scientists know little about them. HRWC volunteers recently reported finding colonies in Mill Creek, and HRWC has a few sponge samples from Davis Creek taken in the 1990s.

— Paul Steen

# Is That A New Cape You're Wearing?

HRWC rolls out h2o heroes campaign

HRWC has been busy developing a new series of print and web ads for spreading the word about preventing runoff pollution. Featuring succinct tips, they combine the idea of everyday people doing extraordinary things without really going out of their way. The subjects in the ads know they're heroes, even without muscles and capes, which is why those features are drawn-in instead of worn in the photo itself. HRWC hopes that homeowners find these not-so-serious ads visually appealing and suggestive of how easy it is to protect the watershed in their own backyards.

The ads will begin rolling out on websites and in local print publications this year and next. The “h2o heroes” concept is expected to be incorporated into the 2012 Watershed Community Calendar which is in production now and scheduled for a fall 2011 release. See the ads in full color at [www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org)!

Work on the ad campaign and the calendar is sponsored in part by the Washtenaw and Livingston Stormwater Advisory Groups, working together to address

stormwater pollution in the watershed. Communities wishing to participate in the Information & Education program, use the ads, or place their order for the 2012 Calendar should contact Pam Labadie.

And be on the lookout as HRWC spends the summer shooting photos for more ad topics — maybe to capture the h2o hero in you!

— Pam Labadie





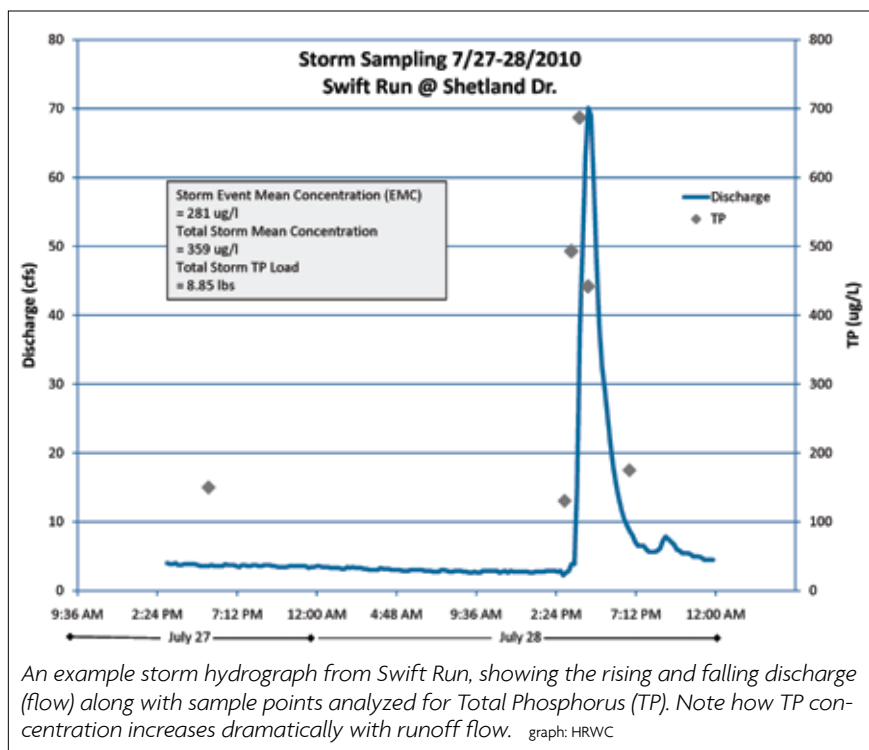
# Meet HRWC's Storm Chasers

continued from cover

## HOW DO THEY DO IT?

The storm chasing process begins with the forecast. HRWC staff closely follow local weather reports to determine when rain storms are predicted. Then, they track radar patterns suggesting a storm is both imminent and large enough (> ¼ inch over 24 hours) to qualify for measurements. When it looks like a large storm is approaching the area, staff put the call out for volunteers by posting an alert on the monitoring program website. Available volunteers call in and are assigned to a “drop-off” or “pick-up” team. Staff and the drop-off team work together, preparing and deploying the autosampler in a stream that has been designated in advance.

About 12-24 hours later, the pick-up team heads out to assess the effects from the



## A Valuable Tool in the Field

The autosampler is the storm chaser's best friend. It is a piece of equipment that, as its name implies, automatically takes water samples based on pre-programmed specifications.

An autosampler consists of a set of 24 water sample bottles, an ice well (for keeping samples cool), a liquid pump attached to a 25-foot hose with a filter, and a specialized computer. Typically, HRWC staff program the autosampler to draw a sample every 30 minutes or an hour (depending on conditions).



The autosampler being set up as a storm rolls in at Honey Creek. The intake hose is attached to the water level logger in the foreground. photo: HRWC

storm. This team unlocks the autosampler, stops it, and records the water level and may take a water sample. They then pull the other important piece of equipment from the stream – a “water-level logger” device. This small metal tube contains a sensor that detects pressure and temperature, saving this data to its memory every 10 minutes. The storm team downloads the data onto a mobile storage device (“shuttle”) and returns the logger to the stream where it was deployed in the spring.

The autosampler, plus any water samples, are shuttled back to HRWC. Staff reviews the data to determine how the storm affected the stream's hydrograph (see sample chart above showing change in flow over time). HRWC staff then selects which water samples will best define the rain event, and the storm team delivers them to the lab at either the Ann Arbor Water Treatment Plant or the Brighton Waste Water Treatment Plant. The storm team then returns to HRWC to help clean the equipment and prepare it for future outings.

## WHAT ARE WE LEARNING?

The labs analyze the samples for total phosphorus (TP), total suspended sediments (TSS) and *Escherichia coli*. When HRWC staff receives the chemical analysis

results, they then can calculate “Event Mean Concentrations” (EMC), which is a summary statistic of the mean (average) concentration of the pollutant in the storm runoff. Since HRWC started the storm sampling program two years ago, staff and volunteers have been able to “capture” 13 storms. Results are still preliminary, but it appears that very small storms generate runoff with TP concentrations that are comparable to samples collected during dry conditions. Modest-sized storms (>1 inch per 24 hours) generate runoff with much higher concentrations. In other words, the storm needs to be large enough to generate significant runoff. Also, significant storm runoff has been measured only in the smaller streams. Much larger storms are needed to generate enough runoff to affect tributaries like Mill and Davis Creeks.

HRWC is working on new ways to utilize storm sampling and is one of a few volunteer programs in the nation collecting this type of data. It is a testament to the skill and dedication of HRWC volunteers that we are able to undertake such a venture.

Contact Ric Lawson for more information about HRWC's Water Quality Monitoring program. Funded in part by partner communities and agencies, and MDEQ.

— Ric Lawson

# HRWC Takes the Lead on Dam Program Improvements

Eighteen river and conservation organizations recommend changes to state agencies

## WHEN DUCT TAPE JUST WON'T DO

The Michigan section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) recently gave the state's dam infrastructure a "D" grade. More than 90% of Michigan's 2,581 inventoried dams will reach or exceed their design life by 2020. This outdated network includes abandoned dams, dams that no longer serve their intended purpose, and dams that pose safety hazards and alter stream flows. Addressing this deficiency is complicated by the lack of a stable funding mechanism to assist dam owners to repair, rehabilitate, or remove aging dams. State funding for inspections is limited with only two staff for the entire state. Furthermore, many dam owners cannot afford to repair, replace, or remove their dams (e.g. the ASCE identified 120 dams alone that need over \$50 million for repair or rehabilitation).

## HRWC STEPS UP

HRWC recognized the opportunity to improve the state's dam program from experiences with dams in this watershed, and

the winds of change were favorable in early 2010 to influence the Michigan DNRE as it considered a new model for environmental management. Staff engaged in the disciplines of river assessment, river research and river restoration were spread across various functions. Agency professionals with stream knowledge and a role in dam removal and management were split among regulatory, conservation, resource management, resource assessment and inventory, restoration project management, water quality and other functions. Clearly, internal change was needed to allow for improved coordination among the agency staff involved in dam management. This situation persists with the split of DNRE into the former DEQ and DNR. But, also missing from the discussion on dams was a unified voice from the river and conservation community.

So, in summer 2010, HRWC called together river and conservation groups with experience and interest in dam management to discuss how to create a better dam program in Michigan.



Superior hydroelectric dam on the Huron River produces power for the City of Ann Arbor.

photo: HRWC

program in Michigan.


The groups responded enthusiastically to this opportunity. In three HRWC-facilitated regional meetings, eighteen organizations from across the state shared their experiences on dam projects, their hopes for Michigan's rivers, and recommendations to their peers and the DNR and DEQ for how to "make the grade" for the state's dam infrastructure. HRWC summarized the recommendations of the groups in a report "Re\*Envisioning Dam Management in Michigan" available at [www.hrwc.org/restorin-griverflows](http://www.hrwc.org/restorin-griverflows).

## IN SEARCH OF LASTING CHANGE


Since the completion of the report, HRWC has partnered with a team of state environmental and conservation organizations (Michigan Environmental Council, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Trout Unlimited, and Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council) to reach out to top DNR and DEQ leaders, department division officials and key staff to build support for implementing key recommendations from the meetings. A new governor brings new people and priorities, so the team assessed these before setting a strategy for the two-year project that includes developing a statewide dam inventory and prioritization model, and building public support for dam removals. HRWC also continues conversations with American Rivers, River Network and other national groups to increase dam removal resources in Michigan.

Contact Elizabeth Riggs for more information about HRWC's dam management program. *Funding provided by the Joyce Foundation.*

— Elizabeth Riggs



**www.a2gov.org/hrd**  
FOR SCHEDULE AND DETAILS



**GET OUT and play**

**CHECK WEB SITE FOR DETAILS AND TIMES. ACTIVITIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**  
Paddle Instruction | Canoe Trips | Canoe and Kayak Rentals | Storytelling  
1-Mile Fun Run | 5K Run & Walk | Swimming the River | Food  
Live Music | Children's Activity Tent | Kids Envirochallenge | Geochaching  
Fishing Fun & Fly Fishing Demos | Classic Small Boat Show | and more!

**SPONSORED BY:** DTE Energy Foundation, Toyota Motor Engineering & Manufacturing, Whole Foods, City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation, National Wildlife Federation, Huron River Watershed Council and Huron Clinton Metroparks Authority.

**A FREE DAY OF FUN FOR ALL!**

**Sunday, July 17**

Fun activities all along the river!

- ◆ GALLUP PARK \$5 boat rentals!
- ◆ PARKER MILL COUNTY PARK

New this year! Additional programs at Huron-Clinton Metroparks:

- ◆ INDIAN SPRINGS METROPARK ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY CENTER
- ◆ KENSINGTON METROPARK FARM CENTER
- ◆ HUDSON MILLS METROPARK
- ◆ OAKWOODS METROPARK NATURE CENTER
- ◆ LAKE ERIE METROPARK MARSHLANDS MUSEUM



# HRWC Annual Meeting

Dedicated stewards honored for their service

HRWC recognized several individuals for their dedication to the Huron River at its annual meeting at the Dexter District Library on April 28. Award recipients were Scott Munzel for the Herb Munzel Zebra Mussel Award; Tom Jameson for the Laminar Flow Award; Dick Chase for the That's Using Your Headwaters Award; and Bill and Mary Kinley for the Vanishing Species Award.

Staff members presented the year's accomplishments and answered questions from the audience. Board members served up picnic fare, including grilled items and a beautiful cake made by Paul Cousins.

Later in the evening, everyone wished Joan Martin, retiring Adopt-A-Stream Director, a fond farewell. Proclamations from the State of Michigan, Green Oak Township and Ann Arbor Township were presented, and guests gently "roasted" Joan in celebration of her many achievements on behalf of HRWC.

Mark your calendars! Next year's Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, April 26, 2012.

— Pam Labadie



Volunteer Appreciation Award recipients Bill, Mary, Dick, Tom and Scott. photo: HRWC



Joan and Jason Frenzel, the new Adopt-A-Stream Stewardship Coordinator.

photo: HRWC



Board members, volunteers, and staff prepared a buffet for the evening. photo: HRWC



Former and present staff celebrate with Joan. photo: HRWC



Laura Rubin, Joan Martin and Steve Francoeur, new Board member representing Washtenaw County.

photo: HRWC



Evan Pratt, the new HRWC Board of Directors Chair, with outgoing Chair John Langs. photo: HRWC



Board member Diane O'Connell with volunteer Jeannine Palms and Board member Janis Bobrin. photo: HRWC

**Thank you!**  
**Thank you!**  
**Thank you!**

# River Stewards Speak Up

Local advocates for water resources



photo: S. Gargaro

## JOHN WEISE AND STEPHANIE BENTLEY

"We are impressed by how HRWC involves the community in the effort to protect vital resources with activities close to home. Education is an important part of what HRWC does as well, making it a great fit with our interest in leveraging the global used book market to support local education and environmental efforts." *John and Stephanie run the Books By Chance program through which donated books, cds and dvds are recycled and sold on the internet, with the proceeds benefiting HRWC.*

## DEA ARMSTRONG

"HRWC helps citizens come together to use whatever ordinary or special skills that we have to keep our very own river flowing free and clean. When the river is in good shape, we are all in good shape. As a wildlife biologist, I take particular interest in the birds and mammals that use the Huron in so many different ways, but I also love simply getting in my kayak and taking in the scenery that a morning or late afternoon paddle can provide. The variety of sights and sounds of a river that is part country, part city is exciting. But being a member of HRWC helps us to know our river and the whole watershed in ways that we might not otherwise. Knowing that I can help keep the Huron at its best, whether it is by donating books, or helping to show folks how birds use the Huron, or taking a friend to Suds on the River, makes me value the river even more. Thank you to all of the HRWC folks who provide me with the opportunity to help. You make it easy and fun. And look what it does for 'my' river!"



photo: M. Teal



photo: HRWC

## JIM FACKERT

"I live on the river in Green Oak Township. I bought the land in the 1980s largely because I enjoyed paddling the river, and loved the wildlife and the natural river corridor. I was impressed with the Huron River Watershed Council. I could see that they had already made significant strides in improving the water quality and the watershed. I felt sure that they would continue to protect the watershed, and the river and its environs would get better and better. I felt inspired to join and support them then, and I have never been disappointed. They do good work, and I feel I am a part of it."

## BOOKS BY CHANCE

### REMINDER:

1. Take extra, old and unwanted books, CDs, and DVDs to HRWC
2. Feel good about a cleaner home with less clutter, while raising funds for HRWC
3. Tell friends and neighbors about Books by Chance

Bring your goods to HRWC between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM weekdays. Books by Chance will sell them over the internet and donate the proceeds to HRWC. Books that sell very well are non-fiction, scholarly, technical, current medical and science, quilting/sewing, engineering, law, political, very current fiction, and textbooks.

### THANKS!

## 2011 Single Fly Tournament

**Friday June 24, 2011 at 5:30PM**

**Pre-Party and Silent Auction** at Jolly Pumpkin Cafe & Brewery (311 S Main St). Food, beer, prizes, silent auction and FUN! Water scientists from HRWC in attendance. Fee includes food and 2 drinks.

**Saturday June 25, 2011 at 11AM -6PM**  
**Single Fly Tournament**

Check-in for tournament by 10AM  
Fishing starts at 11AM  
Must be back by 6PM  
Food and drinks will be served at 4PM with awards and prizes to follow at 6:30PM. Registration limited; ends June 21.

### FEES:

- \$50 - Tournament Only
- \$60 - Tournament & HRWC Membership
- \$70 - Tournament & Pre-Party
- \$80 - Tournament, Pre-Party & HRWC Membership
- \$20 - Pre-Party Only

# Know Your Board Representative

Matt LaFleur, Village of South Rockwood

Matt LaFleur is the recently appointed Village of South Rockwood representative to the HRWC Board of Directors. He previously served on the South Rockwood Village Council for eight years and now serves on the Planning Commission and as an alternate to the Alliance of Downriver Watersheds. For 24 years, Matt was a Senior Airfield Operations Manager at the Detroit Metropolitan Airport, including 12 years focused on environmental work, including water quality monitoring. He now teaches Airport Management at Schoolcraft College.

Matt grew up fishing and canoeing on the Huron and has had a lifelong interest in the environment. His main motivation for serving on the board and being a member of HRWC is to be a model steward of the

rich natural heritage in this region. Matt reflects, "I want the local community to take ownership of the resources in Southeast Michigan and understand that they can make a difference." He is particularly excited about HRWC's efforts to complete the Huron River Water Trail from the source of the river all the way to Lake Erie.

Matt and his wife, Becky, live on the banks of the Huron River with their sons, Brian, Chad and Drake. His hobbies include fishing, hunting, gardening, cooking, camping, and anything outdoors.

He believes in the importance of HRWC's work and knows that anyone, regardless of age, can volunteer to be part of that work. Call Matt at (734) 379-0844 if you would like to volunteer in the South Rockwood



*Matt and son, Drake, land a piscine beauty at an undisclosed location on the Huron River.*

photo: M. LaFleur

area. Call HRWC staff at (734) 769-5123 to find out more about our programs and how you can take part.

— Eunice Burns

## HRWC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### CITY OF ANN ARBOR

Shirley Axon  
Dick Norton (Exec. Comm.)  
Eunice Burns (Exec. Comm.)  
Craig Hupy (Treasurer)  
Evan Pratt (Chair)  
Molly Wade (alternate)  
Cheryl Darnton (alternate)

### ANN ARBOR TOWNSHIP

Diane O'Connell (Exec. Comm.)

### VILLAGE OF BARTON HILLS

Cheryl Mackrell

### CITY OF BELLEVILLE

vacant

### CITY OF BRIGHTON

Sue Monet

### CITY OF CHELSEA

Steven Wright

### COMMERCE TOWNSHIP

Peter Schappach

### DEXTER TOWNSHIP

Barry Lonik  
Kathryn Bowring (alternate)

### VILLAGE OF DEXTER

Paul Cousins (Vice Chair)

### CITY OF FLAT ROCK

Ricky Tefend

### GENOA TOWNSHIP

vacant

### GREEN OAK TOWNSHIP

Fred Hanert

### HURON TOWNSHIP

Deeda Stanczak  
Robert Stanczak (alternate)

### LIVINGSTON COUNTY

Matt Bolang  
Scott Barb

### VILLAGE OF MILFORD

Mark Irish

### MILFORD TOWNSHIP

Mary Bajcz

### NORTHFIELD TOWNSHIP

Sue Shink

### OAKLAND COUNTY

Chris Benedict (Exec. Comm.)

### VILLAGE OF PINCKNEY

Barry White

### PITTSFIELD TOWNSHIP

Sabrina Gross

### PUTNAM TOWNSHIP

Keith Tianen

### CITY OF ROCKWOOD

vacant

### SALEM TOWNSHIP

vacant

### SCIO TOWNSHIP

Spaulding Clark  
Gerry Kangas (alternate)

### VILLAGE OF SOUTH ROCKWOOD

Matthew LaFleur

### SUPERIOR TOWNSHIP

John Langs (Exec. Comm.)

### VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP

Dave Wilson

### WALLED LAKE

Lisa McGill

### WASHTENAW COUNTY

Janis Bobrin (Exec. Comm.)  
Scott Munzel  
Steve Francoeur (alternate)

### WEBSTER TOWNSHIP

Eric Petrovskis

### W. BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP

Gene Farber

### WHITE LAKE TOWNSHIP

Kathy Aseltyne

### CITY OF WIXOM

Michael Howell

### VILLAGE OF WOLVERINE LAKE

vacant

### CITY OF YPSILANTI

Sally Lusk  
Tom Roach

### YPSILANTI TOWNSHIP

Norm Andresen

## HRWC STAFF

(734) 769-5123

### Jennifer Fike x 604

Finance Manager  
jfike@hrwc.org

### Jason Frenzel x 600

Stewardship Coordinator  
jffrenzel@hrwc.org

### Pam Labadie x 602

Marketing Director  
plabadie@hrwc.org

### Ric Lawson x 609

Watershed Planner  
rlawson@hrwc.org

### Kris Olsson x 607

Watershed Ecologist  
kolsson@hrwc.org

### Elizabeth Riggs x 608

Watershed Planner  
eriggs@hrwc.org

### Mel Ring x 610

Membership Coordinator  
mring@hrwc.org

### Laura Rubin x 606

Executive Director  
lrubin@hrwc.org

### Margaret M. Smith x 605

Director of Development  
msmith@hrwc.org

### Paul Steen x 601

Watershed Ecologist  
psteen@hrwc.org

### Debi Weiker

Watershed Program Associate  
dweiker@hrwc.org



# Laura's Stream of Consciousness

An update on HRWC projects and activities

## STAFF CHANGES

In the last few months we've had a staff change and added a new position. In March, Jason Frenzel joined HRWC, replacing retiring Joan Martin as the Stewardship Coordinator. Jason worked with the City of Ann Arbor's Natural Area Preservation program for 10 years as its Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator. Before that Jason worked with the Groundwater Stewardship Program at the Washtenaw County Conservation District. Jason holds a B.S. from Michigan State University in "facilitating tree hugging." I find that many people already know Jason, as he does a lot of volunteering to create community in and around the 'shed. Jason lives in the Traver Creekshed.

Mel Ring also started in March as the new Membership Coordinator. Mel is working part-time with HRWC managing our

membership and summer events, and assisting with other development activities. Mel lives in Dexter, but hails from Austin, TX. Mel is also a massage therapist, teaches PE at Dexter High School, and is a nationally ranked disc golfer. While she does a lot of work with her hands, she brings a big heart and passion for the river and a quick wit for tackling the membership database. Mel lives in the Mill Creekshed.

Please stop by and introduce yourself to Jason and Mel. They are both gearing up for a summer filled with HRWC events and monitoring.



Jason and Mel at HRWC offices. photo: HRWC





# Microbrews

of the Huron River Watershed

**Thursday, September 15**  
6 to 9 pm



Huron  
River  
Watershed  
Council

For tickets call 734-769-5123 x605

## FEDERAL AND STATE CUTS

The news has been filled with stories about environmental program cuts, loosening regulations, and regulatory staff reductions. I understand that we need to cut budgets across the board. Yet I am dismayed that clean water programs, regulations and staff are some of the first and largest cuts made to reduce federal and state budgets.

So, how does HRWC react to these cuts? At the federal level, we step up our advocacy for the implementation of the Clean Water Act (TMDLs, stormwater permitting, wetland regulation) and we promote and partner with the voluntary programs such as the WaterSense program for saving water and saving energy. At the state level, we watchdog permit applications for wetland and floodplain fills, new wastewater treatment plants, and stream changes, and voice support or opposition when necessary. With an eviscerated state agency, HRWC needs to step up to provide the data and evidence to deny a permit. At the state level, we also need to test and promote innovative solutions to protecting the watershed. Additionally, state environmental monitoring is vastly insufficient. Our monitoring programs provide the richest and deepest information on the health of the watershed and can result in better resource management decisions.

— Laura Rubin

# Paddle the Huron River Water Trail

... with the occasional portage

For decades, communities and industries on the river turned their backs on the Huron River and treated it as a conduit for waste and otherwise neglected it. Rivers are, once again, becoming a focal point for communities and a destination for tourism, boating, fishing and other types of recreation. In fact, paddle sports like canoeing and kayaking are one of the fastest growing sectors of the recreational industry, and fishing continues to enjoy a devoted following on the Huron. HRWC and its partners are taking steps to reconnect communities with the river through river-based recreation, called the Huron River Water Trail.



Trail markers like this bridge crossing sign will unify the signage marking the Water Trail and help users find their way. credit: Christianson Design

The Huron River Water Trail is a route on the river that fosters interactive recreational, historical, cultural and tourist experiences. Across the country, examples of successful water trails abound, each with a unique character but with the common focus on economic development, stewardship and education, and culture and history of the waterway.

## Key aspects of the Huron River Water Trail

- way-finding and historical markers on bridge crossings or river-side that highlight historic events related to the river
- a companion guide that provides maps, put-in and take-out points, rest stop locations, paddling conditions, and more
- maps and web-based guides for local restaurants and lodging
- stewardship opportunities to care for the water trail

## WHY THE WATER TRAIL?

The aim of the Huron River Water Trail is to improve recreational access to the river;

add interpretive, way-finding, and historical signage; link river communities; and build creative economic development opportunities. The Water Trail has tremendous potential for becoming a new destination niche and for attracting tourism dollars to Oakland, Livingston, Monroe, Washtenaw and Wayne counties.

## How many people does it take to make the Water Trail?

“Building” the Water Trail takes a lot of dedicated people, like those on the Steering Committee and three Work Groups. The Pilot Project Work Group is addressing the needs of the communities of Milford, Dexter, Ann Arbor and Flat Rock to connect them to the Water Trail. The Infrastructure Work Group is identifying what’s working and what needs improving for the paddling experience, and then working with partners to make the changes. The Cultural and Natural History Work Group is conducting research to identify key cultural and natural history features along the Water Trail. These efforts build on the momentum started by the Downriver Linked Greenways Initiative and the Oakland County Water Trail plans, and bring in key partners like the HCMA and Downtown Development Authorities.

If you’d like to be a Water Trail supporter, contact Elizabeth Riggs to learn about options for involvement.

## RECOMMENDED TRIPS

The Huron River Water Trail includes 104 miles of paddling opportunities! Get a taste of the Water Trail on one of these recommended trips. The trail offers a variety of flat water, swift water, and white-water, on a range of streams, lakes, and ponds giving extensive opportunities for canoe and kayak recreation. Vibrant river communities along the way offer inns, Bed & Breakfasts, camping facilities, dining and recreational and heritage attractions. For printable descriptions that include trip highlights as well as suggested put-in and take-out locations and where to rent canoes and kayaks, go to [www.huronriver-watertrail.org](http://www.huronriver-watertrail.org).



The Water Trail will greatly improve the paddling experience on the river.

photo: City of Ann Arbor

## Upper Huron Trips

Island Lake State Recreation Area: Kent Lake Dam to Placeway Picnic Area—1.5 hours; 5.4 miles. Enjoy the natural setting on state land with great wildlife viewing and fishing opportunities. Relaxing, easy paddle. Two canoe camps accessible only from the river. Basic amenities.

*Trip extension option: Kent Lake Dam to Huron Meadows Metropark— 5.5 hours; 11.4 miles.*

## Middle Huron Trips

Hudson Mills Metropark to Dexter-Huron Metropark: 2 hours; 5.7 miles. Put in above the rapids at Hudson Mills for a more challenging trip. Otherwise a slow and relaxing paddle. So close to villages and cities, but feels remote thanks to the Natural Rivers designation that keeps development outside of the river corridor.

*Trip extension option: paddle up Mill Creek to the Village of Dexter to enjoy the rapids (former site of Mill Pond dam, removed in 2008) and quaint town.*

*Trip extension option: Hudson Mills Metropark to Delhi Metropark— 3.5 hours; 8.7 miles.*

*Barton Dam to Gallup Park: 2.5 hours; 5.6 miles. Find the solitude of nature in the middle of the city with this paddle through Ann Arbor to Gallup Park.*

*continued on next page*

# Paddle the Huron River Water Trail

continued from previous page

Argo Park to Gallup Park: 1.5 hours; 3.6 miles. A shorter trip than the Barton Dam to Gallup Park if time is limited. After summer 2011, the portage at Argo Dam will be bypassed via new white water rapids to be constructed in the former raceway of the dam.

## Lower Huron Trips

Lower Huron Metropark to Oakwoods Metropark: 5-7 hours; 15 miles. Paddle through the three Metroparks along the lower Huron River that offer some of the most beautiful natural river views and paddler-friendly amenities in lower Michigan. Canoe camp at Lower Huron Metropark.

## MORE RESOURCES

Check out “*Canoeing Michigan Rivers: A Comprehensive Guide to 45 Rivers*” by Jerry Dennis and Craig Date or “*Paddling Michigan*” by Kevin and Laurie Hillstrom. The Guide was originally published in 1986 and has been referred to as “an essential tool for the Michigan canoeist for decades.” A revised edition, published in 2001, is available for purchase from IndieBound, Amazon, or Barnes & Noble.



photo: J. Oleksinski

## PADDLING SAFETY

The American Canoe Association website offers a wealth of information on paddling safety, including top ten safety tips. The information covers everything from choosing a life jacket to trip preparation and planning and cold water safety. There is also a printable brochure with a paddler's checklist. Go to [www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org).

The Huron River Water Trail can reconnect communities to the river and its recreational, cultural, ecological and economic

values. It will inspire people to protect the Huron from harm and repair damage from past ills. Enabling residents and visitors alike to discover the recreation benefits of the Huron River will produce a number of benefits for local communities – improved economies; community pride; and a newfound conservation ethic. *Funding provided by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan.*

— Elizabeth Riggs and Pam Labadie

# Support the Huron River Watershed Council

## Ways You Can Help

1. Make a Donation
2. Host an Event
3. Read HRWC.org Blog
4. Volunteer
5. Donate CDs, DVDs & Books

## Our strength is in our numbers

The success of our river protection work is guided by science, and relies on the support of individuals like you.

Please contact Margaret Smith if you have a question, (734) 769-5123 x 605 or [msmith@hrwc.org](mailto:msmith@hrwc.org).

## Donate: Make a Difference

I would like to make a donation to HRWC in the amount of

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 <b>Mayfly</b>             | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 <b>Salamander</b>         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 <b>Crayfish</b>           | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 <b>Smallmouth Bass</b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 <b>Dragonfly</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 <b>Great Blue Heron</b> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 <b>Soft Shell Turtle</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                     |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to HRWC and mail it with this form to 1100 N. Main Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104. Online donations may be made through our secure website at [www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org). Thank you!





*Protecting the river since 1965*

1100 N. Main Street Suite 210  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
(734) 769-5123  
www.hrwc.org

NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Ann Arbor, MI  
Permit #435

The Huron River Watershed Council receives contributions via payroll deduction through EARTH SHARE of Michigan.



Printed on 30% minimum post-consumer  
recycled content paper



## Thanks to Our Volunteers!

Protecting the Huron is a big job and we would be lost without the donations of time, talents, and resources from our dedicated volunteers. **We extend Special Thanks to:**

**City of Ann Arbor Natural Areas Preservation (NAP)** program for loaning tools and gloves for the workday at the Superior dam portage; **St. Joseph Mercy Hospital** for meeting and parking space; **John Carver** and **Ray Pittman** for pitching in with maintenance; and to the **15 brothers of Phi Gamma Delta** chapter at U of M and alum **Kelley Rea** for volunteering a Sunday afternoon to improve the portage at Superior dam.

**Mark Irish** for staffing our "Hands-On River Monitoring" activity at Water Discovery Day, enthusiastically showing macroinvertebrates to hundreds of interested kids.

**Matt Fry**, DNR, for his assistance with the River Scouts Program.  
**Robert Ayotte, Lynn Vacarro, Maurita Holland,** and **Toni Spears** for help at the May 7th Bioreserve field assessment training.

**Maurita Holland** and **Tricia Jones** for improving the online Flickr plant guide.

100 volunteers who conducted the Spring RoundUp at 40 stream sites with the expert help of aquatic entomologists **Graham Lewis, Catherine Riseng,** and **Jo Latimore.**

**Jen Mironas** for database clean up, list proofing and cleaning out storage unit.

Suds on the River Host Committee members **Janis Bobrin, Mike Allemang, Susie Cannell, Bruce Wallace, Deanna Dorner, Richard Dorner, Leslie Desmond, Phil Stoffregen, Mary Kinley, Bill Kinley, Ruth Langs, John Langs, Marta Manildi, Paul Courant, Maureen Martin, Mike Penskar, Jean Shope** and **Thomas Shope** for their dedication to the river and our annual fundraiser coming up September 15, 2011.

**Paul Christianson, Dave Fanslow, Mike George, Mike Mouradian** and **Cheryl Saam** for their assistance with river clean up.