Huron River Report

The Newsletter of the Huron River Watershed Council

Spring 2005

Interview with a Smallmouth Bass

A rare glimpse into life in the Huron River (Interview by Tui Minderhout)

TM: Hello, Mr. er, Micropterus dolo... er

SM: You can call me Smallmouth.

TM: Thank you. Welcome to our radio show, Smallmouth.

SM: You 're welcome. Thanks for having me.

TM: I understand that you "smallies" have distinguished yourselves as, ounce for ounce, the hardest fighting freshwater fish.

SM: Oh, yes, indeed, we smallmouth are one of the most popular freshwater game fishes in North America!

TM: Where in the world do you come from?

SM: My great, great, great, great grandparents originally lived in Lake Ontario and the Ohio River watershed. Then, in 1869, with the rapid growth of the American railroads, we became first-class travelers in water buckets. We were introduced to many states from coast to coast, even in California! My clan is really widespread. You will find us from Minnesota to Quebec and south

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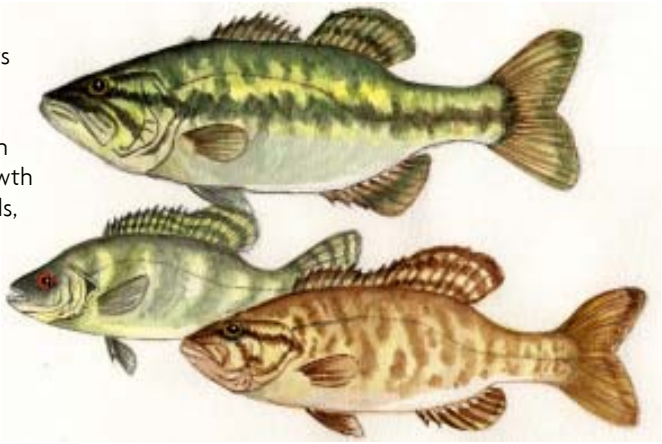

Me and my Crappie relatives from top to bottom: largemouth bass; rock bass, and me, a smallmouth bass. —illustration: Tui Minderhout

Investing in Greenspace

Communities protect land through millages

How can the fast-growing communities in the Huron River Watershed continue to develop while protecting the rural character, natural features and quality of life that make this area so special?

Local governments and residents in the watershed are employing many innovative tools to protect natural areas and farmland, such as millages to purchase conservation easements, outright land purchase, and the development of recreational greenways.

PROTECTION THROUGH PURCHASE

In 2000 the voters of Washtenaw County showed tremendous stewardship of natural areas through the passage of a Natural Areas Ordinance, which established the Natural Areas Preservation Program to purchase natural land with a ¼ mill tax (millage). HRWC and other local environmental groups led the millage effort. The Natural Areas Technical Advisory Committee that guides the program identifies parcels of land that, through long-term preservation, will:

1. Contribute to the preservation of the natural heritage of Washtenaw County;
2. Complement or connect the existing network of publicly and privately protected lands; and
3. Maximize the public benefit.

The Parks and Recreation Commission maintains land purchased in the program for passive recreational uses like hiking and wildlife viewing. Approximately $27.5 million will be generated for land acquisition by the millage between 2002 and2011.

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Saved: native prairie and woodlands on the Devine property in Scio Township.

—photo: Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation

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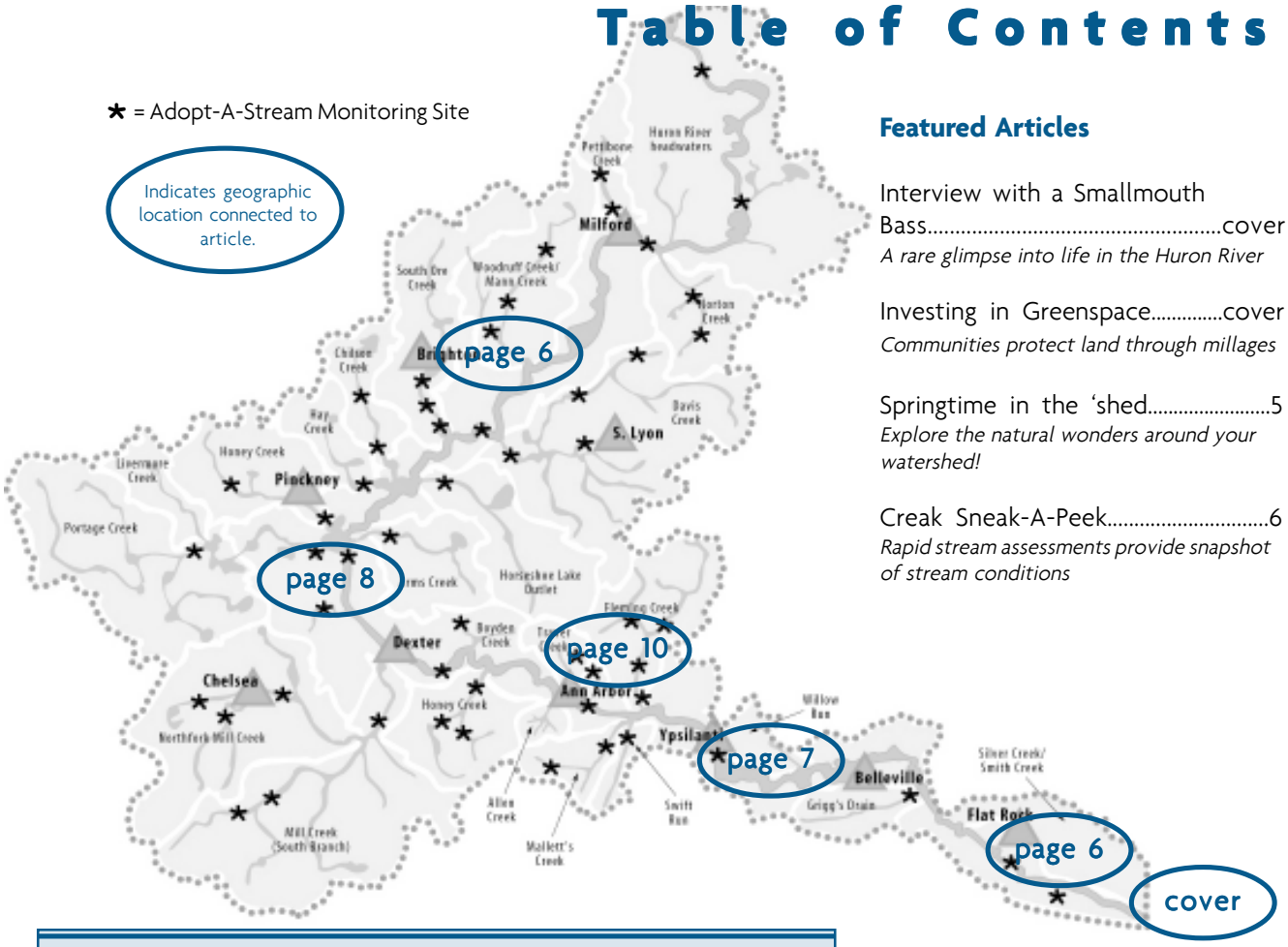
★ = Adopt-A-Stream Monitoring Site

Indicates geographic location connected to article.



Featured Articles

Other News

2005 EVENTS

Saturday, Apr. 9, Noon-5:00PM
Leadership Training
NEW Center & nearby stream
Call Adopt at (734) 769-5971

Saturday, Apr. 16, 9-3:30 or 10:30-5 PM
River RoundUp
Entire Watershed
Call Adopt at (734) 769-5971

Thursday, April 21, 5:30-7 PM
HRWC Annual Meeting
Location TBA
Call Laura at (734) 769-5123 x2

Sunday, May 1, Noon-3 or 2-5 PM
ID Day
NEW Center
Call Adopt at (734) 769-5971

Save the Date:

The 2nd Annual State of the Huron Conference
Friday, May 6, all day
Washtenaw Community College

This event is a great opportunity to learn about the overall health of the watershed, highlight and celebrate successful efforts to protect and restore the Huron, and provide an opportunity to share ideas and strategize for the river's future health. Please join us!

More events and updates on the web at: www.hrwc.org

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

Interview with a Smallmouth Bass

continued from cover

to northern Alabama, then west to eastern Kansas and Oklahoma and, as I said, even California!

TM: Where do you live now?
SM: I have lived in the Huron River all my life; some people still mistake me for one of those choosey trout.

But trout live in cold water, and we smallmouth live in warmer water, with temperatures between 60 and 80 degrees F. We like rocky streams with riffles and lakes, too. We are robust and will give any angler a good workout any day. We live right here in the Huron, right here in your backyard!

TM: I often see you hanging out around the river's weed beds. Are you a vegetarian?

SM: Ha, ha, very funny! No, no, I love to eat crayfish, insect larvae, small fish and other little critters that are hanging out in the weeds. When I was a small fry, I ate the little water fleas. They were delicious and helped me grow fast! Now I especially love the big mayflies that hatch in September.

And, off the record, I love to have the weeds tickle my tummy.

TM: Does pollution of the river affect your food sources?

SM: Yes, in some parts of the river all I can find are tiny aquatic worms and midge larvae. However, nice, big, juicy hellgrammites, which can survive only in clear, clean water, are more to my taste. Some people don't understand and keep on polluting, so I have to move elsewhere. What are they thinking? Come on, give us fish a break!

On top of losing my food supply, some parts of my Huron River home are filled with trash. You wouldn't believe the things that people dump in the river: shopping carts, bicycles, cameras, cans, bottles, a cell phone ... you name it.

Even worse, polluted runoff from many parts of the watershed is filled with silt that chokes my gills and nutrients that cause massive blooms of algae and weeds.

TM: But I thought you liked weed beds?

SM: Yes, I do. However, when too many plants and algae grow they use up the oxygen in the water that I need. When the plants and algae die, oxygen is used by the bacteria that decompose them, so the water becomes degraded. If too much oxygen is used, then we could suffocate!

TM: That sounds horrible! I wouldn't like that at all!

SM: It smells worse than it sounds. Your listeners must remember that what you wouldn't put in your fish tank, you shouldn't put in the river.

TM: Thank you so much for coming to meet with us today, Mr. Smallmouth. Will I see you on the river?

SM: You betcha! Bring your 4-weight fly rod on a nice (but not too hot) summer morning or evening, and don't forget to bring those elk hair caddis; I just can't get enough of them! I assume you use a barbless hook and practice catch and release? If you want to eat something, jig for walleye.

- Tui Minderhout

Investing in Greenspace

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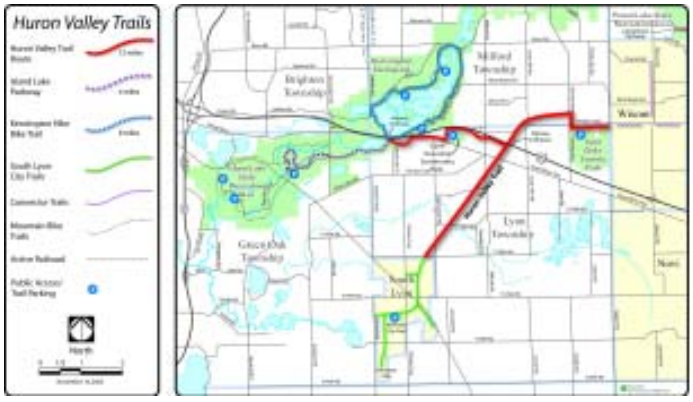
To date 6 sites and 719 acres have been purchased.

More recently, three communities in the Ann Arbor area are working together to protect farmland and natural areas. Ann Arbor Township, Scio Township and the City of Ann Arbor all passed millages to buy land and purchase conservation easements. Again, HRWC contributed efforts and support to these millages. In November 2003, voters in the City of Ann Arbor approved a parks and greenbelt proposal – a 30-year, 0.5 mill tax to purchase land for parks and property development rights on an estimated 7,000 acres of open space near the city. At the same time Ann Arbor Township voters approved a 20-year, 0.7 mill tax to preserve about 2,000 acres of farmland in their community. Combine these efforts with Scio Township's 0.5-mill, 10-year tax (approximately 1,000 acres) to purchase land or development rights from the owners of farmland and other open space and there is a potential for significant land protection in and around Ann Arbor. These programs are hoping to make their first purchases this year.



This recently completed trail underscores how greenways can provide multiple linkages between town centers, between neighborhoods, and between larger natural areas. —illustration: Western Oakland Co. Trailway Mgmt Council

Finally, this past fall voters in Commerce Township endorsed a millage to allow the township to purchase parkland. The first year of the 10-year millage would bring in more than $700,000, but only would cost the average homeowner about $25 in taxes.

PROTECTION THROUGH PATHWAYS

Greenways are pedestrian or bike paths that typically run between parks, shopping areas, neighborhoods, and other destinations. In addition to aesthetic and recreational benefits, they provide many environmental benefits as well. They provide habitat and corridors for wildlife, preserve green spaces that are important to maintaining water quality, and can unify open-space planning efforts throughout the area. Greenway corridors can either

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Investing in Greenspace

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be created on publicly owned land or protected on private properties through techniques such as conservation easements and grouping home building sites together to leave more land available for greenways.

Greenways are expanding greatly all over the watershed. What follows is a list of greenways that neighborhood groups, nonprofit organizations, and planning agencies have initiated recently.

- The Southeast Michigan Greenways Initiative is a five-year program launched by the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan in 2001. It provides funding for and linkage between the myriad greenways groups that are forming in Southeast Michigan. This initiative is expected to provide at least $75 million for creating and expanding greenways in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, St. Clair and Livingston counties.

- The Southeast Livingston Greenways project brought together local government officials and hundreds of Livingston County residents to create a plan for a system of greenways in the townships of Green Oak, Hamburg, Brighton, and Genoa and the City of Brighton. Many smaller neighborhood groups have formed, under this umbrella, to advocate for specific greenways, including Friends of Green Oak Trails and Friends of Brighton Trails. In September 2002, Genoa Township received funding to construct the Bauer Road greenway, which will connect to the existing Brighton Road Pathway. Together, these trails will connect downtown Brighton with Genoa and Hamburg townships, and with the Brighton State Recreation Area.

- The Lakelands Trail runs east-west through Livingston County and will be part of an eventual Lake Huron to Lake Erie Statewide "Discovery Trail" envisioned by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. This trail benefits from the efforts of a Friends of Lakelands Trail group from each of the three townships through which it passes – Unadilla, Putnam, and Hamburg.

- Oakland County has created a comprehensive "Linked Trail/Path Network," which will connect parks and town centers throughout the county.

- Milford Township and Village residents passed a millage last fall for developing a trail from the Village to Kensington Metropark as part of the Huron Valley Trail system, which will link together Wixom, South Lyon, Kensington Metropark, and Island Lake State Recreation Area.

- The Metroparks along the Huron River in Wayne and Monroe counties – Lower Huron, Willow, and Oakwoods - all are connected by a paved 15-mile hike-bike trail. A path to connect Oakwoods to Lake Erie Metropark is nearly complete, with the remaining two segments to be completed by this fall (see map this page).

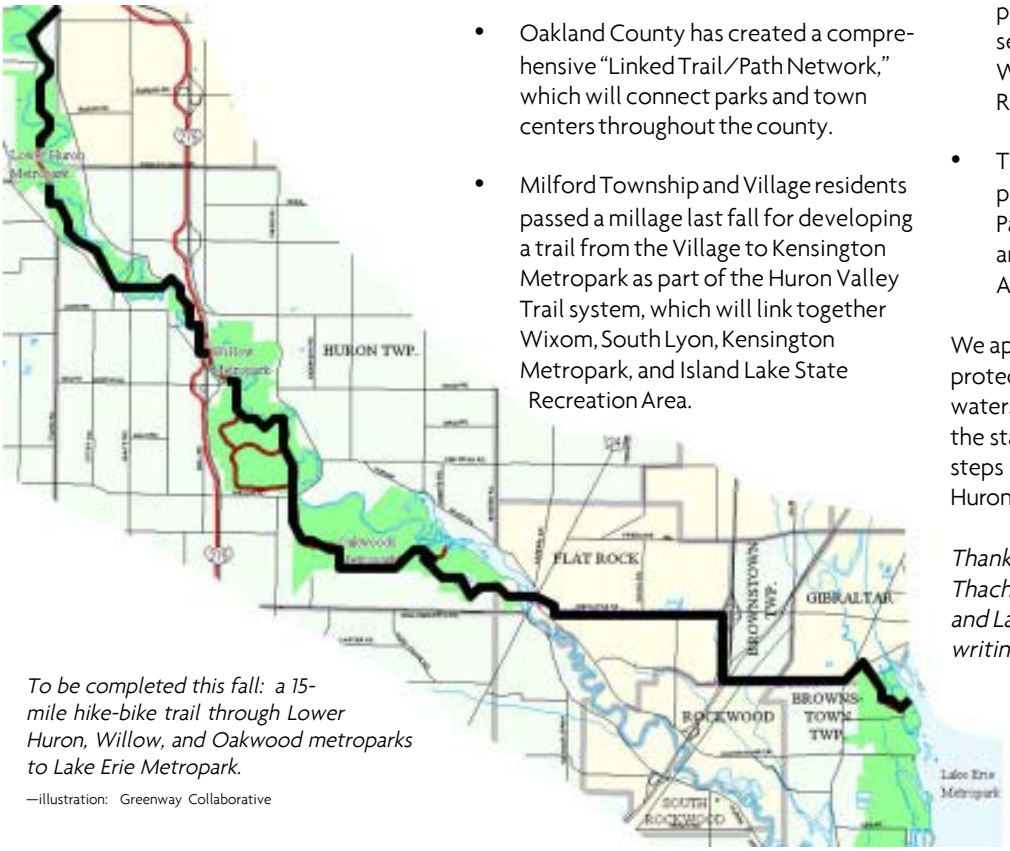
- Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation's 35-mile Border-to-Border Trail is an ambitious plan to create a multi-use pathway along the Huron River from its border with Livingston County to the Wayne County line. Completed segments include a 2-mile trail running past Washtenaw Community College and around St. Joseph Mercy Hospital. Additional segments in the planning stages include one connecting Ypsilanti City with Ypsilanti Township through River's Edge Park and one connecting the Village of Dexter to Dexter-Huron Metropark and further to Delhi Metropark. Washtenaw County will be able to plan and complete work on more segments with the recent renewal of Washtenaw County's Parks and Recreation millage.

- The City of Ann Arbor Greenway proposal would create a "Central Park" through the center of the city and provide a greenway along the Allen Creek corridor.

We applaud these progressive land protection efforts throughout the watershed. These efforts are visionary for the state and the country, and are major steps in protecting and preserving the Huron River Watershed.

Thanks to Eric Piehl, Jim Fackert, Jill Thacher, Norm Cox, Anita Twardesky, and Larry Falardeau for their help in writing this article.

- Kris Olsson and Laura Rubin



To be completed this fall: a 15-mile hike-bike trail through Lower Huron, Willow, and Oakwood metroparks to Lake Erie Metropark.

—illustration: Greenway Collaborative

Springtime in the 'shed

Explore the natural wonders around your watershed!

Spring is almost here, bringing warmer temperatures and an abundance of things to do and see in the Huron River Watershed. Our wonderful system of parks provides excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation and nature exploration. With wildflowers blooming and wildlife active, there's no better time to get acquainted with your part of the watershed, or roam further afield and explore someplace new.

HIKE & BIKE

While nature hikes in the watershed are enjoyable any time of year, your chances of seeing blooming wildflowers, migrating birds, and other active wildlife are great in the spring. Hudson Mills Metropark is renowned for wildflowers along its 3-mile paved trail, much of which follows the Huron River. Some Metroparks offer guided hikes by Park Interpreters so visitors can learn more about spring phenomena. Visit Waterloo State Recreation Area's Discovery Center and hike the Bog Trail through the forest and onto a boardwalk to see spring wildflowers and bog plants. The 5-mile Crooked Lake Trail at Pinckney State Recreation Area allows hiking and biking and includes many unique plants and a beautiful overlook of Pickerel Lake. Hike Kensington and Indian Springs Metropark trails to see abundant wildlife and unique plants. The handicap-accessible wooden boardwalk known as the Hoyt Post Trail in Washtenaw County's Parker Mill County Park follows Fleming Creek and offers a view of the Huron. Wildflowers are abundant along the trail, and the wooded floodplain is beautiful in the spring. Black Pond Woods, in Ann Arbor, and Washtenaw County's Park Lyndon North have abundant wildflowers and wetland habitats to view. Frogs and toads put on a chorus on springtime evenings at Hudson Mills Metropark's paved trail near the Activity Center, and at Independence Lake County Park. Both parks contain vernal ponds, swamps, and marshes that are breeding areas for salamanders and other amphibians.

Trilliums bloom in spring in wooded areas around the watershed.

—photo: Thomas G. Barnes, USDA-NRCS Plants Database

BIRDING

Viewing the migration of waterfowl in bright breeding plumage at Point Mouillée, where the Huron enters Lake Erie, is a spring tradition among avid birders. Walk on the dikes from mid-March through mid-April, bring a spotting scope or binoculars, and be prepared for cool breezes off the water. Spring warblers and other species can be seen along the trails in Hudson Mills and Huron Meadows metroparks and Island Lake and Waterloo state recreation areas. Kensington Metropark provides excellent birding opportunities along a 2-mile hike from the Nature Center around Wild Wing Lake, and also has a blue heron rookery where you can watch herons making nests and raising their young. In Ann Arbor, the Nichols Arboretum and Dolph Park are birding hot spots.

PADDLING

Paddling on the Huron presents an entirely different perspective of the watershed, and there are many landings and liveries from which to choose. A very popular route runs from Hudson Mills to Delhi Metropark. This beautiful stretch of river provides good fishing for rock bass, smallmouth bass, and the occasional northern pike. A separate trip could include paddling from Proud Lake State Recreation Area to Milford, or continuing on to Kensington Metropark or even Island Lake State Recreation Area. Impress your friends with stories of "paddling to Hell and back" – make the easy afternoon trip from Bruin Lake Campground at Pinckney State Recreation Area through the chain of lakes to the Village of Hell, have lunch at the Dam Site Inn, and paddle back. All these trips offer opportunities to see mink, muskrat, deer, blue heron, hawks, and other birds.

BE PREPARED

Remember that many of the parks require the purchase of a daily or annual vehicle pass, and be prepared for seasonal weather and mosquitoes so your outing is enjoyable. Park, trail, and paddling maps and information are available at park offices or online (see box this page).

Thanks to Ron Gamble, Michael George, Ron Sell, Faye Stoner, and HRWC staff for contributing ideas for this article.

- Jo Latimore

Want to Lean More?

- **State Park and Recreation Area** information and maps: *www.michigan.gov/dnr* (click on "Recreation and Camping").
- **Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority**: *www.metroparks.com.*
- **Oakland County Parks** information and maps: *www.co.oakland.mi.us/parksrec/ppark/*.
- **Washtenaw County Parks**: Maps and information at: *www.ewashtenaw.org.* (select "Parks" from the "Quick Links" menu).
- **City of Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation**: *www.ci.ann-arbor.mi.us/index.html.* (select "Parks & Recreation" from the "Quick Links" menu).

Creek Sneak-A-Peek

Rapid stream assessment provides snapshot of conditions

HRWC's Debi Weiker (left) trains Livingston County Road Commission staff on the Stream Crossing Watershed Survey. —photo: HRWC

During this past fall and winter, HRWC staff and trained volunteers could be seen scribbling notes on clipboards and snapping photographs at locations where roads cross the Huron River and its streams. They were conducting a Stream Crossing Watershed Survey (Survey), which is a stream visual assessment procedure established by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ). The Survey serves as a proxy for more detailed and intensive survey methods, such as walking the streams, because it can be done with less investment of time and resources while still yielding information about stream health.

Goals of the Survey include:

1. increase available information on the water quality of surface waters and sources of pollutants
2. serve as a quick screening tool to identify issues of concern and the need for more in-depth investigations.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

At each site, investigators describe conditions such as stream canopy, stream corridor, adjacent land uses, and potential sources and severity of nonpoint source pollution in both upstream and downstream directions based on their observations. Investigators complete their assessments at a group of sites within a day or two in order to facilitate data comparisons among stations under similar stream flow and seasonal conditions. Where possible, investigators photograph the upstream and downstream reaches at each crossing.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The Survey's strongest trait is that it can provide rapid and easy stream assessment by an individual with only minimal training. The relatively simple Survey worksheet means that stream assessments can be used as a tool for involving citizens in learning about their watershed. Also, the Survey allows for surveying many sites over a large area because it is quick to complete. Another strength of the Survey relates to the State's desire to use this assessment procedure throughout Michigan. As a result, MDEQ is entering the Survey data into a statewide database, which will facilitate intra- and inter-watershed comparisons.

The Survey may be quick and easy to complete but several trade-offs limit its usefulness. First, sites are visited once so the investigator sees the site under one set of conditions only; this lack of temporal variation means that recorded site conditions may be skewed from conditions at the site most of the time. Second, observations from a stream crossing are limited because of bends in the stream, elevated bridges, and other visual obstructions. Third, the Survey assesses only the small segment of the waterway that is visible from the crossing. It does not capture conditions along most of the waterway. Finally, Survey responses are inconsistent because the assessment is qualitative and investigators bring their own subjectivity to the assessment.

Cass Drain, a tributary in the Lower Huron River Watershed, typifies a problem found in most drains: lack of riparian vegetation. —photo: R. Schrameck

APPLICATIONS OF SURVEY

HRWC and its partners have employed the rapid stream assessment on slightly more than half of the Huron River Watershed.

Surveys recently were conducted in the Lower Huron and part of the Upper Huron drainages as part of watershed planning for Phase II stormwater permit activities required for communities in those areas. One-third of all stream crossings were surveyed for a total of nearly 200 sites. The results will be published as part of the Watershed Management Plans for the Lower Huron and Upper Huron (Chain of Lakes) drainage areas.

in 2002, HRWC used a similar rapid assessment methodology to rapidly assess 50 sites in the Mill Creek Subwatershed. Results of that assessment identified that lack of vegetated riparian buffers was a problem at 65 percent of the sites and erosion was a problem at 25 percent of the sites. Recommendations to revegetate buffers and stabilize eroding sites are part of the Mill Creek Subwatershed Management Plan.

— Elizabeth Riggs and Chris Riggs

Bluegreen Algae Poised to Invade

Huron River study shows Barton Pond water quality is vulnerable

Researchers from the University of Michigan are discovering that Barton Pond, the main supply of drinking water for the City of Ann Arbor, is becoming vulnerable to invasion by several types of nuisance algae that foul downstream river impoundments each summer.

The new findings are emerging from a University of Michigan research study headed by Professor John Lehman that is sponsored by a grant from the U.S. EPA. The study is targeted at learning the causes for nuisance blooms of bluegreen algae in Ford and Belleville Lakes and recommending corrective measures that could reduce the problems.

SURPRISES AT BARTON POND

Barton Pond was included in the study for reference purposes as an impoundment with relatively good water quality and not plagued by bluegreens. However, the researchers unexpectedly discovered that nutrient chemical conditions associated with bluegreen blooms in Ford and Belleville lakes are occurring already in Barton Pond, and the impoundment is poised to develop nuisance conditions if its nutrient supply is increased by upstream watershed changes.

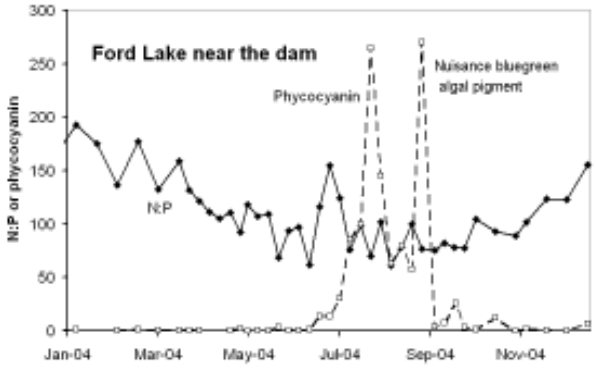
CRITICAL RATIO

A critical factor in the appearance of nuisance bluegreens is the ratio of nitrogen (N) to phosphorus (P) in lake water. Lake scientists have known for some time that bluegreens tend to become abundant in lakes only when the ratio of N to P falls to values of around 60 to 1. Ford Lake provides a perfect example. During 2004, the N to P ratio fell from nearly 200 during winter to just below 60 during the summer. Large surface blooms of bluegreens occurred when the ratio was at critically low levels (see graph at top right).

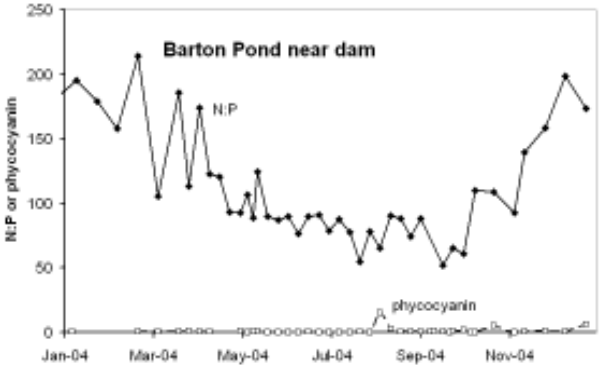
Surprisingly, Barton Pond exhibited a similar drop in N to P ratio during summer to levels of about 60 to 1 (see bottom graph). Fortunately, in spite of this drop, levels of bluegreen algae remained low in Barton Pond.

A TENUOUS BALANCE

Researchers believe that two or more factors are keeping the bluegreens from becoming more abundant in Barton Pond. One of these is the rate of removal of water from Barton Pond and the resulting flushing rate that the Pond experiences.



In Ford Lake, when the N:P ratio falls below 60:1 (solid line), nuisance bluegreen algae concentrations explode (dashed line).



In Barton Pond, similar drops in the N:P ratio cause only a slight rise in bluegreen algae concentrations.

—graphs: J. Lehman

The other factor is the fact that total nutrient inputs to the Pond are relatively low due to the proportions of undeveloped land upstream. However, increased phosphorus pollution may be expected in Barton Pond as the watershed experiences additional development. This increased phosphorus loading will decrease further the N:P ratio, which could quickly and dramaticaly change the algal community in Barton Pond.

For additional information about this study and its progress, visit its website at www.umich.edu/~hrstudy.

- **Donna Lehman**

Don't Guess. Soil Test!

With warm weather just around the corner, many of us have gardening and lawn care in mind. Before you head to the store to purchase fertilizers and other lawn care products, be sure to have your soil tested. This simple procedure can tell you just what you need — and don't need — to ensure healthy, lush gardens and lawns.

Carefully controlling the use of fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides also reduces the likelihood of environmental damage caused when these products are washed into local waterways via drainage systems.

For a small fee, your local MSU Extension office can help you test your soil. Samples are processed through the lab at MSU and Extension Agents interpret the results. In late March through early April, soil testing is even easier! Select local retailers partner with MSU Extension to accept soil tests on site. For a list of participating retailers and promotion dates, call your county MSU Extension office or visit the website at www.msue.msu.edu.

Livingston County	(517) 546-3950
Monroe County	(734) 240-3170
Oakland County	(248) 858-0902
Washtenaw County	(734) 997-1678
Wayne County	(313) 833-3417

Know Your Board Representative

Fred Hanert, Green OakTownship

HRWC Board Representative for Green Oak Township, Fred Hanert. —photo: HRWC

There must be something in the air (or is it the water?) in Green Oak Township that inspires a deep love of the Huron River. Our past and current Board Representatives from Green Oak are committed and passionate stewards of the watershed. We had Herb Munzel and now we have Fred Hanert , a long-time active HRWC member and volunteer, as the township's Board Representative.

Fred has been spending time on his family's property along the river since he was a baby. Some of his greatest memories are of the times he spent fishing in his row-boat and exploring and enjoying the peaceful atmosphere on or beside the Huron. He and his wife, Sandy, now live on a parcel along the river called Arrowhead Springs, named for the many arrowheads found there and the natural springs which flow from the area into the river.

Fred was a high school counselor for Livonia Public Schools and is now a part-time counselor for Schoolcraft College. He has been active in promoting wise growth with the goal of protecting natural areas. He also is a member of the Green Oak Township Historical Society, which is trying to preserve the old township hall for use by local residents. He loves to fish, hike, hunt, cross-country ski, and mountain-bike. He says, "I love the outdoors," and it shows.

If you have questions, comments or would like to become involved with the Huron River Watershed Council and its activities, call Fred at (810) 231-3254 or the HRWC office at (734) 769-5123.

-Eunice Burns

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What's Going On?

New projects abound

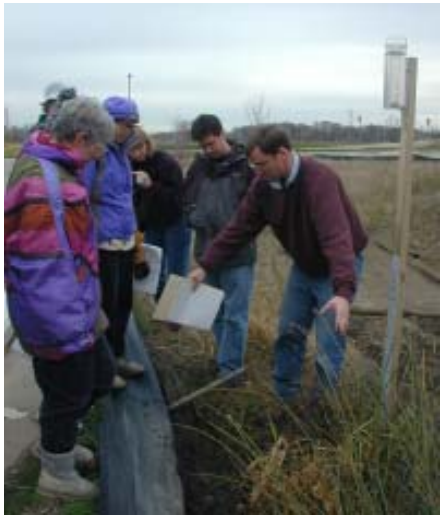
HRWC has new and exciting projects starting up or in the early stages.

- **Improving Stormwater Basins**: Construction is planned this summer for two projects focused on implementing best management practices (BMPs) to reduce phosphorus loads in the Kent Lake watershed. The goal of the projects is to demonstrate the effectiveness of innovative retrofits in reducing phosphorus loading from developed areas. One project will convert an existing basin at a Middle School into a stormwater wetland, and another project will convert the existing basin at a subdivision into a wet detention basin, designed for water quality improvement. HRWC staff will be monitoring before and after construction to measure effectiveness. If you want to help, call Chris Riggs. These projects are part of the overall strategy to improve water quality (with an emphasis on phosphorus reduction) in Kent Lake, presented in the Kent Lake Subwatershed Management Plan to meet the water quality goals of the approved phosphorusTMDL for Kent Lake.

- **Living on the Edge**: To assist communities in reducing soil erosion and nutrient loading from landscaping practices, we are offering the Huron River Watershed Council's "Living on the Edge" workshop series at five locations throughout the watershed this Spring. Goals of the workshops are to increase awareness, sense of responsibility, and intention to implement responsible shoreline management techniques. The workshops include presentations, site visits, and a guidebook. The workshop will educate riparian and lakeshore homeowners about their impact on the watershed and how they can reduce negative impacts, as well as practical knowledge of ecology and options for implementing responsible shoreline management techniques on their property. Workshops will be at Ford/ Belleville Lakes, Cavanaugh Lake, and one each in the Brighton Lake, Kent Lake, and Livingston County Chain of Lakes subwatersheds. Call Jo Latimore for details.

- **Progress on Kent and Brighton Lakes Plans**: HRWC is updating both the Kent Lake and Brighton Lake Plans to meet new EPA watershed management planning guidelines. As part of this effort we are reviewing development codes and ordinances (see Fall 2004 article) of the municipalities in the watersheds to gauge their potential impact on watershed health. Staff then kick into gear with a report including recommendations for each community, followed up with meetings and technical assistance to staff and local elected officials for implementation. HRWC also is speaking and advocating to lake associations, planning commissions and board meetings, and business and interest groups on best management practices to reduce phosphorus.

- And the **Mill Creek Blitz**: HRWC recently started a two-year effort in Mill Creek. We will implement and coordinate numerous watershed restoration and protection projects focused in Mill Creek and develop a monitoring protocol to gauge the effectiveness of these efforts. Typically, watershed improvement efforts are focused on one, or possibly two, activities at a time. This project will provide a unique case study of a watershed where numerous restoration and protection activities are happening simultaneously. The goal of a "blitz" is to saturate the Mill Creek Subwatershed with numerous activities and try to gauge the effectiveness of this concentrated effort through monitoring. Land protection efforts, streambank and wetland restoration activities, agricultural BMP implementation, and dam removal efforts, combined with soil erosion and sedimentation reduction efforts and a focused and coordinated watershed awareness campaign will be the most effective at addressing the impairments that were identified in the recently completed Mill Creek Watershed Management Plan. The monitoring components will measure the effectiveness of these innovative methods.



HRWC staff discuss stormwater BMPs with Harry Sheehan (right), Washtenaw Co. Drain Office, at Ann Arbor's Olson Park. —photo: HRWC

Whew! We'll be busy and we hope you'll help us monitor, spread the word, alert us to news in your community, and participate and contribute to these efforts.

- Laura Rubin

Business Members

Thanks to these businesses for joining or renewing their membership

Benefactor
Pfizer, Inc.
Visteon

Friend
Arbor Springs Water Company, Inc.
FMU Properties
Limno Tech, Inc.

Supporter
Atwell-Hicks
First Martin Corporation
Savitski Design
Washtenaw Engineering

Member
Ann Arbor Area Trout Unlimited
Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc.
Flint Ink
Howard Cooper, Inc
Insite Design Studio, Inc

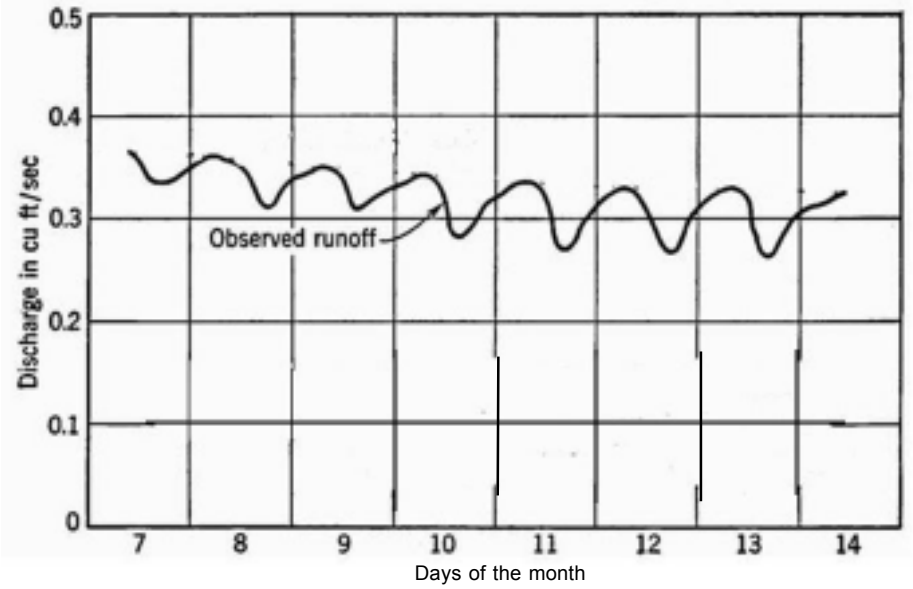
Trees and the River

Got room for a new tree?

When I was a child I loved the apple tree outside my bedroom window. In addition to melodious bird songs and relief from the heat, it provided a unique opportunity for climbing and then resting, viewing the world from a marvelous height.

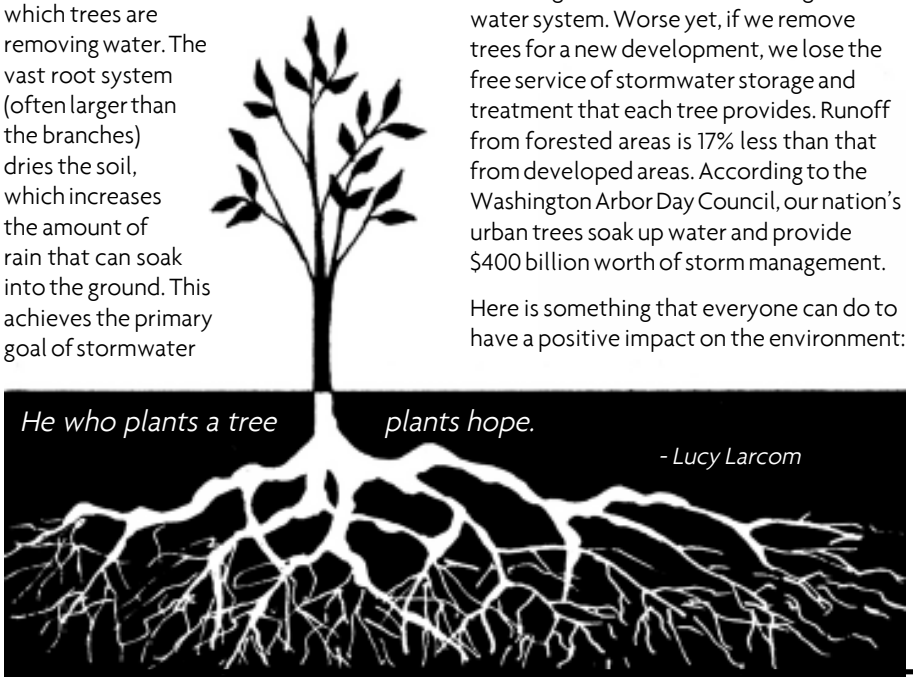
My favorite activity at Girl Scout camp was canoeing and camping on the river. As an adult I chose a profession to help people to protect our river when I realized that we could lose our clean fresh water if we did not actively protect it.

Recently I learned about the important role that trees play in helping to protect our water and how we can help the river by planting trees. Trees have an amazing capacity to move water. When trees grow, they make food by capturing energy from the sun, taking carbon dioxide from the air and using water taken from the ground by their roots. The powerful force that carries water to the top of tall trees comes primarily from transpiration. [Transpiration is the process in which water is absorbed by the roots, moves up through the plant, passes through pores (stomata) in leaves, and then evaporates into the atmosphere as water vapor.] When water evaporates from the leaves, it creates sufficient force to draw additional water up through the conduction tubes (xylem) in the tree trunk. An average sized maple tree moves over 50 gallons of water *per hour* in the summer.



This graph is the record of the continuous stream level in the Coweeta Experimental Forest near Ashville, N.C. The day-night stream level fluctuates noticeably, demonstrating a phenomenon known as "hydraulic bounce." The bounce occurs because trees stop transpiring at night and , therefore, stop drawing water from the ground, freeing it to flow into the creek.

Think of the ground as a sponge from which trees are removing water. The vast root system (often larger than the branches) dries the soil, which increases the amount of rain that can soak into the ground. This achieves the primary goal of stormwater management, which is to help the rain to infiltrate. When rain infiltrates into the soil, it reduces the volume of water that runs off.



Runoff overloads our streams and harms fish and other animals that depend on fresh water. When we construct houses and roads, we cover the soil with impervious surfaces that prevent water from returning to the earth and to the groundwater system. Worse yet, if we remove trees for a new development, we lose the free service of stormwater storage and treatment that each tree provides. Runoff from forested areas is 17% less than that from developed areas. According to the Washington Arbor Day Council, our nation's urban trees soak up water and provide $400 billion worth of storm management.

Here is something that everyone can do to have a positive impact on the environment: plant and nurture trees. This is especially important in an area that lacks trees, such as housing developments built on previously farmed land, or neighborhoods that are losing ash trees. HRWC is working with the Millers Creek Action Team (MCAT) to encourage people to plant trees on their land in the Millers Creek Subwatershed. Six nurseries are offering discounts on young trees to Millers Creek residents. When landowners buy a tree, they also receive a coupon for a free ice cream cone. This project is one that we would like to copy in other subwatersheds of the Huron River. Let us know if you would like to help.

So, plant a tree! On a personal level, your tree will help to moderate summer temperatures, (a large tree cools the air as much as would six room-sized air conditioners) and increase the value of your property (6 to 15% according to many real estate studies). Beyond the boundaries of your property, trees help regulate river water levels and provide food and shelter for a variety of birds and other animals.

Imagine climbing a tree where you live and seeing a variety of trees in all directions, enriching the world!

-Joan Martin

The State of the Huron 2005

Join us for this much-anticipated event

The State of the Huron Conference is right around the corner—it's Friday, May 6, 2005. In order to entice you to mark it on your calendar we want to share with you the great offerings.

We will have great speakers and the popular breakout sessions. This year sessions will include:

Vital Statistics (ABCs): This session will include speakers on current ecological status, geology, and an overview of wetlands in the watershed.

Laws that Affect Watersheds: We will present an overview of relevant national, state, and local regulations.

Watershed Management Planning: This session will explore the Dos and Don'ts of WMP with groups at various stages of development and implementation.

How to Make Things Happen: Six speakers will talk about the *process* for how to bring about change in communities, businesses, and institutions. Speakers include citizens, local government officials, businesses, educators, and politicians.

Natural Areas: This session will look at the natural history and unique natural features, trails and greenway development, and recreation on the Huron. A map that illustrates where all of these spots are located will be developed.

Innovative Tools and Technologies for a Better Watershed: Learn about structural, vegetative, and managerial best management practices in place in the watershed.

Ahhh, summer! The ice cream boat will greet boaters on Strawberry Lake again this year. We wonder: Do they only offer strawberry?
—photo: F. Cowles

We will wrap up the day with a meet the speaker reception and HRWC 40th Anniversary Celebration and Raffle.

Registration materials will be sent out in late March or visit our website at www.hrwc.org for more details. We hope to see you there.

The Huron River Watershed Council

The Huron River Watershed Council is a coalition of Huron Valley individuals, businesses and local governments established in 1965 under Michigan's Local River Management Act to inspire attitudes, behaviors, and economies that protect, rehabilitate, and sustain the Huron River system. The Watershed Council is a non-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code.

If you enjoy this newsletter, please consider membership. Services of the Council include hands-on citizen education, technical assistance in policy development and direct river protection projects. You will find a membership form below. All contributions are tax deductible.

Yes, I want to help the Huron River Watershed Council protect and restore the Huron River.
Here are my 2005 member dues, mailed to: Huron River Watershed Council
1100 N. Main St.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

☐ $5,000 Mink	☐ $500 Blue Heron	☐ $50 Friend
☐ $2,500 Smallmouth Bass	☐ $250 Mayfly	☐ $30 Supporting
☐ $1,000 Green Heron	☐ $100 Steward	☐ $___ Other

Name _____

Address _____ City, State _____ Zip _____

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www.hrwc.org

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Please examine your mailing label for your HRWC membership expiration date and use that as a reminder to renew. If there is no date, then you may not be a current member of the Watershed Council. Please consider HRWC membership. We need your support. Thanks.

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

a member of Earth Share

Thanks to Our Supporters!

We extend Special Thanks to:

Marc Akemann and **Al Wooll** for their excellent photography.

Harry Sheehan, Washtenaw County Drain Office, and **Malama Chock,** U-M, for volunteering their time to lead the HRWC staff on tours of BMPs.

Noemi Barabas, Michael Benham, Carole Dubritsky, Gary Hochgraf, Don Rottiers, and **Carrie Turner** for their expert assistance in training our new flow-measuring team.

Sharon and Dave Brooks, Lee Burton, Margaret Doub, Michele Eickholt, Lee Green, Zoltan Jung , David Katz, Sue Klaas, Pete Klaas, Graham E. Lewis, Mac McCauley , Elizabeth Sensoli, Candace, Shelly, John Stahly, Molly Wade, Debi Weiker, and **Dave Wilson** for measuring flow in Fleming and Mill creeks with care and precision.

Dave Brooks for printing photos and handling numerous problems.

Sue Lillie for phoning everyone outside of Ann Arbor to tell them the Stonefly Search was cancelled.

A total of **170 intrepid people** who were poised to search for Stoneflies. (However, the biggest snowstorm of the winter required cancelling the event.)

Terry Reid, Kathryn Bowring, Shirley and **Don Axon** who completed rapid stream assessments in the Lower Huron River Watershed.

A Newly Woven Web

A new website for an HRWC project, the Lower Huron River Watershed Management Planning, was launched in mid-February.

Visit **www.lowerhuronriver.net** to learn about the downriver portion of the watershed, who's involved in the planning effort, an d see photos of the Lower Huron. The Lower Huron River Watershed Inter-Municipality Committee will post its meeting announcements, notes and public meeting notices on the site, as well.

Whether you're a resident of the Lower Huron or just want to know more about your downriver neighbors, we hope that you'll check out the site.