



# Huron River Report

The Newsletter of the Huron River Watershed Council

Summer 2006

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## Birds of the Huron

*Southern migration on the horizon*

In early April, as I write this, those of us who watch birds are on the edges of our seats. This is the time of year that most of the early ducks and “blackbirds” (Red-winged and Rusty Blackbirds, and Grackles, for examples) have finished their big northward migration to (or past) southern Michigan.



Red-breasted Merganser

—photo: William Fissell

Shorebirds and early songbirds are just beginning to show up. The month of May will bring the jewels of the bird world, the warblers, as well as more flycatchers and sparrows, and some tanagers and cuckoos. The birdsong will fill every morning and evening until late summer. The months of

May through July will give us a chance to observe the nesting behavior of the birds that choose the Huron River watershed as a breeding place. So we birdwatchers can hardly wait to enjoy more of spring migration and the upcoming breeding season.

### HABITAT

Areas along the Huron River and its creeks provide

splendid stopover habitat for all of these birds as they migrate through our area. For a long time the focus of bird conservation has been breeding habitat, but stopover habitat has been shown to be as critical in a migrant bird’s life as the site where it reproduces. It also has similar requirements: the habitat must provide the bird with food and protection from predators. Like a gas station and a motel for us humans, stopover habitat for birds is a refueling and resting spot before the next leg of the journey. Some birds will spend a few days, while others will move on quickly. Many birds migrate at night, so when dawn comes they need to stop, rest and eat. In an urban area, these migrants will look to the biggest patch of appropriate habitat that won’t require an additional large expenditure of

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## Huron “Banks” on New Buffer Initiative

*New project focuses on protecting riparian areas*

### THE IMPORTANCE OF BUFFERS TO STREAM HEALTH

If the Huron River and its tributaries could talk, one of the first things they might say to us is “Hey, can we get a little privacy here, please?” One of life’s bare necessities is clothing and shelter to keep us safe, healthy, and protected from the elements. For a stream or river, the vegetated zones along its banks, known as riparian buffers, are the equivalent of the walls of our houses or the clothes on our backs. Riparian buffers consist of plants, shrubs, or trees that provide a natural transition from terrestrial to aquatic environments. These areas maintain a stream’s physical, biological, and chemical integrity by protecting

the aquatic ecosystem against upland development pressures. Maintaining natural and healthy buffer areas is especially important for sensitive areas of riparian corridors, such as floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes.

Yet, much of the Huron’s stream and river corridors have been stripped of natural vegetation, and natural shorelines and stream banks have been replaced with turfgrass, seawalls, concrete rubble, boulders, or other artificial barriers that sever the critical connection between land and water. The result is bank erosion and a

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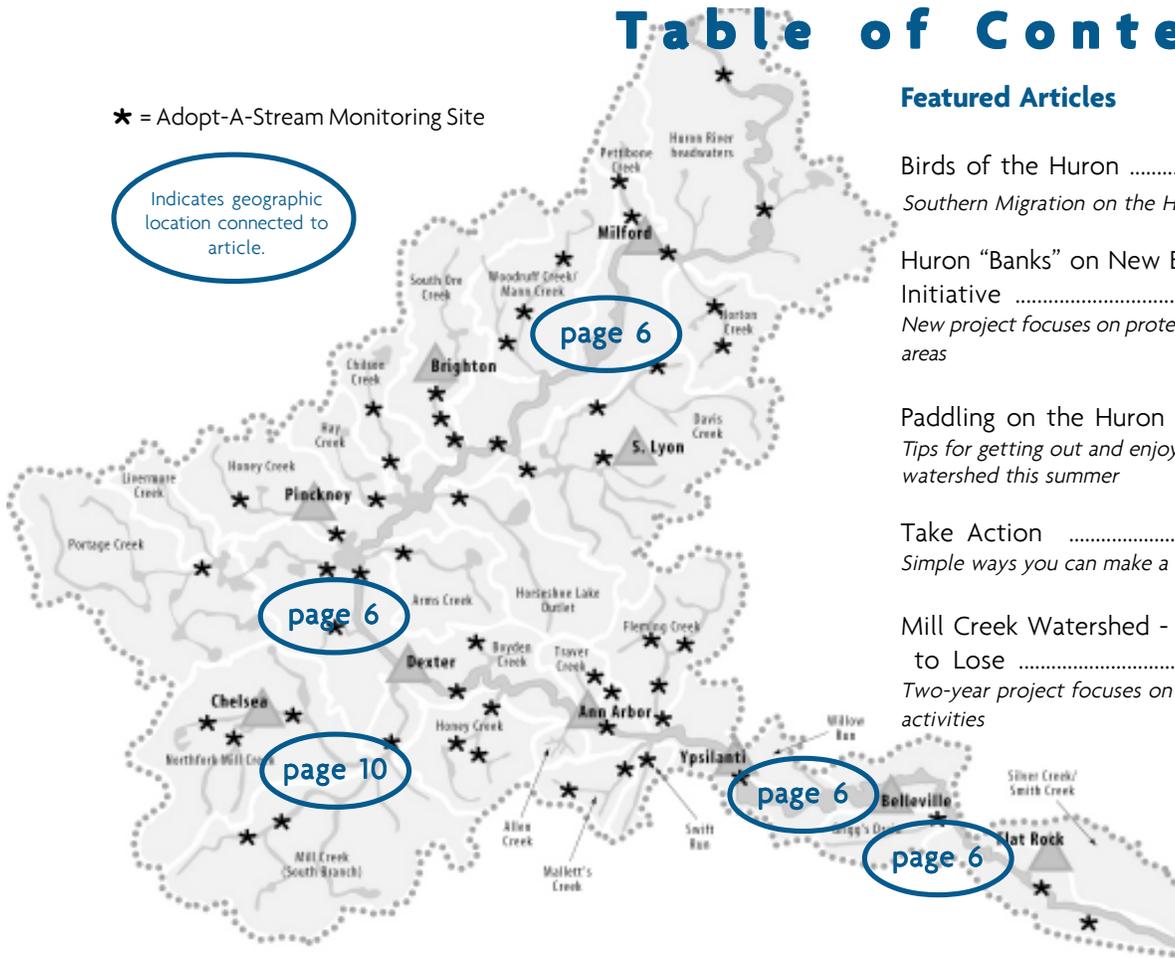


Multiple rows of trees and shrubs, as well as a native grass strip, combine in this nationally recognized demonstration buffer area on Bear Creek in Story County, Iowa. —photo: USDA NRCS

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★ = Adopt-A-Stream Monitoring Site

Indicates geographic location connected to article.



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## 2006 EVENTS

Thursday, June 22 5:30 pm  
**HRWC Executive Committee Meeting**  
 NEW Center  
 Call Laura 734-769-5123 x12

Thursday, July 20 5:30 pm  
**HRWC Board Meeting**  
 Dexter Senior Center  
 Call Laura 734-769-5123 x12

Sunday, July 23 2 - 5 pm  
**Adopt-A-Stream Measuring and Mapping Training**  
 NEW Center  
 Call Joan 734-769-5123 x11

Thursday, August 10  
**Suds On the River**  
 For more information, call Ellen Offen at 734-769-5123 x19. See page 4 for details.

Sunday, August 27 Noon – 5 pm  
**Adopt-A-Stream Leadership Training**  
 NEW Center  
 Call Joan 734-769-5123 x11

Saturday, September 16 9 am – 5 pm  
**Adopt-A-Stream River RoundUp**  
 Entire Watershed  
 Call Joan 734-769-5123 x11 by Sept. 4

More events and updates on the web at: [www.hrwc.org](http://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

## Regular Features

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# Birds of the Huron

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energy to reach. The Huron River and areas along the Huron that have been preserved as parks or natural areas are some of the best places for migrants to stop.

## WHO'S VISITING THE HURON?

Birds begin northward migration as early as January or as soon as the lake and river ice melts. If the Huron does freeze during the winter, the deepest and fastest flowing areas are the first to be ice-free, so this is where the earliest migrant ducks can be found. Consequently it is Ford Lake and North Bay Park as well as upriver from Barton Pond that provide migratory rest stops with fish and mollusks for early waterfowl like Common Goldeneye and Hooded, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers. The water offers protection from predators as well, and many Canada Geese and an occasional Snow Goose, which feed on grains and grasses during the day, will return to the river for the night. Still, during the day, there are always plenty of Canada Geese on the river. (Look closely at all these geese and you may see some with an orange collar with numbers. These orange-collared geese are headed back up to the James Bay area in Ontario to breed. Birdwatchers have helped scientists study their migratory pathways by reporting the numbers on their collars.)

The end of March through April brings Horned Grebes, cute, stiff-tailed Ruddy Ducks, and silent Common Loons, though an occasional eerie yodel is heard. The loons need lots of water for take-off and long, straight, deeper areas along the Huron like the Barton and Gallup impoundments are where you are likely to see one or two dressed in their magnificent black and white plumage.

Just before the loons return, but after the blackbirds, Eastern Phoebes will begin to show up, most often near bridges along the creeks that feed the Huron. This species of flycatcher returns well before others that live



*American Redstart* —photo: William Fissell

in the watershed and it likes to nest under bridges over the Huron and its tributaries. Phoebes are easily recognized because of their habit of bobbing their tails while perched for fly-catching. And of course, they often introduce themselves with a “feee-beee!” Rivers and creeks provide an abundance of the flying insects on which this bird feeds. Soon after Phoebes come the Tree Swallows, and the first migrant Tree Swallows are definitely a river spectacle! These birds, too, feed on insects and



*Common Loon* —photo: William Fissell

know that the best place to find them in spring is over the water. Again, the area around Barton Pond is a good place to be on the lookout for these white-bellied, blue-green-backed aeronauts. In early April one can see hundreds of them flying low over the river in hopes of finding enough food to sustain them during the cool nights of early spring.

## WHERE ARE THE WARBLERS?

By the end of April, the earliest warblers have returned, led by the appropriately named Yellow-rumped Warbler, a few of which will stay all winter long in the watershed. Birdwatchers look for warblers in many areas in Michigan, but one of the best-known places in Michigan to find a wide variety of them is Nichols Arboretum. The trees and shrubs of the Arb offer a large oasis of greenery in an otherwise urban environment. It isn't clear exactly why the Arb is preferred over other riparian woods or natural areas, but one thing we do know is that the birdwatchers certainly flock to the Arb to search for the migrant birds. (Perhaps this is why so many are found!)

When American Redstarts and Tennessee Warblers have arrived, the beginning of the end of spring migration is upon us and many bird observers will begin to focus on looking for breeding behavior in birds. The insect-rich environment along the Huron and its tributaries provide many of the soft-bodied insects that bird parents feed to their young. But as early as late July, migration to the south will start again.

— **Dea Armstrong**

*Dea Armstrong is the City of Ann Arbor's Ornithologist, the Washtenaw County Coordinator for the Michigan Breeding Bird Atlas-2, and frequent guide of the Washtenaw Audubon Society's birding field trips.*

# Huron “Banks” on New Buffer Initiative

continued from cover

straight path for pollutants to flow directly into our waterways. In fact, removing buffer vegetation fundamentally changes the way a stream flows. Riparian buffers act as a sponge, soaking up runoff from rainstorms and slowly releasing it to the stream. Removing or altering riparian buffers allows runoff to rush quickly and directly into streams during rainstorms, which can dramatically harm a stream’s ecological and physical health.

## REPARATIONS

In an effort to prevent further degradation of these natural buffer zones, HRWC is beginning a watershed-wide buffer education and policy initiative. Funded through a federal Clean Water Act grant administered by MDEQ, this two-year project has two primary goals. The first goal will focus on working with watershed communities to adopt and implement riparian buffer ordinances, which establish criteria for the preservation and protection of lands adjacent to the Huron River and its tributaries. The second goal will have two components that target riparian and lakeshore landowners: 1) educate them on the importance of vegetated buffers in reducing the degradation of local waterways; and 2) engage them in stewardship activities, including identifying and developing demonstration sites that illustrate good riparian buffer management practices.

## A MODEL ORDINANCE

With the help of an advisory committee comprised of county and local government officials and planning consultants, HRWC first will develop a model riparian buffer ordinance, which we will share with local government partners interested in pursuing passage of a buffer ordinance. HRWC then will provide technical assistance and support these partner communities in drafting and passing buffer ordinance

- regulates the allowable type and location of development within or near floodplains; and
- designates allowable uses in the buffer zones, such as recreational use or access, installation of stormwater control measures, or tree removal.

## EDUCATING RIPARIAN LANDOWNERS

Within these partner communities, HRWC will launch a stewardship program on the value of riparian vegetative buffers for local water quality and watershed protection. We will develop and distribute educational materials on riparian buffers to residents. Additionally, HRWC is seeking landowners who have recently installed riparian buffers, or may be interested in enhancing or installing a model buffer demonstration site on their property. These demonstration sites will be used to illustrate good riparian buffer management techniques through a series of open houses sponsored by HRWC.

For more information on the Buffer Initiative, or to

learn how you or your community can become involved, contact Elizabeth Riggs at 734-769-5123 x15, or at [eriggs@hrwc.org](mailto:eriggs@hrwc.org).

— Chris Riggs



*Streams without buffers, such as this stretch of Letts Creek in Vet's Park in Chelsea, run higher risks of streambank erosion, pollution, and sedimentation, and offer no wildlife habitat. —photo: HRWC*

language based on the model. The model ordinance will draw on the dozens of existing buffer ordinances currently enforced by many communities, all of which share a few basic features. The ordinance:

- stipulates the buffer width (depending on existing natural features in the corridor);

## SUDS ON THE RIVER

There is only one thing better than a cold beer on a hot day, and that’s a cold beer brewed locally in the Huron River Watershed, enjoyed at a beautiful setting on the Huron at the home of George Miller and Deborah Webster.

**Join us August 10 for Suds on the River!** Members should look for the invitations in the mailbox soon. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Ellen Offen at 734-769-5123 x19 or [eoffen@hrwc.org](mailto:eoffen@hrwc.org).



# Laura's "Stream" of Consciousness

An update on HRWC projects and activities

## HRWC TACKLES THE "BIG PICTURE"

Many people incorrectly believe that the biggest threat to the Huron River watershed is the pollution coming from a handful of factory pipes, when in fact, the current patterns of land development are actually the most pressing threat. HRWC recently has taken on the challenge of spreading the message that, as a community, we must change the patterns of development if the watershed is to be protected.

Currently, in the watershed and across the country, most new development is cropping up haphazardly, leapfrogging out from existing urban areas and replacing large swaths of farmland and natural areas with buildings, roads, and parking lots. But a healthy watershed needs these undeveloped areas, with their natural vegetation, permeable soils, and intact habitat. So, in order to protect our watershed while its human population is growing, we advocate for:

- Concentrating new development in areas where the infrastructure, such as water and sewer, already exists;
- Protecting the surrounding open spaces and farmland; and
- Ideally linking these two concepts.

So, what would this watershed-friendly development look like? Envision a watershed where people live and work in walkable, mixed-use, vibrant communities, where they don't need to drive for every errand, where abundant natural areas exist within and outside the communities where



*We need to promote this....*

—photo: City of Ann Arbor

the people can recreate and enjoy the outdoors, where large tracts of farmland and open space exist around these communities, so that they can continue to provide

*In short, in order to protect the watershed, we need to pursue higher-density development in tandem with permanent preservation of open space and farmland.*

the ecological services that keep the watershed healthy. For this to happen, development must be compact (greater density), and open space and farmland must be preserved permanently.

## NEW HRWC PROGRAM TO STUDY TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

You will be hearing this land use message from us frequently. To help us spread the message we are launching several new programs and efforts that work toward these goals. One project we started this spring, with the help of the Kellogg Foundation's People and Land Grant, is a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) case study.

TDR programs allow landowners to transfer the right to develop one parcel of land to a different parcel of land. In the context of watershed and natural area protection, TDR is used to shift development from natural area or agricultural areas to designated growth zones closer to municipal services. The parcel of land where the rights originate is called the "sending" parcel. When the rights are transferred from a sending parcel, the land is restricted by a permanent conservation easement. The parcel of land to which the rights are transferred is called the "receiving" parcel.

Buying these rights generally allows the owner to build at a higher density than ordinarily permitted by the base zoning (*American Farmland Trust Fact Sheet, January 2001*).

Our project will show how a TDR program works. HRWC will conduct case studies on recent land developments in the Huron River Watershed. HRWC will examine the fiscal, environmental, and social impacts of these developments, and then compare these to impacts that would have resulted under a TDR program.

The major goal of the project is to provide an educational tool that will help communities, developers, and residents understand the benefits of, and "how-to" details about, implementing TDR. If you know of developments, proposed or recently proposed, that might be good case studies for a TDR program, please contact Elizabeth Riggs at 734-769-5123 x15.

We need your help to spread our message of changing the current patterns of development to protect the Huron River watershed. Please get involved in your local



*... if we want to preserve this.* —photo: MNFI

decision-making process, attend hearings on proposed ordinances and new developments, and advocate for compact developments in areas with existing services like utilities, roads, and schools and for the preservation of natural areas and farmland. Visit our website, [www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org), to learn more and find out what you can do to help us combat the biggest threat to the Huron.

— Laura Rubin

# Paddling on the Huron

*Tips for getting out and enjoying your watershed this summer*

Get out on the Huron River and its creeks this summer on a canoe, kayak, or paddle boat. In any season the Huron astounds with its beauty and abundant wildlife. From the sightings of deer in the fall, to the trillium and songbirds in the spring, to its cooling shade on a summer's day, the Huron River brings a new surprise and delight around each bend.



If you don't own a boat, there are plenty of opportunities to rent and get some guidance. Below is a list of canoe, kayak, and paddleboat rentals that you can use to explore the Huron.

## **Al Heavner Canoe and Wildlife Adventures**

2775 Garden Road, Milford  
248-685-2379

heavnercanoe.com

*Island Lake and PROUD LAKE LOCATIONS; Overnight camping available at two sites on the river. Transportation provided.*

## **Argo Livery**

1055 Longshore Drive, Ann Arbor  
734-668-7411

www.ci.ann-arbor.mi.us

*Trips downstream to Gallup, upstream to Hudson Mills, Dexter-Huron, and Delhi Metroparks. Transportation provided.*

## **Gallup Canoe Livery**

3000 Fuller Road, Ann Arbor  
734-662-9319

*Rent canoes, paddle boats, and rowboats.*

## **Kensington MetroPark**

2240 W. Buno Road, Milford  
248- 685-1561 & 800-477-3178

www.metroparks.com/parks/  
pk\_kensington.php

*Paddleboats and rowboats available at Boat Rental Building near Maple Beach.*

## **Michigan Paddle Sport**

9260 McGregor Road, Dexter Township  
734-426-1651

*Canoes must be returned on your own. Day-long rentals preferred.*

## **Skip's Canoe Rental**

Delhi MetroPark  
3902 East Delhi, Ann Arbor  
734-769-8686

*Hudson Mills to Delhi MetroPark. Transportation provided.*

## **Village Canoe**

1216 Garden Road, Milford  
248-685-9207

*Transport provided upstream into Proud Lake; canoes or kayaks can paddle back. Start in Milford Central Park or Kensington. Call or give a time for pickup.*



*Ron Sell helps others experience the joy of paddling at Delhi MetroPark. —photo: HRWC*

## **Two Trips Worth Taking**

Ron Sell, a well-respected authority on paddling the Huron, suggests that an interesting stretch of the River to paddle is from Gallup Park in Ann Arbor to Peninsula Park in Ypsilanti. On this trip you will see beautiful natural areas in an urban location and pass some historic landmarks. Another suggestion from Ron is a trip from Island Lake Park State Park to Huron Meadows MetroPark. This trip passes through part of the Natural River section and is one of the most scenic areas in southeast Michigan. The narrow, twisty nature of the River gives you the "up north" feeling without making the long and expensive car trip.



*—photo: Dan Swallow*

# Know Your Board Representative

*Dan Swallow, Charter Township of Van Buren*

One of our newest board members is Dan Swallow, representing the Charter Township of Van Buren. Growing up in Alpena, Dan spent his summers living, playing, and working on Lake Huron. He worked at a Marina as a deck hand and advanced to an assistant manager.

Dan attended Miami University where he earned a BA in Zoology, and Central Michigan University where his graduate studies focused on freshwater ecology. Before he came to the Township, Dan was a field inspector ensuring environmental

permit compliance on major construction projects in Ohio. He also worked as an environmental planner for the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments where his major responsibility was developing and implementing the areawide water quality management plan for northwest Ohio. He also provided staff support for local watershed organizations.

Dan is now Van Buren's Environmental Director with responsibilities for storm water compliance, solid waste management, lakeshore management, site plan review and

GIS program management. Along the way to the Township, he met and married Michelle. They have two children.

If you have any questions, suggestions or comments or, if you would like to become more involved with watershed issues, call Dan at 734-699-8913 or call the Huron River Watershed Council at 734-769-5123.

**— Eunice Burns**

# Take Action

*Simple ways you can make a difference*

## De-Clutter and Donate

Have you been too busy to start your spring cleaning? Are you beginning to become frustrated with the clutter around your house?

Now you can help HRWC and HRWC can help you—at least with a little piece of the clutter! Donate your extra, old, or unwanted books, CDs, and DVDs to HRWC, and Books by Chance will sell them over the internet and donate the proceeds to HRWC. Your clutter is our fundraiser.

Bring your and your friends' and neighbors' books, CDs, and DVDs to the HRWC offices at 1100 North Main Street, Ann Arbor, between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

If you can't bring your materials into our office, contact Ellen Offen at 734-769-5123 x19 or eoffen@hrwc.org, and she will make arrangements for your books, CDs and DVDs to be part of the Books by Chance donation program.

Please take a look around your house, call your friends, and neighbors, and tell everyone you know. This opportunity is a wonderful way to eliminate clutter, reuse old items, and donate to HRWC.

## Volunteer to Collect Data on Huron River Streams

The Middle Huron Initiative program of HRWC is seeking volunteers to collect data at local streams this spring and summer. This year marks the 5th year that HRWC staff and volunteers have collected water quality data at 10 sites from Dexter to Ypsilanti. Training is provided, so no prior experience is needed, but it is appreciated. Volunteers will work in pairs to measure stream discharge, collect grab samples for lab analysis, and monitor multiple water quality parameters. The information collected is presented to elected officials and decision makers from local units of government in Washtenaw and Wayne counties, MDEQ, and other academic and organization entities. Please contact Elizabeth Riggs at 734-769-5123 x15 or eriggs@hrwc.org to learn more and sign up.



*Kari helps collect data at Honey Creek*  
—photo: HRWC

## Meet Fleming Creek Stream Ecology 101



—photo M. Akemann

2-Day Workshop:  
Thursday, June 22, 6-9 pm  
and Saturday, June 24,  
9 am-1 pm  
Matthaei Botanical Gardens  
1800 N. Dixboro Rd., Ann Arbor

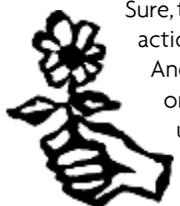
Discover the wonders of stream ecology by exploring Fleming Creek, Ann Arbor's healthiest stream, as it flows through the Gardens. Learn about the creatures that live in flowing waters and the habitat that sustains them through a slide show and live collections. Then, spend a Saturday morning at the stream, exploring Fleming Creek and searching for its inhabitants. You will learn how to identify the major orders of aquatic invertebrates and how invertebrate communities can reveal much about stream health. Prepare to get wet or muddy on Saturday; waders and collecting gear will be provided.

Instructor: Jo Latimore, Ph.D., HRWC Watershed Ecologist,

Fee: \$70 (HRWC or MBGNA Members: \$63)  
This Adult Program class is open to adults at least 16 years of age. To register, call the Matthaei Botanical Gardens at 734-647-7600.

## Ask for River-Friendly Fertilizer

A local, friendly hardware store has stacks of lawn care products right by the front door. Every sack includes phosphorus. When the proprietor was asked if he had any no-phosphorus lawn food, he shook his head sadly and said "I've carried it for several years, but no one seems to want it. So I've put it back in the corner over there." He did, indeed, have a nice assortment of no-phosphorus products.



Sure, the most river-friendly action is not to fertilize at all. And a few communities have ordinances that restrict the use of phosphorus fertilizers, including Hamburg, Commerce,

and West Bloomfield townships, and more recently in the City of Ann Arbor. But in communities where the decision is up to the individual, many people still want to give their lawn a fertilizer boost. If you are in this group, you can still help the river by asking for and purchasing no-phosphorus products. If we consumers ask for the product, we will encourage our merchants to carry and promote its use.

To determine the phosphorus content on a bag of fertilizer, check the middle number in the three number series. Ideally, that number would be zero, indicating no phosphorus in the product.

If you think your lawn or garden might benefit from some phosphorus, have your soil tested first. Your county MSU Extension

office can guide you through this simple process.

Regardless of the type of fertilizer you choose, please be sure you keep the fertilizer on your lawn and out of the river system. If you have fertilizer on the sidewalk or drive, take a moment to sweep it back onto your lawn. Don't fertilize right before a heavy rainstorm. And consider a simple garden border that traps water runoff from the lawn.

For more information on lawn care, call your local MSU Extension office:

Livingston: 517-546-7820

Oakland: 248-858-0902

Washtenaw: 734-997-1819

or check the website at [www.msue.msu.edu](http://www.msue.msu.edu).

# “Crossing the Huron” Answers

Thanks to all who entered the puzzle contest...

## Congratulations to Carol Clements of Dexter

for winning the drawing  
of all the correct crossword puzzle entries.

## Thanks again to our friends at



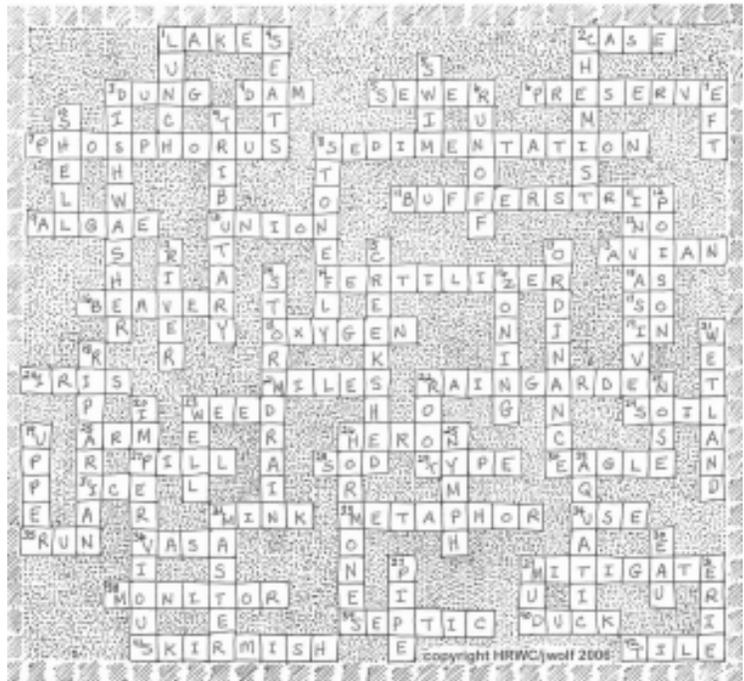
734-662-0600

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# CH2M HILL Engineering

HRWC business partner highlight

## CH2M HILL WATER RESOURCES EXPERIENCE

Founded In 1946, HRWC business partner CH2M HILL is a global firm that provides the technology and expertise required to plan, design, build, and operate complex water resource management, infrastructure, and environmental projects. CH2M HILL's work spans the full application of water resource engineering.

## PROJECT EXPERIENCE IN MICHIGAN

### Ann Arbor Water Master Plan

CH2M HILL is working with the City of Ann Arbor on its master plan for water treatment facilities and water resources. As a significant part of this project, the firm evaluated ways to protect water quality in the Huron River Watershed and in local groundwater aquifers. The Huron River provides the majority of the city's drinking

water supply; protecting this valuable water resource from contamination is one of the city's most important goals and biggest challenges. Because areas surrounding the watershed are becoming rapidly developed, and because much of the watershed is outside city limits, Ann Arbor teamed with CH2M HILL, neighboring communities, and organizations to address Huron River water quality issues. HRWC has a key role on the Master Plan's Public Advisory Committee and provides a link between the City of Ann Arbor and other river stakeholders.

### University of Michigan

CH2M HILL has provided stormwater management services to the University of Michigan since the mid 1990s. These services include developing a comprehensive storm sewer system hydraulic model for the campus, identifying flooding locations, and recommending potential flood mitigation solutions. CH2M HILL has also provided stormwater best management practices and alternatives analysis for planned construction projects, including alternatives to stabilize the highly erosive soils near the Nichols Arboretum. On the North Campus,



The Huron River, Ann Arbor's main source of drinking water. —photo: CH2M Hill

CH2M HILL designed a wetland stormwater detention basin, which reduced flooding potential and improved water quality, while creating an aesthetically pleasing environment accessible via a footpath for campus pedestrians.

### Great Lakes Research

CH2M HILL's Great Lakes watershed work included investigating market-based approaches to connect flow restoration opportunities with funding sources. These approaches were tested on the upper Rouge River in Michigan and the Menomonee River in Wisconsin. CH2M HILL conducted research involving links between best management practices, land use changes, river flows, and the ecological integrity of Great Lakes watersheds. This research included evaluating restoration of the watersheds' natural flows and employing practices to control polluted run-off.

— Tony Myers, CH2M Hill Water Technology Director



CH2M Hill designed this wetland stormwater detention basin complex for the University of Michigan's North Campus. —photo: CH2M Hill

## HRWC Annual Meeting

HRWC held its Annual Meeting at Matthaei Botanical Gardens on April 27. The warm, spring evening helped to make it a well attended event by members and guests.

Highlights of the meeting included an insightful and informative presentation, "Climate Change in Michigan: a Global Perspective" by Dr. Natalia Andronova, a Research Scientist in the Earth Climate Research Group of the University of Michigan, Department of Atmospheric, Oceanic and Space Sciences. Thanks to Dr.

Andronova for sharing her research on how climate change affects the Great Lakes region.

HRWC also awarded its annual Volunteer Appreciation Awards with thanks and congratulations to the following recipients:

- John and Ruth Langs - *Laminar Flow*
- Dave Wilson - *Vanishing Species*
- Marc Akemann - *That's Using Your Headwaters*
- Michele Eickholt - *Zebra Mussel/Herb Munzel*



Michele Eickholt and Dave Wilson accept their volunteer awards. —photo: Al Woolf

# Mill Creek Watershed - No Time to Lose

*Two-year project focuses on high priority activities*

With a growing population, the bulldozer replacing the plow, and significant natural resources at risk, the time to plan for responsible growth in the Mill Creek watershed is yesterday. Local decision makers face numerous issues competing for their attention, so HRWC is raising the profile of watershed protection among the Mill Creek communities. To that end, HRWC and its community partners are implementing high priority activities from the Mill Creek Subwatershed Management Plan (2003; revised 2006) with the support of a federal grant administered by the MDEQ. The Plan is available for download at [www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org): go to Programs/Middle Huron/Mill Creek.

Among the accomplishments thus far are several outreach events to raise public awareness of Mill Creek, including a guided bus tour of Mill Creek and Mill Pond to discuss dam removal, a walking tour of Letts Creek (a Mill Creek tributary) to discuss stream restoration, a speakers' panel for riparian property owners, and traveling displays for public spaces. HRWC continues to assist a citizens' group spearheading streambank restoration on Letts Creek, and to organize residents interested in creek stewardship and advocacy.

HRWC has assisted local governments interested in updating development codes

and ordinances to be more protective of natural resources. These communities received tailored packets of recommended ordinance changes to reduce pollutant loading from nonpoint sources. Lodi Township and Village of Dexter will be adopting many of the recommendations. Scio Township has passed a wetlands ordinance. Webster Township revised its master plan incorporating some of the recommendations. Three other communities are reviewing their ordinances; HRWC hopes that they will adopt the recommendations, as well. In addition, 35 people attended a wetlands ordinance workshop hosted by the East Michigan Environmental Action Council and HRWC in Chelsea. Finally, eight of the twelve local governments in the Mill Creek watershed passed resolutions supporting the Plan and committing resources to implement activities described in it.

Ultimately, polluted runoff and soil erosion will be reduced, natural assets will be preserved, and money will be saved by following the recommendations in the Plan. Residents in the Mill Creek watershed can encourage their local officials to implement the Plan by speaking out at meetings or calling their officials. Contact Elizabeth Riggs at 734-769-5123 x15 to learn about citizen-inspired stewardship projects being planned for Mill Creek.

— Elizabeth Riggs



*Some of the Mill Creek bus "tourists" listen to engineer Jim Hegarty describe dam removal options at one of the tour stops.*  
—photo: HRWC



*Aerial photograph of Mill Creek near Dexter.*  
—photo: Beau Keyte

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## Thank you, Millers Creek Film Festival Volunteers!

So many people generously donated their time and energy to the HRWC's first ever Creek Film Festival. The hard work paid off with a wonderful screening of all the films and an awards ceremony, followed by live harp music and refreshments. With thanks and gratitude, we would like to recognize the following volunteers:

Marc Akemann	Rick Carter	Alan Green	Joan Lowenstein	Rick Ratliff
J. David Allan	Donald Chung	Jerry Hancock	Joan Martin	Liz Ritter
Shirley Axon	Marilyn & Edward Couture	Jennifer Hardacker	Rosalie Meiland	Jean Steppe
Karl Leif Bates	Scott Dierks	Magda Herkfhof	Dallas Moore	Team Telluride
Frank Beaver	Dee Drake	Martha Hill	Bob Needham	Marcia Vanfossen
Michael Benham	Neal Foster	Amy Janowicz	Ellen Offen	Molly Wade
Beverly Black	Robert Fox	Patrick Judd	Robert Ponte	Jennifer Wolf
Robert Black	Geoffrey George	Steve Kapeller	Jennifer Puntenney	Mahya Wood
Sabra Briere	Yoni Goldstein	John Lillie	Tammy Rabideau	Al Woolf

# Lights, Camera, Take Action!

Millers Creek Film Festival combines creative talents with messages about local creek

On May 5 at the Michigan Theater in downtown Ann Arbor, an overflow crowd viewed eleven films about Millers Creek. The theater was filled to capacity. Each film represented a unique and entertaining introduction to Millers Creek and its challenges. Prizes were awarded to the top films in each category:

Public Service Announcement  
"Where is Nature"

Belal El-Hibri, Lucy Carson, Amjad Tarsin and Megan Smallwood  
Awarded a Canon Elura 100 camcorder donated by Altarum, and a \$100 gift certificate from Big George's.

Adult Filmmaker Category  
"Millers Creek Documentary"

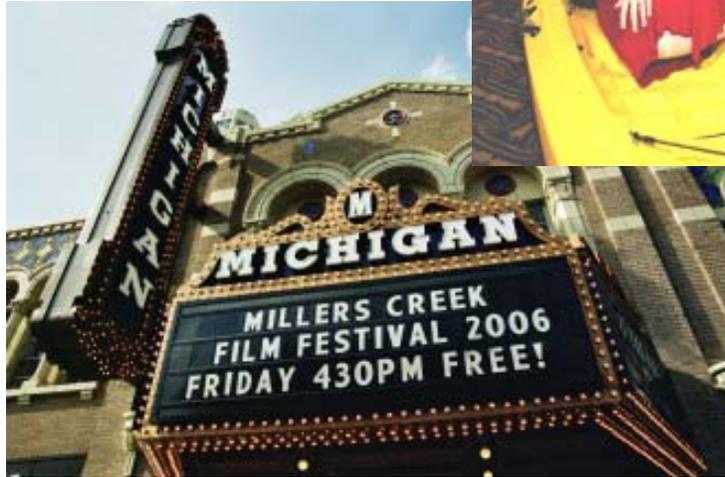
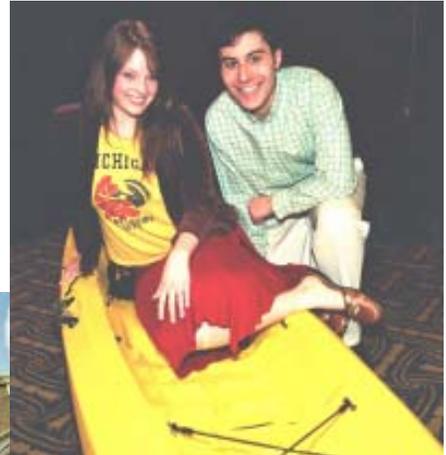
Katie Barkel, Gabrielle Mineo, Michael Rubyan and Ashley Statfeld  
Awarded a Scrambler XL Kayak donated by the Kayak Corral.

Student Filmmaker Category  
"The Story of a Creek"

Matthew Conto  
Awarded an iPod donated by WayPointz

Altarum and Pfizer also provided substantial support with staffing, printing and advisory services.

Special thanks to all the film entrants for their thoughtful entries, the volunteers and sponsors for their generous support, and to Russ Collins and the Michigan Theater for coordinating a grand event!



Above: Millers Creek hits the big screen! Upper right: The plot will thicken when Katie Barkel and Michael Rubyan contemplate how to share a new kayak among the team of four filmmakers of the winning Millers Creek Documentary. Looks like Katie has first dibbs. —photos: M. Akemann

## 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 2006 member dues, mailed to: Huron River Watershed Council  
1100 N. Main St.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

<input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 Mink	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Blue Heron	<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Friend
<input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 Smallmouth Bass	<input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Mayfly	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Supporting
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 Green Heron	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Steward	<input type="checkbox"/> \$___ Other

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

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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.*



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OF MICHIGAN

## Thanks to Our Supporters!

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

**Board Members** who thanked so many of our individual members for their support.

**Don Rottiers, Paul Cousins, Sue Klaas, Kat Ridolfi, John Minderhout, and Tui Minderhout** for the wonderful work they did organizing an exhibit for the Pfizer SAMJAM and the outstanding job they did for two days teaching eighth graders about water quality.

**Bennigans Grill and Tavern, Whole Foods Market, and Heavner Canoe and Kayak Rentals** for helping protect the Huron by encouraging our members to increase their membership.

**Mary Bajcz** for spreading the word about Adopt-A-Stream to the Oakland County Conservation Stewards group.

**Dave Brooks, Tom Chettleburgh, Donald Chung, Margaret Doub, Ramo James, and Graham Lewis** for continuing to download our transducers.

**Dave Wilson and his crew** for measuring sediment in Mill Creek twice a month and after each storm.

**Noemi Barabas, Michael Benham, Dave Brooks, Lee Burton, Margaret Doub, Michele Eickholt, Lee Green, Gary Hochgraf, Zoli Jung, David Katz, Pete & Sue Klaas, Graham Lewis, Don Rottiers, Roberta Shaw-Reeves, Candace Shelly, Debi Weiker, Molly Wade and Dave Wilson** for measuring flow when the need (and water) arose.

**John Minderhout and Dave Wilson** for presenting our activities to the Pfizer Earth Day Celebration.

**Dave Allen, Frank Beaver, and Joan Lowenstein** for judging the films entered in the Millers Creek Film Festival.

**Steve Gilzow** for loaning us his professional nets.

**Hayley Smithkort and Amit Ahuja** for their contributions to the Monitoring Gazette, and **Daniel Austin, Fernando Delgado, and Adam Hogan** for helping make an online Gazette a reality.

**Elijah Petersen and Josh Smith** for mobilizing helpers from the UM Telluride House.

**Marty Baldwin, Ethan Bright, Marilyn & Edward Couture, Dave Brooks, Roberta Carr, Dave Deluca, Chuck Froning, Magda Herkhof, Dana Infante, Matt Ladewig, Graham Lewis, Rosalie Meiland, Catherine Riseng, Theresa Scherwitz, Beth Sparks-Jackson, Nancy Stokes, Brian Swisher, Norma Wade, Al Wooll, and students from the UM Telluride House** for making our largest monitoring event (in April) smooth and successful.

The **176 people** who spent their Saturday monitoring the aquatic communities of 61 stream sites, making a success of the largest RoundUp we have ever attempted.