



# Huron River Report

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**Summer 2007**

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## Swimming the Huron

*Long-distance swimmer takes to the water to raise awareness*

“You’re what?”  
“You must be joking!”  
“Why would you?”

Liz Elling is not offended by questions and comments like these. Telling people you are swimming the length of the Huron River is bound to elicit some strong reactions. But it is the answer to that last question, “Why would you?”, that motivates Liz toward her goal: to raise awareness for our water resources by doing the improbable. In this case, it means swimming 100 miles of the Huron River over a two-week period - sometimes swimming over eight miles in just one day.

### INSPIRATION

Liz’s journey down the Huron started as a child. She grew up along the St. Marys River in the Upper Peninsula. While the big lakes were clean and clear, the St. Marys River was polluted by heavy industry and

freighter traffic. Even as a child, Liz had trouble accepting that “pollution was just a fact of life that one had to get used to and work around.” When Liz came to Ann Arbor in the 1960s to study at the University of Michigan, she was chagrined to find the Huron River was so polluted, “You didn’t dare put your feet or hands in the river.”



*Liz at Bandemer Park in Ann Arbor, overlooking the Huron River.*  
photo: HRWC

She found her inspiration at the University’s School of Natural Resources as a student of Bill Stapp. “I was fascinated by Bill’s way of teaching people about the environment by concentrating on water quality. I didn’t know how to protect the rivers until I studied with Bill Stapp. He worked to teach school children all over the world to

investigate the health of the water in their areas.” Over the years, Liz considered how she, one person, could bring attention to the issues related to water quality.

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## Going, Going, Gone Green

*Environmentally-friendly burials leave a green legacy*

While it may not be new - it is actually returning to ways of old - “green burials” are catching on. Most of us don’t think too much about our bodies *after* we die, but as with so many of the choices we make, there are environmental considerations. In the past few years, as an alternative to the traditional modern cemetery/funeral industry, people who care about minimizing their impact on the earth during their lifetimes want to know that their last act on earth doesn’t harm the earth. As a result, funeral homes are starting to offer alternatives and certification for “green burials”.

### WHAT IS GREEN BURIAL?

The green burial movement (also known as the natural burial movement) includes the trend toward cremation in order to preserve open space, or alternatively, green cemetery sites that ban embalming, cement liners and the interment of mass-

produced coffins made with metals and precious woods, opting instead for burial in simple biodegradable pine or cardboard coffins or shrouds. Some sites even ban headstones. Markers, if used at all, must

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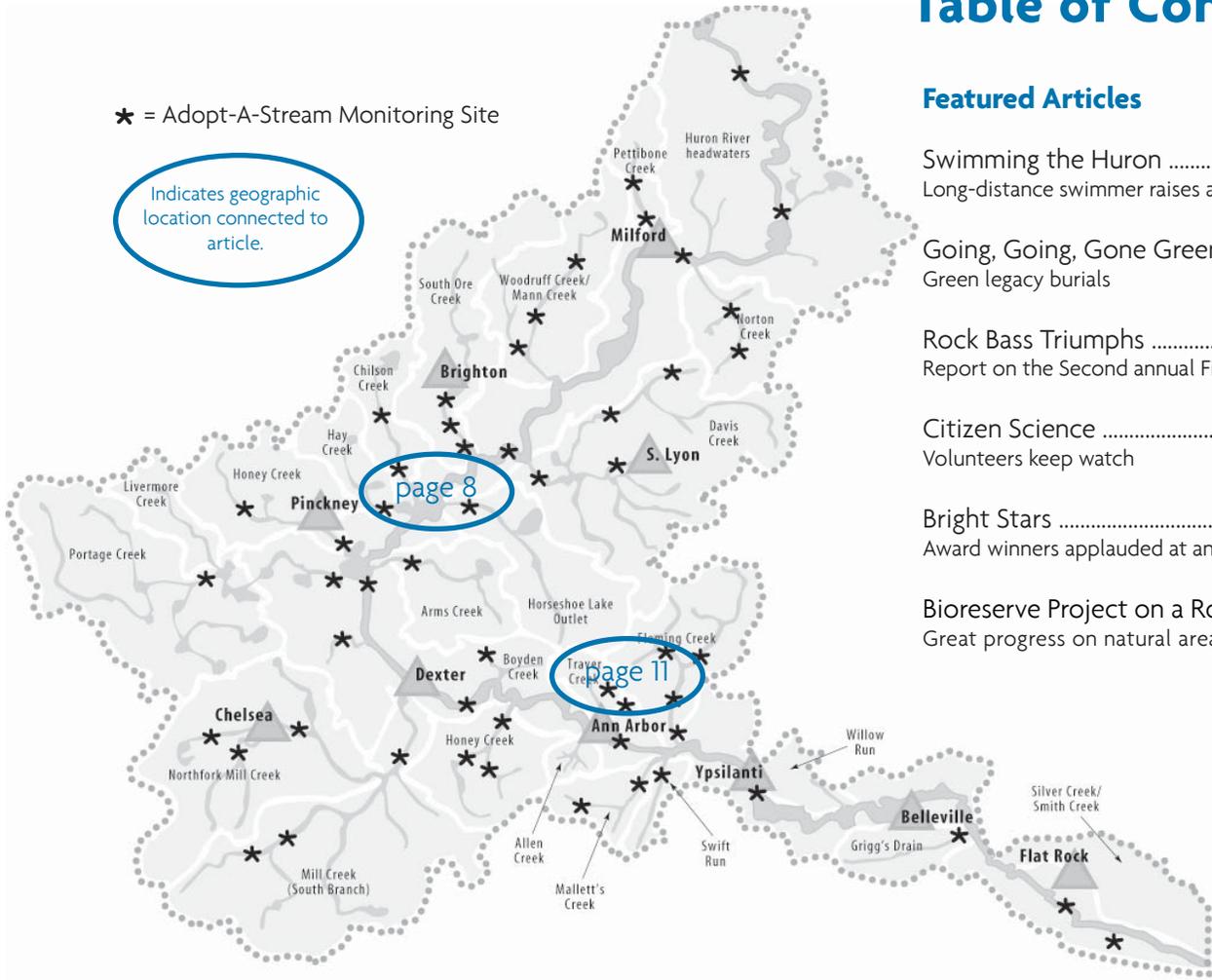
*Greensprings Natural Cemetery in New York.*

photo: Greensprings Cemetery

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Indicates geographic location connected to article.



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## EVENTS

Saturday, June 9, 9 am - 3 pm  
**Livingston Waterfest**  
Howell  
Call Ric Lawson at x13

Thursday, June 14, 7 pm  
**Liz Elling - In Person**  
Ann Arbor District Library -  
Downtown  
343 S. Fifth Ave  
Call Jen Wolf at x17

Sunday, July 15, 8:30 am - 4 pm  
**Huron River Day**  
Gallup Park, 3000 Fuller Rd,  
Ann Arbor  
Call Jen Wolf at x17

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

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

Thursday, July 19, 5:30 - 7:30 pm  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
Location: TBD  
Call Laura Rubin at x12

Sunday, July 22, noon - 5 pm  
**Measuring & Mapping**  
NEW Center, Ann Arbor  
Call Joan Martin at x11

## Regular Features

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# Rock Bass Triumphs

Second annual Film Festival is great success

A crowd of about 350 people enjoyed 18 entertaining short films about the human connections to the Huron River system at the second annual Millers Creek Film Festival, organized by HRWC. The locally made films were screened at the Michigan Theater on March 27.

South Lyon native Dan Nienhuis was the big winner of the evening. His film "A Message from the Huron River Rock Bass" took the Millie trophy for best Public Service Announcement and the Audience Favorite award as well. In this 30-second film we hear what our native fish need us to do to protect the River.



The Festival crowd filled the Michigan Theater lobby after the films in March.

photo: Marc Akemann

Like the other two category winners -- Jacob Rammage at South Lyon High School for "The Huron River...a river for all seasons" and Jake Serwer at the University of Michigan for "Riverbank Rescue" -- Dan

received a beautiful glass Millie trophy and \$500. Second place winners received a check for \$50, and the Audience Favorite received dinner for four at the Red Hawk Bar & Grill on S. State Street in Ann Arbor.

Winning filmmaker, Dan Nienhuis, and his former South Lyon High teacher, Gayle Fike, display their Millies. photo: Marc Akemann

A DVD of the winning films is available for \$5 from Joan Martin at (734) 769-5123 x11 or [jmartin@hrwc.org](mailto:jmartin@hrwc.org).

— Joan Martin

## Alive and Well

Life found in 54 stream sites during River RoundUp

HRWC completed a successful River RoundUp in April with 140 people from all parts of the watershed and even beyond. Teams of enthusiastic families and other residents studied 54 sites on the Huron River and its streams. Passersby also took interest in the creek and the study.

Several things surprised people:

- that there could be so many creatures living in our streams
- that you can learn about the health of a river by examining its streams

One person said, "The creek we checked was close to my home and I didn't realize it was there." People also noticed that

streams are much nicer when natural land is preserved nearby even if the land is developed, as long as the developed area is small.

The results will be available from HRWC following analysis of the data. Results from recent studies can be viewed at [www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org).

— Joan Martin

### MAKE A CLEAN SWEEP

Fertilizer is an asset to your lawn, but you must be careful to keep it on your lawn and out of the storm drain system. Be sure to sweep up any spills immediately, including any granules on sidewalks and driveways. Never use a hose to clean sidewalks and drives, and don't apply fertilizer right before a heavy rainstorm. Remember, fertilizer that washes off your yard and into the street enters the stormdrain system, which is a direct connection to local creeks and the Huron River.

# Going, Going, Gone Green

continued from cover

be living (trees, wildflowers, etc.) or ecologically functional (boulders, stones, etc.) and appropriate for the surroundings.

## EMBALMING

Little is known about the impact of the nearly one million gallons of formaldehyde-based embalming fluid that Americans will bury in the ground this year. Potential problems include groundwater (and hence drinking water) contamination and human health problems for funeral workers who deal with the substance. Studies in Europe have found a correlation between formaldehyde and nasal cancer as well as leukemia.

## CREMATION

At first glance, cremation seems like a more earth-friendly option. Though the technology is becoming more efficient and clean-burning, cremation still consumes a non-renewable fossil fuel, produces greenhouse gas emissions and, if your teeth have fillings, releases significant amounts of mercury vapor.

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## “Nature’s original plan was that we fall down somewhere in a field and become soil”

Susanne Wiigh-Maesak

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## THE GREEN BURIAL COUNCIL

The Green Burial Council (GBC), a non-profit organization, has been working to develop partnerships among conservation organizations and deathcare companies to develop and operate “conservation burial” grounds. The idea is for land trusts, park service agencies and the like to serve as long-term stewards of the land and for the cemeterians to run these facilities, though far differently than they are used to. These standards and practices are set forth by the GBC.

The GBC recognizes two categories of “green” cemeteries. A “Conservation Burial Ground” encourages sustainable and ethical practices and maximizes the potential of the burial process to facilitate ecological restoration and conservation.



A traditional cemetery in Prague.

photo: Google Images

A Conservation Burial Ground must always involve an established conservation organization as a long-term steward.

A “Natural Burial Ground” encourages sustainable and ethical practices but does not involve an established conservation organization as a long-term steward, and does not necessarily further a conservation purpose. Underlying these standards are also principles to ensure that burial never degrades the landscape, and where possible, enhances it, and that there is transparency and accountability on the part of the cemetery operators. The goal is natural areas protection in perpetuity.

## GREEN BURIAL CONSERVES NATURAL AREAS AND MONEY

At Ramsey Creek, a conservation burial ground in South Carolina, only caskets made from biodegradable wood and non-toxic embalming fluids are permitted. While the cost of a standard burial often runs between \$6,000-\$10,000, a Ramsey Creek burial costs approximately \$2,300. With only 1,200 projected burial sites on 32 acres of land -- as opposed to the typical 900 graves per acre -- open space is preserved as well.

Currently no conservation burial grounds exist in Michigan, but the GBC will be launching a program that will enable

people to more easily make green burial arrangements in Southeast Michigan. If you are interested, email [info@greenburialcouncil.org](mailto:info@greenburialcouncil.org) to be put on a list of people to contact once the program is launched this summer.

And for the future: A Swedish town is preparing to become the first to adopt a new form of environmentally friendly funeral: freeze-dry burials. Invented by ecologists interested in connecting funerals with the organic environment, the process involves bodies being frozen in liquid nitrogen, then broken into dust. The frozen remains can be buried in a shallow grave, where they decompose and nourish the earth within weeks.

— Source: Environmental Leadership News, Fall 2006; Conservation In Practice, Vol.8 No.1; January-March 2007.

— Laura Rubin

## LITTLE-KNOWN FACTS

- First, in Michigan it is legal for a body to remain at home — or be transported there from a hospital or coroner — for a home wake.
- Second, contrary to popular notion, embalming, begun during the Civil War when corpses were shipped long distances, is not required in any state.
- Third, the body does not need to be in a box. While cardboard and “eco” coffins are becoming more mainstream, people often look for a simple cotton or woolen shroud.

# Citizen Science

*Adopt-A-Stream volunteers keep watch over the 'shed*

Scientific, credible, reliable... these are just some of the terms applied to the data generated by HRWC's Adopt-A-Stream volunteer monitoring program, widely regarded as the premier volunteer monitoring program in Michigan.

Our Adopt-A-Stream program has earned these accolades through a commitment to collecting high-quality information that can be used for natural resource management and land use planning. Ensuring that the data resulting from the efforts of volunteers are of the same quality as that collected by professionals is not without its challenges. We have developed monitoring methods over the past fifteen years that have led to our data being used by federal, state, and local agencies and researchers for the ultimate goal of protecting the watershed.

## PROFESSIONAL METHODS

Most volunteer monitoring programs begin with an emphasis on educating the community about local natural resources through hands-on activities, and HRWC's Adopt-A-Stream program was no different. What was different, however, was an equally important emphasis from the very beginning on collecting credible, accurate data for resource protection.

In order to collect data that could be used by agencies like the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), we looked to the methods that agency staff use to assess the health of rivers and streams, and we adopted those methods for our volunteer monitoring program. This meant asking our volunteers to collect more highly technical information about the physical quality of the streams and identifying stream life to a finer taxonomic level than is typical for volunteer monitoring programs. To reach this level of accuracy while keeping Adopt-A-Stream inviting to volunteers with no technical background, we developed a program with a broad variety of activities that range from requiring no training at all (and no need to get wet!) to those that require some level of HRWC training, to our "ID Experts", who bring their existing knowledge of aquatic entomology when they volunteer to identify the invertebrate specimens that our volunteer teams col-

lect from the Huron and its tributaries.

As a result, we provide MDEQ with monitoring data from over 70 sites in the watershed that are the same as their staff biologists would collect during their field assessments. With the limited resources and staff that the State is able to dedicate to river and stream monitoring, Adopt-A-Stream volunteers are providing a valuable source of long-term information about the status and trends in the Huron River system.

The important role that volunteer monitoring plays in the protection and management of our resources was the topic of a recent radio story produced by the Great Lakes Radio Consortium's "Environment Report". Rochelle Breitenbach and Mary Bajcz, long-time Adopt-A-Stream volunteers, were joined by reporter Lester Graham at one of our monitoring sites in the headwaters of the Huron during our January Stonefly Search event. The story was broadcast on National Public Radio stations in twenty states, and can be read and heard at [http://www.gllrc.org/story.php3?story\\_id=3325](http://www.gllrc.org/story.php3?story_id=3325).

## PLANNING FOR QUALITY

In order to verify that Adopt-A-Stream volunteer data were reliable and accurate enough for use in river and stream protection, we have documented the steps we take to assure data quality. We developed a comprehensive Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), reviewed and approved by MDEQ. This QAPP lays out the goals of our monitoring work, how we choose our monitoring sites, the details of our field methods, and the way we handle, analyze, and report our data. Within each section, we describe how we ensure that volunteers are following instructions, how we will handle problem data (including guidelines for re-sampling or rejecting samples altogether), and how we ensure the accuracy of our aquatic invertebrate identifications.



*John and Tui Minderhout collect macroinvertebrates with Ed McCarter and Paul Tockstein.*  
photo: Marc Akemann

This documentation is a valuable resource for Adopt-A-Stream staff, as it provides a framework for the program and guidance for handling the large amount of data that our volunteers generate. For the agencies and researchers using our data, the QAPP provides reassurance that the data are reliable and accurate.

## VOLUNTEERS: THE HEART OF IT ALL

Of course, at the heart of the Adopt-A-Stream program are the volunteers, both those who have worked with us for years and those who join in for a single event. Their desire to learn about the Huron River, its tributaries, and its watershed, and to contribute to its protection, has allowed this long-term monitoring study to continue and grow for over fifteen years. Without volunteer involvement, most of the decisions about land use planning and water resource management that affect the Huron would be made with limited information and best guesses, rather than with the support of the rich Adopt-A-Stream dataset.

There are always opportunities for new volunteers to get involved! Check out the Adopt Events Calendar at our website, [www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org). Contact Joan Martin at [jmartin@hrwc.org](mailto:jmartin@hrwc.org) to volunteer for upcoming events, including our summer river and stream habitat assessment project "Measuring and Mapping", or our next aquatic invertebrate collection day, the January "Stonefly Search".

— Jo Latimore

# Swimming the Huron

continued from cover

## LEELANAU CHALLENGE

In 2000, Liz returned to her childhood love of swimming, finding she could go for long distances at a slow but steady pace. By the next summer, at the age of 54, Liz found herself volunteering to swim around the Leelanau Peninsula in Lake Michigan, a distance of over 100 miles. Her plan was to generate as much publicity for the Great Lakes as possible. With the support of family, friends, and “a lot of duct tape”

to cover blisters from her swim flippers, she achieved her goal and more, raising \$10,000 for the conservation efforts of the Leelanau Conservancy.

## DOWN THE HURON

In 2007, Liz will set her sights on the Huron River which, with the impacts of increased urbanization, presents a unique set of challenges: variable water quality, hazardous obstacles above and below

the surface, and low levels of flow. If the task sounds daunting, consider this: in addition to her determination, Liz has a great team ready to help. Civil engineer and husband Gary Elling knows the Huron well, having worked on dam restorations along the river in the late 1960s. He is also her watchdog, reminding everyone “We need to take good care of Liz. I’ve got forty years invested in this relationship, and I

can tell you, she’s irreplaceable.” Daughters Kirsten and Karin also will be on hand, as will close friend and canoe guide Nels Christensen.

Liz also knows that swimming this river is far more complicated than swimming the big lakes. For starters: Liz will swim through 13 counties, several MetroParks, State lands and various municipal parks; she will need groups of paddlers to scout the river with her both in advance of and during the swim; press and community outreach is complicated by the number of communities served in the watershed; and the list goes on. The logistics alone would be a daunting task for anyone, let alone someone also working full time (as the Director of Planned Giving at Glacier Hills Retirement Community). Fortunately, HRWC is fully committed to helping Liz with this endeavor. HRWC staff, board members and volunteers are dedicating time and resources toward helping Liz achieve her goal of increased awareness for the Huron River.

Liz is determined to swim as much of the river as is possible. She has been training for months, with both pool and lake swims. However, she does realize that

*continued on next page*



Liz and her logistics committee, planning her route down the Huron River. (l to r: Allison Arscott, Elsie Orb, Liz Elling, Laura Rubin, Tom Koehler and Ron Sell)

photo: HRWC

## Liz Swims the Huron - Schedule

Week One

DAY/DATE	START AND DESTINATION	MILEAGE
Saturday, July 7	Proud Lake to Milford (Kick Off Party at Central Park - 4 pm)	6.5 miles
Sunday, July 8	Milford to Kent Lake Dam (Meet Liz at Kensington MetroPark ~ noon)	6 miles
Monday, July 9	Kent Lake Dam to Huron Meadows MetroPark	10.5 miles
Tuesday, July 10	Huron Meadows MetroPark to Baseline Lake (Community Party at Baseline Lake)	7.5 miles
Wednesday, July 11	Baseline Lake to Hudson Mills	6 miles
Thursday, July 12	Hudson Mills to Dexter-Huron MetroPark	5.5 miles
Friday, July 13	REST DAY	

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there will be times when water levels are too low, currents or submerged obstacles make the river unsafe to swim, or when poor water quality prohibits body contact (for example, after a heavy rain event when pollutants wash over land into the river system). When circumstances make the river unsafe to swim, Liz will traverse the course by kayak, again reminding people that protection of our water resources is of the utmost importance. Over the last forty years, the river's water quality has improved dramatically as a result of better pollution management at manufacturing and treatment facilities. Liz Elling wants this trend to continue until the entire Huron River is safe to swim. She knows the next set of improvements needs to come from individual actions. Liz hopes her swim will inspire people to take small steps, like fertilizing less and disposing of toxins properly. Changes in individual behavior will make a big difference. As Liz tells us:

*"We think we need a lot of things in life, but the most important resource we need is fresh, clean water."*

— Jennifer Wolf and Elsie Orb

# Paddling the Huron

Great ways to enjoy the watershed this summer

You may not be able to take two weeks off to swim the Huron River with Liz, but here are some other options to get you out on the water!

**Tom Koehler and Heavner Canoe Rental** offer **tours of the Huron River by section**. Each weekend they cover a different portion of the river. Ambitious folk can cover the entire river over the course of the summer, one weekend at a time. Paddlers interested in doing just a few trips are also welcome. Reservations required, children over 12 years old are welcome with a parent. For more information, contact Tom Koehler at (248) 872-9883 or tkoebler316@gmail.com. For day rentals without the guided tour, call Heavner Canoe Rental at (248) 685-2379 or go to [www.heavnercanoe.com](http://www.heavnercanoe.com).

The **City of Ann Arbor Canoe Liveries** offer a variety of **canoe and kayak outings, plus paddleboat rentals**. Call the Argo Livery at (734) 668-7411 or the Gallup Livery at (734) 662-9319 for rental information. More information and specific programs are also available on the website: [www.a2gov.org/canoe](http://www.a2gov.org/canoe).

If you prefer to **walk or hike** the Huron River Watershed, you can find lots of

great outings through the **Huron-Clinton MetroParks Interpretive Services**. Go to [www.metroparks.com](http://www.metroparks.com) for events listings, farm and nature center activities, newsletters, and to search by park. To request a printed newsletter and event schedule, call (800) 477-2757.

For a listing of **State Recreation Areas**, go to [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr).

**Huron River Day** is Sunday, **July 15** at **Gallup Park** in Ann Arbor. This daylong event is presented by the City of Ann Arbor Parks Department. Events include:

- Meet Liz! She'll stop by Gallup Park on her way to Geddes Dam
- Free canoe rentals 12 - 4
- Guided canoe trips offered July 14, call (734) 662-9319 for details
- Mayor's Cup Canoe Race at 10:30 am
- Environmental displays 12 - 4
- Kids activities: fishing and more 12 - 4
- Live music by the WCC Jazz Band
- Classic Small Boat Show and Voyageur Canoes
- Leslie Science Center Bird of Prey exhibit

Find more information at: [www.a2gov.org](http://www.a2gov.org).

## Liz Swims the Huron - Schedule

Week Two

DAY/DATE	START AND DESTINATION	MILEAGE
Saturday, July 14	Dexter-Huron MetroPark to Barton Dam	8 miles
Sunday, July 15	Barton Dam to Geddes Dam at Dixboro Rd. (Meet Liz at Gallup Park for Huron River Day~ 1:30 pm)	7 miles
Monday, July 16	Geddes Dam to Ford Lake Dam	8 miles
Tuesday, July 17	Hydro Park to Belleville Lake	6 miles
Wednesday, July 18	Lower Huron MetroPark to Willow MetroPark	10 miles
Thursday, July 19	Willow MetroPark to Flat Rock Dam	6 miles
Friday, July 20	Huroc Park to Labo Park	5 miles
Saturday, July 21	Labo Park to Point Mouillee (Party at end of swim! 4 pm – Lake Erie MetroPark)	6 miles

If conditions make it unsafe to swim, Liz will travel by kayak, canoe, or on foot.

For schedule updates, go to [www.hrwc.org/lizswims](http://www.hrwc.org/lizswims)

# Know Your Board Representative

Julie Metty Bennett, Hamburg Township

One of the newer HRWC board members is Julie Metty Bennett, who represents Hamburg Township in Livingston County. She holds both a BA and an MS from Michigan State University, where her concentration was in environmental policy, political science and resource development with a specialization in environmental toxicology. Since 2000, Julie has been a senior consultant for natural resource policy at Public Sector Consultants, a non-partisan think tank in Lansing. Prior to that, she worked with the Michigan United Conservation Clubs as an environmental policy specialist, and with National Wildlife Federation, managing issue advocacy campaigns to educate and mobilize individuals, organizations, and governmental policymakers in furthering Great Lakes protection issues.

She grew up in a house with Strawberry Lake in the backyard and the Huron River in the front, and, “being a fish,” she has had an appreciation and a sense of stewardship for the water. Her parents still live in the house where she grew up, so she has the opportunity to see any changes in the state of the Huron at that location.

She lives in the watershed with her husband Aaron, their dog Fisher, and her two cats. Julie says “those who read the newsletter understand the important role HRWC plays in protecting our water resources and helping all the cities, villages and townships in the watershed to work together for the same goal. It is important for others to understand this, as well, so spread the word to friends and family and encourage them to join!” Call HRWC to get involved.



Julie Metty Bennett, Hamburg Township rep  
photo: PSC

— Eunice Burns

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# Bright Stars

Award winners applauded at Annual Meeting

An engineer who has taken thousands of photos of the Huron River and an accountant who waded in water only 14 degrees above zero to map habitat characteristics of our streams were among those receiving awards from HRWC this year. The volunteer awards were given out at HRWC's Annual Meeting on April 26 held at the Matthaei Botanical Gardens in Ann Arbor.

The **Laminar Flow Award** was given to **Al Wooll** for his ability to keep cool when everyone else is lost in the turbulence. Al is an engineer who lives in the Traver Creek watershed, and as HRWC's dedicated professional staff photographer of 11 years, he has even gone to streams in snowstorms to get the right picture!

**Michael Benham** lives in the Swift Run watershed and received the **That's Using Your Headwaters Award** for his marvelous combination of humor and enthusiasm. Michael has spent countless hours measuring flow in Millers Creek, mapping habitats, installing signs, leading teams studying benthic macroinvertebrates, and developing the popular annual Millers Creek Film Festival as well as the Adopt-A-Stream program.

The highly coveted **Zebra Mussel Award** is all about sticking to the task at hand despite resistance. This year's award went to **Mary Bajcz**, an accountant and textile

artist, who lives in the Mann Creek watershed. Mary, along with her son, has mapped habitat characteristics of streams (even in 14 degree weather) and led teams to river study sites, and she persuaded Milford Township to join HRWC.

In honor of the late **Herb Munzel** the **Vanishing Species Award** was given to **Elsie Orb**. Herb was a longtime board member representing Green Oak Township, who served as Vice-Chair, and was always a committed and engaged board member. In his career and in his volunteer activities Herb worked diligently in pursuit of clean water and air in his home community in Livingston County and the Huron River Watershed. Like Herb Munzel, Elsie Orb is an individual who sees what needs to be done and does it. She has helped us whip our database into shape, organized house parties, written membership letters, revised and rewritten grant proposals and general information pieces, and helped us organize Liz Swims the Huron. Elsie is a



HRWC volunteers of the year are (l to r) Al Wooll, Elsie Orb, and Michael Benham. Mary Bajcz is not pictured.

photo: HRWC

tremendous volunteer for HRWC and is a volunteer environmentalist in the tradition of Herb Munzel.

These individuals set a high standard of service, sacrifice and generosity for all of us to follow. HRWC is very fortunate to benefit from their dedication to protecting the Huron River. We thank them, and all of our many volunteers, for their important contributions on behalf of the Huron River and the quality of life in the watershed for all residents.

— Margaret Smith

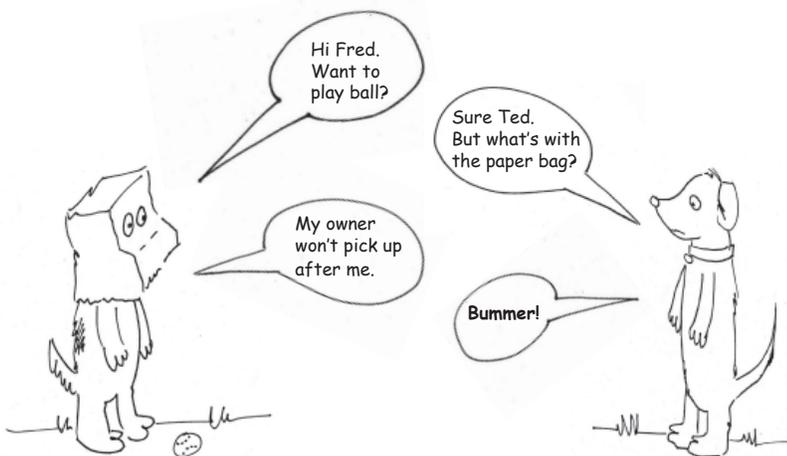


illustration: HRWC

### When you don't pick up after your dog, it's more than embarrassing.

Dog waste left on the ground washes into creeks, stormdrains and the river. Bacteria in the feces compromise water quality, reducing recreational opportunities and contaminating drinking water supplies. So be a good dog owner. Stoop, scoop and drop those baggies in the trash!

### LESS IS MORE

If you fertilize your lawn, consider reducing the number of applications. If you hire a lawn care company, review your application schedule with them and ask about fewer applications. If you fertilize just once each year, fall is the best time to apply fertilizer because it helps your lawn repair itself and prepare for optimal growth in the spring.

# Bioreserve Project on a Roll

Volunteers make great progress assessing natural areas



HRWC volunteers practice rapidly assessing a wetland in Barton Park, in Ann Arbor.

photo: HRWC

Over 108 volunteers assessed 888 natural areas this winter, driving out to sites all over the watershed to find out a little more about natural areas mapped on HRWC's Bioreserve map (see Huron River Report, Spring 2007). The results of the roadside survey will help HRWC decide which areas volunteers will visit this year to perform rapid ecological field assessments.

Thirty-seven people attended a meeting in February to help HRWC strategize how to use the rapid assessment process to promote land use planning that will protect natural areas throughout the watershed. Key strategies include working with local communities to develop policies that will protect natural areas and working with land conservancies to help them target their preservation efforts.

More than 50 volunteers attended a training session in March to learn how to perform the field assessments. Volunteers listened to a presentation by HRWC project staff and then went out to Barton Park to practice using the survey forms.

For more information about the Bioreserve project, see <http://www.hrwc.org/text/bioreserve.htm>. Interested in working with HRWC to assess and protect our natural areas? Contact Kris at [kolsson@hrwc.org](mailto:kolsson@hrwc.org) or (734) 769-5123 x 16.

## THANK YOU:

- **108 volunteers** who have surveyed 888 natural areas in the watershed as part of our roadside survey of natural areas.
- **Debi Weiker**, for creating a database and scoring system for the hundreds of roadside survey forms pouring into our office, and for processing the forms.
- **Susan Wooley**, for entering roadside survey forms into our database.
- **Chris Chew** and **Maryn Mishler**, for helping organize a database and mailing list for all our new volunteers for the Bioreserve Project.
- **37 people** who attended and gave very useful input at our Bioreserve Project strategy meeting, February 28.
- **Eric Kennedy**, who organized his South Lyon High School class to perform roadside surveys on all the natural areas in Lyon Township.
- **More than 50 people** who attended the March 24 Rapid Ecological Assessment of Natural Areas training session and will soon begin helping us assess the remaining natural areas in the watershed.
- **Jacqueline Courteau**, for presenting at the March 24 Rapid Ecological Assessment of Natural Areas training session, and **Faye Stoner, Lara Spears** and **Jacqueline Courteau**, for leading break-out groups.

— Kris Olsson

## STAND TALL

Take proper care of your lawn and you can reduce or eliminate the need for fertilizer. Keep your lawn at least three inches tall, and never cut more than 1/3 of the blade each time you mow. Taller grass has deeper, healthier roots, is more drought-tolerant, and prevents weed infestations. Mulch clippings back into your lawn for an added nitrogen boost. Mulching also adds organic matter, which is necessary to prevent soil compaction. Mulching does not cause thatch.



## Got Grass?

Three-fourths of the Earth's surface is water, and one-fourth is land. It is quite clear that the good Lord intended us to spend triple the amount of time fishing as taking care of the lawn. — Chuck Clark

When you use a manual push mower, you're "cutting" down on pollution and the only thing in danger of running out of gas is you! — Grey Livingston

A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken. — James Dent

A lawn is nature under totalitarian rule. — Michael Pollan, *Second Nature*, 1991

As much as a man might hope to, he can't mow the lawn once and for all. — Joe Chaney

# YOU Make The Difference!

Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.

Our most valuable world resource in the 21st century is not oil, not natural gas, not even some type of renewable energy. **It is water—clean, safe, fresh water.**

**Your membership** supports HRWC programs. Send us this membership form with your check made out to “HRWC” or join on-line at [www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org) and click on Join Now! Your contribution is tax-deductible.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## THANK YOU!

### DONOR LEVELS

[ ]	\$30	Mayfly
[ ]	\$50	Crayfish
[ ]	\$100	Dragonfly
[ ]	\$250	Soft Shell Turtle
[ ]	\$500	Salamander
[ ]	\$1,000	Smallmouth Bass
[ ]	\$2,500	Great Blue Heron
[ ]	\$5,000	Mink



## Laura's Stream of Consciousness

An update on HRWC projects and activities

### EVERYONE'S LOSS: PFIZER

We've lost a great partner in river stewardship with the closure of the Ann Arbor Pfizer plant. In late January, Pfizer Pharmaceutical Company announced the closure of its Ann Arbor plant by the end of 2008. Pfizer has been a leader in watershed protection, especially within the Millers Creek watershed, in which the plant is located. For over four years Pfizer has taken a leadership role in bringing interests together to develop the plan to protect and restore the watershed (*The Millers Creek Watershed Improvement Plan*), to implement the plan, and to sponsor the Millers Creek Film Festival. The Watershed Improvement Plan was recently ranked as the third best watershed management plan in the country by the US EPA.

Last fall HRWC secured a \$396,000 US EPA grant to restore a large section of Millers Creek. Pfizer matched this effort

with \$900,000. While we have 75% of the design complete and HRWC completed 100% of the pre-monitoring work, we now will not be able to complete the project and implement the improvements. We are hoping to redirect the funding to another project in Millers Creek, but the scale and significance of the project certainly will be smaller.

Pfizer's loss is significant for HRWC and the watershed. Pfizer was a rare company that committed staff and financial resources to protect and steward a local creek. We have far too few of these kinds of companies in the watershed and I will miss their leadership and camaraderie.

### ON THE HOME FRONT

HRWC is nearing completion of a major upgrade to our computing capabilities. We have replaced aging equipment that was nearing the end of its expected lifetime and have also improved various

components of our system using newer technology, including a new server. We are grateful to McKinley & Co. for creating a “technology closet” where we have put our new equipment and also our phone system. We also are very grateful to Kevin Love, Scott Nelson and Jason Bibby. These HRWC friends have extensive computer expertise and provided valuable advice and counsel as we grappled with the complexities of computing. Finally a word of gratitude to Susan Wooley, Elliott Yush and LTI Technology who have helped us implement the plan.

Thank you!

— Laura Rubin

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



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## 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:**

**Rochelle Breitenbach, Dana Infante,** and **Catherine Riseng** for demonstrating expert bug collecting technique at the first-ever Adopt-A-Stream Collector Refresher Training event, and Rochelle and Dana for volunteering at the last minute to help train a new group of Adopt-A-Stream Team Leaders and Bug Collectors.

**150 wonderful people** who made the April River RoundUp successful, organizing the gear and paperwork, improving the maps, greeting the volunteers, spending six hours finding bugs in the streams, helping new people to know what to do, identifying the bugs and putting the equipment away.

**Bennigan's, Busch's** and **Great Harvest** for delicious snacks for hungry volunteers at the April River RoundUp.

**Sixty lovely people** who made the Millers Creek Film Festival a great success, creating and distributing multiple fliers, creating films, judging films, copying and packaging DVDs, baking cookies, organizing the Michigan Theater lobby, playing music and putting things away.

**Sabra Briere** for organizing the entire reception for the Film Festival.

**Dave Brooks, Tom Chettleburgh** and **Gary Hochgraf** for downloading transducers and fixing several problems for HRWC.

**Mike Brooks** for coordinating swim events for Liz Swims the Huron.

**Allison Arcscott** for helping with logistics for Liz Swims the Huron.

**Mary Bajcz, Dan Swallow** and **Jason Bibby** for coordinating community events for Liz Swims the Huron.

**Elsie Orb** for helping with collateral and events for Liz Swims the Huron.

**Mike George (HCMA)** for logistics and event support for Liz Swims the Huron.

**Tom Koehler, Ron Sell, Cheryl Saam (City Ann Arbor Liveries)** and **Alan Heavner (Heavner Canoe Rental)** for help with paddlers and canoe support for Liz Swims the Huron.

**Liz Elling** for swimming the Huron River and giving us the gift of raising awareness for freshwater resource protection.

**Mary Bajcz** for help at Kensington MetroPark's "Heron Festival".