



Huron River Report

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Spring 2011

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Adopt-A-Stream Founder Hangs Up Her Waders

Joan Martin to retire April 1 - no fooling!

Joan began her first day at HRWC in the fall of 1991 with a stack of road signs on her desk, located within a small room within a condemned building on a contaminated site in downtown Ann Arbor – but the rent was free. She joined Executive Director Paul Rentschler and part-time Office Manager Delia Reeves as the only paid employees of HRWC.

Joan stared at her desk. “The signs were to be put up at road crossings over the streams as the culmination of a project of my predecessor, but he moved to St. Louis before installing them.” Joan set the signs aside and got to work on the project she had come to start: the Adopt-A-Stream program.

In the twenty years prior to joining HRWC, Joan, who holds a doctorate in insect physiology, raised two children while doing research with her husband, Michael, on insects and chemistry. Having been active with the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor, she

decided to focus all of her time on helping the environment. After reading about water quality monitoring in the *Whole Earth Catalog*, Joan decided she cared most about the future of our fresh water. “When I decided to change my career to help protect local water, I had to ask my daughter to help me write up a resume; my only job since college had been working with my husband.”

Joan credits an existing Baltimore-based volunteer monitoring program, Save Our Streams (SOS), for providing the model for HRWC’s new program, and a helpful University of Michigan Professor of aquatic sciences, Dr. Mike Wiley, for providing technical support and guidance. Paul and Joan attended a volunteer monitoring conference in Baltimore and learned from SOS the basics of how to run what was to be HRWC’s Adopt-A-Stream Program. “The great innovation of their program was that



Joan standing beside the Huron River, circa 1994.
photo: HRWC

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“Take a Hike” for the Watershed!

Third in a series about how HRWC collects data in the field

Let’s say you want to get outdoors, enjoy the woods, tromp around in the mud, and help the watershed all at the same time. You can be a Bioreserve Project field assessment volunteer!

Over the last three years, HRWC staff and volunteers have assessed over 165 different natural area properties for the Bioreserve Project (www.hrwc.org/our-work/bioreserve/). Volunteer teams gathered data during these field assessments about the ecology, hydrology, wildlife, and plant life on these sites. The data helps HRWC, local governments, property owners, local con-

servancies and other conservation agencies make decisions about where to focus efforts for protection and restoration of natural areas. The data also provides ecological information about the health of the overall watershed.

What happens during a typical field assessment?

GETTING STARTED

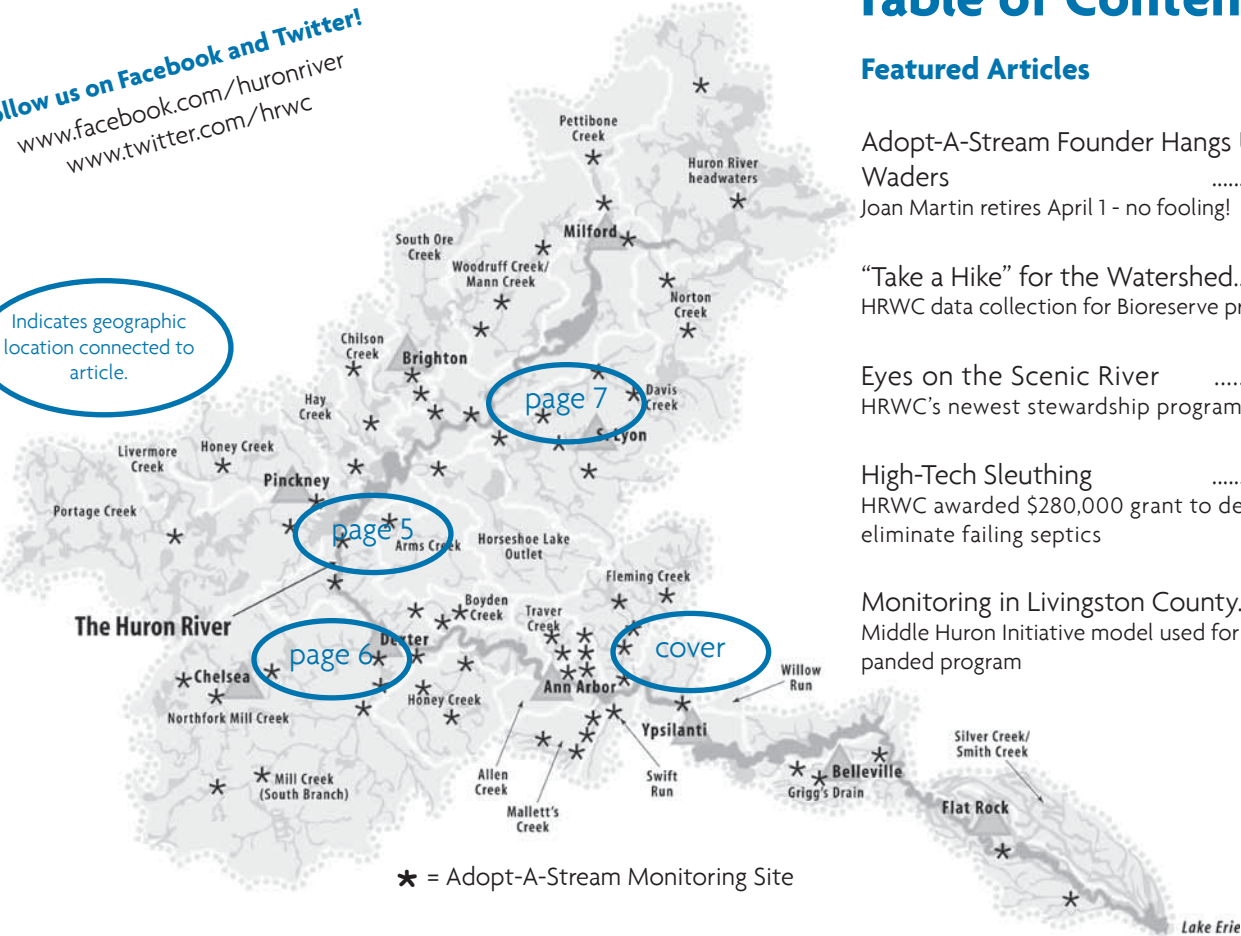
Picture yourself... at your computer! Yes, this fun adventure starts sitting at your desk! First, sign up for a training in May (details at close of article). Next, scout

out HRWC’s Bioreserve calendar for a date and time that fits into your schedule. You can even look at Google Earth to find the property you will be assessing, and get an idea of what it looks like (i.e. what you are getting yourself into!) based on the aerial photo. Better bring some boots and bug protection! Once you find a date, email us and we will email you a packet of maps and forms for the trip and connect you with your teammates, one of whom will be a “plant expert” who can readily identify most of the plants you will typically

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www.facebook.com/huronriver
www.twitter.com/hrwc

Indicates geographic location connected to article.



* = Adopt-A-Stream Monitoring Site

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

Events

Saturday, March 19, 1 – 4 PM
Water Quality Sampling Training
 NEW Center, Ann Arbor
 Ric: rlawson@hrwc.org

Thursday, March 24th, 5:30 PM
HRWC Executive Committee
 NEW Center, Ann Arbor
 Laura: lrubin@hrwc.org

Saturday, April 17, 12 – 4 PM
Adopt-A-Stream Leadership Training
 NEW Center, Ann Arbor
 Joan: jmartin@hrwc.org

Thursday, April 28, 5:30 PM*
HRWC Annual Meeting
 Dexter District Library, Dexter
 Laura: lrubin@hrwc.org
 *6:30 PM Joan’s Retirement Party

Saturday, April 30
River RoundUp
 Register by April 6 at
www.hrwc.org/volunteer/roundup/

Saturday, May 7, 10 AM – 4 PM
Bioreserve Field Assessment Training
 Matthaei Botanical Gardens,
 Ann Arbor
 Kris: kolsson@hrwc.org

Sunday, May 8, 12 - 3 or 2 - 5 PM
Bug ID Day
 NEW Center, Ann Arbor
 Paul: psteen@hrwc.org

Summer recreation events on page 10.

More events and updates on the web at: 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

Adopt-A-Stream Founder Hangs Up Her Waders

continued from cover

they took the insect identification to the family level,” Joan recalls, “which provides much more information to assess the health of a creek site.”

Joan and Paul also decided to follow the Michigan DNR’s “Procedure 51” for measuring stream conditions, as well as to follow strict quality assurance/quality control protocols, to ensure scientific validity of the data gathered. “That way, state biologists would be able to compare and include our data with their stream assessment data,” Joan explains. Volunteer-gathered data would actually be used by DNR scientists and become part of the State’s overall data collection. When Joan thinks back on these early days, she recalls, “We had one Macintosh computer, which we had to share. I took a computer class to learn how to use it. When I think of how sophisticated our computer data systems are today, I am amazed.”

Dr. Wiley generously agreed to help guide the program design on scientific issues, conducting the first training workshop at Island Park on the Huron River in Ann Arbor. “We had eleven people for that first training with Mike, including one who volunteers with us to this day, Tom Jameson. We managed to get most of our equipment donated and sent volunteer teams to seven sites the following week,” Joan remembers. The first ID day was held in the basement of the Dana building, home of the University of Michigan’s School of Natural Resources and Environment.

Joan remembers the first days and months of the program as incredibly exciting and exhausting, with new people and ideas appearing every day. “I had never been in the position of running an environmental education and stewardship program, so every idea was a great one, and we ran with it.” Along the way Joan learned and expanded the program. Events became organized by the ideas of volunteers who saw the need for them. She implemented Dr. Wiley’s idea to start a January Stonefly Search after a couple of years. The first year only four people participated. Joan laughs, recalling that “Only one was a volunteer – and a new volunteer at that – who kept looking around for all the other volun-

teers!” Following the advice of SOS in the Chesapeake, she started an advisory committee (including Beverly Black, Kathy Sargeant, Ron Gamble, Jesse Gordon and Jeannine Palms) to help guide the program.



At a River RoundUp event, Joan helps volunteers identify macroinvertebrates. photo: HRWC

Adopt-A-Stream has grown from those first 11 volunteers to approximately 400 volunteers today. This is largely due to Joan’s infectious enthusiasm for the work being done, her genuine appreciation for the contributions of her volunteers, and her eagerness for feedback and opportunities to improve the program. In 1998, Adopt-A-Stream volunteers were surveyed to find out why they stuck with the program despite the physical challenges of stream collection and surveying. Comments such as “Joan makes me feel like what I am doing is very important...” “Joan’s confidence in me and willingness to train me means that I understand this on a deeper level and that makes the work meaningful...” “Joan doesn’t just instruct, she listens – she makes me feel like part of a larger team effort...” are representative of the overall sampling. The HRWC Joan Martin Stewardship Fund honors her inspiring attitudes about protecting the watershed (details at www.hrwc.org).

In addition to kicking up insects, as they did on that first day in 1992, today’s Adopt-A-Stream volunteers monitor over 70 stream sites throughout the watershed; take measurements of stream flow; measure stream habitat; provide long-term stream temperature data; produce and direct movies about the importance of healthy streams; get involved in their communities by becoming planning com-

missioners or advising their local planning commissions; report observations of problems in the watershed; and organize volunteer teaching about the streams for school field trips. For several years, Adopt also organized elaborate and popular Creek Festivals at Kensington MetroPark. Adopt-A-Stream Program staff also administers the MiCorps program, which trains organizations throughout the State on river and lake volunteer monitoring.

Another great idea that HRWC ran with was *RIVERfest* ‘93. Back at that 1992 conference in Baltimore, Joan had been entranced by a presentation from paddler Valerie Kruger, who had organized volunteers to traverse the entire length of the Grand River in Michigan. Joan and her volunteers (including Jim Fackert, Mike George and Ron Sell) put together *RIVERfest* ‘93, a flotilla of HRWC staff (well, that would have been Joan and Paul), 125 volunteers and Voyageur Canoe re-enactors, who paddled the length of the river, camping along the river each night and stopping in each community for celebrations, where the elected officials dedicated their communities to protect the river. “That was a great way to begin Adopt-A-Stream because it increased our visibility beyond just the Ann Arbor area, and we found great volunteers up and down the river.” In recent years, Joan was the catalyst behind Liz Elling’s swim down the Huron River, as well as the tour-de-force behind the Millers Creek Film Festival.

Joan Martin will retire April 1st after nearly 20 years of building one of the most comprehensive, respected, and effective Adopt-A-Stream programs in the country. Reflecting back, Joan says “It is very difficult to retire. Creating and directing this program has been the most wonderful job imaginable. From the start, it has grown and improved because of the volunteers and their ideas and involvement.”

Please join HRWC staff and board members on Thursday, April 28 at 6:30 pm at the Dexter District Library to thank Joan for her many contributions and wish her a wonderful retirement.

— Laura Rubin and Kris Olsson

“Take a Hike” for the Watershed!

continued from cover

see on an assessment. You can arrange carpooling and detailed meeting times with your new friends.

THE ASSESSMENT SAFARI

As you set out on your assessment, you can use the aerial photos and maps in the packet to figure out your route through the property. HRWC has worked out permission to access the site with the property owner ahead of time, and often they will join you and can be your guide. The maps will show the different ecosystems (wetlands, forests, grasslands, and any creeks) that you should visit during your trip. It's a challenge to figure out the best route to visit all the different areas and make it back to your car in the most efficient way. Without getting too lost, that is! A compass helps. Some volunteers even have a smart phone



Field assessors Gwynne Fisher and Mary Bajcz on an adventure at the Lyon's Point Nature Preserve in Hamburg Township, Livingston County.

photo: HRWC

equipped with a Global Positioning System, which can be very helpful.

As your team walks through the property, your scribe jots down each plant species your plant expert (or anyone else) calls out. This is a great time to learn about plant identification – each assessment is like attending a nature walk with a naturalist. After a few of these assessments, you too can become a plant expert. (If you're really stumped, our Flickr slide show at www.hrwc.org/our-work/bioreserve/bioreserve-plant-photo-stream/ can help with identification.)

Every few minutes, you and your teammates stop to look around at the big picture, to get a sense of the overall vegetation structure in the forest or wetland or grassland you are assessing. Are there mostly big trees, a mixture, or is this an old pine plantation? Are there a lot of invasive species taking over? Does the wetland have distinct zones of vegetation, like a wet meadow area surrounding a cattail marsh, or are different kinds of wetland plants all mixed together? Is the ground beneath the forest canopy clear and open, or is it choked with invasive buckthorn? Are there specific species, like trillium or trout lily, that indicate a high quality forest? These are the kinds of questions that help us determine the value these properties provide to the health of the watershed.

After 2 – 3 hours of exploring, you return to your cars. This is a good time to go over the assessment forms and confer over your answers. It is also a good time to go and get a well deserved ice cream cone or other refreshment, and reflect on a great day spent enjoying the Michigan outdoors while helping HRWC at the same time.

REGISTERING TO VOLUNTEER

The next Bioreserve Field Assessment TRAINING WORKSHOP is MAY 7 at Matthaei Botanical Gardens on Dixboro Road. Go to www.hrwc.org/volunteer/bioreserve-field-assessments/ to register and find details about various bioreserve locations and procedures. If you have any questions about the program, please email Kris at kolsson@hrwc.org.

—Kris Olsson



Millers Creek FILM FESTIVAL

Showcasing creativity for clean water.

The festival seeks concise, creative, original, accurate **VIDEOS** that convey a connection between people and water.

Make a difference, make a film. Produce your own video inspiring the protection of the Huron River.

Tap into your inner critic. Nominate your favorite YouTube video inspiring the protection of rivers, lakes, or streams in general.

Now accepting rolling submissions. Winning entries and the best of the nominations will be featured at a future Festival Showcase.

www.hrwc.org/events/millers-creek-film-festival

Eyes on the Scenic River

HRWC's newest stewardship program: River Scouts funded by REI

Michigan is fortunate to have more than 36,000 miles of rivers and streams. The State of Michigan's Natural Rivers Program was developed to preserve, protect and enhance the finest river systems for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. In 1977, under the state's Natural Rivers Program, HRWC and several citizen groups secured a "scenic river" designation for parts of the Huron and its tributaries.

THE HURON'S NATURAL RIVER ZONES

The designated scenic river section starts at Kent Lake Dam in Kensington Metropark and continues downstream to the Scio-Ann Arbor Township line (excluding lakeshore in the Chain-of-Lakes and the Village of Dexter) and includes portions of Davis, Arms, and Mill Creeks (see map). This part of the river is particularly rich in fish, wildlife, vegetation and scenic beauty, and provides myriad recreational opportunities to community residents and property owners.

The Natural Rivers designation establishes special zoning restrictions within a Natural River District Zone that extends 400 feet on each side of the river. In that zone, new construction can only include single-family housing, and building construction must take place outside of the floodplain and be set back 125 feet from a river or creek. In addition, a 50-foot natural vegetation buffer strip must be maintained along the riverbank, and filling and dredging activities are strictly regulated. Variances to the requirements can be obtained under special circumstances. (For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/dnr and type "natural rivers huron river" into the site search engine.)

HRWC LAUNCHES RIVER SCOUTS

Thanks to a generous grant from REI, HRWC's new volunteer stewardship and paddle recreation program, River Scouts,

will promote the Natural Rivers corridors. River Scouts will raise community awareness and improve the protection of this stretch of the Huron as well as increase recreational paddling. REI is committed to fostering environmental stewardship and increasing access to outdoor recreation through education, volunteerism, gear donations and financial contributions.

community pride, protect the natural beauty and habitat of the scenic river section and identify river changes, impairments or opportunities for restoration.

HRWC and the River Scouts program will be partnering with the Huron-Clinton Metroparks and the Huron River Fly Fishing Club in their annual river clean up on either the first or second weekend in September (date to be announced in May).

River Scouts will encourage folks to take action and join HRWC for a day of work in the scenic river section removing debris from the river. Necessities for this event include sunscreen, drinking water, polarized sunglasses, a willing spirit, good humor and some garbage bags.

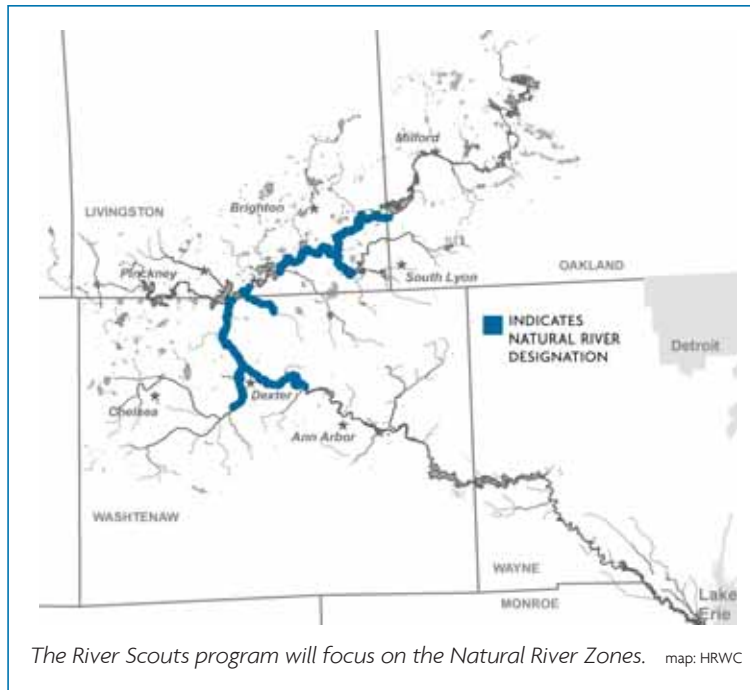
Join us May through September 2011, for paddle trips on all parts of the Huron River. There are day trips, classes for beginner paddlers, and paddle trips for experienced paddlers and their families with an overnight canoe camping trip along the river. River Scouts will be on hand as guides to teach paddlers how to use the river in ways that are consistent with

the natural environment and aesthetic qualities of the river and streams. (See the Summer Recreation article on page 10 for a list of summer paddle trips.)

River Scout workshops will start in May, and paddle trips are throughout the summer. If you are interested in learning more about the River Scouts program, the paddle trips or the river clean up in September, please contact Margaret Smith at 734-769-5123 x 605 or msmith@hrwc.org.

We hope that you are excited about River Scouts, our newest stewardship program, and that you will work with us in preserving and protecting our priceless natural heritage, the Huron River and surrounding watershed.

— Margaret Smith



High-Tech Sleuthing to Solve a Nagging Problem

HRWC awarded \$280,000 grant to detect and eliminate failing septic systems

How much of a problem are failing septic systems? One of the more perplexing questions about water pollution in the Huron River is finally going to be answered thanks to a new HRWC project. Preliminary work by HRWC and others shows that, potentially, the highest concentrations of phosphorus entering the middle Huron are from failing septic systems. U.S. EPA and MDEQ awarded a three-year grant to HRWC and project partners Sanborn Map Company, Washtenaw County, and Photo Science Geospatial Solutions to research this question.



Indications of a septic failure in the summer include lush vegetation due to the excessive nutrient release and standing water (left). In the winter, failing septic systems can be identified by melted snow caused by warm septage leaking up through the ground (right). photo: Washtenaw County

PROJECT GOALS

The project goals are to 1) reduce the quantity of phosphorus and bacteria entering the middle Huron River, and 2) develop a cost-effective approach for monitoring and rectifying problems with septic systems for county health depart-

ments in Michigan. Washtenaw County Departments of Public Health and Environmental Health play a key role on the project by acquiring information, testing draft products, and assisting with disseminating the results.

PURSUIING INNOVATION

HRWC and project partners – with Sanborn and Photo Science taking the lead – will demonstrate the ability of imagery and image analysis methods to detect failed septic systems. Digital image analysis, in conjunction with spatial analysis, will identify failure signatures. The signatures vary, depending on soil and weather conditions, but relate to the impact on vegetation from soil saturation with nutrients and water from the leaking septic systems. The project demonstrates a new use for an existing technology that, if successful, will give county health departments a cost-effective, reliable tool for detecting failing septic systems.

Currently, Washtenaw County learns about failing systems primarily through its “time of sale program,” when sellers are required to have their septic systems inspected. Twenty percent of septic systems are noncompliant, including failures. County Environmental Health Supervisor Leon Moore effuses, “This project will explore some brand new approaches in improving surface water quality. The current Phase II storm water permits, which identify illicit discharges, have focused on more populated areas. This project helps fill a gap by looking at septic systems in rural areas.”

HOLISTIC APPROACH

Current work on the project focuses on developing a map that shows the probability of septic failures within Washtenaw County, with emphasis on three townships in the middle Huron. The failure probability method and map will optimize limited county government resources to rectify the problem systems.

In project years 2 and 3, HRWC will design, implement and assess an education campaign for households in high probability failure areas. The campaign will encourage homeowners to take actions to prevent failures. HRWC will also conduct water quality monitoring in Mill and Honey Creeks for *E. coli* and phosphorus in areas where system failure and proximity to surface waters allows for comparison of conditions before and after the systems are corrected. The project will complement ongoing water quality work within the middle Huron including the Middle Huron TMDL Initiative, Middle Huron Stormwater Advisory Group, and the Washtenaw County Illicit Detection Elimination Program. Contact Elizabeth Riggs at eriggs@hrwc.org for more information.

— Elizabeth Riggs

BOOKS BY CHANCE

REMINDER:

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

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

THANKS!

Volunteers Gearing Up for Monitoring in Livingston County

Middle Huron Initiative model used for expanded program

HRWC has expanded its successful volunteer water quality monitoring program in the middle Huron tributaries to new sites in Livingston County. In August and September of 2010, HRWC successfully piloted the monitoring effort at a handful of sites with a small team of adventurous volunteers. Starting this spring, HRWC will expand the pilot to include more sites, and additional volunteers will be needed.

PROGRAM TO UNDERSTAND STORMWATER POLLUTION

HRWC created the Water Quality Monitoring Program in response to community interest in increasing the data available on nutrient contributions to the Huron River and its lakes and tributaries. The data is intended to increase understanding of sources of stormwater and other non-point pollution in tributaries of the watershed. This data will help community partners focus and track their pollution reduction efforts as they strive to meet the phosphorus limits in Strawberry, Brighton, and Ore Lakes. The Monitoring Program complements monitoring conducted by municipalities, lake associations, universities, and the Michigan Department of



Volunteers Mike and Magda recording water quality data over Allens Creek.

photo: HRWC



Volunteers Patti and Julie at one of the monitoring sites measuring stream flow.
photo: HRWC

Environmental Quality (MDEQ). Trained volunteers take samples from creeks to test for nutrients, sediments and chemical characteristics twice a month from April to September. Volunteers also measure stream flow and use an automatic sampler to collect data during summer rain events to add information about pollutant loading from runoff. Stream locations are prioritized based on their ability to further the understanding of relationships between land cover and ecological stream health.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

In partnership with the Livingston County Drain Commissioner, HRWC secured Federal stimulus funds to support the initial two years of monitoring in the Huron Chain of Lakes watershed. Long-term funding will be provided by the Livingston Watershed Advisory Group (WAG) – a group of community representatives in Livingston County dedicated to better managing stormwater runoff. The Brighton Waste Water Treatment Plant laboratory has agreed to analyze the collected samples.

Few storms between August and September last fall meant that baseline phosphorus and sediment levels at each of the pilot monitoring sites were relatively low. Total phosphorus measures were all below

50 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$), except at the site downstream of the Brighton Lake dam, where measures ranged between 40 and 60 $\mu\text{g/L}$. The water quality target for area lakes is 30 $\mu\text{g/L}$. Relatively few data were collected in the pilot year, so it is not possible to draw conclusions at this point. It will be interesting to see results at these sites following storm events in 2011 to help determine the source of phosphorus to Brighton Lake, in particular. Longer term trends will also be important. The Middle Huron Initiative showed significant decreases in phosphorus that may be attributed to local policies such as phosphorus-free fertilizer ordinances.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

HRWC will need additional volunteer support in 2011. Anyone can help out; training will be provided March 19 at 1:00 PM. Visit the HRWC website and look for “Water Quality Monitoring” for more information. Sign-up to volunteer and then register for training. Livingston County is also in need of volunteers to collect macroinvertebrates in the Shiawassee River watershed near the City of Howell. Contact Ric Lawson at rlawson@hrwc.org if you are interested in this program, or if you have any questions about HRWC’s water quality monitoring programs.

— Ric Lawson

Know Your Board Representative

Sue Shink, Northfield Township

Sue Shink is the HRWC board representative from Northfield Township, and she brings a perspective from a more rural part of the watershed.

She has been interested in water quality issues for a long time, having spent summers swimming and boating on Lake Huron and fishing in the St. Clair River. Although the water looked clear and blue, she was horrified to learn that the fish they caught were poisonous if you ate too many. She then took action and served on the St. Clair River Binational Public Advisory Commission, which oversees the clean-up of the river. She also worked on water and pollution issues with the Grosse Pointe League of Women Voters before she moved to Northfield Township in 2002.

Sue, her husband, Tom Hatch, and their three daughters live on 35 acres, where they care for a wide range of pasture-based animals. When developers sought to build a subdivision in her neighborhood, Sue worked with her neighbors to defeat the project. She served as a Northfield Township Trustee from 2004-2008, which is when she was appointed to the HRWC Board. She also serves on Washtenaw County's Agricultural Lands Preservation Advisory Committee and the Northfield Township Historical Society. Her education in political science (BA), natural resource planning (MS) and law (JD) from the University of Michigan served her well in these endeavors. Sue and her family enjoy walking in the woods and swamps, and canoeing and swimming in the Huron.



Sue enjoys summer in the watershed.
photo: E. Hatch

To contact Sue with your questions or comments, call her at (734) 663-0225. Or call HRWC at (734) 769-5123 for more information or to volunteer for one of our many activities.

— Eunice Burns

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Laura's Stream of Consciousness

An update on HRWC projects and activities

STAFF UPDATES

I want to thank Amy Samples for her internship and short-lived, but very productive, work with us at HRWC. Amy came to HRWC from the University of Michigan last fall with Doris Duke Internship funding. She worked with us for three months, and we enticed her to stay through this past January when she secured a full-time



Amy at work photo: HRWC

job at Michigan Sea Grant housed at the University of Michigan. Amy's work included research on dam removal prioritization methods throughout the state with recommendations for HRWC, as well as on the development of the Huron River Water Trail. Her work moved HRWC ahead consider-

ably in both programs. We wish her well in her new job as Community Outreach Coordinator at the Michigan Sea Grant Program.

If for any reason you missed it, please see our cover article on Joan Martin's retirement from HRWC after 20 years as Adopt-A-Stream Director. Thanks for all your hard work and dedication, Joan. We'll miss you!

— Laura Rubin

Spring Gardening the River Friendly Way

Simple steps to start the season out right



Aster novae-angliae, New England aster, a spectacular late-blooming species that prefers medium-moist to wet soil conditions in full to partial sun. photo: HRWC.

For those who are dreaming about getting outside and are planning a garden under the cover of a Michigan winter, consider these resources to inspire and motivate. Find even more information on where to get native plants, how to construct rain gardens and river-friendly lawn care at HRWC's Take Action page at www.hrwc.org/take-action.

WASHTENAW CONSERVATION DISTRICT SPRING TREE & PLANT SALE

Order trees and shrubs by March 18, other native plants by April 29, while supplies last. Online catalog (includes pictures) of conifers, fruit trees, hardwoods, shrubs, grasses, wildflowers and ferns. Plant collections for butterfly or pollinator gardens come in kits for \$44 each. Rain barrels and

tumbling composters are also offered. Details at www.washtenawcd.org.

DON'T GUESS . . . SOIL TEST! MSUE'S SPRING SOIL TESTING PROGRAM

Saturdays in April, drop off your soil samples at participating retailers throughout the watershed, and have samples tested to determine fertilizer needs for vegetables, flowers, landscape plants, turf and fruit. Michigan State University Extensions in Washtenaw, Livingston and Oakland

counties make it easy. Contact info at www.hrwc.org.

BECOME A MASTER COMPOSTER

The typical American household throws away over 5 pounds of compostable garbage daily! Take that garbage and turn it in to something you can use that is river-friendly to enrich your flowers, vegetables, and lawn. Discover the basics of home composting in this fun 5-session class on Thursdays, starting April 21. Limit 20 students. Registration details at www.a2gov.org/compost.

PHOSPHORUS-FREE FERTILIZER: IT'S A STATE LAW

Get a head start by choosing phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer this season! Beginning January 1, 2012, state law prohibits the use of fertilizer containing available phosphate, except to correct a phosphorus deficiency or establish new turf grass, or by trained staff at a golf course. Don't wait until 2012! Details at www.hrwc.org.

— Pam Labadie



Iris virginica, blue flag iris, an outstanding wetland flower that grows in areas with damp soils and water up to 4" deep, blooming from late spring to mid-summer. photo: HRWC.

Summer Recreation

Register today for fun in the Huron River watershed

FLY FISHING

HRWC and Mike Mouradian of Ann Arbor Trout Unlimited (www.aatu.org) will be presenting a series of fly-fishing classes, including a special class for parents and children. Learn casting, knot tying, fly identification, entomology, and wading with experienced instructors. We have rods, waders, flies and will serve lunch. All you need is your willingness, a pair of polarized sunglasses and appropriate clothing for the weather. All classes meet at the Wooden Shelter at Gallup Park in Ann Arbor and are limited to 15 participants. Further details and a fly fishing instruction book by Mike Mouradian will be sent to you upon registration.

GENERAL Fly Fishing Class
Saturday May 14, 10 AM – 2 PM
Open to anyone 16 and older

FAMILY Fly Fishing Class
Saturday May 21, 10 AM – 2 PM
Families WITH their children/grandchildren age 11 and older; adult must accompany children.



photo: HRWC

WOMEN'S Fly Fishing Class
Sunday May 22, Noon to 4 PM
For women only.

WILDCRAFTING

Saturday June 11, 1 – 3 PM
Learn to find and prepare wild edibles, identify common medicinal herbs, and be aware of what plants to avoid. Enjoy a slow walk through Gallup Park with local herbalist and Holistic Health Practitioner Linda Diane Feldt (twitter.com/wildcrafting). Handouts provided. Learn about wild snacking on your walks, plants you can take home and prepare, and herbs to use for immediate first aid as well as long term benefit. Meet at the single lane wooden car bridge at Gallup.



photo: HRWC

SWIM BASELINE LAKE

Sunday, July 17, 8:30 AM
Baseline Lake, UM Sailing Club, Dexter Jump in for our annual summer tradition – swimming the Huron River with Liz Elling and HRWC's Laura Rubin. One-mile swim from the river channel through Baseline lake. After the swim join us for a continental breakfast of hot coffee, fruit and bagels.

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE

ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Don't miss out!

Email Margaret at msmith@hrwc.org
or call (734) 769-5123 x 605

PADDLE INSTRUCTION

Sunday July 17, 2011, 10 AM-12 noon
Huron River Day, Gallup Park in Ann Arbor Presented by REI - We are pleased to announce that we are providing a recreational and family oriented paddle instruction in cooperation with REI. Now you can enjoy learning to paddle in a kayak or a canoe. All the basic strokes (forward, reverse, sweep, draws, stopping and braces) are covered.



photo: J. Oleksinki

PADDLE TRIPS WITH HRWC

Based on the great success of last summer's paddle trips, we are including one overnight trip in July. Join us in a great river experience with expert paddlers Ron Sell and Barry Lonik along with HRWC staff. Each trip includes discussion regarding that river section's water ecology, history and unique features. Shuttle transportation provided. Bring your own watercraft, gear, food, drinking water and appropriate clothing for the weather. Every paddler must wear a flotation device - bring your own. Exact location of each put-in will be sent to participants after they register.

Saturday May 21, 10 AM put in
Proud Lake to Milford

Saturday June 11, 10 AM put in
Dixboro to Frog Island

July, date TBD - Ron Sell will teach how to pack and prepare for overnight canoe camping trip.



photo: J. Oleksinki

Saturday July 23 and Sunday July 24
Overnight Canoe Trip and Camping at Island Lake State Recreation Area
2 PM meet/shuttle pack; put-in time is 3 PM at Island Lake State Park at Riverbend Fishing Access below the dam. Camping at the Island Lake S.P. Canoe Camp. Continue on the next day to takeout at Huron Meadows Metropark.

Friday August 12, 7 PM start
South Lake (full moon/bonfire)
(no shuttle needed)

September 17, 10 AM put in
Lower Huron MetroPark to Oakwoods

— Margaret Smith

River Stewards Speak Up

HRWC members go the extra step to protect the watershed



photo: L. Green

Michelle Eickholt and **Lee Green** live in Dexter and have been contributing members of HRWC for many years. “We enjoy the opportunity to explore the river with new volunteers at the River Roundup. We get to talk about the river and how the tiny invertebrates that we collect are a marker for the river’s health. Going to two different sites can be a neat illustration of how ‘good’ and ‘not so good’ diversity reflects the local watershed. We also share the triumph of finding that neat bug concealed in the sample,” explains Lee.

“Mapping a stream is a favorite activity: we make it a family outing with one of our grown up kids or a recently arrived exchange student (a memorable introduction to Michigan), and we always find something new and interesting in the

stream. While mapping & measuring last August we waded into a pool with fish large enough to swim into our legs with surprisingly hard thumps.

“Volunteering at HRWC is a great chance to contribute to science as a citizen – the information we collect over time can provide evidence of how the river is affected by changing conditions – or identify which temperature-sensitive fish can successfully live in the Huron and its tributaries. We love learning, we enjoy being outdoors, we like the feeling of contributing to something truly worthwhile and that makes a difference, and we like sharing that with others who do, too. That adds up to HRWC.”

Dick Carlisle, President of Carlisle Wortman Associates, Inc., works with local governments to create livable, healthy communities. “It is clear that a major economic shift needs to occur in Michigan with the transformation from manufacturing to a

knowledge-based economy. Communities that wish to attract and retain an educated workforce and businesses that reflect the new economy will find themselves in a national, even worldwide, competitive environment. Talented people and advances in technology allow people to live in areas with a quality of life they desire. As the community planners to 24 cities, villages and townships within the watershed, we recognize that the Huron River, as the



photo: CWA

cleanest urban river in Michigan, represents a key component of the quality of life this area has to offer. Protecting and enhancing the unique natural features within the Huron River watershed is as important as maintaining our physical infrastructure if we wish to distinguish ourselves and gain a competitive advantage.”

— **Margaret Smith**



Photo courtesy of Bentley Library.

Dear friend of the river,

People often ask what they can do to help protect the Huron River. We tell everyone to practice stewardship and membership. Take action by changing small habits that will make a big difference. Inspire others and spread the word about HRWC. Support us, because for 46 years we have kept the victories coming.

Use this newsletter and attached envelope to inspire someone in your life to become a member of HRWC. Share your enthusiasm in protecting the Huron River. Use the envelope or donate online at www/hrwc.org/support-us/

If you have never given to HRWC, take this opportunity to become a member and make a difference in your corner of the watershed.

For the river, your stewardship and membership keep the victories coming.



Huron
River
Watershed
Council

Protecting the river since 1965

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Thanks to Our Volunteers!

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

Dave Wilson for teaching with Lynn Bradley and the Belleville High School Ecology Club.

The **157 people** who spent Saturday January 31st successfully searching for stoneflies at 54 sites throughout the watershed, and the 10 additional people who prepared and staffed the event.

Chatura Vaida and **Max Bromley** for travelling, photographing, filing and placing photos of our study sites and for the complicated job of creating useful maps to find and study those sites.

Marilyn and **Edward Couture**, **Lisa Perschke**, **Mike George** and **Joe Mooney** for distributing Stonefly posters.

Lindsey Cousino for designing Adopt-A-Stream Program posters.

Elsie Orb for editing Wikipedia pages and updating the *HRWC History*.

Business Committee members working to cultivate business community support for HRWC; **Dick Carlisle** of Carlisle Wortman Associates Inc., **Mark TenBroek** of CDM, **Paul Cousins** of Dexter Planning, **Eunice Burns** in her role as HRWC Board Member, **John Lloyd** of Magellen Properties, **Eric Petrovskis** of Geotech Consulting, **Sabrina Gross** of Pittsfield Township and **David Mindell** of PlantWise Restoration.

Maurita Holland for inputting Bioreserve field assessment data.

Maurita Holland and **Tricia Jones** for improving our Bioreserve Plant online plant guide and developing an iPhone application for identifying plants in the field.

Dan Swallow, who departed Van Buren Township after years of dedicated service and leadership in protecting and improving watershed resources in the lower Huron, including volunteering for water quality monitoring.

Volunteering with HRWC is challenging, rewarding, and a great way to connect with a diverse group of interesting people motivated to protect our precious water resources.

Water quality monitoring, aquatic insect studies, creek mapping, plant inventories, natural area assessments, stewardship events and shoreline restorations... these are just a few of the many activities available to HRWC volunteers.

Get connected to opportunities that match your interest at www.hrwc.org/volunteer and become an active part of a meaningful solution.