



# Huron River Report

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SUMMER 2018



feature  
story

## Aerial Insectivores

*Look for swallows and swifts throughout the watershed this summer*

Southeast Michigan is home to several species of aerial insectivores—six swallow species, and the Chimney Swift. These birds, though not closely related, have evolved to use a similar ecological niche—catching and eating insects on the wing. All of these species can be seen skimming the surface of the river and surrounding lakes and ponds in search of emerging and flying insects.

### Chimney Swifts

Chimney Swifts are black and charcoal gray birds with short tails and long, thin wings that beat stiffly. They arrive in the Huron River watershed in mid-April, after migrating from their

wintering grounds in South America. They are more closely related to hummingbirds than to songbirds. Chimney Swifts nest and roost inside old chimneys and similar structures, just as the name suggests. They are unable to perch and can only cling to vertical, rough surfaces when needing to rest, roost, or nest. Chimney Swifts attach their nest of small twigs to chimney walls with their sticky saliva, raising their small brood of young inside the chimney until the fledglings are ready to leave the nest. You may see these birds in late spring, summer, and fall emitting their chittering call while flying over cities, towns, and open water in search of

*continued on page 4*

Chimney Swift  
credit: Z. Pohlen



## Safe Swimming in the Huron River

*Stay healthy by deciding when and where to jump in*

Summer is on the way—time to plan for fun! In the Huron River watershed there are many great places to swim, paddle, fish, or otherwise play in the water. In most stretches of the Huron River, bacteria in the water is not a concern. In other places, some simple decisions regarding when and where to go can help prevent exposure to high bacteria counts.

### What bacteria is the concern?

While many forms of microbial life can render a waterbody unfit for

human use, the State of Michigan uses one species of bacteria—*Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*)—as an indicator of the presence of pathogens. *E. coli* are coliform bacteria. Coliforms are a group of bacteria that includes a smaller group known as fecal coliforms, which are found in the digestive tract of humans and warm-blooded animals. While most strains of *E. coli* are not dangerous, some strains can cause illness.

### How does bacteria get into the water?

A variety of sources contribute bacteria to local waterbodies. Sources include improper waste connections to stormdrains or roadside ditches, malfunctioning septic systems, combined and sanitary sewer overflows, stormwater runoff, wild and domestic animal waste, and agricultural runoff. When these sources contact surface water it can become contaminated or unsafe for human interaction.

*continued on page 5*

**INSIDE: UPCOMING EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS** *Celebrating Laura's tenure*  
*Change Makers Needed | Stewardship Awards | Paddler's Companion updated! | Walter J. Weber, Jr., Ph.D. Fund*





# Laura's Stream of Consciousness

If you're a regular reader of the Huron River Report, then you've come to expect this spot to offer thoughts from HRWC Executive Director, Laura Rubin. For this issue, however, Deputy Director Elizabeth Riggs is stepping up to recognize Laura's 20 impressive years at the helm of HRWC. (Laura was just one year in when she hired Elizabeth in 1999 fresh out of graduate school, so these recollections are first-hand. No fake news here!)

Since joining the organization in 1998, Laura has transformed HRWC from a low-profile organization to a high-impact, high-visibility national leader in the field of watershed management. HRWC leads in the development and dissemination of cutting-edge conservation and public-education projects, serving as a model for watershed organizations around the country and world. In 2013, she won River Network's River Heroes Award, which recognizes those who have made a sustained contribution to river protection.

Laura leads our team in successfully bridging the often divergent interests of river uses by identifying shared needs and values—such as a high quality of life, clean drinking water, attractive natural areas and the ability to make a living—and then proposing how to reach that common

ground together. Laura works toward balancing environmental, economic, and recreational demands, while recognizing that attracting people to the river is the first step in developing their conservation ethic and appreciation for it as a valuable resource.

**Hold the Date!**  
Join us September 13th  
at **Suds on the River**  
to recognize and appreciate  
**Laura's impact**  
on HRWC and the  
Huron River watershed.

Laura, who was the first student to enroll in the University of Michigan's joint MBA/MS program, says her graduate education prepared her to take the helm of HRWC by providing a tremendous grounding in business and science, and valuable exposure to different fields, perspectives, and people. These days, she guides the School of Environment and Sustainability as a member of its External Advisory Board.



D. Brenner

## Highlights of Laura's tenure include:

- Administering an annual budget of \$2.1 million and overseeing staff of 12, a board of 30, and more than 500 volunteers
- Developing and nurturing excellent relations with 40 member governments, 1,000 individual members, 75 business members, dozens of major donors and community leaders, and numerous press and media organizations
- Stabilizing and growing the organization's financial health, increasing the annual budget by 500% (from \$350k to \$2.1 million), expanding net assets 16-fold (from \$37k to \$1.17 million), and maintaining fiscal strength through the recession
- Transforming the organization's fundraising program: increasing memberships four-fold, foundation grants three-fold, and doubling government grants; developing contractual services to represent 25% of the annual budget; and creating a major gifts program

All that, plus she makes a mean lemon bar!

Please join us in congratulating Laura on this special anniversary!

— Elizabeth Riggs  
HRWC Deputy Director



Laura receives Washtenaw County's first Leadership Award of the Environmental Excellence Partnership Program from Water Resources Commissioner Evan Pratt.

# Change Makers Needed

HRWC seeks residents to make their voices heard for the river

Sixty-seven local governments have the power to determine the location of houses, farms, and businesses throughout the watershed. These land use decisions have tremendous impacts on water quality and natural areas. One of the most powerful ways local citizens can affect change that will protect the Huron River is to get involved in their local governments.

In January and February 2018, HRWC hosted workshops in Green Oak Township, Belleville, and Chelsea teaching 50 local residents about the impacts of development on clean water, how local governments make decisions, and the many ways to connect with and influence the process. Participants learned local river-friendly policies that protect clean water, and that local governments are comprised of volunteer boards and commissions made up of regular people—anyone can get involved, regardless of expertise.

HRWC offers Change Makers workshops to help citizens become advocates for smart land use and water resource protection. The long-term goal of the Change Makers program is to support those who want to learn about land use, local government, and water quality, and get involved in protecting the Huron.

Prior to the availability of the Change Makers program, many concerned residents around the watershed have learned by diving into an issue on their own. Self-taught "Change Maker" Carol Westfall and her neighbors learned the importance of being involved in local government when it came to protecting Pleasant Lake, in Freedom Township.

## Carol shares her story

Who protects my lake's interests? Lake property owners often ask this question and assume the responsibility rests with local officials or their lake association. After almost 10 years of lake living, I now believe there is only one person truly accountable for maintaining lake or any other natural area or water quality protections: YOU! Yes, you and your fellow residents are the only ones who can fully represent your lake, river, and water

quality and bring together residents, officials, and other constituents to gather support for lake and water quality protections.

I learned this the hard way. A few years ago, our lake residents were invited by township officials to provide input into a new Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance, but very few residents showed any interest. That was *our* mistake. Later, we were caught by surprise when some parts of the new zoning ordinance did not reflect our lake's needs. Changes to the new ordinance were made, but not without enormous resident effort.

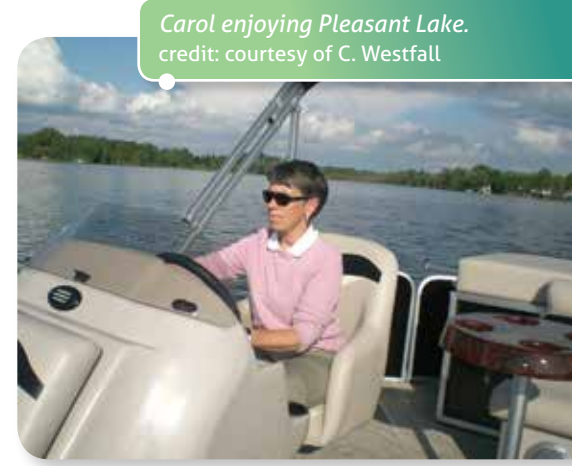
## Lessons learned yield helpful tips

You can learn from our mistakes and help protect your community's water resources. Here are a few tips to get you started.

**TIP #1:** Regularly attend local planning commission and board meetings. Local officials need to know residents are involved and watching over actions and policies that affect local lakes and water resources. Get to know your officials and build relationships with each of them—before you have an issue. You must help them act in the best interests of local water resources. Just as you'll flag something when they get it wrong, be sure to acknowledge and thank them when they get it right.

**TIP #2:** Educate yourself and your neighbors. Study your local zoning ordinance and determine how each section affects natural resources. Join HRWC's Change Makers program ([www.hrwc.org/change-makers-bootcamp](http://www.hrwc.org/change-makers-bootcamp)) and get lots of resources, including the *Land Use for a Healthy Watershed* guidebook.

**TIP #3:** Build a coalition of residents to support your advocacy efforts. When a problem occurs, you will need the support of your fellow environmentally-minded residents (officials respond to local constituent feedback and groups in attendance at meetings, etc.).



Carol enjoying Pleasant Lake. credit: courtesy of C. Westfall

**TIP #4:** Create connections with local media. Get to know your local editors and writers. Educate them about your efforts and challenges. Most have limited budgets and staff so *you* must do the leg work. Make it easy for them by submitting articles and pictures to get your message in the news and let the public know what's going on.

**TIP #5:** Don't give up! Advocacy for vital yet voiceless interests like lakes, rivers, wildlife, forests, and wetlands is not for the timid. Your persistence will be rewarded and your lakes, clean water, and natural areas will be the beneficiary.

**TIP #6:** Even better, get interested residents appointed to the planning commission and committees. Run for office! HRWC's Change Makers program is providing resources to those running for local office.

## Become a Change Maker

Michigan needs leadership from local residents. There's never been a better time to step forward. Follow the above six tips and join HRWC's Change Makers ([www.hrwc.org/changemakers](http://www.hrwc.org/changemakers)), and you'll be well on the way to protecting your water's future.

—Kris Olsson and Carol Westfall



food. They are especially vocal when gathering to enter their chimney roosts at dusk, and they can be seen diving into chimneys *en masse* during staging before migration in the fall. People commonly mistake these birds for bats.

Though currently a common bird, Chimney Swifts are in steep population decline, in large part due to habitat loss. Many old buildings, with the chimneys these birds prefer, are torn down each year, only to be replaced with modern buildings with metal chimneys, which they cannot use. Chimney Swifts have evolved in synchrony with human habitation, and the Eastern population of this species is no longer able to use old growth hollow trees in which to nest, which was their nesting location in the distant past. Look for Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation and Washtenaw Audubon Society's Swift Nights Out in late summer and fall, when we identify roosts and count Chimney Swift numbers to monitor their population.

### Swallows

In contrast, swallows are songbirds, which are capable of perching on twigs and wires and have a well-developed voice box (syrinx) to produce complex song. They swoop and fly on broader, shorter wings than swifts, but they are equally maneuverable in the air. They have longer tails than the short-tailed swifts, and their wingbeats are graceful and smooth. Michigan is home to sizeable populations of Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, and Northern Rough-winged Swallows, as well as somewhat smaller populations of Bank Swallows, Cliff Swallows, and Purple Martins. All of these species hunt flying insects over fields and trees as well as over water.

Tree Swallows arrive here from their southern wintering grounds by the first of April. They are iridescent blue-green and white, and they nest in tree cavities and man-made nest boxes. They may be seen skimming treetops and water surfaces in search of flying insects, or singing near their nest. Barn Swallows, as their name suggests, construct mud nests under overhangs or inside barns or similar structures. They are common



Barn Swallow

in agricultural settings and along the Huron River, nesting under bridges in such places as Barton Nature Area and Gallup Park in Ann Arbor. Their plumage is iridescent blue, with orange and white on their underside, with a long, deeply-forked tail. Northern Rough-winged Swallows nest in drain pipes, abandoned Kingfisher nests, and holes in river banks and walls. They are drabber in plumage, being a somewhat dusty-looking brown above and white underneath, with brownish smudging at the neck.

One of our less common nesting swallow species is the Cliff Swallow. The underside of the Huron Parkway bridge at Gallup Park in Ann Arbor is home to hundreds of these birds. They are superficially similar to Barn Swallows in plumage, but have a shorter, less notched tail and an orange rump patch. Watch for them in early May on the side of the bridge, sprucing up their mud nests. Bank Swallows, our smallest swallow, nest colonially in steep banks, where they excavate holes for their nests. They are brown above, and white below, with a distinctive

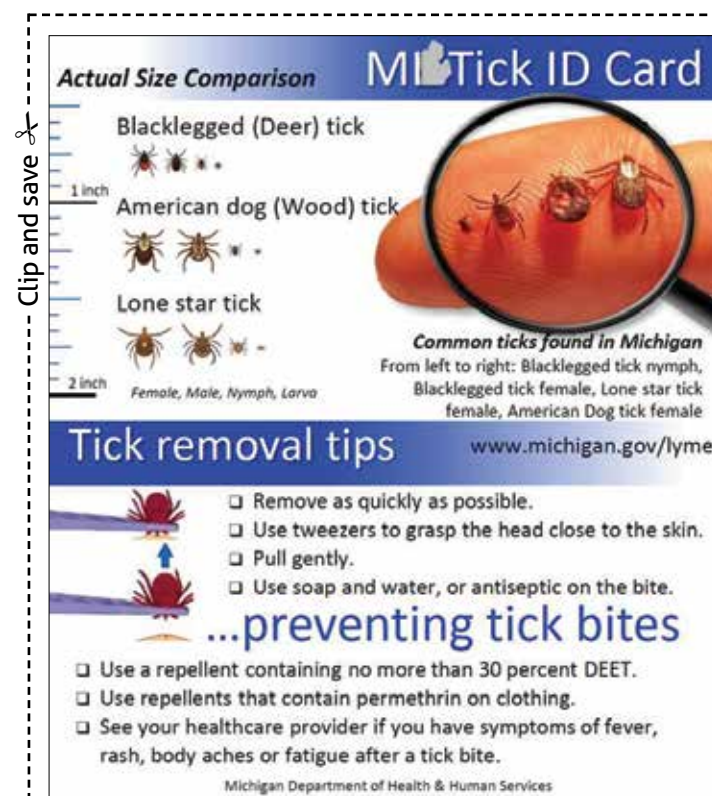
brown necklace at the throat.

Our largest Swallow is the Purple Martin. These birds are sizeable, purple-blue birds with a beautiful, liquid, warbling song. They nest only in man-made and maintained Purple Martin colonies, such as you might see in agricultural areas or near water at cottages and homes in the Huron River watershed. Their numbers are in steep decline due to invasive bird species, like House Sparrows and European Starlings, which take over their nest structures and kill adults and chicks. Owners of Purple Martin houses must take care to keep these invasive species away.

Enjoy swallows and swifts in the Huron River watershed. They are indicator species of a healthy and ecologically diverse environment!

—Juliet Berger

*Juliet Berger is the ornithologist for Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Natural Area Preservation Division (NAP), and President of Washtenaw Audubon Society. She lives to watch birds and to help other people connect to birds and nature.*



### How are bacteria levels measured?

*E. coli* levels are monitored at many specific locations across the watershed on a regular basis during the recreation season. County health departments and beach managers are required to routinely test public beaches across the state for bacteria levels during the swimming season. Information on swimming beaches is available at the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ) BeachGuard website.

The MDEQ also samples a range of randomly selected sites once every five years to identify potential problem areas in the watershed.

Volunteers in HRWC's Chemistry and Flow Monitoring program sample streams for *E. coli* every two weeks at more than 30 sites in the watershed, both in the main stem of the Huron River and in its tributaries, from April through September. They deliver these water samples to local municipal labs where staff analyze them to determine *E. coli* levels. Past results from this sampling are found on the Info Stream under "Maps" at hrwc.org.

### Why do bacteria levels matter?

The MDEQ, in accordance with the U.S. Clean Water Act, established "designated uses" for all the "waters of the state"—each river, major tributary and lake in Michigan. Watershed management policies then aim to maintain or restore water quality to meet these target uses. Each use has one or more water quality standards that the water must meet. Two of these designated uses are: year-round partial body contact (PBC) recreation (for example, canoeing, kayaking or wading), and total body contact (TBC) recreation (for example, swimming) between May 1 and October 31. Most waters in the Huron River watershed are designated for both uses. In Michigan, both of these recreational uses have to meet *E. coli* standards.

The maximum levels for PBC recreation are "1,000 *E. coli* per 100 milliliters (mL) [of water]." The maximum levels for TBC recreation are "130 *E. coli* per 100 (mL), as a 30-day geometric mean." In addition, "at no time shall the waters of the state

... contain more than a maximum of 300 *E. coli* per 100 mL."

These levels were established to protect people from contracting illnesses due to contact with waters containing bacteria. Research indicates that, when levels exceed the established standards as noted above, the likelihood of gastrointestinal illness—such as bacterial infections (cholera, salmonellosis), viral infections (hepatitis, gastroenteritis), or protozoa infections (cryptosporidiosis, giardiasis)—increases. Once these pathogens are in a stream or lake, they can infect humans through ingestion, skin contact or contaminated fish. Children, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems are at greater risk for illness when they come into contact with contaminated water.

### Deciding WHEN and WHERE to swim

*Check the weather and don't swim for two days after heavy rains totaling 1-inch or more.*

*Look for signs of water pollution such as discolored water, fast flowing and strong smelling drains, or street litter floating in water.*

*Check the *E. coli* section of the Info Stream found under "Maps" on the HRWC website for the general condition of area waters.*

*Avoid swimming next to drain pipe openings or outlets.*

*Swim only in designated "swim areas" and always check for pollution warning notices or beach closure signs.*

### Where and when is it safe to swim?

The answer is a little complicated, but it is safe to swim along most of the length of the Huron River most of the time. That said, there are exceptions. High bacteria counts (i.e. exceeding TBC standards) are very



*Most stretches of the Huron River always meet the standards for "partial body contact recreation" (such as canoeing) where some part of the body comes in contact with water, but it does not normally involve total immersion (like with swimming).*  
credit: City of Ann Arbor

rarely detected from downstream of Kent Lake all the way to Argo Pond, and then again downstream of French Landing Dam all the way to Lake Erie. Consistent high bacterial counts plague the river running through the Ann Arbor area between Argo and Geddes ponds, as well as tributaries flowing into the river along that stretch including Traver, Millers, Malletts and Swift Run creeks. Caution should also be exercised when wading or swimming in some other tributaries to the Huron, especially Norton, Honey, and Mill creeks. HRWC sampling data indicate that these waters exceed TBC (and sometimes PBC) standards more often than not.

Additionally, untreated, unfiltered rain water runoff washes into the Huron River through community stormdrains or directly over land, carrying pollution with it. Fertilizers, pesticides, oil and other auto fluids, and waste from pets and farm animals get into the water. As a result, bacteria levels in rivers, lakes and creeks rise. Overall, HRWC recommends that people refrain from contacting any surface water (especially in agricultural or urban areas) for 48 hours following large rain storms. The key is to avoid ingestion or internal body contact (i.e. through a wound). If you do make contact with river water after a storm, wash all exposed skin thoroughly afterward.

—Ric Lawson and Pam Labadie



## MISSION

The Huron River Watershed Council protects and restores the river for healthy and vibrant communities.

## VISION

We envision a future of clean and plentiful water for people and nature where citizens and government are effective and courageous champions for the Huron River and its watershed.

## CORE VALUES

We work with a collaborative and inclusive spirit to give all partners the opportunity to become stewards.

We generate science-based, trustworthy information for decision makers to ensure reliable supplies of clean water and resilient natural systems.

We passionately advocate for the health of the river and the lands around it.

## HRWC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

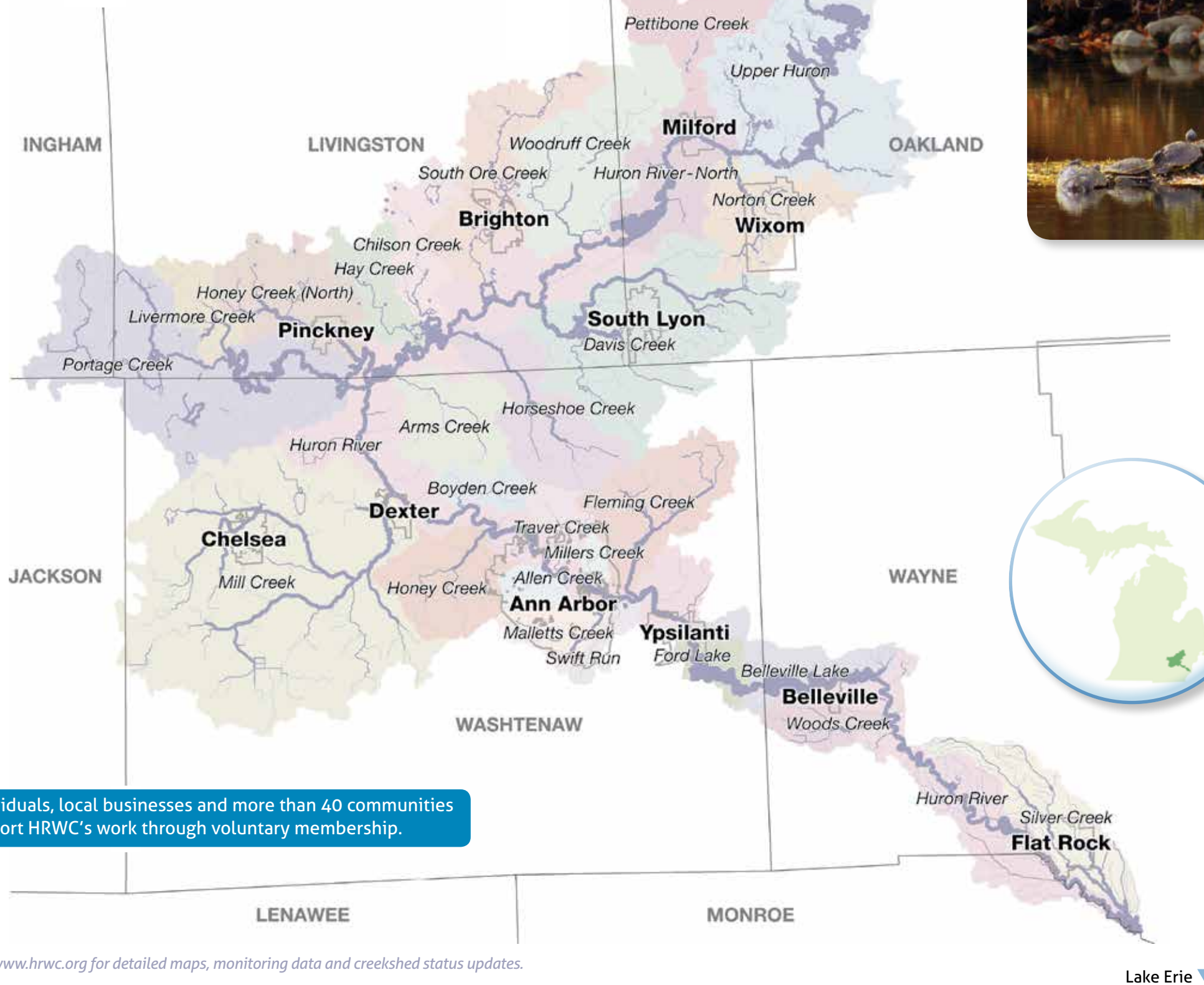
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Matthew LaFleur (Treasurer)  
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Curt Wolf  
Lisa Wozniak

# The Huron River Watershed



Visit [www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org) for detailed maps, monitoring data and creekshed status updates.



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M. Akemann

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calendar  
of events

# HRWC Events and Workshops

JUNE • JULY • AUGUST • 2018

## Chemistry and Flow Monitoring Mid-Season Training

Saturday, June 23, 1:00 – 2:30pm, NEW Center

*Did you miss our program orientation in March? Attend on June 23 and you can join us mid-season to help measure the quality of local rivers and streams this summer! Collect water samples, measure stream flow, and sample runoff from rain storms. Stream sites are in Washtenaw, Livingston, and Wayne counties. We have a strong need for volunteers to work downriver. Additional hands-on training will occur in the field during the first week of sampling.*

Registration: [www.hrwc.org/volunteer/water-sampling](http://www.hrwc.org/volunteer/water-sampling)

## Single Fly Tournament

Sunday, July 15, 10:00am – 5:00pm, Schultz Outfitters, Ypsilanti

*Pick your best fly and fish it till you lose it! Bring a partner or come alone. Prizes may include fly rods, reels, gear, gift certificates and more. All proceeds benefit the Huron River Watershed Council's water quality and river restoration projects.*

Registration: [www.hrwc.org/single-fly-tournament](http://www.hrwc.org/single-fly-tournament)

## HRWC's Baseline Lake Swim (1 or 2 miles)

Sunday, July 15, 8:30am from the UM Sailing Club in Dexter

*Join us for our annual open water swim. The Huron River flows through and connects the Chain of Lakes—nine kettle lakes in Livingston and Washtenaw counties that were formed by receding glaciers. Baseline is one of these—jump in!*

Details: [www.hrwc.org/calendar](http://www.hrwc.org/calendar)

## HRWC Board Meeting

Thursday, July 19, 5:30pm, location TBD

Contact: Laura at [lrubin@hrwc.org](mailto:lrubin@hrwc.org)

## River Cleanup

Sunday, August 18, 7:00am, Milford and Hudson Mills

*Help us collect and remove tons (literally!) of trash from the river.*

Details: [www.hrwc.org/volunteer/river-cleanups](http://www.hrwc.org/volunteer/river-cleanups)

## Stop by HRWC's Booth at these community events:

Ann Arbor Mayor's Green Fair, Friday, June 8

Dexter Daze, Friday and Saturday, August 10 – 11

## SAVE THESE FALL DATES!

Find details in the next issue  
of the Huron River Report

### Suds on the River

September 13

### Ypsi Fall River Day

September 23

### Leader & Collector Training

September 23

### River Roundup

September 29

### Insect ID Day

October 14

Connect with us  
this summer by sharing  
on Facebook, Instagram,  
and Twitter!  
**#huronriver**

# Walter J. Weber, Jr. Water Quality Monitoring Fund Supports HRWC's science programs

Walter J. Weber, Jr., Ph.D. has dedicated his life to water system sustainability and environmental engineering through academic research at the University of Michigan's College of Engineering for over 30 years. After retiring in 2009, Dr. Weber discovered HRWC and hosted Suds on the River at his home on Ford Lake. Dr. Weber's family appreciates being able to support HRWC's mission to restore and protect the river for healthy and vibrant communities.

Now the Weber family wants to extend this support into a lasting tribute to their father through a campaign to grow the Walter J. Weber, Jr. Water Quality Monitoring Fund at HRWC. HRWC's longest serving

programs are the science programs that comprise over 25 years of data collection; they engage and educate over 500 volunteers annually.

The fund's goal is to honor Dr. Weber's life work in water by supporting HRWC's vital biological, chemistry, the flow monitoring of the Huron River and its tributaries, and to provide learning and stewardship experiences for the next generation of water scientists.

Please consider making a one-time tax-deductible contribution to HRWC at [www.hrwc.org/weber](http://www.hrwc.org/weber) to honor Dr. Weber's legacy. Any amount you can give will multiply the impact of his gifts to the organization and ensure continuation of our water quality monitoring work.

—Margaret Smith and Kathy Stocking



Walter J. Weber Jr., Ph.D.  
credit: courtesy of W. Weber

# Goodbye, Stevi. Hello, Andrea!



A. Savage

In May, Stevi Kosloskey responded to the siren call (and warmer weather) of southeastern Florida. Stevi came to HRWC in 2014 as a volunteer with the Chemistry and Flow Monitoring

Program, looking to make a deeper contribution to environmental stewardship. Noting her interest and enthusiasm, HRWC hired her as an intern to coordinate the program's volunteers. She quickly proved herself valuable with her ability to organize, communicate, and motivate volunteers in a number of programs.

In her three years with HRWC, she grew volunteer participation to allow the program to cover more than 50 sites it has monitored. She

also developed and contributed to mapping projects, including the recently released Info Stream on the HRWC website. Most recently, she managed the canine investigation of bacterial contamination in Honey Creek. HRWC staff and volunteers alike will miss Stevi's deep love of and appreciation for the natural world, her enthusiasm and energy, her sense of style, and her good humor.

Andrea Paine joined HRWC's staff as a Watershed Planning Associate at the end of April. She coordinates volunteers in the Chemistry and Flow Monitoring Program and assists with stormwater management coordination and many other watershed planning, management, and restoration projects. Andrea has three years of experience in environmental management and policy with a variety of Great Lakes organizations; most recently she was with the Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative in Chicago. Andrea has



a bachelor's degree in Public Policy with a minor in Environmental Studies from the University of Michigan. She lives in the Allens Creek watershed in Ann Arbor and is excited to wade in and contribute to HRWC's knowledge base, and help continue HRWC's legacy of environmental protection and stewardship.

—Ric Lawson

**JULY 15, 10 AM**

**Schultz Outfitters, Ypsilanti**

Pick your best fly, fish your favorite spot,  
win great prizes, support HRWC.

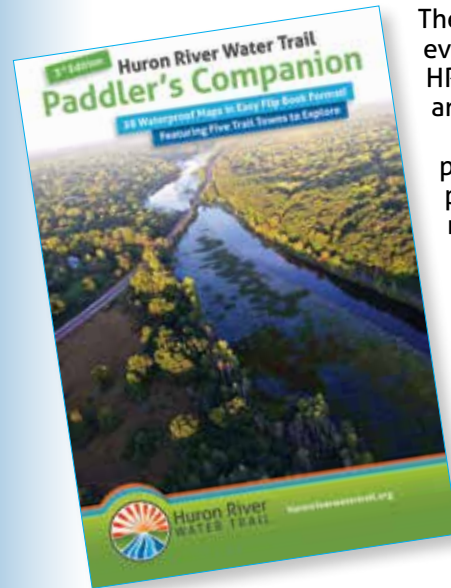
All proceeds go to water quality  
and river restoration projects.

Register at [www.hrwc.org/single-fly](http://www.hrwc.org/single-fly)

Credit: Erik Viso



## Paddler's Companion 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Released



The essential waterproof map book for the Huron River National Water Trail is better than ever! The Paddler's Companion 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition is now available for purchase. Over the winter, HRWC worked with water trail partners to update the maps with the latest information and add some terrific new features.

The revised edition reflects the most popular questions and needs of Huron River paddlers. A table of contents and page numbers make the Paddler's Companion easier to use on the river and for pre-trip planning. Want to paddle all 104 miles in one trip? Check out the recommendations for a five-day trip with options for camping.

The Paddler's Companion still features 28 beautiful color maps in an easy flip book format with durable waterproof pages on a spiral ring binding. Trail Town destination information is updated with trail-oriented highlights, places to go, events, and history.

The Paddler's Companion is available for purchase at [huronriverwatertrail.org/store](http://huronriverwatertrail.org/store) and at several retail partners in southeast Michigan.



J. Wolf

## DTE Energy riverfront property set for transformation

RiverUp! helped inspire and move forward a clean-up and redevelopment of the DTE Energy site at Broadway Street in Ann Arbor a few years ago. The initial clean-up resulted in removal of contaminated sediment and initial restoration of the site. With the City of Ann Arbor's new transit station in the works, this site was one of the options for the new station. Further clean-up and redevelopment was put on hold until this decision was made.

The city's recent decision to place the transit station on Fuller Road has reengaged DTE Energy on site restoration and revitalization. DTE Energy is working closely with a development group, and a sale should be announced and finalized this year. DTE Energy is also in discussions with the MDEQ on an additional clean-up plan, together with the developer, that is scheduled for submission soon. In May, the company unveiled plans for "Broadway Park" that includes investments worth \$75 million or more—public open space, a riverfront trail, event pavilion, hotel, retail space, condos, and a riverfront restaurant. HRWC looks forward to a thorough clean-up of the site and subsequent redevelopment that will make this spot an amenity for residents and visitors.

—Elizabeth Riggs

Kayakers paddle the river next to DTE Energy's property on Broadway. credit: DTE Energy

## 2018 Stewardship Awards



credit: G. Hieber



(From left) Stephanie, Janis, and Bill  
(Inset, top to bottom) Rowan and John  
credit: J. Lloyd; S. Bentley

Each year, HRWC is honored to recognize a select group of stewards for their outstanding service to the watershed. Their efforts are both inspiring and appreciated.

### Rowan Elowe Volunteer of the Year Award

Rowan came to HRWC at the beginning of 2017 and quickly made himself a valuable part of the team. He found a way to participate in most volunteer projects. He became a leader for River Roundups and collected samples for HRWC's Chemistry and Flow Monitoring throughout the summer. Rowan used the knowledge and research skills that he gained while earning his law degree to research river-friendly ordinances, map out Huron River Water Trail sites for the National Rivers Database, and even help with the dirty work of audit preparation. In all, Rowan's contributions to HRWC were long and varied. He recently moved to Boston to be closer to family and to work at MIT's Energy Initiative. We'll miss Rowan, but we

look forward to seeing his contributions to the environmental field.

### Books By Chance Big Splash Award

Through the selling and recycling of used books, CDs and DVDs online, Books By Chance has been making a difference at HRWC since 2006. Owners John Wiese and Stephanie Bentley helped raise over \$36,000 to support HRWC programs that

monitor the health of the Huron River. Many donors bring boxes of books to our offices that John and Stephanie then pick up and sell online. Their finely tuned process and heavy lifting, literally, has made it so easy for all of us to participate in Books By Chance and to be successful. Their commitment to a healthy environment is a model of stewardship for all of us to follow. It is a revenue stream that, month by month over the years, has made a big splash in contributions for HRWC.

### Bill Phillips Bridge Builder Award

As a lifelong outdoorsman and angler, Bill's diverse background makes him an asset to both HRWC and Ann Arbor Trout Unlimited (AATU). He volunteers an exorbitant amount of time working to protect and improve Mill Creek, the Huron's only trout stream. Bill's work as a logger and tree service company owner have made him an amazing asset to HRWC's woody debris management program. His work as an experiential education coordinator at local schools and camps has made

him an adept delegator and leader. Bill supports and nurtures community members who are interested in Mill Creek, while making sure the bridge between HRWC and AATU remains strong.

### Janis Bobrin Lifetime Achievement Award

Janis has long been one of Michigan's most innovative guardians of clean water. First elected in 1988 as Washtenaw County's Drain Commissioner (she reimagined the position into the Water Resources Commissioner), she introduced significant approaches to sustainable stormwater management, coupled with public education designed to promote behavior changes and community stewardship. She was reelected five times, and retired in 2012. In addition to the responsibilities of her position, Janis has left her mark on the Ann Arbor area as a member of numerous commissions and boards focused on environmental protection and public health. While Janis continues to serve on HRWC's board and executive committee, we celebrate her extraordinary career of achievements protecting our precious water resources.

To read more about these amazing folks, see the blog on our website: [www.hrwc.org/blog](http://www.hrwc.org/blog). Thanks to all of the dedicated volunteers who help make HRWC the effective organization it is today!

—Jason Frenzel, Ric Lawson, Laura Rubin, and Margaret Smith

**\$36,000! That's how much we've raised through Books by Chance with your support.**

Proceeds from the internet sale of old and unwanted books, CDs, and DVDs helps HRWC. Please put your "treasures" to work for HRWC. We like the slightly esoteric, academic, scholarly, and especially university presses. Bring your donation to the HRWC office, 9am – 5pm weekdays. We will handle the rest.

**QUESTIONS:** Rebecca Foster (734) 769-5123 x 610 or [rfoster@hrwc.org](mailto:rfoster@hrwc.org)





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HRWC depends on your support to protect our clean water for people and nature.

Questions about how your dollars can help?

Margaret Smith (734) 769-5123 x 605, [msmith@hrwc.org](mailto:msmith@hrwc.org)

Photo by John Lloyd