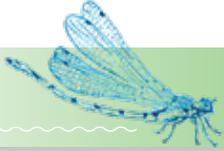




Huron River Report

Published by the Huron River Watershed Council

SUMMER 2020



feature story

Invasive Aquatic Plants

Ecosystem–altering species prevalent in the Huron River watershed

The Huron River watershed has many exotic and invasive plant species that have drastically changed our lake, river, and riparian ecosystems. These plants grow quickly, spread quickly, alter habitat for the indigenous creatures and plants, and reduce recreational benefits for humans. Once invasive plants become established, it is often too late to eradicate them from an ecosystem. Finding the plants early is key to protection, which means both scientists and volunteers need to get boots on the ground and boats in the water to look for them!

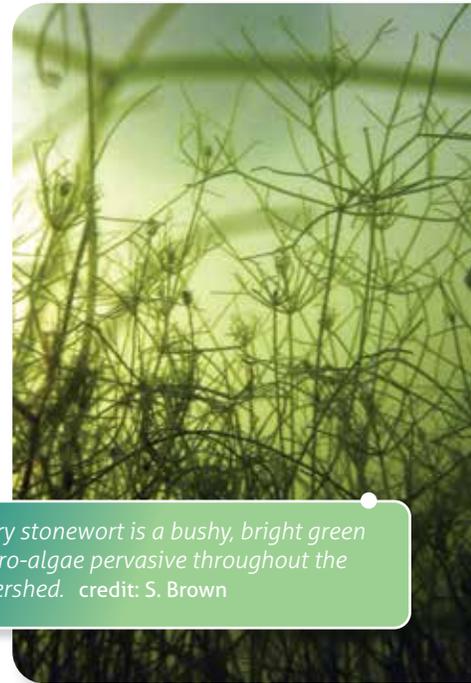
The Midwest Invasive Species Network (MISIN), run by Michigan State University, is a great resource for spotting when invasive species arrive in a new area. Users can

install the MISIN app on their mobile devices to report findings, and the network also holds data collected by government employees and scientists. Of course, the breadth of the mapped data depends on where people are looking and when they choose to report their finds.

A tour of the problem

Let us take an exotic invasive plant tour of the Huron River system via the MISIN mapping software, starting at the river's estuary near Lake Erie, and heading upstream to its headwaters in Springfield Township. At the river's mouth, the two most reported plants are European frogbit and phragmites. European frogbit is a relatively new invader to the river system. This small

continued on page 4



Starry stonewort is a bushy, bright green macro-algae pervasive throughout the watershed. credit: S. Brown

Something's Fishy about Mussels

What's lurking at the bottom of the river

In the mid-1990s, I was looking through a glass bottom bucket to see the bottom of Davis Creek. I had lost my water temperature monitor. Instead of finding the monitor, I spotted an unusual scene—a fish caught between the two valves of a freshwater mussel. How odd is that! I went to grab my camera but didn't get it in time.

A few weeks later I received a call from Professor Chris Barnhart at Missouri State University. "Did I ever see a mussel capture a fish when I was out in the field?" he inquired. "Funny that you asked," I replied. Dr. Barnhart had observed in the lab what I had observed in the field.

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An endangered lamp mussel. credit: R. Mulcrone

INSIDE: *The Bill and Mary Kinley Innovators Fund | Cleaning Up the Huron River One Piece at a Time Get Your GuppyFriend! | River Giver's Recap | Welcome Wendy Palms, HRWC's new Director of Development*





Rebecca's Stream of Consciousness

It may be an understatement to say that a lot has happened since my last stream of consciousness. Just days after the Spring Huron River Report hit mailboxes, the first COVID-19 cases were reported in Michigan. We all know what has transpired since early March, and how the past three months have been unlike any we have experienced in our lives.

I want to share a little about how HRWC has responded to this crisis and how we are preparing to weather the longer-term consequences of the pandemic.

My first priority is to keep the HRWC staff safe, healthy and supported. We shifted immediately to a virtual office and learned our way through online meeting platforms with the rest of the world. Now, dogs, children and spouses regularly make appearances at our meetings. While we miss the office banter and the view of the river, we know this is where we need to be right now, and we look forward to cautiously returning to the office as restrictions are lifted.

The impact of the pandemic on nonprofit organizations has been heartbreaking: lost staff, lost pay and in some cases, doors have been closed. HRWC is heading into this economic recession in good shape thanks to diverse funding sources, an established rainy-day reserve, and funding through the Paycheck Protection Program Loan as a part of federal relief efforts. Several of our funders are stepping up too. The Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation

awarded us general operating funds in early March, and other funders are providing flexibility as our work has been postponed or changed. I am certain that we will have to hustle harder and work with less in the coming months as the economic impact of the pandemic will remain for many years, but I am committed to keeping our staff on board and able to work on HRWC's increasingly important mission.

Summer is busy and fun for us. We typically bring on dozens of interns and host events with hundreds of volunteers, who help us collect the data that are essential to understanding the health of the river. This field season will look very different. We are monitoring federal and state guidelines, and the team is developing creative solutions for collecting data while socially distancing. Visit our website and watch your social media—we will be posting ways you can volunteer or observe us in the field remotely.

While we deal with much uncertainty, some things are clearer than ever.

Access to clean drinking water is critical. Residents without water are extremely vulnerable to the virus as basic hygiene and hand washing practices are harder to adopt. Further, if the water we do have is contaminated with toxins, we are more vulnerable to the virus. PFAS, for example, suppresses the immune system and has been shown to decrease the efficacy of vaccinations. It has been heartening to see environmental justice and



K. Paine

water advocacy groups come together to demand clean affordable drinking water for all.

Nature is a part of the solution. As people shelter in place, one thing is abundantly clear, our region's parks, paths, forests and streams have been a salve to many. **The river will play a key role in our personal, social and economic recovery.** Outdoor spaces will be the first places we gather again. As businesses reopen, those that are situated near our parks and paths will benefit. Economic vitality is a pillar of our Huron River Water Trail work with our Trail Towns. HRWC will play an important role in the recovery of local businesses.

I'd like to close by saying—we miss you! Our community of volunteers and partners is our family, and it is in no small part due to you that HRWC is able to weather this storm. We continue to develop creative ways to stay connected so that you may safely continue to support HRWC's mission. Please go to www.hrwc.org for updates on projects, activities, and events.

Wishing you strength and health,

— Rebecca Essleman
HRWC Executive Director
[@natureiswater](https://twitter.com/natureiswater)



Bill and Mary Kinley Innovators Fund

Enabling Creative Solutions for River Protection and Restoration

Donate at www.hrwc.org/donate/innovators-fund or contact Wendy Palms, wpalms@hrwc.org, (734) 769-5123 x 605.





Bill and Mary Kinley Innovators Fund

Enabling creative solutions for river protection and restoration

"Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower." —Steve Jobs

Bill and Mary Kinley are committed to protecting the health of the Huron River. In December of 2018 they offered HRWC a \$78,000 donation—the seed money for a fund that gives HRWC staff the freedom to explore creative new approaches to river protection and restoration. With that generous start, The Bill and Mary Kinley Innovators Fund began.

This fund allows HRWC to pursue creative ideas and partnerships. It's currently supporting a collaboration among Southeast Michigan watershed groups that will result in a region-wide program using green infrastructure to tackle stormwater pollution.

HRWC is most effective when it can act quickly to respond to emerging threats like PFAS or microplastics, and when it has the resources that allow staff to explore new initiatives to ensure the long-term health of the river.

Thank you, Bill and Mary for your wisdom and vision, and for providing the seeds for the Innovators Fund.

Help us reach our goal!
Join Bill and Mary in their quest to keep the Huron River healthy and beautiful, they will generously match your contribution—up to \$22,000.

To support the Innovators Fund, go to www.hrwc.org/donate/innovators-fund.

Or use the enclosed envelope if you are reading the paper copy of this newsletter—and be sure to check the Innovators Fund box. For more information contact Wendy Palms, Development



Director at wpalms@hrwc.org.

Thank you for supporting your Huron River!

—Wendy Palms

Welcome, Wendy! • HRWC's new development director

HRWC is excited to announce the addition of Wendy Palms to our staff. Wendy began as Development Director in early April and is already an indispensable part of the team. Wendy will help set overall fundraising goals for the organization and lead our efforts with individual donors and foundations. She will also oversee membership, events, and corporate sponsorship programs.

Wendy comes from the University of Michigan where she held several roles in fundraising, most recently providing leadership at Mcubed, a program that matches funders with innovative research collaborations within the University. Wendy brings a strong background in leadership, program development, marketing, and communications. She spent her early career in development for local nonprofits including the Ann Arbor Summer Festival and the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra.

We are excited by her deep experience, fresh perspectives, and enthusiasm for HRWC's mission. Wendy grew up in Traverse City on Lake Michigan and she now lives with her husband and three children in Chelsea in the Mill creekshed. Please help us welcome Wendy!



Wendy connects with Bill Kinley at the River Givers Gathering. credit: K. Paine



floating plant resembles lily pads, but the leaves are tiny, measuring just 1/2 – 2 1/2 inches. The plant forms dense mats that can impede boat traffic and alter food and habitat for waterfowl and fish. Frogbit has also been found in Novi-area detention ponds right on the Huron’s eastern border, but otherwise has not been found in the Huron River watershed.

As the tour navigates the downriver area and makes its way up to Belleville and Ford lakes, phragmites and flowering rush are plentiful, and they remain so throughout the Huron system. Both are riparian plants, meaning that they are on the edge of the river or in very shallow water. Phragmites is a very tall perennial reed (8-10 ft) that spreads very easily, very thickly, and dominates areas, preventing other plants from establishing themselves. Flowering rush is another type of perennial reed that does not grow as tall (1-4 feet) but, like Phragmites, grows in very thick stands that prevent bird and amphibian habitat and impede water access.

As the tour continues up the river, a different species of aquatic exotic invasive plants is found. Ford and Belleville Lakes make a nice home for Eurasian watermilfoil, an infamous plant that clogs up lakes and will even clog up the boat motor of anyone who attempts to plow through it!

Going upstream through Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor, phragmites, flowering rush, and a smaller amount of purple loosestrife (another pretty, yet problematic riparian plant that grows in monoculture stands) remain the primary problems.

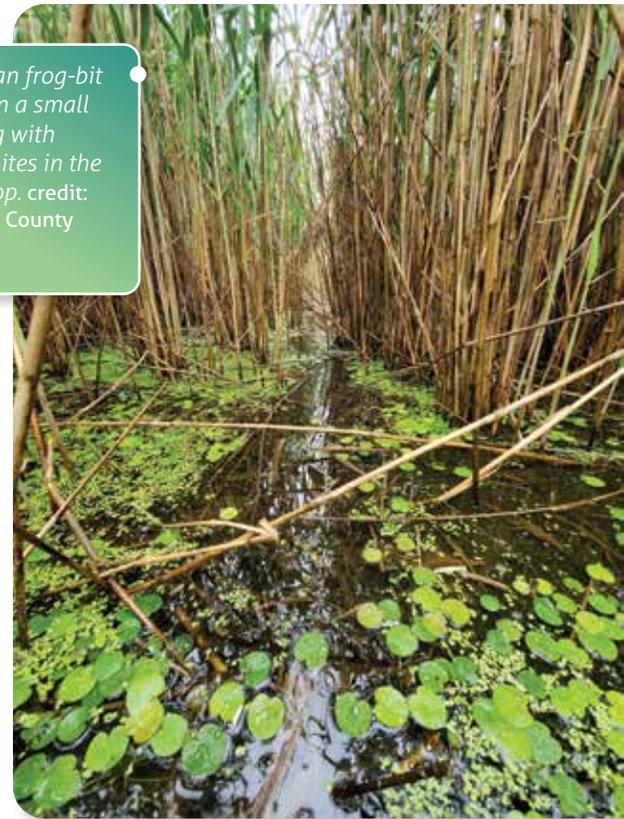
In the Argo and Barton impoundments, we meet another floating plant, the European Water Clover. This exotic invasive was probably released from someone’s aquarium and now grows in patches in these two ponds. Water clover looks just like a four-leaf clover and floats on the surface, forming dense vegetative mats. Thankfully, it seems that water clover does not spread through running water. HRWC and the State of Michigan have been monitoring this stand of water clover and have not yet seen it spread downstream or upstream from Argo and Barton.

The tour continues upstream from Barton Pond, past Dexter, and up to the Chain of Lakes area. The Chain of Lakes region is a series of mostly natural lakes in line with the river and is where starry stonewort starts to become very problematic. These plant-like algae are present from here up to the headwaters in all the inline lakes. Like the other invasive species, the problem with starry stonewort is that it grows very dense. What makes starry stonewort probably worse than other plants like Eurasian water milfoil is that no treatments exist that reliably remove it. Copper-based herbicides can cause a temporary die-back, but these chemicals harm the rest of the ecosystem as they indiscriminately kill non-target plants and smaller organisms like macroinvertebrates. Starry stonewort is a relatively new plant on the scene, and there is still much to learn about it. Scientists agree that starry stonewort thrives in lakes of Southeast Michigan; low-nutrient, transparent lakes with calcium carbonate-rich sediments.

As the tour goes upstream into Kent Lake, we meet another exotic invasive—curly-leaved pondweed. This plant is generally not as widespread as starry stonewort or Eurasian watermilfoil, but it can cause problems at some locations. Curly-leaved pondweed differs from the many native pondweeds, sporting leaves that look like Ruffles potato chips.

The tour continues upstream, repeating the same plants *ad nauseam*; starry stonewort and invasive watermilfoil primarily in the natural lakes and impoundments; and phragmites, flowering rush, and purple loosestrife along the banks. To cap off the tour, we reach Pontiac Lake, very close to the Huron headwaters at Big Lake. Except for frogbit and water clover, Pontiac Lake

European frog-bit grows in a small clearing with Phragmites in the backdrop. credit: Oakland County CISMA



has the misfortune of holding every invasive aquatic plant mentioned thus far in this report.

Vigilance for a wide-spread problem

All these plants are also found on the hundreds of lakes not directly connected to the river. The MISIN data identifies 34 Huron River watershed lakes plagued by starry stonewort, ten afflicted with Eurasian water milfoil, and eight infested with curly-leaf pondweed. These numbers are likely much higher because not every lake is monitored and/or reported.

Unfortunately, once plants establish themselves in the ecosystem, permanent eradication is nearly impossible. The phragmites, flowering rush, and purple loosestrife that make up a large portion of the Huron River’s riparian zone are here to stay. It is possible yet very expensive to treat specific stands of the plants that are particularly

continued on next page



Invasive Aquatic Plants *continued from previous page*

troublesome or invade habitats that are particularly important.

As sad as this analogy is, suppressing invasive species is not much different than suppressing a virus. It takes vigilant isolation and decontamination policies. If any of these exotics spread to a new water body, it is important to stop the plants immediately before they become established. As the watershed's lakes seem particularly susceptible to starry stonewort invasion, a pristine lake that is surrounded by other lakes infected with starry stonewort requires relentless monitoring to extinguish any accidental introduction of this plant.

For lake ecosystems with boat launches, the battle takes place at those locations. Lake associations need to station people at boat launches on busy weekends to check that boats are not bringing in unwanted plants. Monitoring at boat launches is not easy and requires a vigilant, concerted effort. Any boat—including simple canoes and kayaks—can bring in plants, though it is easiest for plants to hide on boat trailers. Two important programs for lake residents to be aware of are the Exotic Plant Watch program through the Michigan Clean Water Corps, which trains people to look for aquatic invasive species, and the Clean Boat Clean Waters program, which offers training and materials to volunteers who want to monitor their

boat launches.

For stream ecosystems, it is even harder to prevent contamination since there is no primary place where something can be introduced. Education is the key—all river users must become aware that they can easily spread invasive species from one place to another. HRWC uses bleach and/or Formula 409 to decontaminate all monitoring gear and waders when moved from one place to another—and encourages anglers

and boaters to do the same. Paddlers on our river and stream ecosystems can get involved with Michigan Paddle Stewards, which helps paddlers identify and map invasive species along Michigan's water trails.

It is impossible to completely eradicate invasive species currently growing in the watershed. It is very possible to prevent new ones from invading. Constant vigilance!

—Paul Steen

RESOURCES

Summer 2016 *Huron River Report* cover article "Aquatic Hitchhikers": www.hrwc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Huron-River-Report-Summer-2016.pdf

Mi-Corp Invasive Species Prevention kit, video and users guide: www.hrwc.org/volunteer/decontaminate/

Exotic Plant Watch program through the Michigan Clean Water Corps: <https://micorps.net/>

Clean Boat Clean Waters program including training and support materials: www.micbcw.org

Invasives reporting procedures and links: www.hrwc.org/waterfront-wise/protect-against-invasives/

Michigan Paddle Stewards: www.misin.msu.edu/projects/mipaddle/



Eurasian watermilfoil is a rooted, submerged aquatic plant. The leaves appear green while the stems are white to reddish. It is notorious for choking lakes and clogging boat props. credit: S. Brown

The Huron River Watershed

MISSION

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

VISION

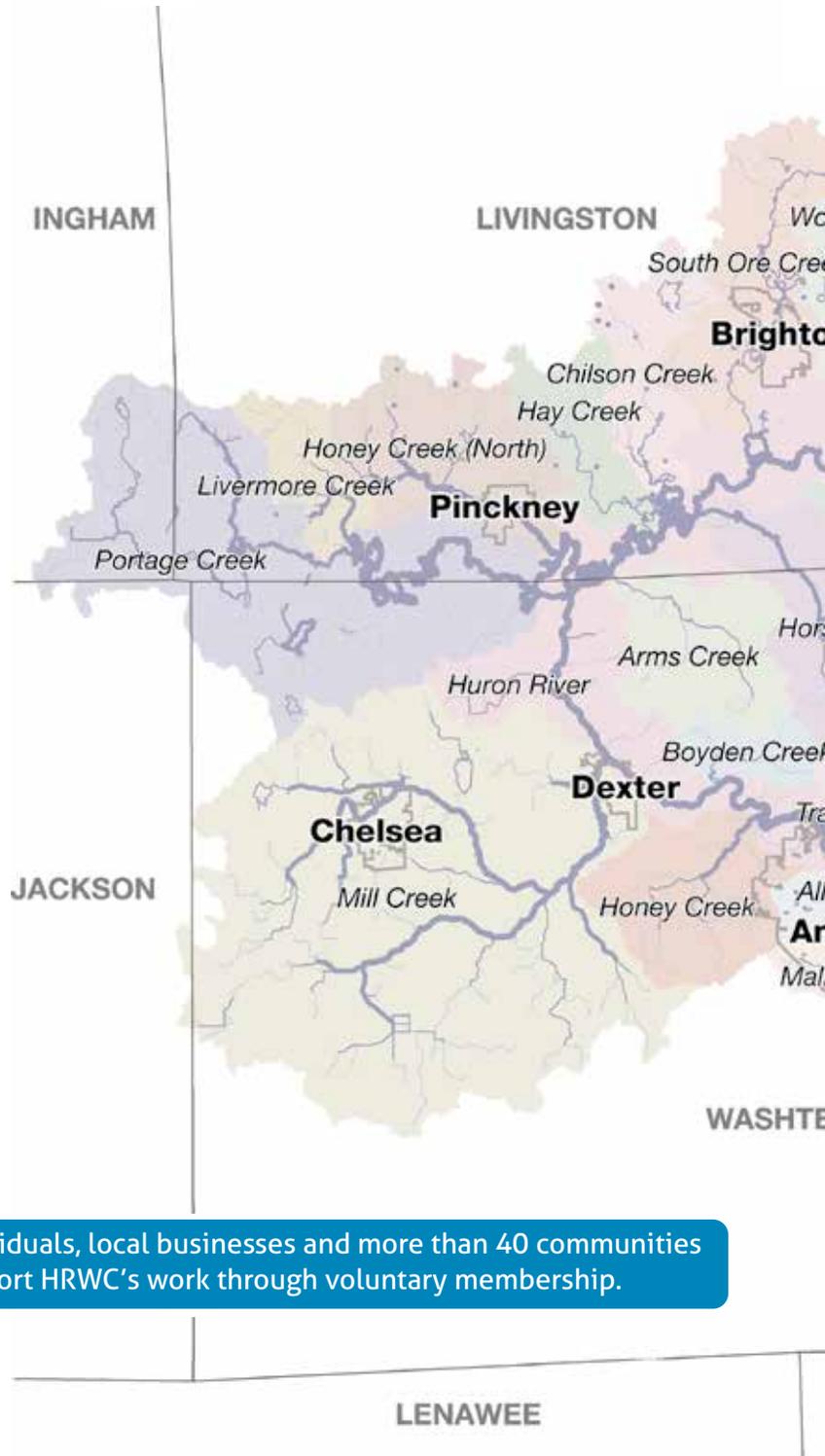
We envision a future of clean and plentiful water for people and nature where citizens and government are effective and courageous champions for the Huron River and its watershed.

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.



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Individuals, local businesses and more than 40 communities support HRWC's work through voluntary membership.

Visit www.hrwc.org for detailed maps, monitoring data and creekshed status updates.



*Community-designated alternate representative



Green frogs are common in and native to the watershed.
credit: Wildlife World

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Unionids have a parasitic larval stage

Mussels catch fish each spring and summer in the tributaries of the Huron River, where the snuffbox mussel (*Epioblasma triquetra*) lives. The federally endangered snuffbox is one of the 31 native mussel species in the family Unionidae that have been recorded in the Huron River. Often referred to as "unionids," these mussels have bivalved (two-valved) larvae, called glochidia (rhymes with the name "Lydia") that must attach to the gills or fins of a fish to metamorphose into its next stage as a juvenile mussel.

The female snuffbox needs to get its larvae to a particular species of fish, the logperch (*Percina caprodes*), and has a clever way of capturing the fish. As the logperch turns rocks over on the bottom of a stream or river to look for food, the snuffbox, resembling a rock, captures the fish between its valves and then pumps its larvae onto the fish's gills. This relationship is highly specialized, as only the logperch's skull can take the force of the snuffbox's grasp.

While the snuffbox needs one host fish species, other unionids, such as the commonly found giant floater (*Pyganodon grandis*), may use many fish species; other types of mechanisms are used to get the glochidia to the fish. Some mussels release glochidia in little packets, called "conglutinates." Some conglutinates resemble worms, aquatic insect larvae or even fish fry. Two mussels commonly found in the Huron River, the plain pocketbook (*Lampsilis cardium*) and the state

endangered wavy-rayed lampmussel (*Lampsilis fasciola*), have modified mantle flaps that resemble minnows. The mussels twitch their mantle flaps, putting on a show that resembles a live fish. Both the plain pocketbook and wavy-rayed lampmussel use bass as their fish hosts, so the unknowing predatory fish goes to eat the "minnow" and becomes infested with the glochidia.

To see a snuffbox capture a logperch, you can visit Missouri State's Unio Gallery at: <http://unionid.missouristate.edu/> The gallery has photos of mussels similar to species found in Michigan, showing the different types of fish lures used by the unionids.

Mussels provide ecosystem services

Because the mussels need healthy fish to continue their life cycle, it is unlikely that the larvae kill the fish. In fact, the parasitic glochidia may help fish develop immunities to other parasites. Mussels also provide ecosystem services in the waters where the fish live. Mussel beds provide habitat for aquatic insects and other macroinvertebrates. As filter feeders, unionids recycle and store nutrients, and even modify food webs. Since mussels don't move very far and are sensitive to pollutants, their presence usually indicates good water quality.

Other small bivalved mollusks you may observe in the Huron include the pea or fingernail clams (family Sphaeriidae) or the non-native Asian clam (*Corbicula spp.*) The invasive zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) and quagga mussels (*Dreissena bugenensis*) have threads to attach to rocks or other hard substrates. None of these other bivalves have the unusual parasitic life cycle of the unionids.

Unionids are one of the most imperiled faunas

Unfortunately, about 70% of the North American unionids are imperiled. Pollution, altering waterways, and most recently the zebra and quagga mussels have decimated these sensitive species. Zebra and quagga mussels like to

settle on the unionids, which creates a burden for them energy-wise and prevents the native mussels from eating. Invasive mussels upstream of a dam can also deplete the food sources that the unionids need downstream.

Another historical reason for the decline in mussel populations was the button industry. Before there were plastic buttons, there were freshwater shell buttons, made from the thicker shelled unionids. In some areas of Michigan where button factories existed, you can still find old shells with round holes where slugs were cut to make buttons.

While shell collecting of unionids used to be a hobby, collection is now restricted. Any handling of the federally listed species (including the snuffbox) is only allowed with federal permits. Permits are needed from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to collect common and state threatened and endangered species. This is mainly done to protect all mussels in Michigan. So, observing the mussels in the rivers is fine, but collecting them is not.

There is good news on the conservation front, however. Researchers at Central Michigan University and governmental agencies in the U.S. have started propagating freshwater mussels in hopes of reseeding some populations. Water quality in general has improved since the Clean Water Act, and populations once harvested for the button industry have rebounded. Michigan has implemented requirements to relocate mussels if they are being impacted by instream construction projects, including bridge replacements. The remedy is very easy – the mussels are just moved to another area so that they won't be dredged, crushed, or harmed in other ways.

—Renee Mulcrone, PhD, Guest Author

L. cardium displays mimic fish to attract host species.
credit: R. Mulcrone





Cleaning Up the Huron • *One piece at a time*

HRWC's goal is to have river cleanups in every location where they are needed, as often as needed. A lofty goal, perhaps, but HRWC has never been shy on vision. Despite not owning any land and having only one kayak on hand, HRWC is flush with waders and grateful for a wealth of volunteers, donors, and partner organizations who are passionate about the health of the Huron River and willing to pitch in.

River heroes donate time and resources

HRWC fosters river cleanups by supporting anyone who is willing to conduct or attend a cleanup. All of the canoe liveries along the Huron provide thousands of free or discounted boats each season, including: The City of Ann Arbor, H2E River Adventures, Heavner Canoe & Kayak Rental, Motor City Canoe Rental, Skip's Huron River Canoe Livery, and Village Canoe Rental. HRWC works with these outfitters by obtaining grant funds to offset costs or match a portion of their donated services. HRWC actively recruits volunteers and some groups have been conducting river cleanups for decades, including the City of Ann Arbor, Huron Clinton Metroparks, and the Friends of the Huron - Oakland. The last of these has held regular cleanups for 34 years—started by a resident of Milford, and now coordinated by her children.

In recent years, the Metroparks and Skip's have both expanded river cleanups, covering more river miles and hosting more events. Schultz Outfitters conducts reconnaissance early each season, organizes cleanups in challenging locations, and more recently held weekly cleanups along the river in Ypsilanti.

There are thousands of volunteers staffing these cleanups. Some run their own personal cleanups, while many join formal cleanup events. Many groups volunteer as a team-building exercise. There are so many groups that ask to join cleanups that most of the liveries take volunteers on a first-come, first-served basis and maintain a waiting list.

Litter attracts more litter

When HRWC works with students, they are asked to consider "if a place looks like a dump and is full of trash, do you think people are going to litter there or not?" It is inherently true that litter attracts more litter, as it indicates that no one cares about that corridor. Yet, it is also true that if a place looks nice and clean, people are more likely to dispose of trash properly. Understanding the impacts of cleaning up trash in the river makes this work doubly important. Luckily, trash cleanup can be done by nearly anyone, nearly anywhere.

—Jason Frenzel

TAKE ACTION

Join a planned river cleanup listed at hrwc.org/events or conduct a river cleanup on your own. For how-to information check out hrwc.org/cleanup.

When you pick up litter in your favorite park or along roadsides, you are keeping trash out of the stormdrains—and thus out of the river! For resources, check out hrwc.org/adoptastormdrain.

If you are paddling or fishing the river and find an area that's particularly trashy, please let us know. Send a photo, brief description, and geolocation if possible. Be sure to broadcast your efforts to clean up the Huron River by tagging us on social media with #HuronRiver and #TrashTag .



Intrepid trash collectors getting it done! Volunteers in canoes remove hundreds of pounds of trash each year during clean up events. credit: HRWC



River Giver's Recap • Thanks for the support!

HRWC's second annual River Givers Gathering brought together more than 100 volunteers, members, donors, and staff for an afternoon filled with food, music, cheer, and gratitude. It was a celebration of the many contributions and accomplishments of the people who support the Huron River.

HRWC presented Paul Cousins with a Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his decades of inspired leadership.

Thanks for event support from Cultivate Coffee & Tap House; Fäjllräven; Kari Paine Photography & Design; MAIZ Mexican Cantina; the Powder Mill Ramblers; Schultz Outfitters; REI; and volunteers Carolyn Berge, Belinda Friis, Amanda Hughes, Karim Motawi, Mike Peabody, Erica Perry, Jason Schneider, and Jennifer Wolf.

—Pam Labadie

Clockwise from top left:

Jason Frenzel, Stewardship Coordinator, and Rebecca Esselman, Executive Director, present the Lifetime Achievement Award to Paul Cousins.

Local teacher Carolyn Berge reads the newly published children's book "Magical Creatures of the Huron River" to young guests.

Volunteer Amanda Hughes helps volunteer Ben Steen make art from things found in nature.

A guest takes a close-up look at the types of macroinvertebrates that volunteers collect for HRWC's biological monitoring.

Daniel Brown, Watershed Planner, shares Huron River Water Trail information with guests John and Isabel Hanson.

Volunteers learn the results of data collected through HRWC's Chemistry and Flow Monitoring program from Ric Lawson, Watershed Planner.

credit: all photos thanks to Kari Paine Photography & Design



calendar
of events

HRWC Events and Workshops

SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • 2020

HRWC is committed to keeping our staff, volunteers, and community safe during these unprecedented times. As this newsletter heads to the printer, the guidance is still changing related to COVID-19 and best practices for public gatherings.

Staff are actively converting trainings, events, and other activities

to online formats when suitable. HRWC and its community partners are devising modified formats for field events—such as river cleanups, surveys, and collections—to ensure watershed monitoring and collection continue in the safest way possible.

With increased interest in outdoor recreation, the protection and care

of the watershed is more important than ever. HRWC is grateful to all who strive to celebrate and preserve the Huron River, its tributaries, and natural areas.

For up-to-date events information from HRWC and its partners, please go to www.hrwc.org/events.



Heroes of Woody Debris Management

Keeping the river safe, yet natural

HRWC receives information and alerts from river users that run the gamut from interesting to inspiring. From 2012-2014 HRWC received a spate of alerts about branch and log clearing that left little habitat for aquatic creatures and looked very unnatural.

Acquiring knowledge, training, and a dedicated volunteer core

As a result, HRWC began gathering expertise on how to safely conduct "woody debris" removal that made paddling possible but was also ecologically sensitive. Luckily, the Clinton River Watershed Council and Friends of the Rouge had recently done a fair amount of work on the topic and were able to provide best practices when managing fallen trees in the river. HRWC recruited volunteer leaders to pilot a woody debris program in Portage and Mill Creeks and the program was born.

Chain saws, kayaks, and trout

Since then, the teams and their work have evolved. Ann Arbor Trout Unlimited, under the leadership of Bill Phillips and Steve "Z" Zawistowski, primarily focuses on the health of the trout fishery in Mill Creek—trout habitat and safe wading are both protected by lightly managing

in-stream wood. Don Reef leads several adventurous kayaking groups throughout the state, as well as a team conducting wood management for advanced paddler recreation.

These teams have become strong and nimble partners on a suite of projects, including responding to woody debris management needs, quickly taking care of dangerous sweepers (fallen trees blocking the river that can trap and overturn canoes and kayaks) that put novice paddlers in harm's way. Thankfully, these expert team members are all highly involved in HRWC's biennial safety and ecology trainings for future wood management volunteers.

In recent years, the partnership has increased to include Boullion Sales, a local Stihl chain saw dealer, and staff from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. These partners bring a wealth of chain saw safety and ecological health knowledge to HRWC trainings and implementation.

Your reporting helps us

If you find a woody debris situation that seems unsafe (or is just interesting) in the Huron or its tributaries, please contact HRWC. Reports of unsafe recreational situations are best submitted with



Safety first, fun second!
credit: HRWC

a photo, brief description, and geocoordinates if possible. Thanks, and stay safe out there!

—Jason Frenzel

See the Fall 2015 Huron River Report cover article "Woody Debris – Friend or foe?" for a review of why woody debris is good for aquatic life, when HRWC chooses to leave wood in the river, and when it is best for recreational safety to remove large woody debris.

New Member Benefit • Free Guppyfriend!

Become a member today to support HRWC's efforts to reduce microplastics.

New members joining at the Crayfish level or above will receive a complimentary Guppyfriend bag!

Synthetic microfibers such as polyester and rayon are the largest source of microplastics pollution in the Huron River and are a serious problem. Here are the top five ways you—and your friends!—can reduce pollution from microfibers:

1. Get a washing machine filter to capture microplastics before they enter the wastewater treatment or septic system. Look for 330 microns or less, like the

- Fitrol, Lint Luv, or Girlfriend Collective's Microfiber Filter.

2. Use laundry devices such as a Cora Ball or a Guppyfriend Bag to capture fibers during the wash cycle.

3. If you are in the market for a new washing machine, choose a front load machine instead of a top loader since fibers shed less in front load machines.

4. Wear clothes made with natural fibers or synthetic/cotton blends, which shed less, and wash your synthetics less frequently.

5. Contact clothing manufacturers and ask them what they are doing about microplastic pollution from their synthetic fiber products.

Already a member? Sign up as a sustaining member to make renewals effortless and receive a complimentary Guppyfriend washing bag. Learn more at www.hrwc.org/donate/membership.





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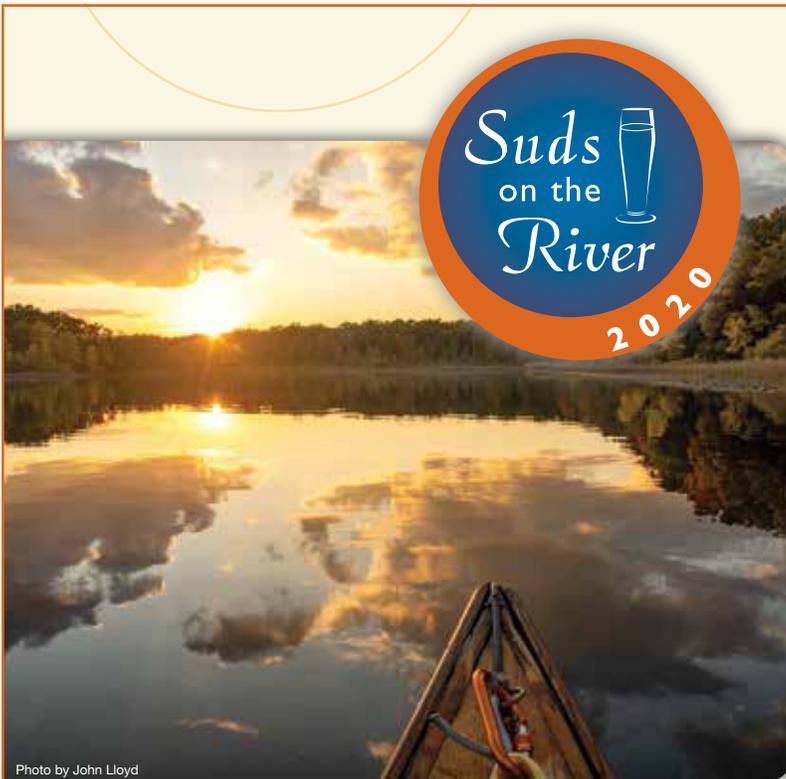


Photo by John Lloyd

We may not be able to gather on the banks of the Huron this year, but

We Will Still Celebrate!

We have so much to be grateful for—unwavering support from YOU, fantastic food and brews, and the beautiful Huron River.

Suds 2020 may look different this year, but the sentiment will remain the same.

We'll still raise a glass to celebrate the Huron River, and you!

Watch your mailbox and our website for updates.

Questions? Please contact Allie at (734) 769-5123 x 610 or hrwc.org/SUDS.



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