



Huron River Report

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Summer 2009

Breaking News pg 6
Portage and Mill Creeks pg 7
Volunteer Awards pg 10

River Vignettes

What is your favorite place on the Huron?

There are so many ways to love the Huron River! Over the years, we have encouraged everyone to jump in the river, paddle down her waters, walk, bike, or ride along her shores, sit on her banks, and feel at one with her beauty. Here, we want to share with you some of those special experiences . . . as told to us by lovers of the Huron.

DIANNE MARTIN, EQUESTRIAN

Downstream from the dam in Hell, Michigan is a little section of Portage Creek that might just be one of the most wonderful places on earth. It certainly seems like that to two human beings, two horses, and two dogs who, on hot summer afternoons, take respite there at the end of a long ride.

It is our good fortune to be able to board our horses within the Pinckney State Recreation Area, where there are miles of equestrian trails. These paths meander through woodlands and fields, circle

small lakes and wetlands, and encompass a portion of that special tributary known as Hell Creek. During the warmer months, toward the end of almost every ride, we find ourselves heading for the creek. The dogs dive in first, thankful for the rest, the cool water, and the opportunity to play “river otter” along the slippery banks. The horses, too, have learned to enjoy their break from our fast pace. They stand quietly in deep pools and let the soothing water provide relief as it swirls around their legs. We humans “drink” from the quiet sounds of nature and the companionship of our animals, and we “soak” in our appreciation of how fortunate we are to have this amazing place.



Dianne Martin and her horse Kinko in Hell Creek. photo: D. Martin

BARRY LONIK, CANOEIST/KAYAKER

When Samuel Dexter established Mill Creek Settlement (today’s Dexter, Michigan) in 1824, he built a dam to power several mills. For more than 180 years that

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Volunteers Get Their Hands Wet

Water quality of 13 local lakes monitored in 2008

In the spring and summer of 2008, volunteers monitored 13 lakes in the Huron River watershed under the statewide Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP), a part of the Michigan Clean Water Corps. (HRWC’s role in the MiCorps program was highlighted in the last *Huron River Report*). Nine of these lakes are located in southern Livingston County, and four are in Oakland County near the watershed’s headwaters (see map on page 5).

Using CLMP guidelines, volunteers make a variety of measurements each spring and summer designed to indicate lake

productivity. “Productivity” means the amount of plant and animal life that can be produced within the lake. Productivity in lakes naturally and gradually increases over time as living material dies, decomposes, and releases nutrients into the water - a process called “eutrophication.” This process is called “cultural eutrophication” when it is hastened by the actions of humans through the unintentional supply of additional nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen to the lake. Most lake management strategies are concentrated around

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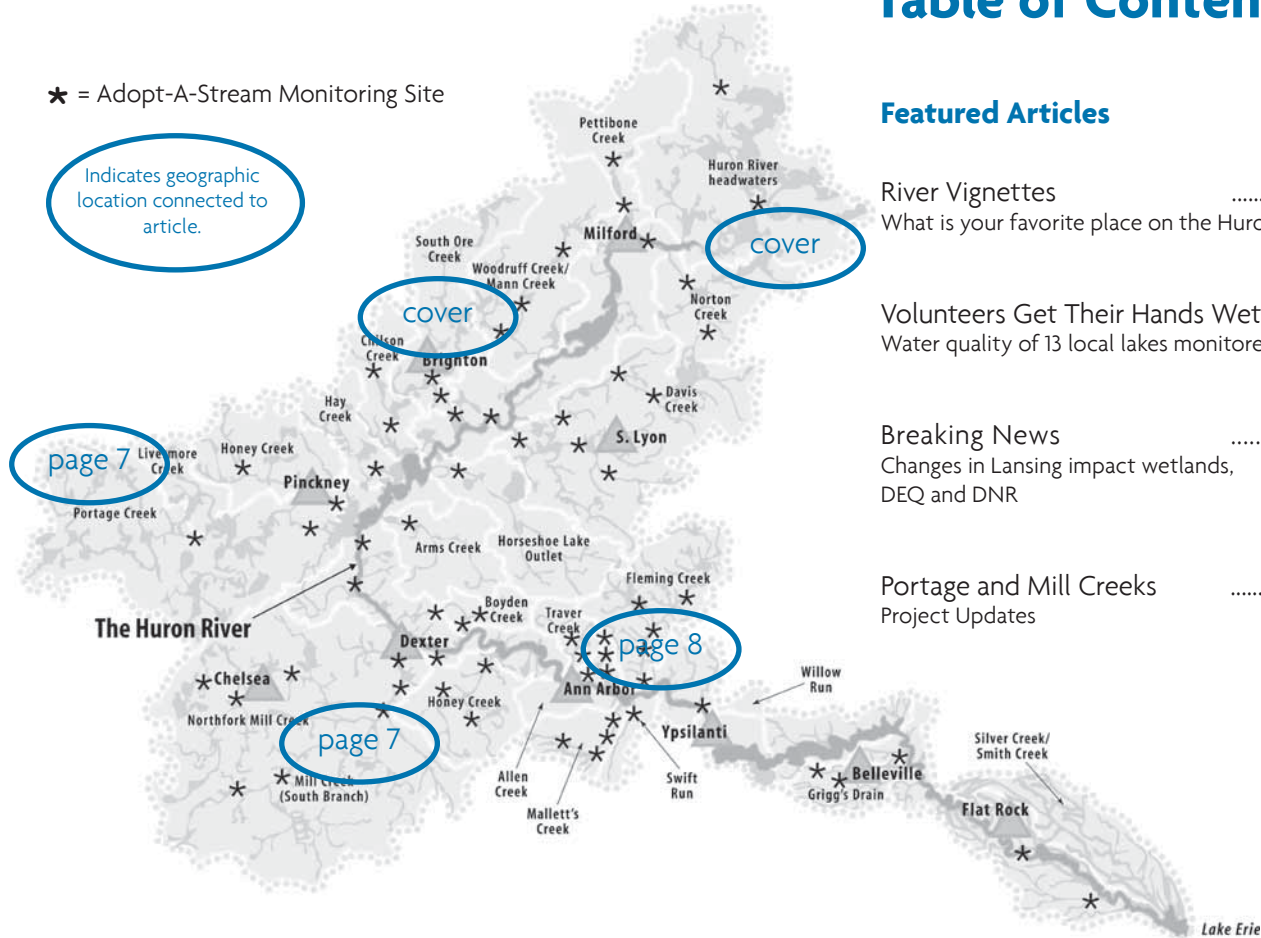


Jim Dixon, CLMP volunteer, slowly lowers a Secchi disk into the water in order to make a lake transparency measurement. photo: HRWC

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Events

Saturday, June 6, 10 AM – 1 PM

“Grow Zone” Native Plant Restoration

Lower Huron Metropark
Ric: rlawson@hrwc.org or x13

June, Date and Time TBD

“Grow Zone” Native Plant Restoration

Huroc Park, Flat Rock and Lebo Park, South Rockwood
Ric: rlawson@hrwc.org or x13

Saturday, June 20, 10 – 11 AM

Stream Temperature Study Training

NEW Center, Ann Arbor
Joan: jmartin@hrwc.org or x11

Saturday, June 20, 9 AM

2009 Huron River Canoe Challenge

Gallup Park, Ann Arbor
Margaret: msmith@hrwc.org or x19

Thursday, June 25, 5:30 PM

HRWC Executive Committee Meeting

NEW Center, Ann Arbor
Laura: lrubin@hrwc.org or x12

Sunday, July 12, 10 AM

Community River Swim with Liz Elling

U-M Sailing Club at Baseline Lake
Margaret: msmith@hrwc.org or x19

LISTINGS continued on PAGE 6!

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

River Vignettes

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dam harnessed and held back the erosive power of Mill Creek. Last year, the dam was removed and Mill Creek once again flowed freely into the Huron River. This spring it became a raging torrent, and the thought came to me that it is very likely no one has run those “white waters” since French traders and Native Americans did so almost two hundred years ago.



Paddlers Lee Green and Barry Lonik on the “white waters” of Mill Creek in Dexter.

photos: M. Akemann

On March 14 of this year, paddling solo, I attempted this historic whitewater run. The current was very swift and the channel so narrow that it was impossible to pull over. On that day, the air was fairly warm but the water was frigid. The run was straight, but the bow dipped into a sizable trough and a large gush of icy water came pouring in. With no time to worry about that, I shot past the new library, under the railroad bridge, and out onto the flood plain.

My trip ended at Dexter-Huron Metropark, where I pulled out and reflected on my experience. It is clear that the river is finding its channel again and that its flow will continue to change over the next few years. For now, it is simply delightful to see a free-flowing river with its own natural – and very exciting – drop.

THREE SWIMMERS

I enjoy swimming in the Huron at Bandedem Park, off the boardwalk in Argo Pond, and anywhere else I can hop from the canoe and not find too many weeds. I have discovered that stormwater drains create very nice beaches with all the sediment they bring in. And, if I were still in my ‘teens, I would look for places where I could jump in and make a big splash!

-Noemi Barabas

I would like everyone to experience the pleasure of floating in a tube, or some other inflatable, down the Huron River from Hudson Mills Metropark to the Village of Dexter, or to Delhi Metropark. This is my favorite stretch of the river to either drift or paddle – whatever suits the moment. If possible, choose to spend a day mid week, when the river is both lovely and quiet. There is a fairly swift current most of the way, and at the wider, slower parts, you can get out and walk the river’s bed. (Remember to wear shoes!) There are three Metroparks along this stretch, exquisite scenery, and lovely places to pull out and have a picnic.

-Lee Burton

My favorite Huron swimming hole is at Wixom Road in the Proud Lake Recreation Area. At that spot, there is a site for picnicking and a trail going upstream for fishermen. Filled with excitement and anticipation, we strap on our life jackets, walk or run up to the dock, and jump in! Here, we float and become one with the river.

-Bill Tuccini

RON SELL, CANOEIST

It was a lovely spring morning. I parked next to the old bridge at the end of Bell Road and carried my canoe to the water.

Paddling away from the bank, I entered the heart of the Natural Rivers section of the Huron, a quiet and peaceful place, and a timeline of human history. On the right bank are the foundations of the original mill and raceways. Up on the hill is a reconstruction of the original owner’s home.

Moving downstream, I pass through one of the least paddled stretches of the river, and one of my favorites. The banks are high and wooded. Glacial boulders dot the stream. Turtles are sunning themselves on logs and rocks, and mink scamper along the banks. The current relaxes as North Territorial bridge comes into view, spanning a once well-traveled Native American trail. Hudson, long ago a bustling mill town, emerges as a skeleton poking through the underbrush, and the bones of the old dam provide a brief rush of current. You can almost hear the gristmills turning . . . and the voices of the Huron people as they hunt and fish along the shores while making their way to summer camps.

RAY STOCKING, BIRDER

The Huron River is a birder’s paradise! Either alone, or with groups from the Washtenaw Audubon Society, I frequent stretches of the river from Portage Lake down to Lake Erie. There is always something exciting to see, at any time of year.

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River Vignettes

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Bald Eagles, Trumpeter Swans, and many rare migrant birds find a home on the Huron River, if only for a short while during their migrations north and south each season.

One of my favorite spots is the place where the Huron empties into Lake Erie. The natural habitat of this area is a migratory magnet for tens of thousands of waterfowl and other birds, who either winter there or use it as a migratory stopover for resting and feeding. We enjoy some of our best local bird watching here.

Watching a Bald Eagle soar over the Huron River never ceases to amaze me. You may think you have never seen one in Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, or Belleville. The next time you are near the river, look up. You just might be surprised!

DIRK FISCHBACH, ANGLER

The sun had outdone itself all afternoon. Now, as evening approached, it languidly slid into the soft canopy of trees lining the river. The waxwings flitted eagerly from branch to branch, and a light breeze stirred the leaves around them. Then, seemingly from nowhere, large mayflies filled the air, moving upriver in an undulating cloud.

Sunset. August. Osborne Mill.

That combination will bring a smile to anglers throughout southeastern Michigan, even on the toughest of days. The August emergence of *Hexagenia limbata* (one of the most geographically widespread mayflies in North America) on the Huron River now ranks among the finest hatches on any waterway in the state. Yet, there is something special about *Hex* fishing at Osborne Mill.

Perhaps it is the meandering trail that weaves its way through a lovely deciduous woodlot. Perhaps it is the knowledge that the very best fishermen have plied their skills here for decades, and the sense that we share the river with them as we stand in their shadows.

Whatever it is, it strikes me every time. And, when it is over, I cannot wait to hear the spirit of the river speak to me again.



Flyfishing on the Huron River. photo: M. Mouradian

JO LATIMORE, ECOLOGIST

My favorite place on the Huron River is not really on it, but in it. Certainly, I love to walk along the banks of Fleming Creek at Parker Mill County Park, or launch my kayak at Island Lake State Recreation Area. Yet, for me, there is always that pull to get

even closer to the majestic river and its lively tributaries. If I am kayaking, you will see my hand trailing in the clear, cool water as I take a break from paddling on a slow stretch. If I am walking along one of the creeks on a warm day, I will rest on the banks and dangle my feet in the stream. And, regardless of the weather, I will find an opportunity to throw on a pair of waders and hop right in. There, I will turn over the rocks to see what tiny creatures are present, look into the slow-moving

depths and eddies for resting fish, and scan the shoreline for wildlife.

This is, indeed, my favorite place “on” the Huron . . .

— Compiled and edited by **Elsie Orb**

Thursday, September 17 from 6 to 9 pm



SUDS



on the
river

MICROBREWERIES of the Huron River Watershed

For tickets call (734) 769-5123 ext 19.

Volunteers Get Their Hands Wet

continued from cover

slowing down the cultural eutrophication process so the lake stays clear and free from excessive algae and plant growth for as long as possible.

CLMP volunteers assess lake productivity with three measurements: water transparency, total phosphorus, and chlorophyll. In 2008, the 13 lakes studied in the Huron River watershed had an average lake productivity value very close to the overall state average. All thirteen lakes were classified as “mesotrophic,” a productivity rating between oligotrophic and eutrophic (see sidebar). While lakes are normally put in these standard categories, in reality these categories represent a continuum, and the 13 lakes were scattered across the mesotrophic spectrum. Hamburg Lake was closest to being oligotrophic while Strawberry Lake was nearly eutrophic. Strawberry Lake is currently listed on Michigan’s impaired water quality list for excessive phosphorus.

Water transparency is the quickest and easiest water quality measurement for volunteers to make. They do this by lowering a black and white metal disk (a “Secchi disk”) into the water and recording the depth at which the disk disappears from

view. The volunteers saw an average of 12 feet down in the water column for the 13 lakes. The clearest lake was Middle Straits in Oakland County with a transparency of 15 feet, and the murkiest lake was Strawberry in Livingston County with a transparency of 8 feet. In comparison, the transparency in a eutrophic lake is often 5 feet or less, while transparency in an oligotrophic lake can be 20 feet or deeper. Phosphorus and chlorophyll samples are sent to the state water quality laboratory for analysis. Phosphorus is a “limiting” nutrient in Michigan lakes and often drives the production of algae. Chlorophyll is the green pigment in plants and is used as a rough measure of algae content. Download the CLMP annual report at www.micorps.net/lakereports.html for more information on these parameters and to see the rest of the 2008 data, or look up individual lakes on the MiCorps Data Exchange (www.micorps.net).

Lakes that remain in the program for at least eight years produce enough data for the participants to study long-term trends. Portage Lake joined the program in 1974, the year that volunteer lake monitoring began in Michigan. The water transparency of Portage Lake over the past 34 years has remained very constant, fluctuating only slightly around 12 feet. Oneida Lake is another long-standing CLMP member. The transparency of Oneida Lake has decreased from around 15 feet in 1980 to closer to 10 in 2008, indicating a trend toward eutrophication. Such long-term data sets are very useful in understanding how a lake’s productivity level is changing, and the data sets are an important tool for the decision makers responsible for lake management.



The names and locations of the 13 local lakes enrolled in the 2008 Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program. credit: HRWC

LIMNOLOGY 101: LAKE PRODUCTIVITY

Lakes are often assigned into one of the following categories based on their nutrient status.

Oligotrophic: Low nutrients result in low lake productivity and very clear water. Great for swimming and boating but fish populations will be low.

Mesotrophic: Moderate nutrients result in some algae growth. Swimming and boating can still be good and fish populations are larger due to a greater food supply for all parts of the food chain.

Eutrophic: High nutrient levels can cause excessive plant and algae growth. When this growth decays, oxygen is taken from the water, which can potentially cause fish kills.

Hypereutrophic: Like eutrophic lakes, but with even more plant and algae growth, and a greater likelihood of anoxia and fish kills. Swimming and boating are not possible at times.

Any lake can be in the CLMP, as long as the lake has dedicated volunteers who commit to making weekly spring and summer measurements. Often, lake associations become involved in the CLMP in order to gather data that can be used to make management decisions; however, lake association involvement is not required as the work can be done by individuals. Enrollment for the summer 2009 season is now over, but enrollment for 2010 will begin again this coming fall. If you want to learn more about getting your lake involved or have questions about lake monitoring, contact Paul Steen at psteen@hrwc.org or at (734) 769-5123 x14, or check the MiCorps website at www.micorps.net.

—Paul Steen

Breaking News

Changes in Lansing impact wetlands, DEQ and DNR

GOVERNOR PROPOSES DROPPING WETLANDS AUTHORITY AND MERGING DEQ AND DNR

In her “State of the State” address, Governor Granholm proposed two major changes to state environmental policy that could directly impact natural resources in our watershed. First, she proposed transferring permitting authority over inland wetlands to federal agencies. Second, she suggested merging the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) into a single agency. Both changes were brought forward as part of a larger effort to trim state government costs and balance the budget.

WHO WILL WATCH WETLANDS?

The wetlands proposal would return authority over wetlands permitting and enforcement to the U.S Army Corps of Engineers. Bills have been introduced in the state House and Senate that would implement the Governor’s proposal. A House subcommittee held a 4-hour public hearing on March 17 and, as of the date this went to publication, no action had been taken to move the bills to either floor for a vote.

Michigan is one of two states, along with New Jersey, that has assumed federal and state permitting authority. The change would result in separate permits and, with a reliance on federal agencies and a need to make state budget cuts, it is likely that regulatory oversight would be scaled back substantially. The removal of state wetlands regulations would leave 1 million acres of wetlands unprotected, according to James Clift, policy director of the Michigan Environmental Council (MEC). This change, in turn, could put more pressure on local jurisdictions to fill the gap in oversight. Currently, many municipalities in our watershed have wetland ordinances, but they rely on the state to regulate impacts to wetlands over five acres in size. Further, the change would save only an estimated \$2 million a year (a small fraction of the DEQ’s overall budget) and complicate the permitting process. While the DEQ currently does not have the resources to staff wetlands oversight sufficiently,



Pickerel weed is a native plant commonly found in wetlands and lake margins. photo: Oklahoma Biological Survey

HRWC believes that the program should stay under state control and it should be strengthened, rather than weakened. Compromises to the program may create permit delays and slow economic development, in addition to threatening the quality and health of our waterways.

For now, it is up to the legislature to act. All indications currently suggest that this proposal will not move forward, but HRWC will follow the developments closely.

ONE ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY . . . AGAIN?

Also suggested in the Governor’s address is a merger of the state’s DNR and DEQ, which would return oversight of the environment and natural resources to a single agency. The DEQ was formed in 1995 under Governor John Engler by moving environmental programs out of DNR and other agencies. The move was accompanied by major staffing cuts. Those cuts hurt the DEQ’s ability to regulate and enforce the state’s environmental laws. Currently the public views the DNR positively as the natural resource protection agency and the DEQ is seen, sometimes negatively, as a permitting agency.

The impact of such a merger on the state and our watershed is unclear. It depends primarily on how the changes are implemented. If environmental staff is further cut, the result will be a further decline in environmental oversight. However,

communications between environmental and resource functions will likely be improved. Better communication could lead to a more efficient organization, better functional integration, and perhaps more opportunities for combined funding. The merger is just an idea at this point – part of a larger effort to streamline state government. The merger is not likely to move forward until closer to the end of the Governor’s term, if at all.

HRWC will continue to follow these issues and work with the MEC to voice our concerns and opinions.

—Ric Lawson

Events

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Sunday, July 12, 12 – 4 PM

Huron River Day

Gallup Park, Ann Arbor

Pam: plabadie@hrwc.org or x17

Thursday, July 23, TBD

HRWC Board Meeting

Laura: lrubin@hrwc.org or x12

Sunday, July 26, 2 – 5 PM

Measuring & Mapping to Read the River

NEW Center, Ann Arbor

Joan: jmartin@hrwc.org or x11

Friday, Saturday, Sunday August 21 – 23

Ypsilanti Heritage Festival Green Tent

Riverside Park, Ypsilanti

Pam: plabadie@hrwc.org or x17

Saturday, September 12, 12 – 5 PM

Leader & Collector Training

Register by Sept. 7

Joan: jmartin@hrwc.org or x11

More events and updates at: www.hrwc.org

Planning in Portage and Protecting in Mill

Project updates for Portage and Mill Creek Watershed Management Plans

PORTAGE CREEK MANAGEMENT PLAN

HRWC staff is developing a Watershed Management Plan for Portage Creek with local and county community partners. The 56-square mile watershed is largely forested or farmed and faces increased development pressure. The baseline watershed report will be used to plan and direct management efforts. Fieldwork, which began in spring 2008 with a stream assessment, flow monitoring, and uplands assessment, will continue through summer 2009 with flow monitoring. HRWC is heading up a review, in cooperation with the communities, of each communities' land development and stormwater codes and ordinances. As a result, HRWC staff will develop tailored recommendations that are cost-effective and environmentally-sensitive.

Involvement of local community partners and residents in the planning process is key to the future health of Portage Creek. Nearly 100 residents attended one of the two public meetings to hear presentations from HRWC staff and give input on the planning process. Approximately 6,000 households received a brochure that informed residents about the location and special features of the watershed and the watershed management planning process.

The planning phase wraps up in late 2009 with a completed plan to be sent to MDEQ and the U.S. EPA for approval. Approved Watershed Management Plans provide eligibility for significant grants through the Clean Water Act to implement many of the clean water activities listed in the plan.

NEW PROJECT IN MILL CREEK: STOPPING EXCESS EROSION WITH SOFT ENGINEERING

In Mill Creek, HRWC is in its sixth year of implementing this creek-specific watershed management plan. The planning phase showed that altered hydrology, sediment and soil erosion, and excess nutrients were the major documented problems in Mill Creek. Efforts have been underway since 2003 to reduce these problems, with the removal of the Mill Pond Dam in

Dexter being a recent example.

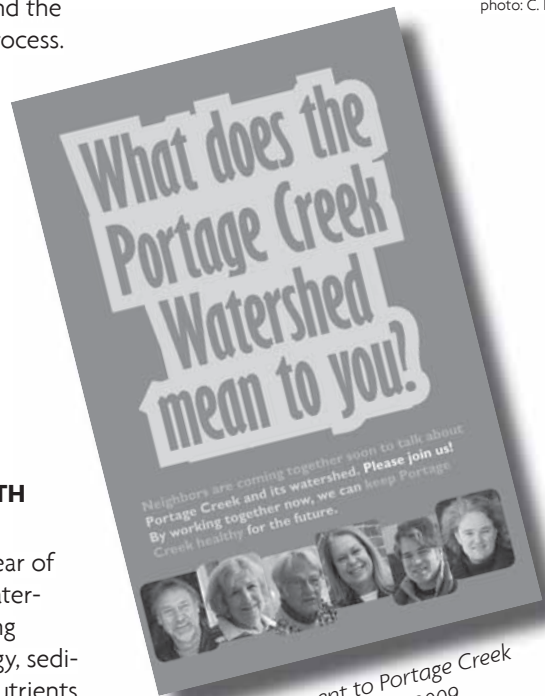
HRWC has teamed up with Legacy Land Conservancy (formerly Washtenaw Land Trust), Washtenaw County's Water Resources Commissioner, and Environmental Consulting & Technology on a 2-year project to reduce nutrient loading and soil erosion at two streambank locations. The two eroding sites along the south branch of Mill Creek at Dancer Road and S. Lima Center Road will be stabilized by employing "soft" engineering techniques. Soft engineering relies on vegetative materials and techniques rather than structural, or hard, materials and techniques. Since this project will be the first to use preferred soft engineering techniques in the Mill



Residents share insights at a public meeting about Mill Creek in Dexter Township. photo: V. Banta



Halfmoon Lake with Portage Creek in the foreground. photo: C. Riggs



Brochure sent to Portage Creek residents in January 2009. credit: HRWC and Christianson Design

Creek watershed, it will be promoted as an educational opportunity for residents, local governments and others in the area. In addition, the project partners plan to protect critical lands upstream of the two locations.

Property owners upstream of the sites will receive information about their properties' importance to the watershed and the conservation options available to them. The project team will pursue permanent protection of critical watershed areas by working with interested property owners to negotiate conservation easements, purchase of development rights, or the outright sale or donation of a property to an appropriate management organization.

— Elizabeth Riggs

Know Your Board Representative

Richard Norton, City of Ann Arbor

One of Ann Arbor's six HRWC representatives is Richard "Dick" Norton. He currently serves as a member of the Executive Committee. Previously he served as an alternate representative from Washtenaw County.

Dick is an Associate Professor of Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. He earned his Ph.D. in city and regional planning, and his J.D. with honors at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He uses his educational expertise in teaching and research in areas of sustainable development, environmental planning and planning law. His expertise is valuable in his service to HRWC as he helps us keep up on the cutting edge of watershed protection practices.

Dick's wife, Trish Koman, works for the EPA as a policy analyst. Their two sons attend Ann Arbor schools; Will is a fifth grader at Dicken Elementary School and Jake is a seventh grader at Slauson Middle School. Two "rambunctious" black labs complete their household.

If you would like to contact Dick about watershed issues, you may call him at (734) 769-0792; he welcomes your comments, suggestions and questions. You may also call HRWC with your questions or to become involved with HRWC's mandate to preserve and enhance the health of the Huron River.

— Eunice Burns



photo: D. A. Bashir

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Laura's "Stream" of Consciousness

An update on HRWC projects and activities

KOREAN DELEGATION

Last winter a delegation of government and non-government officials (NGOs) travelled to the United States to learn about watershed planning. The delegation was from the Gyeonggi Province in the Republic of Korea. The group was benchmarking watershed protection and management practices in the United States. They were also interested in site tours and the study of advanced watershed management systems and regulatory reform measures. HRWC was one of the three groups they chose to meet with during their stay.



HRWC staff with delegation from Gyeonggi Province. photo: HRWC

I spent two hours with 17 members of the delegation at our offices reviewing HRWC's programs and accomplishments. We talked about how we work with partners, volunteers, stakeholders and the general public; about what works and what doesn't work; and we discussed the similar and different priorities and threats to our respective watersheds. With the help of a translator and some English-

analysis of reasonable water management methods. Water quality concerns and non-point source pollution are the common concerns.

CLEAN WATER ACT

Thanks to the Clean Water Act (CWA), nearly two-thirds of our lakes and rivers are safe for recreation, fishing and wildlife, compared to just 36 percent before the law was passed. However, there is still much to be done to ensure that all of our waters are safe for our communities. At a time when we really need to strengthen the CWA, courts and federal agencies are making it less effective.

At issue is what levels of protection should be given to "isolated" waters (streams, lakes and wetlands that have no direct connection to other water bodies) and to streams that do not have year-round flow. (In Michigan, MDEQ estimates that 930,856 acres of wetlands in the state, along with 26,384 lakes and ponds, could be considered "isolated" waters. EPA estimates that

48 percent of the streams have no other streams flowing into them, and that 36 percent do not flow year-round.) Under varying interpretations of a fractured U.S. Supreme Court decision made in June 2006, these types of water bodies are among those for which the extent of CWA protections have been questioned. Ambiguous federal agency guidance from the

Bush administration has helped to further weaken the CWA.

Compromising the CWA could have significant impacts on public health. Per the EPA, 298,007 people in Michigan receive some of their drinking water from areas containing these smaller streams and at least 163 facilities located on such streams currently have permits under the federal law regulating their pollution discharges. In an effort to uphold these federal protections and pollution controls, Michigan has joined over 30 states in asking the Supreme Court to uphold broad legal protections for small tributaries and their adjacent wetlands.

You can help. Contact your Congressional representative and demand restoration of the CWA through: removal of the confusing term "navigable" from the CWA; clarification that "waters of the United States" means the water bodies protected prior to 2001; and the articulation of the broad constitutional authority of Congress to protect such waters. Please call your representative today!

TRAILS IN THE WATERSHED

There is a lot of trail building along the river in the middle sections. The Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority (HCMA) is extending a trail from Hudson Mills Metropark to the Village of Dexter. The Village of Dexter is then building a trail up Mill Creek, from the confluence of the creek and the Huron River to Shield Road. The HCMA trail is especially noteworthy because the original trail design included a bridge over the river in the Natural River Zone, which specifically prohibits new bridges and encourages crossing at existing bridges. HRWC and DNR opposed the bridge, and the revised trail will be built to continue to the Village of Dexter with no bridge required. Additionally, the HCMA has been very inclusive and open to suggestions during the trail development and sensitive to the existing natural and historical features in determining the trail alignment. Both trails will be beautiful additions to the wealth of walking and biking trails along the Huron.

—Laura Rubin



The delegates learn more about HRWC practices. They were amazed that a woman had voluntarily swum the Huron, that the water quality was good enough for body contact, and that hundreds of people volunteer to monitor the river. photo: HRWC

speaking delegates, we were able to talk about stormwater, water quality sampling, *E. coli*, GIS and modeling, legislation, and recreation. Water quality and drainage basin management are currently sensitive issues among Korean communities and NGOs, as well as private and public sector interests. Gyeonggi Province wants to establish applicable models for research and

Film Fest, Volunteer Awards and More!

Celebrations highlight the watershed

FOURTH ANNUAL MILLERS CREEK FILM FESTIVAL MAKES A SPLASH

The impact of fertilizer, disposing of used oil properly, picking up pet waste — these topics and other human connections to the Huron River were the subjects of 17 entertaining short films enjoyed by a crowd of over 350 people at the fourth annual Millers Creek Film Festival on March 13th.

WINNERS of the 2009 MILLIE AWARD:



“Runoff Lemonade” by Marty Stano, an independent filmmaker, for best Public Service Announcement;



“60 Second PSA” by John Inwood in the Adult Filmmaker category; and



“You Love Your Dog” by Nani Wolf in the School-Age Filmmaker category.

Winners received a glass trophy Millie and a cash prize of \$500.

HONORABLE MENTIONS went to:

- “Mystery of the Dirty Storm Drain,” by “Carnegie’s Scholars,” a fifth grade class at Northside Elementary in Ann Arbor; and
- “Life is Hectic” by Blair Neighbors of Milford.

Honorable mentions received gift certificates from Washtenaw Dairy and Grizzly Peak.

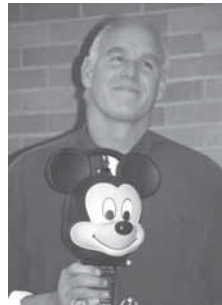
To see the films, go to the HRWC Millers Creek Film Festival page at www.hrwc.org/filmfestival or directly to www.youtube.com/millerscreekfilmfest. Plans are underway for the 2010 Millers Creek Film Fest so be sure to watch your e-mail for updates.



Wes Daining, Catherine Riseng and Dianne Martin with their volunteer awards. photo: HRWC

HRWC VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED AT ANNUAL MEETING

A spring evening at the Matthaei Botanical Garden was the backdrop for HRWC’s Annual Meeting on April 30. Board members John Langs, Paul Cousins and Craig Hupy grilled hotdogs and served up picnic fare for HRWC supporters in attendance. Staff members presented the year’s accomplishments and answered questions from the audience.



Ben Upton accepts the That’s Using Your Headwaters Award. photo: HRWC

HRWC also honored several volunteers, recognizing their dedication to the Huron River. Volunteer Award recipients included:

- Catherine Riseng for the Herb Munzel Zebra Mussel Award;
- Ben Upton for the That’s Using Your Headwaters Award;
- Wes Daining for the Laminar Flow Award; and
- Dianne Martin for the Vanishing Species Award.



A young festival-goer identifies his home in the watershed. photo: HRWC

ART MEETS ENVIRONMENT AT THE ANN ARBOR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

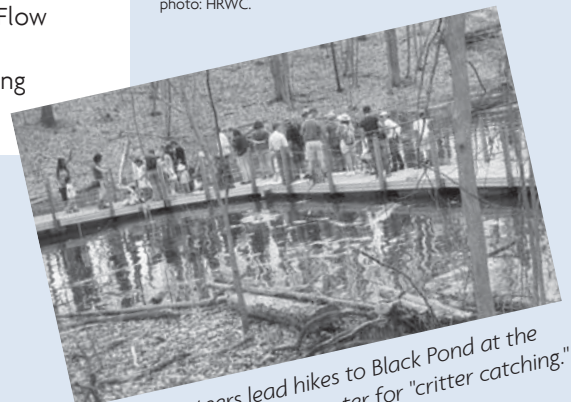
The Huron River Watershed was the highlight of the evening at the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra’s April 18 concert. The world premiere of “Watershed,” a piece composed by Evan Chambers and commissioned in celebration of the orchestra’s 80th anniversary season, drew a crowd of over 1,000. When asked by the Ann Arbor Symphony to write a piece with a local theme, Chambers was inspired by the Huron River, which flows past his house. HRWC engaged the audience at an interactive map display in the lobby of the Michigan Theater. Attendees identified where they live in the watershed and learned about HRWC and current watershed issues.

— Pam Labadie

EARTH DAY FESTIVAL: HRWC VOLUNTEERS SHARE WATERSHED KNOWLEDGE AT LESLIE SCIENCE CENTER



Volunteers help Earth Day participants catch and identify creatures in Black Pond. photo: HRWC.



HRWC volunteers lead hikes to Black Pond at the Leslie Science & Nature Center for “critter catching.” photo: HRWC

Your Path to the River Begins with Us

FREE events for all ages, all summer

GEOCACHE ADVENTURES

Geocaching is an entertaining outdoor adventure game that takes advantage of the features and capabilities of a global positioning system (GPS) unit. The basic idea of geocaching is to set up caches outdoors and share their locations on the internet. Indeed, locating a cache can be very entertaining.

HRWC and the Michigan Geocaching Organization (MiGO) created a geocache tour of 22 caches for the entire watershed, including several canoe-side caches.

The **HURON HISTORY MYSTERY TOUR** is designed for first-timers and experienced cachers alike. Each cache contains collectable HRWC History Mystery cards, which reveal important facts about the watershed. We have GPS devices available for HRWC members to borrow for the Tour. Every cacher completing the course will receive a special HRWC/MiGO/HCMA coin. To learn more about geocaching, and to begin your Tour, go to www.migoonline.org.

HURON RIVER CANOE CHALLENGE

Saturday, June 20, 9 AM at Gallup Park, HRWC and the Michigan Canoe Racing Association (MCRA) will present the second annual professional canoe race on the Huron River. For more information go to www.miracing.com.



Professional canoe racers take on the Huron River in 2008. photo: M. Bialek

For more information on any of these events, please contact Margaret (734) 769-5123 x19, or msmith@hrwc.org.

COMMUNITY RIVER SWIM WITH LIZ

Sunday, July 12, 10 AM, at the University of Michigan (U-M) Sailing Club on Baseline Lake. Come on in, the water is fine! This one-mile community swim is for those who love the water and want to try a river swim at the U-M Sailing Club on Baseline Lake. Jump in with water conservationist Liz Elling and HRWC's Laura Rubin. To register, e-mail msmith@hrwc.org.



Swimmers on the first leg of the 2008 Community River Swim. photo: HRWC



Photo: Jeff Oleksinski

Fulfilling Goals

Leave a legacy by including the Huron River Watershed Council in your will and estate plans. Please remember HRWC and our important watershed protection and restoration programs with a generous bequest in your will or trust. Help us meet the challenges of keeping our river running clean. If you have already included HRWC in your will, please let us know so we can thank you. With your support the watershed will be enjoyed for many generations to come.

Please contact us to discuss planned giving options.

Margaret Smith, Development Director.
(734) 769-5123 x 19 , msmith@hrwc.org

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

Your membership supports HRWC programs. Send us this membership form with your check made out to "HRWC" or join on-line at www.hrwc.org and click on Join Now! Your contribution is tax-deductible.

MEMBER LEVELS

- \$35 **Mayfly**
- \$50 **Crayfish**
- \$100 **Dragonfly**
- \$250 **Soft Shell Turtle**
- \$500 **Salamander**
- \$1,000 **Smallmouth Bass**
- \$2,500 **Great Blue Heron**
- \$5,000 **Mink**

thank you!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

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



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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:**

The many people who contributed to the Fourth Annual Millers Creek Film Festival: videographer **Kyle Wilson** for compiling the souvenir DVD of the winning films and the screening DVD; graphic artist **Lindsey Mishler** for designing the posters and DVD cover; judges filmmaker **Chris Cook**, Senator **Liz Brater**, and aquatic ecologist Professor **Steve Francoeur**; **Dave Brooks** for printing the posters and programs; advisory committee members **Michael Benham** and **Rick Ratliff**; **Michigan Tech Research Institute** (MTRI) for burning and packaging 100 DVDs; **Grizzly Peak Brewing Company** and **Washtenaw Dairy** for their gift certificates; **Rick Carter**, **Sabra Briere**, and others for managing the Michigan Theater lobby; and to **all the bakers who donated homemade cookies!**

150 April River RoundUp volunteers for contributing to yet another successful monitoring event.

HRWC Board members for the delicious food and beverages at the Annual Meeting and Picnic BBQ. Special thanks to our grillers **Craig Hupy**, **Paul Cousins** and **John Langs**.

Elsie Orb for her editorial services and delicious cookies.

Liz and **Gary Elling** for hosting a house party to benefit HRWC, **Arbor Teas** for their tasty organic tea, and **Paul Cousins** for delicious desserts.

Noemi Barabas, **George Hammond**, **Julia Henshaw**, **Hannah Jackson**, **Karen Pierce** and **Jana Smith** for their excellent help leading hikes and demonstrating bug collecting at the City of Ann Arbor's Earth Day Festival.

SUDS on the RIVER committee members **Lynette Cable**, **Kathy Stocking**, **Pat** and **Paul Cousins**, **Jill Money**, **Sue Monet** and **Liz Elling** for organizing this year's annual fundraiser.

Victor Banta for serving as photographer and videographer at the Portage Creek Watershed public meeting.