

A Protection Project for Portage Creek and its Lakes

Keeping a high-quality watershed healthy for the future

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This Nonpoint Source Pollution Control project has been funded in part through the Michigan Nonpoint Source Program by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under the Clean Water Act Section 319 funding. The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) has begun work with communities within the Portage Creek watershed to implement parts of the Portage Creek Watershed Management Plan adopted in 2010. The Plan is the only one in the Huron River watershed that MDEQ designated as one focusing on "protection" – preventing future impacts from degrading a high quality, mostly natural creekshed – as opposed to "mitigation" – cleaning up waters already degraded from agricultural and development practices.

Learn more about the project:

www.hrwc.org/portagecreek



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ABOUT THE PORTAGE CREEK WATERSHED

The Portage Creek watershed is one of the most beautiful areas in southeast Michigan. It covers 90 square miles, including portions of 7 townships plus the villages of Stockbridge and Pinckney. It contains about 3,000 acres of lakes, and the entire stream network in the area is roughly 50 miles long.

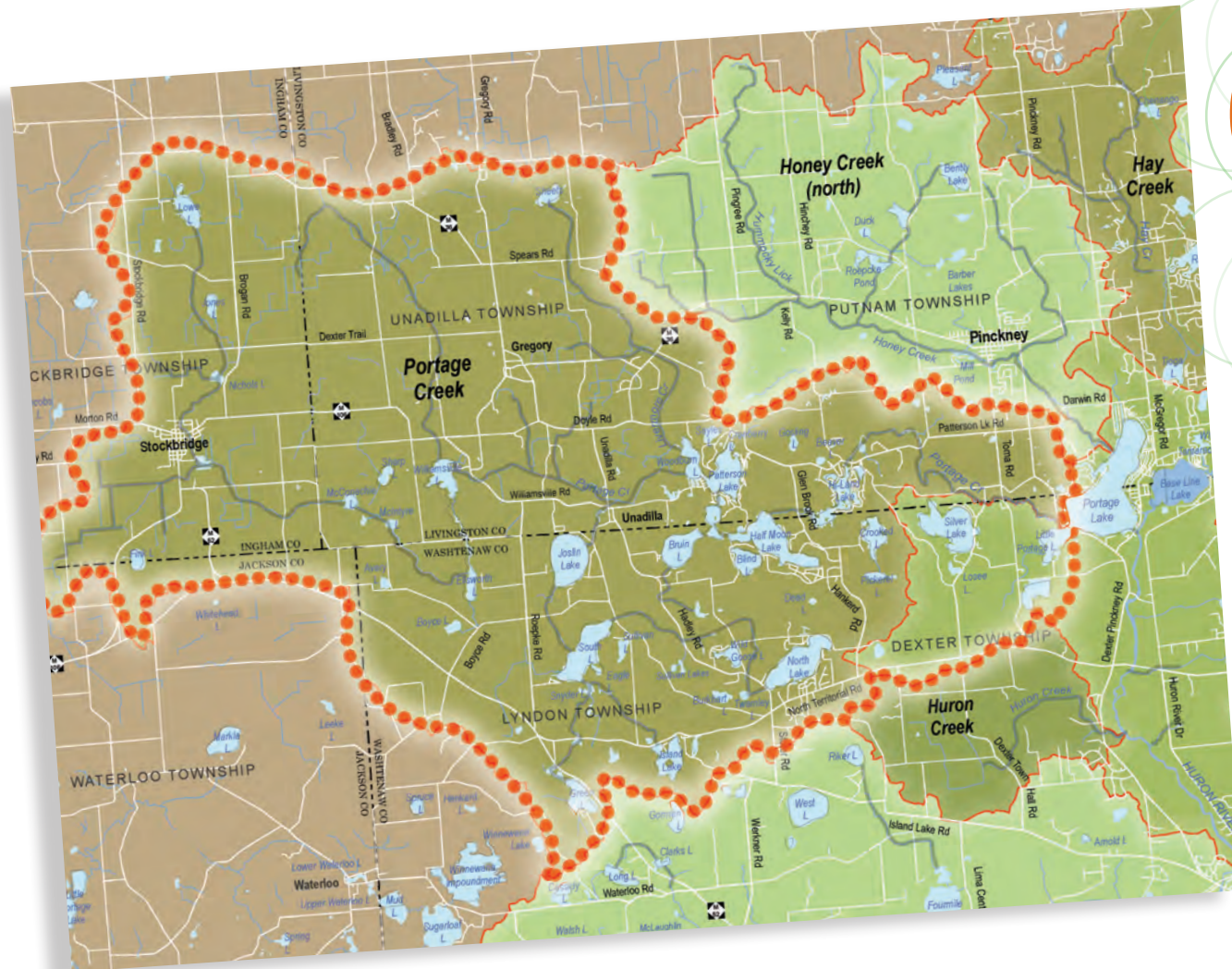
An estimated 14,000 people live in the watershed as well as many rare types of native plants and animals. Two state recreation areas lie within its boundaries. It provides countless opportunities for boating, fishing, and enjoying the best outdoor activities Michigan has to offer.

The natural character of the Portage Creek watershed helps protect the quality of its fresh water. Native trees, shrubs and plants in the areas around streams and lakes play a vital role. They capture rainwater runoff, filter out pollutants and sediment, reduce and regulate the water volume and flow, and moderate water temperatures. The natural areas along the banks of Portage Creek and the waterways that feed it ensure that the water stays clean.





THE COMMUNITIES AND RESIDENTS OF THE PORTAGE CREEK WATERSHED recognize their unique situation and want to keep their creek and lakes beautiful and healthy while avoiding the high cost of clean up and restoration in the future. The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) is conducting a 2-year project to: **(1)** improve local ordinances and policies in order to accommodate development and protect the creek, and **(2)** increase resident awareness about the creek and use of water-friendly residential practices.



(1)

LOCAL PLANNING Dexter, Lyndon and Unadilla townships have held public workshops to discuss their green infrastructure – the forests, wetlands, lakes, streams and other open areas that clean the air, filter polluted runoff, replenish drinking water supplies, provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and maintain quality of life. Following the workshops, HRWC provided each community with a plan and map describing the extent and value of their green infrastructure. These materials present options for development planning that is in concert with, not in opposition to, this vital green infrastructure. As a next step HRWC is working with each community to improve local ordinances that help protect the creek as future development occurs. *The Village and Township of Stockbridge will hold a joint workshop in January 2014.*

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(2)

RESIDENT SURVEY AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN HRWC is working to educate residents who live along Portage Creek and the watershed's lakeshores. To inform outreach HRWC surveyed those residents for their opinions about the local water resources and what they might do to help protect them. Topics of interest included minimizing stormwater runoff, preventing erosion, maintaining healthy lawns and gardens, septic system care and maintenance and the use of natural shorelines or streambank buffers to protect water quality. The 2014 Watershed Community Calendar is part of these efforts.

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THE BEST WAY TO SAFEGUARD WATER QUALITY is to prevent its decline in the first place. By working together now, we can keep the Portage Creek system healthy for future generations.

Learn more about the project, ways you can help, and sign up for email updates at:

www.hrwc.org/portagecreek