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Copies of this report are available on our website or by contacting:  
Flint River Watershed Coalition, 400 N. Saginaw Street, Suite 233, Flint, MI 48502  
(810) 767.6490  |  info@FlintRiver.org  |  www.FlintRiver.org

*Left the organization in 2015
What is a watershed? A watershed is an area of land that drains to a particular stream, lake or wetland.

The Flint River Watershed is increasingly healthy and strong, and offers many recreational, educational, and environmental opportunities. It is home to more than 600,000 people who live within its 1,400 square mile area. It encompasses 59 townships, 25 cities and villages and 43 school districts within 7 counties.

The Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC) believes that all people should have access to the Flint River, its tributaries and lakes for recreation, swimming, and fishing as well as the ecosystem services and economic values it provides to our communities: it is a right, but also a collective responsibility to keep our watershed healthy.

FRWC is an organization representing individuals, businesses, community organizations, and local units of government sharing a vision of a healthier Flint River Watershed. As the leading community-based advocate for clean water resources in the region, the FRWC promotes efforts to protect, preserve, and improve the region’s ecosystem through partnership, public education, scientific projects, and community involvement. The FRWC provides the necessary resources, knowledge, and capacity to area resident and decision makers to protect local water quality through science-based resource management and citizen stewardship.

You can read more about FRWC’s programs and successes here and on our website at www.FlintRiver.org.
Joint Report from the Chairwoman & Executive Director

Dear Friends:

The Flint River Watershed Coalition (FRWC) is gearing up for its 2016 Voice of the River Annual Celebration.

We look forward to celebrating all the wonderful features of the Flint River. We also will share our most recent testing data, our plans to pursue National River designation, as well as our plans to restore the river as it flows through downtown Flint. And as always, we’ll have great food, great companionship, awards, and some fun auction items.

At this meeting, our collective ‘Voice’ of the river will tell the world: #itsnottheriver.

This year’s event is happening during a time of significant hardship for Flint residents. Lead contamination in the City’s drinking water supply has many questioning the quality and health of the Flint River. The FRWC is appalled at the condition of the City’s drinking water, and dismayed that the local, state, and federal agencies that are meant to protect our citizens and our drinking water all seemed to fail so completely.

Our message to the world is simple. It’s not the river. The Flint River is a vibrant ecosystem that supports growing populations of pollution intolerant species such as eagles and ospreys. Recreational opportunities in and along the Flint River are abundant, and we’re seeing higher numbers of users each and every year. Local support for the protection, preservation, and improvement of the river has never been stronger.

News reports are erroneously making statements such as “the highly caustic Flint River” or “the river serves as an industrial sewer.” These reports simply do not accurately state the facts. Our long term monitoring data show an ecosystem that is consistently trending from “good” to “excellent.” Recent chloride testing is showing levels well within the threshold for acceptable. As well, recent lead tests show no indication of lead in the river itself.

Treating river water is very different from treating lake water. Unfortunately, far too many mistakes were made from the very start of the switch to using the Flint River as our drinking water source. From high bacteria levels, to violations of the Safe Drinking Water Act for TTHM levels, to the current lead crisis and possible link to the Legionnaires outbreak. This failure to treat the water and the failure for agencies to take action have harmed our citizens and have harmed this invaluable freshwater resource. This is unacceptable.

As you page through this report, you’ll see all the wonderful things our Flint River has to offer our community. From a vibrant freshwater ecosystem that supports a diverse array of fish and wildlife, including a growing population of eagles and ospreys, to countless recreational opportunities in and along the river. 142 miles of precious natural resources. We invite you to join us as we continue our mission to Protect, Preserve, and Improve our fabulous Flint River.

Rebecca Fedewa
Executive Director

Amy McMillan
Chair, Board of Directors
Flint River Watershed Coalition Programs

River and Community Clean Ups
marks the beginning of spring for hundreds of volunteers who come to one of over 15 sites spanning several counties to remove the trash that has accumulated over the past winter and get the Flint River ready for the coming year.

In 2015 roughly 280 bags of trash, 55 tires, 140 bags of lawn and yard waste, and even 2 hot tubs were collected at the 2015 Clean Up. 7 additional dumpsters were filled and several large piles of construction debris were hauled away. Any unique or unusual items are submitted into a public vote for the “Golden Gloves” award that is handed out at the Voice of the River Annual Celebration.

In addition, volunteers hosted multiple river clean ups over the course of the year as needed. Our sincere thanks to all our hard working volunteers, community leaders, and sponsors that make these efforts a success.

Water Quality Monitoring occurs every Spring and Fall at 35 sites in the Flint River Watershed across Genesee and Lapeer Counties by FRWC staff and citizens scientists trained according to Michigan DEQ standards. Volunteers take measurements and collect insect nymphs and larvae (a.k.a. benthics) that spend a good portion of their lives in the substrates of our local rivers and streams.

Once analyzed, the number and variety of benthics collected reveals stream health. The data is then compared to previous seasons and analyzed for trends and anomalies. Most monitoring sites are steadily increasing with scores of “good” or “excellent,” and any site with a decreasing score is investigated and reported when necessary.

Data is reviewed by our monitoring committee and shared with local and state agencies, as well as on the FRWC website: www.FlintRiver.org.

Flint River GREEN takes middle and high school students and pairs them with mentors from engineering and environmental fields who assist them in conducting nine chemical tests for water quality on their local streams. Students study their results and create an action plan based on their findings to improve or maintain water quality. In 2015, 23 schools with over 1100 students participated in the Flint River GREEN program. Of those schools, 15 were able to participate in the GREEN Student Summit, which is generously hosted by Kettering University. Those students were able to share their findings with other GREEN students and local officials as well as attend break out sessions hosted by a variety of professionals. Flint River GREEN Annual Reports are located on the FRWC website at www.flintriver.org.
“Our Water” Program Partnership
Creating Citizen Stewards and Memorable Experiences

Thanks to the generous support of the Genesee County Community Water Quality Consortium and the Genesee County Drain Commissioner, the FRWC implements several public education programs that educate residents and promote citizen stewardships through ways to prevent stormwater pollution and to keep our water clean. Genesee County Drain Commissioner also generously supports the Flint River GREEN program, as well as the annual Flint River and Community Clean Up.

Storm Drain Stenciling program is part of the “Our Water Campaign” to promote storm water awareness. This project educates communities about the water that runs into the storm drains in the area. The Storm Drain Stenciling project addresses how storm drains can transport pollutants. Volunteers stenciling the message “Dump No Waste, Drains to River,” near the storm drains and distribute door hanger to local homes that provide information on simple steps residents can take to help reduce pollution runoff into storm drains. Adults and children of all ages and various groups volunteer with this program, participating in over 12 events in 2015 to protect the waters of the Flint River.

Educational Presentations are another way the FRWC promotes citizen stewardship around the watershed. The goal of the presentations are twofold: to educate citizens on specific actions they can employ to avoid contributing nonpoint source pollution to our watershed, and to share stories and opportunities on the wonderful recreational activities the river provides right here in our own back yard. The presentations cover the Seven Simple Steps of the “Our Water” program sponsored by The Genesee County Water Quality Consortium. For more detailed information on The Seven Simple Steps look on our website at www.FlintRiver.org.

Paddles 2015 was an outstanding year for the paddling program and for getting out on the river. Our regularly scheduled trips along various stretches of the Flint River, known as Paddles, were held on the first and third Saturday of the month, May through October with several additional evening trips added throughout the season. This included a memorable trip from Irish Road to Mott Lake that had over 35 participants, an all-time high attendance for this program.

The FRWC held a total of twenty one Paddling trips, ranging from our Paddles, private trips for small groups (introduced in 2015), the 2nd Annual Flotilla, and kayak tours at the ‘Love Your Lakes’ events held at Thread Lake and Flint Park Lake. Over 450 people experienced kayaking the Flint River during the 2015 season and enjoyed the beauty and abundant wildlife that flourish there while seeing firsthand the importance of preserving this precious natural resource.
Engaging the Community

Spring Grove Wetland Restoration Site – an Urban Ecological Gem
The FRWC and partners were awarded $5,000 in ecological restoration services and materials provided by PlantWise of Ann Arbor, MI. The Spring Grove restoration effort built upon the ecological restoration and maintenance of the site that our partners, Grand Traverse District Neighborhood Association (GTDNA), the Stockton Center, and General Motors (GM) Tool & Die have been working at for many years. Spring Grove is home to two wetland ponds, turtles, frogs, birds, and many desired native species. Through our cooperative effort we cleared a large portion of the non-native (invasive) Tree of Heaven and created an attractive raingarden that collects and filters rain water from the nearby Stockton Center parking lot. Spring Grove is an excellent example of a place based education site and serves as an ecological gem for the community. It is through the hard work of our partners who dedicated many hours of planning and labor toward its success. We are honored to help build upon their work and will continue to look for further opportunities to aid in ecological improvements at the site.

Thread Lake and Flint Park Lake get some TLC: For a second year, the FRWC celebrated two great features of our watershed—Flint’s lakefront communities. Along with our dedicated partners the Genesee County Parks & Recreation Commission (GPC) at both lakes, and the International Academy of Flint at Thread Lake, we celebrated with over one hundred community members at each ‘Love Your Lake’ event. Local residents took part in a lake “paddle,” and for many it was the first time they ever floated their lake, enjoyed the GPC’s Turtle Van, ate some great food, and talked with neighbors about the outstanding lakes in their neighborhoods. The Celebrations also help us stay on track in implementing the Vision documents that the Flint Park Lake and Thread Lake communities helped develop with Michigan State University. We will continue to reach out to community leaders and partners on potential projects that will positively affect the lakes, and their surrounding natural areas and communities. See page 8 of the 2014 Annual Report – photo and caption that link to the Thread Lake Vision document – we should do the same but with Flint Park Lake for 2015.

Looking Forward
The FRWC is always on the lookout for projects and partners that help us protect, preserve, and improve the Flint River watershed. We serve on committees, attend events, and present our material to other organizations in order to build our abilities and share our successes. We’d love to partner with you!
Most recently we secured a one year technical assistance award from the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program that will guild our efforts to build the necessary support for attaining a National Water Trail Designation for the Flint River from the National Parks Service, National Water Trail System. There will definitely be more exciting news to come as the year progresses!
Outreach and Advocacy

FRWC is the “Voice of the River” and serves as the region’s principal resource on the Flint River Watershed. FRWC promotes and advocates for the Flint River watershed on issues that impact the function and integrity of the basin in part or as a whole at the local, regional, state, and federal level. Examples of our outreach and advocacy work include: partnering to secure implementation of watershed management plans across the watershed; collaborating with partner organizations on common priorities within the greater Saginaw Bay watershed; taking a leadership role in the Flint River Corridor Alliance mission to transform the Downtown Flint stretch of the Flint River from a distressed waterway to a natural resource that is an asset to the community; serving on City of Flint Master Plan development and implementation teams; and providing testimony to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on the Rover Pipeline proposal.

FRWC Chapter Accomplishments

Friends of the Flint River Trail (FFRT) For 20 years, the Friends of the Flint River Trail have led regular Sunday rides on the Flint River Trail and have advocated for extension of the trail. We started with about half a dozen riders and a six mile ride - from the Old Farmers’ Market to Dort Hwy and back. With multiple extensions of the trail our options and the distance of our rides have expanded greatly.

We lead rides every Sunday, May through October, starting at 2:00 PM, from the OLD Flint Farmers’ Market. Generally, we alternate between four basic routes - to Blue Belle Beach, Stepping Stone Falls, McLaren Hospital, or the Genesee Valley Mall. There are occasional variations such as an annual ride to For-Mar Nature Preserve and occasional rides through the City. The rides are leisurely in pace - and generally are of 12-15 miles in length. For the past few years we have averaged about 40 people per Sunday ride and regularly draw from about 25 zip codes over a season.

In addition, for the past several years, we have led a once per month Saturday ride on other mid-Michigan trails - simply to introduce our riders to other trails. When we started that practice, we had only about 5-6 trails from which to choose. Now, we have many more choices.. Those rides are generally of 20+ miles in length, and are on trails within about an hour's drive from Flint.

We have an annual trail clean-up on the last Saturday in April and start our rides on the first Sunday in May. This year the rides will start on May 1st.
The FRCA has made significant progress in implementing the Hamilton Dam project. In July, The Hagerman Foundation made a $200,000 contribution towards the preliminary engineering for the project. Combining this funding with other grants the FRCA had secured, preliminary engineering and permitting could be completed. The contract is being managed through the Flint River Watershed Coalition. Building support for this project has been lead by the FRCA staff and board members. Fundraising for project construction is an ongoing activity the FRCA expects to lead until the project is fully funded.

Thanks to the efforts of the Genesee County Land Bank, tangible progress has been made at Chevy Commons. With construction of Phase II coming to a close, a plan for maintenance, safety, programming, and continued fundraising needs to be put in place. The FRCA is working with stakeholders to formalize a plan using existing resources.

Other Activities:

In 2015, the FRCA has taken the lead in applying for over $1.75 million in grant funding for various projects including the Hamilton Dam and green infrastructure at Chevy Commons. The FRCA adopted a section of the Flint River Trail by Vietnam Vets Park and by the Old Farmer’s Market. During one season, over 1000lbs of litter and trash were removed, 2 benches and a fishing dock were rebuilt and repainted. During a clean up event, a 40 yard dumpster was filled up with brush and trash. Lastly, just in 2015, over 650 tires were removed from the river and the banks.

**Flint River Paddlers (FRP)** is group of paddle sport enthusiasts who share common goals for paddling and conservation on the Flint River. FRP promotes recreational canoeing and kayaking, and advocate to increase and maintain public access sites. FRP invests countless volunteer hours at paddle events promoting the Flint River as a safe, family friendly outdoor experience, including the FRCA Annual Flotilla and the FRWC Paddles, among other events.
**Lapeer County Chapter (LCC)** is one of FRWC’s oldest chapters, and the volunteers in Lapeer County are tireless in their conservation and protection activities. Maintaining canoe paths throughout the county, coordinating water quality monitoring and cleanup efforts, as well as advocating for water quality protection measures with local officials and decision makers are the LCC’s highest priorities, and this team gets results.

On January 8, 2015, the Lapeer County Commissioners voted in favor of allowing LCC to move forward with the development of the Saginaw Street Canoe Landing. In 2006, FRWC volunteers passed the hat to come up with the $1,250 needed to buy 5 acres that were in foreclosure. LCC purchased the land and then donated it to the county to add to the inventory of other canoe landings they own and maintained. We now have drawings of the proposed parking lot/landing, preliminary cost estimates of $27,000, and have begun the permitting process and fundraising. This stretch of the South Branch of the Flint River is the closest to town, usually the first to be cleared of obstructions, and the most widely used by student groups. The development of this landing and LCC’s plans to improve access at Rotary Park will showcase this amazing section of the river and highlight the important work done by Lapeer’s amazing team of obstruction removal volunteers.

The obstruction removal partnership with the DNR and Lapeer County Probation Department continues to battle poison ivy, mosquitoes, and a seemingly endless amount of fallen trees. This project concluded its 9th consecutive year. Crews cleared 16 sections and put in over 450 hours to remove 58 obstructions, clearing 11.7 miles of river.

LCC’s Benthic Monitoring crew covered the majority of sites again this year and even recruited a college trained entomologist to work at the lab! The river cleanup was composed of about 75% students, with many repeat volunteers reporting that there was less trash. LCC had several Lapeer County schools participate in Project Green again, testing local streams, storm drain stenciling, and attending the Green Summit.

LCC’s #1 goal is to recruit more volunteers.

**Kearsley Creek Chapter (KCC)** represents northern Oakland County portions of the Flint River Watershed. KCC monitors and advocates for what is the last remaining cool water fishery in the Flint River Watershed. They promote stewardship and recreation through the popular Annual Ortonville Creek Fest event, as well as biannual water quality monitoring and FRWC’s River and Community Clean Up.
Grants & Major Sponsors

The following individuals and organizations are the major source of grants and financial support for the operations and projects of the Flint River Watershed Coalition. Without the generosity of these foundations, businesses, and individuals, we would not be able to carry out the FRWC mission. We look forward to a continued strong relationship with our supporters in 2015 and beyond. Thank You

Grants and Program Support in 2015

AKT Peerless
Arch Environmental
Reinvent Michigan, Senator James Ananich
Anna Paulina Foundation
Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, Mr. Wade Pyles
Ms. Deborah Cherry, Genesee County Treasurer
David Churchill
Community Foundation of Greater Flint
The Conservation Fund
Diplomat Specialty Pharmacy
E & L Construction Group
Flint Institute of Arts
Flint River Corridor Alliance
General Motors, LLC
Genesee County Drain Commissioner’s Office
Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
Genesee Wanderers Bicycle Club
Genesys Athletic Club
Genesys Health Systems
Hagerman Foundation
Health Plus of Michigan
Highfield Foundation
Dan Kildee for Congress
Kettering University
Land Bank of Genesee County
C. S. Mott Foundation
C. S. Mott Foundation, Matching Gifts Program
Drs. Bobby & Srinivas Mukkamala
Laura Jane Musser Fund
Michigan State University
Michigan State University - Institute for Water Research
Michigan State University - Planning and Zoning Center
Ruth Mott Foundation
Quaker Chemical Corporation
Rowe Professional Services Group
Security Federal Credit Union
Shaklee Products, Ms. Marilyn Alvey
Six Rivers Regional Land Conservancy
Steve's Plumbing and Heating Company, Inc., Mr. Rick Figula
Taylor Morgan PC
Tetra Tech
United Way – Best Project
University of Michigan - Flint, Rec Center
Vern's Collision and Glass, Mr. Michael Herriman
Wade Trim, Inc.
Waste Connections, Inc.
Tom and Rebecca Wickham

We have dozens of sources of valued in-kind support, and wish that space would allow individual recognition for all. Please contact the offices of the FRWC for a list of our in-kind donors, or to find out how you can offer support to our programs.
Partnerships

The Flint River Watershed Coalition would like to thank the following partners who have helped build the success of the organization and its many programs.

C. S. Mott Foundation
Ruth Mott Foundation
Genesee County Drain Commissioner
Genesee County Water Quality Consortium
Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission
University of Michigan – Flint
Genesee County Conservation District
Lapeer County Conservation District
Michigan State University Planning and Zoning Center
Michigan State University Institute of Water Research
Flint Institute of Arts
Diplomat Specialty Pharmacy
Keep Genesee County Beautiful
Flint Downtown Development Authority
Genesee Intermediate School District
Lapeer Intermediate School District
Six Rivers Regional Land Conservancy
City of Flushing
City of Flint
City of Lapeer
Epic Technology Solutions
Earth Force
General Motors
Membership Matters

The Flint River Watershed Coalition is a grass roots organization that depends on its supporters and members for financial and volunteer viability. We have made a lot of progress in increasing our membership and sponsorship base, and in expanding the ways that we reach out to those who share our love of the Flint River.

There are many ways that the community, businesses and individuals can become members of the Flint River Watershed Coalition. We accept contributions in the traditional way with cash and checks, but now, at any time during the year, members can use the convenience of the internet. By going to the FRWC website at www.flintriver.org and pressing the ‘Donate Now through Network for Good’ button on the home page, credit card users can become new members or renew their membership in the Coalition.

There are seven levels of membership available, and four ‘Big Fish’ sponsorship opportunities. Please contact any one of our Board members or staff if you are interested in membership, sponsorship, or volunteer opportunities with the Coalition.

FRWC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

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<td>Family or Group</td>
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<td>River Sponsor</td>
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Members 4.13%

Contracts 8%

Grants 26%

Projects/Events 9.27%

Other 2.6%
Flint River Watershed Coalition
Statement of Activities
31-Dec-15
UNAUDITED

Revenues and Support 2015

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<td>In-kind donations</td>
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<td><strong>Total revenue and support</strong></td>
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Expense released from restrictions

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<td>Support services</td>
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<td>Management and general</td>
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<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
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Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets 83,900.00

Beginning Year Assets - All Funds 231,000.00

Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets 83,900.00

Total Ending Year Assets - All Funds 314,900.00

Our Thanks To All for your continued support of the Flint River Watershed Coalition and its mission to protect, preserve and improve our region’s most important natural assets.