

The Watershed Reporter

Welcome Spring!

From Executive Director Rebecca Fedewa

As I'm writing this, the snow is falling and Mr. Woodchuck (I'm mad at him, so today he is no Groundhog) has predicted more winter. But spring is tantalizingly close, and we're already making plans for all the fun and educational spring programs you've come to know and love at the Flint River Watershed Coalition.



Rebecca Fedewa

Like many, I often think of Spring as a time of renewal, change, and growth. Much like last year, we have some big changes

coming to the FRWC and the Flint River Watershed.

First, we bid a fond farewell to two outstanding board members. **Bob Carlyon** joined the FRWC back in 1998, and he has served in a variety of roles including the chair of our finance committee. Bob also is a frequent volunteer in a wide array of FRWC events. We wish Bob a wonderful retirement.

Sara McDonnell joined our board in 2007, and immediately took on a number of leadership positions as Treasurer and as co-chair of our Clean Up committee. Her expertise as a Program Coordinator with the Center for Applied Environmental Research at UM-Flint was invaluable to our organization. We are very fortunate that Sara is going to stay involved with the FRWC in a number of ways, including her leadership on the Clean Up committee.

We also want to welcome our newest staff member, **Jaime Welch**, our new Program Assistant. Jaime comes to us

from Southern Lakes Parks and Recreation where she managed their information technology needs, ran a variety of programs, and staffed the front desk. Jaime will have a very similar role at the FRWC, helping us with our electronic communications and technology needs, assisting in program implementation, and helping us keep the office in some sort of order. Welcome, Jaime!

It's also a pretty exciting time for the Flint River Watershed. Locally, regionally, and even nationally, activities big and small are happening that could forever change the health and prosperity of our watershed. On a national level, stimulus spending and the proposed budget submitted by President Obama could bring unprecedented amounts of funding into the Great Lakes to protect habitat and water quality. And we are starting to see real movement at the state, regional, and national level to prevent that wily Asian Carp from entering our waterways.

Locally, we are moving toward on-the-ground solutions to habitat and water quality issues across the watershed. In Lapeer County, a broad alliance of agencies and organizations came together to begin putting the South Branch Watershed Management Plan into action. In Oakland County, our students are taking a lead role in organizing a clean up effort on the Kearsley Creek, among other activities. And in Genesee County we are getting closer to a freer flowing river in downtown Flint, an expanded trail system, and watershed management plan implementation in the Swartz Creek.

Its going to be a great year! See you on the River!



Mayfly Larva, from www.BugGuide.net

Spring = Critter Catching Time!

The FRWC invites you to have some fun helping us collect benthic macroinvertebrates, aka creek critters. Join us for a few hours this Spring on either Thursday, April 29th or Saturday, May 1st as we don our waders to gather data that helps us monitor the health of our creeks and streams. We have 34 sites in our watershed and could use your help in gathering this valuable data that is used by the FRWC, Genesee County Drain Office, and the Michigan DNRE.

This fun "get outdoors" opportunity provides a first-hand watershed experience while learning about your site's habitat. If you like making discoveries -- we have a site for you. Contact Sue Lossing at (810) 767-9491 or slossing@flinriver.org to find out more on how you can help support the benthic monitoring efforts. To see our site locations and/or past years' data, please visit our website at www.FlintRiver.org and click on Programs.



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The Watershed Reporter is published quarterly by the Flint River Watershed Coalition. The Coalition is dedicated to promoting the importance of protecting our natural resources. It works closely with the public and with private agencies and citizens' groups in carrying out its mission.

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FRWC Board meetings are held the third Friday of the month.

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newsletter design & layout by Jon Wood

10 Questions With... FRWC Board Member Bob McAllister



Bob McAllister

1. Why are you a member of /work for/volunteer for the FRWC?
After teaching a course on Water Management, I became interested in protecting surface and ground water from misuse.
2. What FRWC programs do you participate in?
Flint River 500 and Genesee GREEN.
3. When did you first get involved in the FRWC?
I became involved about four years ago.
4. What's your favorite part of the watershed?
I enjoy watching the Flint river as it flows through Mott Park golf course.
5. What is the most interesting thing you have seen in the watershed (wildlife, garbage, someone doing something unexpected, etc.)?
I have seen people throw old tires and garbage in the Flint River. It is a disturbing sight to see.
6. What's your favorite river (any river) memory?
Sitting on a bench next to the Charles River in Boston, Massachusetts watching the fireworks on the Fourth of July.
7. What worries you most about the watershed?
I am concerned about the impact of urban runoff on water quality. Urban runoff is defined as surface runoff from an urban drainage area that reaches a body of water.
8. What gives you the most hope?
Young people are our future and they have a strong desire to live in a green America.
9. If you could change one thing to help improve the watershed, what would it be?
I would improve water quality and wildlife habitats throughout the watershed.
10. Who is your river/watershed/environmental/conservation hero?
Rachel Carson, author of "Silent Spring".

Think Spring! Use Spinning & Stationary Bike to "Get Ready"

The Friends of the Flint River Trail Steering Committee met in February to plan for the 2010 bicycling season. Our own newsletter, "River Ride" will be out in April with more details of the season – but a few pointers for your calendar AND for those really cold mornings when you need to remember that winter will come to an end "someday".

As usual, the regular Sunday rides will begin the first Sunday in May and continue through October – every Sunday – beginning at 2:00 PM from the Flint Farmers' Market. The rides are, generally, 12-17 miles in length and at a leisurely pace. "Sweeps" or support riders accompany every Sunday ride – at the end of the group – to assist with any bicycle problems. In addition to our Sunday rides, we invite riders to join us on

more vigorous Saturday rides to trails within about an hour's drive from Flint. We'll inaugurate our Saturday ride on May 15th with a nearby and relatively short ride – the Clio / Trolley Line Trail – including about three miles of a new trail opened just last year – going north to the County line and that will eventually connect to a trail in Saginaw County (and, eventually, beyond!) Subsequent Saturday rides will be on the second Saturday of each month – June through October.

Of course the success of the rides depends on clearing the trail of winter debris before the ride season really gets underway. Everyone is invited to join the Friends on Saturday, April 24th at Vietnam Veterans Park at 9:00 AM for the annual trail clean-up. A hot-dog lunch will follow.

Water Wars

Chairman's Update: Jack Minore

We have all heard comments about water resources replacing oil as an object of national and international dispute "sometime in the future." We've probably all thought that might be the case – but that it would our children or grandchildren that would deal with that: maybe not! Maybe those water wars are



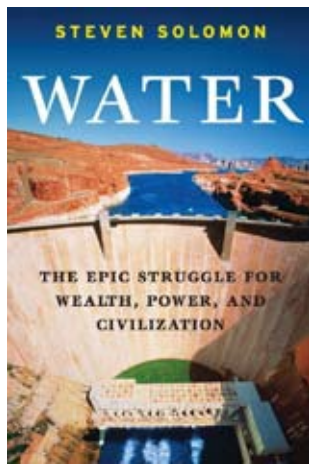
Jack Minore

hard upon us. A recent book, "Water: the Epic Struggle for Wealth, Power and Civilization" by Steven Solomon, prompts my comments today.

Nations 'fail' based on their ability to provide food and sustainability to their people, Solomon states, and many nations are now on the verge of a 'water bubble' that will cause that failure. India, for example, is over-pumping their ground water very heavily – and faces the prospect of drought as their population increases rapidly. In most nations, not only is the population increasing, but water use on a per-capita basis is increasing about three times as fast as the population. In the U.S. our per per-capita consumption is increasing far more rapidly than in the world at large. Among other factors, the aging infrastructure of our water supply system – with enormous waste from leaks – has reached a critical stage. We have certainly seen examples of that in urban areas of Michigan – including Flint.

Solomon points out that efficiency is a major key to water preservation, and

cites Australia and Israel as prime examples of water conservation. He urges a national water policy that emulates those nations. If we adopt such conservation policies, he asserts, the U.S. will be a "Water Super Power" in the inevitable water struggles that lie ahead of us – and in the very near future. The hallmark for Australia is their policy of trading 'water rights' - - a kind of 'cap and trade policy' it appears. By that policy, wasting water becomes extremely expensive. In Israel, so-called "gray-water" is heavily utilized for irrigation and other non-drinking water supply. The author cites those nations, along with India and China, as having made great policy strides because of their need. The U.S. by contrast, he asserts, actually encourages over-use! He cites subsidies for bio-fuels – the production of which requires more water and more energy than the results warrant.



There is much more to this discussion than I can go into here. One final comment, however, relates to the probability of climate change. Climate change will have enormous impact on the change in water cycles. Areas may get the same amount of water as now - - but it may all come in torrential down-pours 'out of season' rather than during prime growing seasons. That could mean huge increases in food costs, and, therefore, huge strains on populations. In short, let's conserve water – locally and by way of good national policies! We can't be lulled into comfortable non-action because of our bountiful regional supply of fresh water!



The River in Winter

Two feet of ice
and a desperate stinging cold
announce that the river
is closed for the season.
In winter, the murky waterway
running through the city
resembles a shuttered ocean-side resort.
But at the dam the torrents continue
to run and dive under the ice,
a privacy wall beneath which
river dwellers enjoy an exclusive bash.
I stand on the banks, a frozen outcast,
and like the lone child
not invited to a birthday party
I envy the catfish and the bass,
the discarded truck tires and pint bottles,
the rocks and the vegetation dancing
in the subzero flow beneath.
And I wish for a spring cotillion
to announce the spawn of future friends
and a new season for me
to stand on the sidelines and watch life
as I have always watched it:
protected by the concrete river bank,
restrained by the cast iron rails
which prevent me from falling in.

© January 9, 2009 Julia Zaher

Want to see photos of your watershed?



www.flickr.com/photos/frwc/

River Views

Lois B. Robbins

In 2006, with a grant from the Oakland Native Partnership Initiative, 36 volunteers installed a stream buffer next to Kearsley Creek, behind Ortonville's historic Old Mill. The buffer is designed to be both pleasing to the eye and functional. Streamside buffers such as this

are essential to the health of the Creek, a designated trout stream and headwaters to the Flint River. They help prevent soil erosion, uptake pollutants, and capture sediments before they enter the stream. The demonstration buffer is large: 25' X 140', following the principle that the larger a stream buffer, the better. The rule of

thumb is that a stream buffer should be as wide as the tallest tree is tall. This works well in most cases.

Because the open area behind the Old

Mill is often used for community events such as the Ortonville CreekFest, the buffer is designed to leave as much open space as possible and still be wide enough to function well as a buffer. The design incorporates a pathway down to the Creek, with a smaller garden with



Site: Native Stream Buffer at Kearsley Creek, in Ortonville, Michigan

low-growing native plants at the top of the path. A sandbar that floods in the springtime was replanted with water-loving plants, while the remainder of

the buffer was planted with a diverse selection of forbs (wildflowers), sedges, ferns, and low shrubs. The diversity of native plant communities found in the buffer will, over time, offer food, nesting places, and cover for many kinds of wildlife.

Homeowners who have streamside property can create a pretty effective buffer by simply leaving an area next to the stream unmowed. Those who wish to create a native landscape buffer can find more detailed information at the Michigan State University Extension Service.

If you plan to participate in the annual Ortonville CreekFest, or just happen to be in Ortonville, please

include a visit to the native buffer site on Kearsley Creek in your trip.

'River Views' is a periodic column in the FRWC newsletter that features sites of interest along the banks of the Flint River

Community and River Clean Up - Saturday, May 8th

Mark your calendars, and get ready to spruce up the watershed. The Flint River and Community Clean Up is coming up soon!

The snow may still be coming down, but spring will be here before you know it. Last year, 270 volunteers removed over 296 bags of trash, filled 53 yards worth of dumpster space, and hauled 99 tires from the river and its banks, all while competing for the coveted "Golden Gloves" award



The Coveted Golden Gloves!

for the most unusual item found during the clean up. Our 2009 winners were the Youth Leadership Genesee team cleaning up McKinley Park on Thread Lake who pulled a Pepsi machine from the shores of the lake.

The Gloves are up for grabs again this year!! So come on out and see if you can't claim the trophy for your group this year.

FRWC Welcomes New Members

Membership in the Flint River Watershed Coalition offers many **F.R.E.S.H.**-ing ways to advocate for the Flint River – Enjoy its beauty and value as an important natural resource, provide financial support as we work to Sustain its viability, and promote the fact that the Flint River is indeed, Healthy.

In these tough economic times, we recognize the hardships that everyone is experiencing. We sincerely appreciate the sacrifice of our new members by making a financial commitment to the FRWC, and the

continued affirmation of support we receive from those who have renewed their membership. We would not be a successful organization without our members. Thank you very much.

The following individuals and families became new members of the FRWC or renewed their membership since the publication of the last 'Watershed Reporter'. They are:

- Morley and Judy Biesman*
- Kerry and Anna Cannon*
- Kiersten DeKorne*

- Carl Haas and Carol Heidemann*
- Bill Goodfellow*
- Mike Haley*
- Brad Hill*
- Raymond and Kathleen Kelly*
- Kathryn Koegel*
- Amy Krug*
- Gerry and Shelly Masters*
- John Mrozik and Heather Sisto*
- Anna Paulina Foundation*
- Michael and Julianne Riha*
- Fred and Alyce Townsend*
- Dave Woolfenden*



Membership Application YES! I am pleased to become a member of the Flint River Watershed Coalition:

SPRING 2010

Name _____
 Address _____
 Organization _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Telephone (h) _____ (w) _____
 Email _____

Enclosed are membership dues for:

- | | | | |
|--|--------|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$ 10 | <input type="checkbox"/> River Patron | \$ 250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$ 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Protector | \$ 500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Group | \$ 40 | <input type="checkbox"/> Watershed Guarantor | \$ 1000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> River Sponsor | \$ 100 | | |

I have enclosed an additional gift of \$_____.

Some companies will match an employee contribution to an eligible charity or non-profit organization. Please check with your employer to obtain a matching gift form, if applicable.

Your support is sincerely appreciated. The Flint River Watershed Coalition is a not-for-profit organization with 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt status. Your contribution is tax deductible. Please make checks payable to:

**Flint River Watershed Coalition or FRWC
 432 N. Saginaw Street, Suite 238
 Flint, MI 48502**

Please Help Us to Serve You Better

Each quarter, the FRWC newsletter contributors work hard to put together a publication that is newsworthy and informative. Currently, we mail out over 1100 newsletters to our supporters and members. Our goal is to reach all who are interested in our activities and want to keep up to date on what's happening on the Flint River.

Your help is needed. If you have friends or colleagues who you think may appreciate being added to our mailing list, please let us know. Or, if you are receiving the Reporter and think that it's not something you are interested in right now, let us know that too. We can add you back at any time. Lastly, if there are corrections that we need to make to your name or address, please provide us with the correct information.

You can reach us in any one of several ways:

- By e-mail, you can send a quick note to: ewesthoff@flinriver.org.*
- By phone, you can call the Business Manager at 810-767-6490.*
- Or drop us a note to 432 N. Saginaw St. Ste. 238, Flint MI 48502*

Thanks so much for your support of the Flint River Watershed Coalition. Enjoy the newsletter, and we'll see you on the Flint River this summer!

Help Reforest the Flint River Watershed!



Visit www.gettrees.org

We all know that forests and natural area provide tremendous opportunities for recreation and improve the overall quality of life in our community. But trees and green areas are also critical to protecting the water quality of the Flint River Watershed. By planting trees and increasing our green spaces we have the opportunity to create cleaner, cooler and clearer waters here in our watershed. We will also leave a natural treasure that that will protect our resources and be enjoyed for many years to come.

This spring, the Genesee Conservation District has made it easier than ever to plant a tree and make a real difference in your community. With our new online marketplace we are making it possible to purchase almost 30 varieties of trees with just the click of a button. Our goal is to distribute over 10,000 trees to improve the environment in Genesee and surrounding counties this spring. To reach our goal we are asking those who care most about our natural resources to take action and make a difference today.

Visit www.gettrees.org today to order your spring trees and make the Flint River Watershed cleaner, cooler and clearer for generations to come.

For more information contact the Genesee Conservation District at (810)230-8766 ext.3

Buick City Clean Up Moving Forward

For over 100 years, the GM property along the Flint River known as Buick City has been producing carriages, cars, and even aircraft engines and other military equipment. The site predominantly sits empty now, and all operations will cease completely some time in 2010.

To encourage redevelopment of the site, the City of Flint, Motors Liquidation Company (MLC), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are moving forward with a proposed clean up plan for the 230-acre southern end of the site (the north end will be addressed in the next year).

The EPA has developed a proposed clean up plan, called a "Statement of Basis" and is wrapping up the public comment phase of the process. The \$5.9 million

plan calls for a three-fold action plan to bring the site into compliance for future industrial use as well as long term monitoring to measure the effectiveness of the cleanup steps and ensure continued compliance with Michigan criteria for the protection of the Flint River.

The Flint River Watershed Coalition has been an active participant in the comment phase, and will continue to monitor the process to ensure that all plans are indeed protective of the Flint River. If you have any questions about the Statement of Basis or the clean up in general, please feel free to contact Rebecca at rfdewa@flinriver.org.

For more information on the cleanup of the Buick City site, see: <http://www.epa.gov/reg5rcra/wptdiv/sites/buickcity/>

Flint River Watershed Coalition partners with the U.S. Census Bureau to support the 2010 Census

FRWC is partnering with the U.S. Census Bureau to raise awareness of the 2010 Census and help achieve a complete and accurate count of our population. The partnership is part of a larger effort by the Census Bureau to increase participation in the 2010 Census. In our watershed, census data represents power and money – power from adequate congressional representation and money from \$400 billion in state and federal funding. Each county in our watershed the loses about \$1,000 a year over 10 years for each person missed by the Census.

Census data are used for legislative and congressional redistricting, as well as to determine funding for hospitals, schools, job training centers, senior centers, roads and most importantly programs dealing with our waterways.

These improvements can have a significant impact on the lives of everyone in our community.

One of the shortest census forms in history, the 2010 Census form asks 10 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete. Census forms will be delivered or mailed to households in March 2010. Census Day is April 1, 2010, the official day of the population count. Households should complete and mail back their responses upon receipt. Census workers will visit households that do not return their forms to take a count in person.

Remember ... be counted so the Flint River watershed will get its fair share of state and federal funding for the next 10 years. For more information, please visit www.gencocensus.com or www.2010census.gov.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH	DATE/DAY	TIME	EVENT
MAR	5-7 FRI-SUN	Day	Flint River Steelheaders, Birch Run Expo
	5-8 FRI - MON	Day	Flint Area Science Fair, Kettering
	11 THURSDAY	Day	Flint River GREEN, Professional Development
	12-14 FRI-SAT	Day	Flushing Walleye Festival
	13 SATURDAY	Morning	Environmental Justice in the Urban Context: UM-Flint
	13 SATURDAY	8am-1pm	Keep Genesee County Beautiful Conference: UM-Flint
APR	14 WEDNESDAY	10:00am	Our Water Walk: Flint River Trail Southwalk
	16-17 FRI/SAT	Day	Genesee Conservation District Tree Sale at EA Cummings Center
	18 SUNDAY	Contact FRP	Flint River Paddlers 2010 Ice Breaker Paddle: Mitson Landing to Flushing Riverview Park
	22 THURSDAY	Contact FRWC	Flint River GREEN Water Monitoring Day (Lapeer, Oakland, and Genesee counties)
	22 THURSDAY	Contact FRWC	Paddle Rally: Celebrate the Earth Paddle: Flushing Riverview Park to Flushing Township Nature Park
	22 THURSDAY	Contact FRWC	Storm Water Run Off Awareness & Stenciling Program for Genesee County
	24 SATURDAY	9:00am	Trail Clean-up for Friends of the Flint River Trail, Viet Nam Vet's Park
29 THURSDAY	12-6pm	Spring Benthic Monitoring Season/Lab Date	
MAY	1 SATURDAY	12-3pm	Spring Benthic Monitoring Season/Lab Date
	2 SUNDAY	2:00pm	First of the weekly FFRT Sunday Bike Rides: Meet every Sunday at the Farmer's Market
	2 SUNDAY	Contact FRP	Flint River Paddlers: Downtown Flushing to Montrose
	8 SATURDAY	9am-12pm	Annual Flint River & Community Clean Up (Genesee, Lapeer & Oakland counties)
	8 SATURDAY	10am-4pm	Wild Lapeer, The Willows Earth Education Center, Chatfield School
	14 FRIDAY	8:30am	Flint River GREEN Student Summit at Mott Community College
	15 SATURDAY	Contact GCMPC	Genesee County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day
	15 SATURDAY	10:00am	FFRT Saturday Bike Ride: Clio Trail
	16 SUNDAY	Contact FRP	Flint River Paddlers: Holloway Dam to Mott Lake boat ramp
21-23 FRI-SUN	Contact FRP	Flint River Paddlers: Pine River near Cadillac, Michigan	
26 WEDNESDAY	10:00am	Our Water Walk: Flushing River Trail	
JUN	5 SATURDAY	Contact FRWC	Ortonville Creekfest
	6 SUNDAY	Contact FRP	Flint River Paddlers: Holloway Dam to Irish Road
	12 SATURDAY	10:00am	FFRT Saturday Bike Ride: Southern Links Trail
	13 SUNDAY	Contact FRWC	Our Water Paddle: Holloway to Irish Road
	17 THURSDAY	6:00pm	Our Water Walk & Kayaking Demonstrations: Montrose Barber Memorial Park
	20 SUNDAY	Contact FRP	Flint River Paddlers: Shiawassee River Holly to Fenton
21 MONDAY	Contact FRWC	Our Water Paddle Rally: CELEBRATE SUMMER / Solstice: FTNP to Montrose.	

2010 Annual Meeting a FRESH Success

For those of you who were not able to attend our Annual Meeting, we missed you! And you missed a great evening! We were fortunate to have as a very special guest: Lt. Governor John Cherry. Mr. Cherry kicked our evening off with brief remarks about the importance of protecting our freshwater resources, and noted how invaluable the work of our organization, volunteers, and partners is to ensuring the protection, preservation, and improvement of our watershed.

The evening then proceeded to celebrate some of the great projects and volunteers who have worked so hard for the Flint River

Watershed. The focus of the program was FRESH – Flint River, Enjoyable, Sustainable, Healthy. We are very proud of the work

Auction. As you may recall, this past fall we held our Flint River 500, a membership drive that brought our total to

504 members! To celebrate that accomplishment, a very generous donor challenged us to the Flint River \$5,000! If we could raise \$1,250 in silent auction bids at our 2010 Annual Meeting, the donor would match our efforts up to \$5,000. Thanks to a wide array of donors and bidders,



Flint River 500 Planning Committee members receive the 2009 Dr. Gary Pace Volunteer of the Year Award. From left: Brent Nickola, Steve Montle, Gerard Bernash, Jay Cook, Duane Elling, John West, Eric Hall. (Not Pictured: Gabe Zawadzki)

you all do on a daily basis, and it was our honor to celebrate your accomplishments.

The finale of the evening was the Silent

we exceeding our goal and raised almost \$1,700 in silent auction bids. THANK YOU to all who participated!



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