

Watershed

REPORTER

PARTNERING TO PROTECT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

MARCH 2012

TELL US YOUR STORIES OF FUN ON THE FLINT RIVER

REBECCA FEDEWA, FRWC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Rebecca Fedewa

This time of year always has us looking forward to all the great programs and events of the coming spring and summer. And with our mild winter, the “call of the river” has piped up even earlier than usual.

Throughout this whole year, as we focus on the issues big and small impacting our watershed, the FRWC is also promoting

a theme of “Fun on the Flint River” and I hope you can join us. If you are reading this newsletter, you probably already recognize that the Flint River is a fantastic recreational resource, right here in our collective back yard. To steal a tag line from our friends at the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission – Get Away, Right Away. There is no need to travel hours up north for prime fishing holes, swimming beaches, scenic paddles, or relaxing bike rides or hikes.

Join us on for one of our fun activities, or plan a trip of your own. Did you know that two liveries have opened to serve our watershed in just the last couple years? On the west side, you can rent from Good Ol Redbeards and on the east side Peddles and Paddles can assist you with boat AND bike rentals. Or check out the Parks and Rec website for an abundance of opportunities to recreation in our county parks, one of the largest county parks

systems in the state.

While you are out having fun, please snap a photo or 10, maybe shoot some video, or even write a quick story about your adventures for potential publication in a future newsletter or on our website.

We want to hear ALL about it! Find us on Facebook and brag about your great catch (you don’t have to identify your secret hole if you don’t want to). We have a YouTube channel where you can post your videos (<http://www.youtube.com/user/FlintRiverWC>). Or simply send us your pics and stories and we’ll try to feature them in future issues of our print and electronic newsletter.

We have a fantastic resource that we want everyone to know about! But we need your help to spread the word. Tell your story, and make it part of the Flint River Watershed’s narrative. See you on the river!

CALLING ALL MONITORS!



Winter (such as it was) is almost over, and we are itching to get our waders on and get in the water for what looks to be an exciting year!! Spring dates for our Water Quality Monitoring have been set with training scheduled for April 12th and our labs are scheduled for April 26th and May 5th. Water Quality Monitoring involves volunteers going out to one of our 34 sites across Genesee and Lapeer counties and taking samples of “benthics” (the macroinvertebrates that live in the stream) and doing data collection, such as width and depth of stream and types of stream habitat. It is an easy process to learn, and gives

our monitors the chance to make a huge difference by allowing us to see how our local streams and rivers are doing from season to season. This information is a great warning indicator and alerts us when something changes in the water habitat that begins to adversely affect it. We are, as always, eagerly seeking volunteers that would like to participate and have fun in the water with us. Monitoring is for just about all ages, and a great way to spend time with people in your community. If getting in the water isn’t for you, no worries, there is plenty to do that does not involve getting wet! You can help at the site [more at “monitor” page 5](#)



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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 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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10 QUESTIONS WITH... DAVID CHURCHILL FRWC BOARD MEMBER



David Churchill

1. Why are you a member of /work for/volunteer for the FRWC?

I love rivers and wanted to do a little work that I can consider beneficial to the environment.

2. What FRWC programs do you participate in?

So far, benthic monitoring, but I certainly plan to work on the Clean Up Days in the future and possibly some river clearing.

3. When did you first get involved in the FRWC?

The Spring of 2010 is when I did my first monitoring.

4. What's your favorite part of the watershed?

I haven't seen all of the watershed yet, but the stretch through the State Game Area in Lapeer County is heavily wooded and scenic. My wife and I paddled down from the livery in Flushing last fall and it was very beautiful.

5. What is the most interesting thing you have seen in the watershed (wildlife, garbage, someone doing something unexpected, etc.)

Large spiders in the State Game Area in Lapeer County.

6. What's your favorite river (any river) memory?

There are many so it is hard to choose. While working in the prosecutor's office in Antrim, I had a friend up for the weekend and we rented a canoe at and went down the Jordan River for something to do. I loved it and wanted to spend more time on rivers, so I have paddled and fly-fished on many since then. It all started with that trip down the Jordan River in 1977.

There was a bull moose on Rock Creek that looked as black as coal and a cow moose with a calf on the Bitterroot, both in Montana. There was a great night fishing the hex hatch on the Maple River in Emmet County after many discouraging ones. I could go on and on but most involve catching trout and seeing wildlife.

7. What worries you most about the watershed?

On a large scale, the same things that worry me about all ecosystems, global warming and population pressure. On a smaller scale, having the resources and volunteers to keep the river open for paddlers.

8. What gives you the most hope?

The river is cleaner and more open for paddlers than it has been, so if present trends continue, it will get better.

9. If you could change one thing to help improve the watershed, what would it be?

I don't know what the river needs most. It is cleaner than people think it is, but the water quality is probably not as good as we would like it to be.

10. What is your river/watershed/environmental/conservation hero?

My environmental hero is Al Gore for his work on global warming.



Brent Nicola

THE YEAR OF FUN ON THE RIVER

BRENT NICKOLA, FRWC BOARD CHAIR

Well, it's that time of year again. We are most of the way through winter, the Walleye are spawning in the river, and we are all ready for that first warm day of the spring. This is the time of year to tune up your bike, wax your boat, tie some extra flies and generally get ready for another year on the river.

This year, the watershed coalition is going to be focusing on getting people out on the river. We have declared this year as the year to "Have Fun in the Flint River." I wanted to take a little time to highlight a few things you may want to consider when choosing how you are going to get out there and have fun.

First, you have to check out the South Branch, where our many volunteers from the Lapeer Chapter have been working for many years now. Hundreds of volunteer hours have gone into improving this stretch of river for paddling and fishing. Because of its relative narrow width, this stretch provides for an intimate experience with nature. When you explore it, you will find yourself up-close with not only the river but the wilderness and nature along the banks. Be ready for an up-close experience with the birds, mammals and other bank dwelling animals and plants. Keep your eyes open for the occasional overhanging tree too!

For those of you that enjoy the fast pace of powerboats for floating on the pontoon with friends, you have got to check out the Holloway Reservoir. On any given weekend in the summer, hundreds of folks will be on the reservoir, skiing, tubing, fishing or just relaxing with friends. If you go, be sure to take your boat up the "Narrows" to the north side of the reservoir. Keep your eye open for birds of prey and wading birds in this section.

Rumor has it that this area is a good spot for walleye too. On your way up, keep your eye open for groups of folks hooking several boats together. If you see this, pull on up to the group and say hello. I have been part of some of the best impromptu parties out there and made many friends for the day.

Finally, check out the stretch of river from downstream of Flint to the confluence with the Saginaw River. Now I know that is a big stretch of water, so here are my suggested highlights.

- Paddle from Flint to Flushing – Great short stretch of river that will take you past some of the best walleye fishing in the entire Saginaw Bay.

- Paddle from Flushing to Montrose – My home water, this stretch of river offers large vistas and some great fishing for pike, bass and walleye. Look out around the area of Carpenter road for the biggest set of rapids on the river. Stay right and look out for the big boulders.

- Shiawassee national wildlife refuge – This place is one that always fascinates me when I visit it. The river is usually murky here from all of the agricultural runoff in the lower portions of the watershed. The sheer size of the river and its wetlands that surround it are amazing. Take a compass and GPS out here. You really could get lost in this section of river!

Wherever you head out to enjoy the Flint River this year we want to hear your stories. We will be featuring stories of our members throughout the year in our print and digital media. Take along that camera, shoot a short video on your cell phone, or journal about your experience and share it with us. We pride ourselves on being the voice of the river. We hope your stories will be a voice of the river too.

NEW TEAM MEMBER HOLLY ROSSER

We are pleased to welcome Holly Rosser to the FRWC team. Holly will be helping with this year's Flint River GREEN program. Holly comes to us with lots of great experience organizing programs and events with another local nonprofit, Priority Children. Holly has helped with their Carrera Program,

the Children's Champion Breakfast, and most recently is working with their Green and Healthy Homes Initiative. We are very excited to have Holly working with us, and look forward to having another great year for Flint River GREEN. You can reach Holly at 810-767-9491.



Holly Rosser

SPECIAL THANKS FOR OUR SPONSORS

The FRWC would like to thank everyone for attending our Annual Meeting! This year we had a record turnout and we owe it all to the continual support of our valued members like you. Thank you for being part of our growth and for helping us Protect, Preserve, and Improve the Flint River Watershed. We have an exciting year planned and we look forward to your involvement with the FRWC.

A special Thank You to our Annual Meeting Sponsors:

Pike Title Sponsor



Genesee County Drain Commissioner

Jeff Wright: Title Sponsor of the 2012 Flint River Watershed Coalition's Annual Meeting

Walleye sponsors



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MPS Group offers distinct, innovative, tested systems and processes to help you reach your environmental sustainability goals. We consistently provide yearly reductions in waste volumes and costs to each of our clients by evaluating and managing all aspects of our client's waste management program.

Reinvent Michigan

Jim and Andrea Ananich



Wade Trim

Wade Trim is a consulting engineering firm that helps communities address infrastructure and environmental issues. We have extensive experience in watershed planning and the evaluation and application of a broad range of ecosystem restoration techniques. We are proud to be involved with the restoration of the Flint River and its riverfront, planning and designing solutions that balance flood control, ecological restoration, public open space, recreation and redevelopment of underutilized land.

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ANNUAL MEETING ROUND UP

Starting off with a record breaking crowd at our January Annual Meeting was a super beginning to what promises to be another great year for the Flint River and its watershed. We had over 140 people in attendance this year, and raised a record breaking \$14,500! Thank you SO much to everyone who came out, contributed to the silent auction, placed bids on our items, and in general showed your support for the FRWC. A special thanks to our sponsors (opposite page).

This year, our meeting featured two important initiatives, one right here in our watershed, and one that promises to raise the profile of rivers across the state. Our evening began with an update on progress to reclaim "Chevy in the Hole", the massive brownfield in downtown Flint. Our former Director Steve Montle (currently with the Center for Community Progress) was joined by Matt Didier, Brownfield Project Manager with Region 5 of the EPA. Look for some exciting developments on the site this spring, including a phytoremediation project starting on Earth Day with a large scale tree planting on the site.

Our keynote address this year was given by the co-founders of Michigan River News – Andy McGlashen and Jeff Brooks Gillies. MRN is an environmental news site launched in 2011, and is a source of original reporting on the waters flowing through the state's cities, forests, and farms. Andy and Jeff gave an informative talk about their role to raise awareness of important issues impacting our rivers and streams, such as the closing of federal gauge stations, PCB levels in fish, unsafe dams, and more.

Finally, please help us welcome our newest board member David Churchill, who was elected to fill a vacant seat at

this year's meeting. You can read more about David on page 2.

We would also like to thank our Annual Meeting silent auction donors:

Anita Harrand; Andrew Ward; Birds Unlimited, Daniel Cruz; Brent Nickola ; Casey Foote; Coldwell Banker, The Wade Pyles Team - Fenton; Cummings Chiropractic, LLC, Dr. Teresa Cummings D.C.; Cyberlink; Doc Fletcher; Duane Elling; Ellen Brothers; Essential Balance Message Therapy, Denise Penwell; Gabe Zawadzki; Glenn Fischer; Graff Chevrolet - Durand; Heather Sisto; Italia Gardens; Jack Minore; Jackson Chiropractic Clinic, P.C.; Jaime Welsh; Jan Praefke and Joel Geda; Jim and Andrea Ananich; John Mrozik; Jon Davidson; Linda Berker; Liz Ostrander; Marilyn Alvey; Mark Bilodeau ; Paul Rozycki Photography; Stallings Stained Glass; Suski Chevrolet, Andrew Suski; Thread Creek Farm, Michael and Virginia Knag; Todd Iser Nickola; University of Michigan- Flint Rec Center; Zoom Digital Media, Steve Hester.

The FRWC would also like to thank Mike Herriman of Vern's Collision and Glass for donating an Aquapel glass treatment to all of our attendees at the Annual Meeting.



Dave Beaulieu receives the Volunteer of the Year Award



The Silent Auction was a huge hit!



An Evening of good food, fun and fellowship

"monitor", cont'd from front page

by taking down the data and sorting the benthics, or help at the lab with identifying (Master Monitors will be on hand to verify and help those not familiar with a lesson on how we identify our benthics). We will also be holding a Master Monitor class this year to give those monitors who want extra instruction a chance to hone and increase their skills.

If you haven't attended training before or would like a refresher course just contact us and let us know. We will get you registered for training, and while at training you will be able

to see a list of sites that need your help to get monitored this season. If you are a returning monitor, you should be receiving an email in the next few weeks with information on your site and the days available for monitoring.

If you are interested in finding out more about our program, check out our website at: www.FlintRiver.org. If you are interested in attending training and/or getting involved with monitoring, contact Jaime Welch at 810-767-7140 or jwtelch@flinriver.org for more information. I hope to see you in the river this season!

GENEROUS MEMBERS ADD VALUE

Our supporters have been very generous since we last reported to you about membership. There are many ways to connect with us, and several ways to make membership payments.

Right before the Christmas break, and then when we returned to the office in January, we received many membership payments from those who share our vision to protect, preserve, and improve the Flint River Watershed. Then, a couple of long standing friends recently stopped into the office to renew their membership. They know where we are located, and drop by occasionally. Several people took the opportunity to renew their membership while participating in the fun activities of the Annual Meeting and Silent Auction.

Three individuals made contributions to the watershed, and then took advantage of the matching gifts program of their employers. Please remember that many local companies value the charitable spirit of their employees and will match contributions to qualifying 501(c)3 organizations such as the FRWC. To compound your giving, check out your employer's policy on this.

We want to give special recognition to those who recently gave at the River Sponsor and River Patron levels. Renewing at a level of \$100 or more are Scott and Ahlissa Vaubel, Michael and Julianne Riha, Jeanne Pepper and Thomas Herman, James Kettler, Mary Christian, Raymond and Kathleen Kelly, and our friends at the Anna Paulina Foundation. The combined contributions from these individuals, families, and foundations exceeds \$1,500. Their generosity will help fund the programs in the spring such as benthic monitoring and the Flint River and Community cleanup.

Here is a complete list of those who became new or renewing members of the Flint River Watershed Coalition:

Clark Almassy

Tracy Brewington

Nancy Byder

Mary Christian

Cheryl Gault

Fremont and Mary Ann Halboth

Raymond and Kathleen Kelly

James Kettler

Kay Lennerth

Joe and Lili Leonardi

Pat Litwiller

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Jeanne Pepper and Thomas Herman

Michael and Julianne Riha

Paul Roetter

Debra Golden Steinman

Scott and Ahlissa Vaubel

Angela Warren

Matthew Watts

Dave Woolfenden of American Speedy Printers

Your membership is important to us. We value every member, and safeguard every dollar. Welcome all to the ranks of members in the Flint River Watershed Coalition. Thanks!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION * MARCH 2012

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____ student \$10

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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 no-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 400 N. Saginaw Street, Suite 233 Flint MI 48502**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH	DATE/DAY	TIME	EVENT
MAR	2-4/FRI-SUN		*Flint River Steelheaders Boat & Fishing Show Birch Run
	3 / SAT	Morning	*Keep Genesee County Beautiful Conference
	7 / WED	8:00am	Flint River GREEN Professional Development
	9-10/SAT-SUN		*Flushing Walleye Festival
	10/SAT	1:00pm	Presentation by Doc Fletcher at Flushing Walleye Festival
	16 / FRI	8:30am	FRWC Board Meeting
	20 / TUE	7:00pm	Lapeer Chapter, FRWC Meeting
APR	9 / MON		Last Day to Order for Lapeer County Tree Sale
	11 / WED		Last Day to Order for Genesee County Tree Sale
	12 / THU	TBD	Spring Benthic Monitoring Training
	14 / SAT	8am-3pm	*Annual Earth Day & Garden Celebration
	17 / TUE	7:00pm	Lapeer Chapter, FRWC Meeting
	20 / FRI	8:30am	FRWC Board Meeting
	23-27 / MON-FRI		Flint River GREEN Water Monitoring
	26 / THU	TBD	Benthic Monitoring Lab Date
	28 / SAT	9:00am	Friends of the Flint River Trail Maintenance & Cleanup
	28 / SAT	9:00am	Annual Flint River & Community Cleanup
MAY	5 / SAT	TBD	Benthic Monitoring Lab Date
	5 / SAT	9:00am	Wild Lapeer
	5 / SAT	9:00am	Backup Date for Annual Flint River & Community Clean up, in case of inclement weather.
	6 / SUN	2:00pm	First of the weekly Friends of the Flint River Trail Sunday Bike Rides. Meet Every Sunday at the Farmer's Market.
	11 / FRI	8:00am	Flint River GREEN Student Summit
	11 / FRI	8:30am	FRWC Board Meeting
	15 / TUE	7:00pm	Lapeer Chapter, FRWC Meeting
19 / SAT	9-Noon	Rain Barrel Give Away - Hosted by Boys & Girls Club of Greater Flint. 3701 N Averill Ave, Flint	
JUNE	2 / SAT		Ortonville Creek Fest
	9 / SAT	TBD	Our Water Beginner's Paddle - Location TBD
	30 / SAT	TBD	Our Water Paddle - Location TBD
JULY	21 / SAT	TBD	Our Water Paddle - Location TBD
	21 / SAT	TBD	Riverfest - Lapeer

* FRWC Community Table Events, Volunteers Welcome

DON'T MISS OUT ON TIME-SENSITIVE INFORMATION!

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LAPEER STUDENTS TIRE REMOVAL PROJECT

7th grade students at Chatfield School in Lapeer removed 16 tires and a truckload of other junk from the South Branch of the Flint River last September. The tires were taken to Cass Community Social Services (CCSS) in Detroit to be turned into mudmats. CCSS trains homeless people in the machine shop that transforms the old tires into durable, attractive mudmats. In addition to providing food and housing to those in need, Cass operates several other green enterprises including an exercise bike gym that creates electricity, document shredding and recycling, and several microenterprises for special needs clients. The Chatfield National Honor Society took a trip to work in the shop with Cass employees to help fill holiday orders for the popular mudmats. The students then hosted the Cass Community for mud oven pizza and a tour of the Willows Ecology Center at Chatfield School. Once again, the river plays a role in building community.



Lapeer Students and their great tire haul

To learn more about Cass Community Social Services go to www.casscommunity.org or the Willows at www.chatfieldschool.org.
