

The Watershed Reporter

Rally Ho!!

From Executive Director Rebecca Fedewa

This was a phrase repeated over and over during the 2010 National River Rally held in Snowbird, Utah. I was lucky enough to attend with FRWC Board member Brent Nickola. We were there to give a talk on the Flint River 500, the membership drive held last fall that doubled the membership of the Flint River Watershed Coalition.

Rally is an incredible conference that brings together river advocates from



across the country. I feel very fortunate that I was able to attend, and that we were chosen to share our experience on the Flint River with this talented and dedicated group. Our peers showed great interest in the Flint River and our efforts to protect, preserve and improve our watershed.

Rally also was a time to reconnect with old friends, make many new friends,

and nearly constant learning. I left feeling truly inspired by the work and dedication of the river community, from east coast to west. This is a group inspired by the beauty and splendor of our rivers; if you are reading this newsletter, count yourself among the throngs of amazing

people who take the time to care about our rivers.

As inspiring as Rally was, I also left feeling very fortunate that the Flint River Wa-

tershed is as healthy and protected as it is. Many of the groups that I met with are involved in issues as dire as the Gulf oil spill, water scarcity, rampant point source pollution that is in direct violation of current federal law, and so much more. Which makes it all the more important that we continue to work hard to maintain the quality of our waters.

This is definitely the time for us all to work together in our efforts to protect this wonderful resource. Thank you for being a part of the Flint River Watershed Coalition and for all you do to ensure the health and prosperity of OUR watershed.

Taking Action on Earth Day



Volunteers participate in stenciling to raise awareness

Local Sierra Club and WildOnes members joined with the FRWC to help prevent stormwater pollution, one of the major sources of contamination to our watershed. Unlike wastewater flowing through sewer drains, water that enters our storm drains does not go to a treatment facility. Instead, that water—and all the debris and other contaminants it carries—flows directly to our local streams or rivers.

On Earth Day, volunteers worked in five targeted river stretches with water quality monitoring results that scored as either “Poor” or “Fair,” to raise local awareness of the impact of our storm drains. “Helping to protect our fresh water was a great way to honor Earth Day.” said Rebecca Gale-Gonzalez, President of the Flint River WildOnes.

We appreciate their efforts! Many more neighborhoods could be stenciled. If you would like more information on how you can participate, please contact the FRWC Outreach and Education Coordinator Sue Lossing at 810-767-9491 or slossing@FlintRiver.org

Come and read our blog at





432 N. Saginaw St. Ste. 238
Flint MI 48502
810-767-6490
www.Flintriver.org

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 Bill Welch

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

There is a huge need for everyone to look at how we live and interact with our environment. Working with FRWC helps me not only to look at the impact but to get involved in solving problems in the environment connected with the Flint River Watershed.

2. What FRWC programs do you participate in?

Currently I am part of the education committee and I mentor two schools in the GREEN program.

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

I joined in 1999 as an educational representative from the K-12 community. After I retired from K-12 education, I remained on the Board as a concerned citizen.

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

My favorite part is the great variety of water sources from the narrowest of creeks to the Rivers and including the lakes and reservoirs.

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

Fishing, family recreation and power boat races on the same body of water.

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

Camping along the rivers in the western US and also in our own Holloway Reservoir. There are differences but a great many of similarities. My memories are the enjoyable camping trips with my family.

7. What worries you most about the watershed?

The biggest worry that I have about the watershed is that most of our citizens still don't recognize how intertwined their lives are with our Flint River Watershed.

8. What gives you the most hope?

Educating our young citizens through the GREEN program. This program, run

by FRWC helps our school age students to begin to realize how important a watershed is to each community.

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

More comprehensive educational programming for school age students. I believe that we need a multi-tiered program that will emphasize watershed education in elementary and middle school with a culmination of river water testing in high school. I can only guess at the cost: \$10,000 per year.

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

I have many local heroes, including everyone on the current FRWC Board, but I would have to choose Jack Minore because he was not trained in environmental management/education but he has embraced it and has become a strong and knowledgeable advocate as the president of FRWC.

Man of the Dam

Man prides himself on
this canyon,
this river,
this water.

But still he wants to
dam it,
drown it,
hide it.

Could man live without
this dam?

Maybe man would
dam the ocean;
if he could.

@Sarah Webb

Sarah Webb is a senior at Skyline High School, Salt Lake City Utah. She is editor-in-chief for the 2nd year of her schools' literary magazine, Satorian! She read this poem, as well as many of her peers' work, at the National River Rally in Snowbird, Utah.

Chairman's Update

Jack Minore

THANKS ! to the many volunteers who turned out for our very busy Spring season. From the Trail clean-up in late April, the River clean-up in early May - - and the monitoring, Flint River GREEN and the student summit – hundreds of folks have given hundreds of hours to the FRWC and its programs. Those volunteers are the



Jack Minore

are what make the Watershed programs really work. THANK-YOU to all!

MEMBERSHIP: Some of you are reading this – but have never joined the FRWC. We need you! Some of you are members at the minimum level: please consider increasing your annual contribution. All of us know two or three people who share our interests in protecting our water and its watershed. Please help the FRWC by recruiting them to join us. Perhaps you're a paddler or bike rider or one of the Lapeer river cleaners, and you enjoy the experiences of the group but have never formally joined. We need you. Each year, as our programs have expanded, the cost of running those programs has gone up, too. Add a clean-up or monitoring site, and we need additional equipment.

We have been fortunate to have received several grants over the past few years to build and maintain our programs; but the ultimate sustainability of the FRWC depends on increased numbers of members. All of us have the opportunity to increase the strength of the organization by joining or recruiting one or two members. Our future depends on it.

TRASH DEFEATED!

Forty-degree weather and a bit of rain is not enough to defeat our awesome volunteers. They are true Watershed Stewards! The 2010 Flint River and Community Cleanup was a very productive effort, with almost 400 people helping to make a difference at one of our 15 locations across the watershed.

We are very excited about the leadership developing among our area's young people through our clean up program..

• This year, we welcomed the Student Veterans of America, Flint Chapter who supported the cleanup at

the Vietnam Veteran's park. Over 25 people removed items from this site, including 40 tires.

• Students participating in the Youth Leadership Genesee program started working with the FRWC back in 2008, and they haven't stopped since. Their impact at Cummings Park on Thread Lakes has been enormous.

• Starting in 2009 and continuing this year, the Science Club at Bendle High School hosted the only City of Burton site where more than 30 students helped to clean up Thread Creek. This is upstream from one of our monitoring sites that scores poorly in habitat conditions for macroinvertebrates. We hope to see improving scores at these sites in future years!

• In 2010, the Youth Conservation Council at Brandon Schools took the lead in planning a clean up at three sites along the headwaters of Kearsley Creek. These students raised their own

funds and coordinated all aspects of their clean up.

• In Flushing, 84 students from the high school Environmental Action Group participated in downtown Flushing. Flushing H.S. Teacher Donn



Volunteers at Veteran's Memorial Park smile through the 40 degree temps

Hinds stated this is "... a new record since we started our cleanups about 30 years ago."

The winner of the 2010 Golden Gloves Award is yet to be determined! We'll keep you posted, and the winner(s) will receive their award at our Annual Meeting in January.

We appreciate the efforts of EVERYONE who participated in this year's clean up. Collectively, three hours made a huge difference. To receive notices of the next cleanup date, please visit the FRWC Website www.FlintRiver.org to sign up for our weekly email newsletter "Ripples from the Watershed."

Want to see photos of your watershed?

flickr

www.flickr.com/photos/frwc/

River Views

Touring the Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

“You know this is the gem of the Flint River, don’t you?” This, before we even had a chance to say hello to our tour guide for the afternoon, Steven F. Kahl, Refuge Manager. I didn’t mention that there are probably a lot of folks out there that feel the same about their slice of the Flint River Watershed, mostly because I absolutely love it when people start a conversation out this way.



Flint River, just before most of its flow is diverted into the Spaulding Drain, outside the SNWR.

If you have never visited the Refuge

before, I strongly encourage you to head to where the Flint River meets with the Shiawassee, Tittabawassee, and Cass Rivers to form the Saginaw River. It contains one of the largest and most productive wetland ecosystems in the state, and last year played host to over 78 different species of birds including 3-5 occupied Bald Eagle nests. The Refuge is also home to a strong population of Blandings turtle, listed as a threatened species in Michigan, and countless other species of reptiles and amphibians. Deer are also plentiful!

With over 13 miles of trails, and activities planned all summer long, there is lots to do. And starting next spring, the Refuge will have completed construction of its new “Auto Tour” route, allowing visitors the chance to see even more of the Refuge than what you can see by foot. Check out their website for more info: <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/shiawassee/>

If you would like to tour the area by boat, an equally compelling and beautiful trip, contact Wil Hufton at Johnny Panther Quests — (810) 653-3859 or www.jpqat.com.

Spring Water Monitoring: “Excellent!”

Every spring and fall, volunteer water quality monitors fan out across the watershed to conduct benthic macroinvertebrate* sampling and stream habitat assessments.

This season, two sites in Genesee County received the highest possible score of “Excellent.” Scoring is based on the collected species’ sensitivity to habitat conditions and whether they are “common” or “rare” at the collection site.

This was also an “excellent” season for monitoring. In stark contrast to last spring—where excessive rain made it too difficult to test most sites—this season 63 volunteers enjoyed the weather and easy stream conditions to help record data on the health of the watershed. Monitors reported on stream habitat conditions, collected macroinvertebrate samples, and helped with the lab identifications. Through their efforts, we monitored all 20 Genesee County sites and 7 of Lapeer County’s 10 sites.

How is this data used? By identifying areas with low or fluctuating scores, we can direct our programs to help build awareness and being taking small steps



Volunteers monitoring at the Flushing Township Nature Park.

in those areas to improve water quality. For example, the FRWC partners with the local Sierra Club Conservation Committee to conduct community Storm Drain Awareness Programs in areas with ‘fair’ or ‘poor’ rankings (see story front page). Scores also are shared with the Genesee County Drain Commission and with the State of Michigan Water Division for their

reporting purposes.

Monitors are essential to the success of this program. Join us at one of the upcoming, State-approved trainings to learn more about monitoring and become a member of a team. Testing is done during the last week of April and the last week in September. For more information, contact program coordinator Sue Lossing at 810 767-9491 or slossing@FlintRiver.org.

* Freshwater benthic macroinvertebrates are animals without backbones that are larger than ½ millimeter (a pencil dot). These animals live on rocks, logs, sediment, aquatic plants, and debris found in the river. They includes crustaceans such as crayfish, mollusks such as clams and/or snails, aquatic worms and the immature forms of aquatic insects such as dragonfly, damselfly, stonefly and mayfly nymphs and larvae.

Welcoming New Members

Tough economic times have continued to present a challenge for our members and supporters. But as we witness the national environmental crisis that is currently taking place in the Gulf of Mexico, our contributors still recognize the work that we do locally to protect, preserve, and improve the Flint River Watershed. As a result, several individuals, groups, and families became new members of the FRWC, or renewed their membership since our last newsletter. They are:

Richard Barron

Dave Crabill and Family

Kathleen Dilworth

Raeann Gatenby

David Leyton

Dr. Robert McAllister

Sierra Club Nepessing Group

In addition, one of our long term members, Patricia Schultz of General Motors Corporation, was instrumental in securing additional corporate funds to help with the costs associated with our Flint River GREEN program. We sincerely appreciate Pat's efforts as an individual to look for additional ways to make her support of the FRWC grow.

If you know of individuals who may be

interested in membership in the Flint River Watershed Coalition, please make sure that you pass a membership application on to them. There is an application in this newsletter, and one on line at www.flintriver.org. In addition, for those who prefer the convenience of on line membership payment, you can now use 'Donate Now through Network For Good'. See the button on the home page of our website.

Make sure that when you are on the river this summer, you look for the members of the Flint River Watershed Coalition and join them in celebrating this natural resource.



Membership Application

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

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

SUMMER 2010

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!

FFRT Is Ready for Riding!

The regular Sunday rides of the Friends of the Flint River Trail began May 2nd and will continue every Sunday through October – starting at 2:00 PM at the Flint Farmers' Market. There were several new 'first time' riders with us the first two Sundays; and the first of our regular Saturday rides was on the Clio bike path and the new Trolley Line extension north to the County Line. The next Saturday ride will be on June 12th – and the Friends will ride the new Southern Links Trail from Columbiaville to Millington and back. Saturday rides to

other mid-Michigan trails will occur on the second Saturday of each month.

The Sunday rides are at a leisurely pace – and generally go to either Blue Belle Beach or Stepping Stone Falls – about 13 miles total. On the Second Sunday we take a slightly longer ride to the Village of Genesee for ice-cream. All riders are welcome! There is no advance registration: just "show up and ride". (Helmets are strongly recommended.) Ride information from Jack Minore at jacksonmin@aol.com or Bruce Nieuwenhuis at bnbaton@gmail.com

Protecting 97 acres of farm, woodland & stream

Thread Creek Farm Protected Forever thanks to Virginia and Michael Knag

Kathy Rollins took the pictures and Katie Anderson wrote the story

On the last day of 2009, Virginia and Michael Knag and NOHLC's Executive Director, Katie Anderson, met at the Genesee county courthouse to execute and file the Conservation Easement donated by the Knags to permanently protect the conservation values of 97 acres of their 140 acre farmstead known as Thread Creek Farm.



The beautiful Thread Creek Farm

leaving the courthouse Ginny, whose connection to the farm and the land run deep, said, "I just knew this was the right thing to do. I have peace of mind knowing that the farm will be protected in perpetuity and can be appreciated by generations beyond my life. I have enjoyed the farm because of the actions taken by my ancestors to preserve it over these many years."

Having been continually farmed by Virginia's family for six generations, the family still uses the original buildings.

Virginia is the great-great-great granddaughter of Jonathon Davison. John C. Evatt, deceased in 2008 was a fifth generation farmer who passed down the property to his daughter Virginia Evatt Knag and her husband Mike Knag.

They produce native Michigan perennial flowers, sweet corn, pumpkins, and raise a small herd of cattle and turkeys. They open their farm to school groups in the Fall and their roadside stand also provides produce to the public. "I am pleased that we can now focus more on stewardship, than the financial burdens of farming," Ginny said. The easement drafted and negotiated by Frank Aiello, Thomas M. Cooley

Law School Associate Professor and editor of the newly-drafted Michigan Model Conservation Easement, provides for two zones of protection. The Habitat Zone covers the riparian area including Thread Creek and the wooded area, while the Agricultural Zone allows for eco-friendly agricultural practices. The Base-line documentation which serves as a permanent record of the land's conservation values was prepared by Kathleen Rollins, NOHLC Land Steward. The management plan for the property

is being prepared in collaboration with Virginia's niece, Shannon Walker, forestry student at MSU. David McCarty, a NOHLC board member and volunteer, will install permanent NOHLC boundary markers.



Woods at Thread Creek Farm

Conservation Values Protected

- Protects Thread Creek's water quality and essential habitat as part of Flint River watershed.
- Preserves dynamic wet-mesic forest with dominant canopy of Sugar Maple (maple syrup production and woodland habitat).
- Protects valuable, fertile soils for local source of produce, potentially native species
- Preserves part of the natural, cultural and historic heritage of the area.



Thread Creek wanders through the Knag's farm

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH DATE/DAY TIME EVENT

JUNE

4	FRI	8pm	Begginner Kayak Presentation, Flushing Riverview Park
5	SAT	10a-3p	Water Demonstrations with various Kayaks, Flushing Riverview Park (behind Tucker Pool)
5	SAT	TBA	Ortonville Creekfest, Activities, downtown Ortonville
6	SUN	2pm	(FFRT) Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
6	SUN	TBA	Flint River Paddlers: Holloway Dam to Irish Road
12	SAT	10am	FFRT Saturday Bike Ride: Southern Links Trail
13	SUN	TBA	Our Water Paddle: Holloway to Irish Road
13	SUN	2pm	(FFRT) Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
15	TUE	7pm	Lapeer Chapter, FRWC Meeting
17	THU	6pm	Our Water Walk & Kayaking Demonstrations: Montrose Barber Memorial Park
20	SUN	2pm	(FFRT) Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
20	SUN	TBA	Flint River Paddlers: Shiawassee River Holly to Fenton
21	MON	TBA	Our Water Paddle Rally: Celebrate the Summer Solistice: Flushing Township Nature Park to Montrose
26	SAT	10am	First Annual Flint River Corridor Alliance Triathlon, downtown Flint
27	SUN	2pm	(FFRT) Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market

JULY

4	SUN	2pm	FFRT Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
10	SAT	10am	Saturday bike ride - Saginaw Valley Trail
11	SUN	2pm	FFRT Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
14	WED	10am	Our Water Walk: For-Mar Nature Park
18	SUN	2pm	FFRT Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
21	WED	Contact FRWC	Our Water Paddle Rally: From Flushing Township Nature Park to Barber Memorial Park in Montrose
25	SUN	2pm	FFRT Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
28	WED	10am	Our Water Walk: Clio Jack Abernathy Trail

AUGUST

1	SUN	2pm	FFRT Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
1	SUN	Contact FRP	Flint River Paddlers: Shiawassee River from Geeck Park to Shiatown Dam
7	SAT	Contact FRWC	Our Water Paddle Rally & Fresh Water Forever event: Flushing Township Nature Park
8	SUN	2pm	FFRT Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
13-15	FRI/SUN	Contact FRP	Flint River Paddlers: Au Sable River/Mio to Cummings Flats
14	SAT	10am	FFRT Second Saturday bike ride - trail TBD
15	SUN	2pm	FFRT Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
18	WED	10am	Our Water Walk: Richfield River Walk & Pot Luck Picnic
20	FRI	8:30am	FRWC Board Meeting
22	SUN	2pm	FFRT Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market
29	SUN	2pm	FFRT Sunday Bike Ride: Farmer's Market

For a listing of events after August, Please visit the website: www.FlintRiver.org

Phenomenally GREEN

The Flint River GREEN program engages area students, teachers, and environmental professionals to help our youth learn about their watershed while engaging in monitoring the health of their local stream or river.

Using scientific methods, students conduct various tests to assess the health of their local river or stream. Students then work to identify any environmental problems, re-



Students get involved with GREEN sampling

search the causes of the problem, and develop solutions to improve the health of their stream. Beyond merely identifying the environmental issue, the class works to make positive changes in practices

or policies that allowed the problem to emerge in the first place.

Following their testing season, classes gather at the 2010 Student Summit held at Mott Community College. At the Summit,

students from 24 school districts in three counties presented their data to one another and to the community, providing an opportunity for shared learning across the watershed.

GREEN hit record numbers this year thanks to additional sources of financial support and new collaborations with organizations providing mentors and session leaders. Major organizations supporting GREEN

include Earth Force, the Lapeer and Genesee Intermediate School Districts, the City of Flint Waste Water Division, the Genesee County Drain Commission, Mott Community College, and General Motors. Through their support, we could offer this program to 13 additional teachers from Lapeer County while continuing to sustain the large number of teachers from Genesee County and a teacher from Oakland County.

From a teacher evaluation following the Student Summit, a Flint River GREEN teacher summed up the program thusly: "Kids are phenomenal - at first they think it is "dumb" but once they get started - it is a whole different story." The FRWC thinks our participating GREEN teachers are phenomenal too! With their help, we see the ripples of learning become a much larger wave towards environmental stewardship.



FLINT RIVER
WATERSHED COALITION

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Suite 238
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