

The Watershed Reporter

On Working Together...

From Executive Director Rebecca Fedewa



Early in February, as I was driving along the Flint River on a routine trip to the bank, I was disappointed to see a smattering of tires in Vietnam Veteran's Park. As I continued along, my disappointment turned to dismay and finally anger as I came across three more piles of tires dumped right on the shore of the river. My Facebook friends had the honor of watching my mini-meltdown upon this discovery.

What was almost worse than the tires, however, was how easily these piles were accepted by the several people I stopped to talk to. These were good people, don't get me wrong. This was a public park space, and they were using it to wind down after a day of work. And while each was upset by the dumping, to a person they slipped into the mode of thinking that "this is what happens," "we just have to get used to it," "this is what we deserve."

Well, it's NOT what we deserve, and thankfully, there is a happy ending to this story. Because of the strong partnership built over the years with the City of Flint, a few phone calls were all that was necessary to get a truck, trailer, and people to the scene and the approximately 50 tires were gone in less than 24 hours. A small victory, certainly, but one that resulted in 50 fewer tires winding up in our river, releasing potential pollutants and generally mucking up the beauty that is our Flint River.

Why am I relating this story? For two reasons.

One: the power of the Flint River Watershed Coalition lies in our COLLECTIVE ability to get things done. Back in 1997, it was partnerships with a variety of organizations that formed the foundation of this organization. Over the years, these partnerships have evolved, but at the core the FWRC's

mission remains the same: partnering to protect, preserve, and improve the Flint River Watershed. We will continue to work as an organization to build and sustain these partnerships that prove so integral in our ability to effectively serve as the "Voice" of the river.

Two: dumping tires (or anything for that matter) is just ridiculous! Unfortunately, we will always run into a mindset that it is easier to do the wrong thing. But what if those tires ended up in your back yard? Well, they did. This is YOUR watershed, and working together, we can send an ever growing message that we won't simply accept its degradation. Help us build the attitude that the Flint River and its watershed is a fantastic resource that is ours to use and enjoy, and as a result it is our responsibility to protect it for our friends, family, and neighbors.

As we move into our spring programs, we'll once again be organizing our Flint River and Community Clean Up (see page 2). This is one simple way for you to get involved, either through volunteering, organizing a site, or becoming a sponsor. Beyond our clean up, if you happen upon dumping or other obvious pollution to the river or watershed, please contact our office and we'll work together to address the issue.



BEFORE



AFTER

Behold: the beauty of working together! This is why alliances are so important.

Have YOU Seen "The Ripples"?

Don't miss out on the latest news from the Flint River Watershed Coalition!

The FRWC is reaching out in many new ways to our followers. The 'Watershed Reporter' is only one tool we use to keep you up to date on our watershed. Many of you who receive this quarterly printed newsletter are not signed up for our weekly e-newsletter, 'The Ripples'. If you don't get our electronic

news or our updates on Facebook, you may be missing out on some important time-sensitive information.

To subscribe for our weekly e-newsletter, visit our web site www.FlintRiver.org, or send us an e-mail at info@flintriver.org. You can also "like" us on Facebook by searching for Flint River Watershed Coalition.



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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.

**FRWC
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Brent Nickola

Executive Director

Rebecca Fedewa

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- Irene Bashore
- Linda Berker
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- Jack Minore
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FRWC Board meetings are held the third Friday of the month.

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on Recycled Paper with 40%
Post-Consumer Waste.
Please Recycle!**



newsletter design & layout by Jon Wood

FRWC Outreach and Education Programs

Join us this year for healthy summer fun while supporting efforts to protect, preserve and improve the Flint River watershed.

Wednesday, April 6th is the first of a series of educational Our Water River Walks conducted throughout the watershed. Walkers of all ages and ability are welcome. This spring walk will take you along a beautiful section of the Flint River Trail. Learn first-hand about human impacts on the river and simple things that can be done to help protect and improve the watershed. Participants can learn and see different sections of our watershed.

Saturday, April 16th: You can help FRWC partake in the large Annual Earth Day & Garden Celebration with the theme "What We Can Do." This fun event provides a great opportunity for FRWC to share information about the watershed. Sharing the Our Water message of Seven Simple Steps people can do to help protect this valuable resource is a step in the right direction. At the FRWC Booth people will be able to sign up for events such as clean-up, monitoring, river walks, paddling events. Contact: Suzanne Lossing at SLossing@FlintRiver.org, or 810-767-9491.

Saturday, April 30th: Spring Cleaning along the popular Flint River Trail. Join the Friends of the Flint River Trail (FFRT) as they prepare this trail for the enjoyment of many riders, walkers and joggers. Over 900 people participated in the Sunday Bike Rides, and many more bike, jog and walk along the trail all year long. Clean up participants meet at the VietNam Veteran's Memorial Park, between Hamilton Avenue and Robert T. Longway Blvd. (west side of the Flint River) at 9:00 am. Lunch is provided for participants. For groups of 5 or more,

please contact Bruce Niewenhuis: 810-742-0071, bnbaton@gmail.com. or Jack Minore: jacksonmin@aol.com, 810-235-1490.

Sunday, May 1st: Kicks off the 2011 season of 2:00pm Sunday bike rides from the Flint Farmers' Market. Sunday bike rides continue throughout the summer and into the fall until the last Sunday in October. Contact Jack Minore at jacksonmin@aol.com, or 810-235-1490.

Saturday, May 21st is the annual Flint River & Community Clean-Up (9:00 am-12 noon). Do you have a site you would like to recommend for clean up? Do you know of a group who might be interested in helping? In the past three years over 1,124 bags of trash, 252 tires, and many large items such as mattresses, lawn furniture, roof shingles and other building materials, have been retrieved from the watershed. Where would it be now without the help of people like you? Help us exceed numbers by joining us on this day to help protect, preserve and improve the Flint River Watershed. We can make a huge difference with your support. Lunch is provided for participants. You can register at: www.FlintRiver.org, or contact: Suzanne Lossing at SLossing@FlintRiver.org, or 810-767-9491.

Saturday, May 21st: Get wild for the environment at the Wild Lapeer event following Lapeer's river cleanup efforts at 9:00 am. Show your support for the Lapeer Chapter and all their efforts by volunteering to help on this big day! Then join in for lots of fun with some wonderful people. To help FRWC at this event contact Peter McCreedy at: pjmcornlover@yahoo.com 810-614-7594.

BRENT NICKOLA: FRWC NEW BOARD CHAIR

Spring is just around the corner and by this time of year we are all looking for the first signs. Are there new birds I haven't seen since fall? Is that patch of ice finally gone for the year? These are the questions that haunt me this time of year. Yep! It's just around the corner. I promise.



Brent Nickola

As the new Chair of the FRWC Board, I am particularly excited to see what the new season will bring. As I look forward to the spring in our watershed, I plan to focus my efforts on three specific areas. Leadership, the Water, and FUN. Let me take a few minutes to clarify what I mean.

Leadership: As I take a leadership role in the Coalition, I have been thinking about all the other leaders that have built our organization into something to be proud of. This leadership has come in many forms: leadership from our staff, leadership from our board, and most importantly, leadership from you, our members. Your membership, your volunteer hours and your financial contributions to the organization never cease to amaze me. I will do what I can highlight those who have played a leadership role in the past. And I will continually search for new leaders to help shape our future.

The Water: I want to be clear about what I see the goal of our organization – It is to protect and improve the quantity

and quality of the water in our watershed. Simple as that! As we move forward this year and address the issues impacting our watershed, I will continually be asking the question “Is it good for the water?” I have had the opportunity to attend national conferences on water issues over the past several years and I am always shocked by how fortunate we are to have good quality water. Ladies and gentleman, we have got a great river here, and I look forward to working with all of you to keep it that way.

Fun: For anyone that knows me well, I don't think this one will be a surprise to you. Having fun in life is something that we owe to ourselves and everyone around us. We need to incorporate fun into our organization at every opportunity we can find. This does not mean that we plan to avoid hard work or not devote ourselves to issues we believe in. It simply means that we will make what we do fun. And by doing this, we will easily engage more and more people in our efforts.

Spring is just around the corner. As the weather begins to break, I ask you to consider your place in our organization this year. Are you going to be a leader this year? Are you going to help protect our great river? And finally, are you going to have fun this year? If you answer yes to any or all of these questions, give us a call and we will help you do your part. Now, let's go have some fun this spring!

WATER MONITORING

The snow is melting! As spring starts to creep closer, we at the FRWC are gearing up for our Water Monitoring Spring Season. Monitoring is not only extremely important to following the health of our streams and rivers, but is also a great way to get out and “play” in the river. Monitoring has something for everyone, and is a two step process. You have the opportunity to get in the water and collect macroinvertebrates or to stay on the bank and record data. Then the specimens are taken to the local lab where they are identified. By knowing what is living in our local streams, we can tell how healthy – or unhealthy – that

stream is. These results are then shared with the Genesee County Drain Office and the Michigan DNRE. We have a training day on Wednesday, April 13th at Donnelly Pavilion at



Examining Samples in the Lab

Kearsley Park. The training is a great way to see what monitoring is all about, and to see if it is for you. Bring a friend!

Our monitoring dates this spring are Saturday,

April 30th and Thursday, May 5th. The labs will be open on these two days for identifying purposes. There are 34 different sites in our watershed that require monitoring every season, and we need great volunteers like you to get involved! The data collected while doing monitoring performs an invaluable service, and only requires a few hours of your time. Last season we had a wide variety of ages participate, and it was a fun, educational experience for everyone. You can see all the data from past years, as well as pictures of our volunteers monitoring on our website: www.FlintRiver.org.

If you are interested in attending training and/or participating in monitoring, please contact Jaime Welch at jwelch@flinriver.org or call 810-767-7140 for more information.

Ninety–four people can't be wrong!

A recap of the wonderful 2011 Annual Meeting of the Flint River Watershed Coalition

We had a great gathering at our 2011 Annual Meeting and Silent Auction on Thursday, January 27th at the Davison Country Club. With a theme of "Path to 21st Century Conservation", we had



The Annual Meeting was a fun night out celebrating the watershed with family and friends

a lot of material to cover in one short, fun-filled, informative evening. Ninety four people attended the event, giving us our largest and most enthusiastic crowd ever.

Ms. Lauri Elbing, a Policy Associate with The Nature Conservancy in Michigan was our keynote speaker. She stepped in at the last minute for Rich Bowman, the Director of Government Relations for TNC. Lauri gave us a statewide perspective on travelling the Path to 21st Century Conservation through managing knowledge, empowering people, and integrating conservation. With Lauri as a new friend, we are pleased to consider The Nature Conservancy our newest partner. Their mission is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. Their purpose is so complementary to ours – we are sure the partnership will be long lasting

and beneficial. Please visit the website of The Nature Conservancy at www.nature.org to gain more insights on the role of this organization, and how those of us in the Flint

River watershed are important elements of a larger environmental picture. Thanks again to Lauri for filling in on short notice.

Every year we use the Annual Meeting as a forum to recognize the individuals

and groups who have taken it upon themselves to be a voice of the river. The awards ceremony is fun, and gives everyone a chance to sit back and take credit for the work that has been done over the past year. The following presentations were made:

The second annual "Golden Gloves"



Aaron Bigler receives the Golden Gloves

goes to the person or group who helped us dispose of the most interesting, most disgusting, or the most offensive item during our annual Flint River and

Community Cleanup in May 2010. Aaron pulled a gumball machine from the banks of the Flint River in downtown Flint, on the UM – Flint campus. How this item got to be in downtown Flint is a mystery! Everyone found Aaron's engaging acceptance of the award to be refreshing and sincere. He'll be a great environmental steward in the future.

The **Joe Leonardi Leadership**



Mayor Dayne Walling accepts the Joe Leonardi Leadership Award on behalf of the City.

Award was presented to the City of Flint for 2010. We were pleased to have the Honorable Dayne Walling, Mayor, on hand to accept on behalf of the city. The city of Flint has been an active supporter of the Flint River and the FRWC for many years. Recognizing the value of the river and the responsibility to help protect it, the city has donated countless staff hours and resources to our GREEN, benthic monitoring, and clean-up efforts. They help us demonstrate that good things can happen with true civic leadership and engagement.

Mr. Terry Reechko was the recipient of the **Dr. Gary Pace Volunteer of the Year Award**. Terry joined the Flint River Watershed Coalition in 2007, but it's safe to say he has been a long

term supporter and advocate for the River. Terry came to us through his participation in our Friends of the Flint



Terry Reechko receives Volunteer of the Year award
River Trail chapter. HE HAS BEEN GOING EVER SINCE. When you think “worker”, Terry immediately comes to mind, as he is often the first person to volunteer for arduous tasks at all of our clean ups. Terry keeps the FRWC staff on its toes.



Sara McDonnell



Bill Welch

Finally, two **Special Service Awards** were presented to departing FRWC Board members, Sara McDonnell and Bill Welch. We recognized their service to the board and thanked them for the leadership and expertise they have so generously lent to us over the years.

Many congratulations to all of the award recipients. We'll continue with the tradition of recognizing our volunteers and supporters in the future. We sincerely value their contributions.

The Annual Meeting is also the time of year that we conduct business that requires the approval of the FRWC membership-at-large. The terms of several board members was extended to January 1, 2013. Please consult our website for the terms and biographies

of all our current board members. In addition, we added two new directors to the board roster. Steve Hester of Zoom Digital Media, and Andrew Leavitt both joined the board as citizen representatives. You'll hear from these two energetic board members in the future as they become involved in all aspects of the organization. They may even contact you directly for some assistance in our programs and projects. Welcome to Steve and Andrew.



An array of items were available for auction.

The meeting concluded with the most fun (and frankly, most profitable) part of the night. The Live and Silent Auctions! Darren Bagley conducted a live auction by engaging our guests in a competitive bid on two Redwings tickets. The lucky bidder was able to attend a hockey game at a great price. Then, over 30 items were offered up for silent auction. Between the live and the silent auction, we raised over \$2,000. Then, because we met a special challenge posed to us from an anonymous donor, we received a significant match of the amount we raised, increasing our total fundraising success to \$8,000. Please support the businesses that made generous donations to us. They provided products, gift certificates, and services that we put in the auction. Following is a list of our silent auction donors. Thanks!

- Marilyn Alvey, Shaklee Products
- Jim and Andrea Ananich
- Linda Berker
- Ernest Carter
- Erin Caudell
- David and Carol Diem
- Duane Elling
- Dave Fairbanks, Fairbanks Canoes and Kayaks
- Bill Goodfellow
- Genesee County Parks and Recreation, Amy McMillan
- Graff Chevrolet – Pontiac, Inc., Douglas Schnell
- Michael Hawks, Governmental Consultant Services Inc.
- Marian Listwak
- Adam Lock, Lock's Photography
- Suzanne and David Lossing
- Jack Minore
- The Nature Conservancy
- Brent Nickola
- Denise Penwell, Essential Balance Massage Therapy
- Wade Pyles – Coldwell Banker Real Estate
- Sabrina Race, Creative Cleanings
- Charles and Gerry Rudduck
- Katherine Saunders
- Grace Sauve
- Stallings Stained Glass
- Wade Trim, Inc
- Wild Birds Unlimited Nature Shop
- Bill Wortz, Public Affairs Associates

All in all, the Annual Meeting was very successful. Plan on joining us next year when we celebrate the successes of 2011. Connect with your ninety-four best friends of the Flint River Watershed Coalition at the 2012 Annual Meeting and Silent Auction. See you next January!

see *LOTS* more photos at

www.flickr.com/photos/frwc/

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

I am a member because I love the outdoors and having a vibrant watershed that I can use for recreation near my home is important to me.

2. What FRWC programs do you participate in?

I just became a member/board member so I have not experienced the programs yet.

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

I was in 8th grade when we tested the water in the Swartz Creek for science class.

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

Flushing Park and Winshall Park. I spent a lot of time in both parks growing up. I grew up in the neighborhood around Winshall Park which is on the Swartz Creek so I spent a fair amount of time getting dirty in the creek. In high school I spent a lot of time fishing in Flushing Park with one of my good friends.

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

I was fishing in the Flint River near Flushing Park and found a butterfly knife.

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

This is easy. In September of 2008, for my birthday, my wife and I went to our cottage on the Little Manistee River to salmon fish (It has become somewhat of a tradition now). It was cold, rainy and generally miserable. After fishing for a few hours and nothing to show for it we started back to the cottage. As we approached I asked her to check one more spot just above the cottage, being such a wonderful wife she agreed. We stopped as we reached fishing hole. I told her how much I loved her, dropped down on one knee in Little Manistee River and removed a ring from my pocket and asked her to marry me.....she said yes.

7. What worries you most about the watershed?

The heavy industrialization along it and the lack of awareness. Those two things coupled together make it uninviting to many and they miss out on what a great resource it is.

8. What gives you the most hope?

The steady progress that has been made. The realization by local leaders that it can be an economic engine and the interest in building a recreational watershed that is vibrant and beautiful.

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

Removal of Hamilton Dam.

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

My Dad, he always taught me to leave with more trash than you entered. It is simple and if more people did it all watersheds and public lands would benefit.

What Does Your Membership Mean to the FRWC?

The Flint River Watershed Coalition is so appreciative of the individuals and organizations that support our mission. The following membership payments were made over the 2010 Holiday season or early this year. If you see our supporters on the river, please join us in recognizing their generosity.

David Beaulieu

Nancy Byder

Mary Christian

John and Cathie Frederick

Esther Fuchs

Mike Haley

Genesee Conservation District, In memory of Patricia Hill

John Helsom

Holloway Lake Association

Raymond Kelly

James Kettler

Joe and Lili Leonardi

Riley McLincha

Anna Paulina Foundation

Michael and Julia Riha

Timothy Ruwart

Debra Golden Steinman

Laurie Tata

Dave Woolfenden, American Speedy Printing

The combined membership payments made by these individuals, families, and foundation is almost \$2,000. These funds will help us promise:

Almost 340 lunches for middle school kids at the Flint River GREEN summit in May 2011, OR

Nearly 800 pairs of gloves for our Flint River and Community Cleanup volunteers, OR

Insurance and supplies for our canoers and kayakers.

We want to give special recognition to Riley McLincha and Nancy Byder who are two of our long time supporters. Our work to protect, preserve, and improve

the watershed is an ongoing effort, and Riley and Nancy have proven their continued support by making multiple contributions during calendar year 2010. We thank them sincerely for this.

One of our new members, Timothy Ruwart of Flushing, made his donation on line by linking to the 'Donate Now' option from our website.

If you are interested in other water related or environmental organizations who are members of the FRWC, be sure to check out the web sites of the Genesee Conservation District, and the Holloway Lake Association. Both of these groups have been long term partners with the Flint River Watershed Coalition. You can get a link to their web sites from our webpage under the 'Affiliates' tab.

There is a membership form in this newsletter, on the facing page. Please consider joining today. All contributions are tax deductible.

We watch every dollar and pinch every penny to make sure that your membership dollars translate into real action and benefit for the Flint River watershed. Please consider our request when we ask you to become a member of the FRWC or when we ask you to renew your membership.

Become a member now!

Thank you Green Stewards for becoming a sponsor of the Flint River Watershed Coalition.



GREEN STEWARDS

Green Stewards is a landscape and snow management company that specializes in organic and green landscape-related services.

Green Stewards, formerly Grandscapes, is a family owned & operated company that has proudly served Genesee County and its surrounding communities since 1989.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH	DATE/DAY	TIME	EVENT
MAR	3-6	FRI-SUN	*Flint River Valley Steelheaders Boat & Fishing Show, Birch Run
	5	SAT	MORNING *Keep Genesee County Beautiful Conference
	11-13	FRI-SUN	*Flushing Walleye Festival
	15	TUE	7:30pm Lapeer Chapter, FRWC Meeting
	18	FRI	8:30am FRWC Board Meeting
APR	4	MON	Deadline Date Lapeer Conservation TREE Sales (www.lapeercd.org)
	6	WED	10:00am Our Water River Walk: FFRT
	7	THU	7:00pm Kearsley Creek Chapter Meeting
	13	WED	130-530pm Water Quality Monitor Training, Kearsley Park
	15	FRI	8:30am FRWC Board Meeting
	15	FRI	Deadline Date Genesee Concervation TREE sales (www.gettrees.org)
	16	TUE	9am-4pm *Annual Earth Day & Garden Celebration
	19	TUE	7pm Lapeer Chapter, FRWC Meeting
	30	SAT	12noon-5pm Spring Monitoring Lab Date
	30	SAT	9am Clean-up, FFRT
MAY	1	SUN	2:00pm Bike Ride: Friends of the Flint River Trail (FFRT) <i>Sunday bike rides May through October</i>
	5	THU	12noon-5pm Spring Monitoring Lab Date
	8	SUN	2:00pm Bike Ride FFRT
	13	FRI	8:30am FRWC Board Meeting
	13	FRI	8:00am-2:00pm Flint River GREEN Student Summit (RSVP)
	15	SUN	2:00 Bike Ride FFRT
	17	TUE	7:00pm Lapeer Chapter FRWC meeting
	21	SAT	9am-12noon Flint River and Community Clean-up
	21	SAT	9am-3pm Wild Lapeer
	22	SUN	2:00pm Bike Ride FFRT
29	SUN	2:00pm Bike Ride FFRT	

* denotes FRWC Community Table Events; Volunteers Welcome



Membership Application

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

SPRING 2011

Name _____
 Address _____
 Organization _____
 City, State, Zip _____
 Telephone (H) _____ (C) _____
 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
 400 N. Saginaw Street, Suite 233
 Flint, MI 48502



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Doing Well By Doing Good - Vern's Collision

Beauty is right in our own backyards, and Mike Herriman, owner of Vern's Collision is doing his part to protect, preserve, and improve our watershed.

Mike captures the rain water at his business to wash cars with phosphate free soap before he works on them. This not only saves the company money, it also is a simple way to positively impact the environment with very little effort. Mike's system reduced the amount of stormwater run-off that flushes dirt, debris, and motor oil into storm drains which flows directly into the Flint River.

Mike also practices environmentalism at home by having two rain barrels to catch downspout water. Pictured is a 250 gallon rain barrel, and a

50 gallon rain barrel used for an overflow tank. This water catchment system saves his neighbors' living



Mike Herriman's rain barrel collection system

room from flooding, and saves Mike an estimated \$10.00 a month on his water bill. Rain water is healthier for your lawn and garden because it is

free of chlorine, lime, and calcium. Irrigation of lawns and gardens accounts for approximately 40% of a city's water use in the summer time.

Mike's vision is to have municipalities utilize rain barrels at businesses and households to help conserve costly treated water, and protect our rivers from pollutants. To help facilitate this vision Mike recently made a generous contribution to the

FRWC enabling us to donate two rain barrels to local establishments.

Statistical information from the Land Conservancy, for more information on rain barrels visit <http://www.conservemc.org/rainbarrelbenefits.htm>