



Stream Lines

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Fall 2013

RRWC Under New Leadership

In light of the two-year hiatus since our last newsletter, the RRWC has an extensive backlog of positive developments to report. Among them:

- revised by-laws
- new officers on the Executive Committee
- doubling of member municipalities
- office re-located
- updated website
- increased attendance at delegate meetings

After several months of revision, refinement, with final review by counsel, our "Amended and Restated By-laws" were approved at the Spring Meeting this past March. Attendance at that meeting topped 60 persons – double the number who attended the Fall 2012 meeting. We are looking forward to even more people attending our Fall Meeting on October 24 at Cabela's. For details, see the announcement in this newsletter.

At that same meeting, Member Government Representatives acting collectively as a Board of Directors elected seven persons

to the Executive Committee (EC). Once business was taken care of, MDEQ's Joe Rathbun presented his work on the "Ecology and Management of Woody Debris in Streams." In short, how should we deal with log jams? Folks in attendance had many questions. Dr. Jim Martin of Adrian College followed with an overview of his work during the past years on monitoring the water quality of the River Raisin. Be sure to read his article in this newsletter.

Since March, the EC has met monthly to get our organization back on its feet. The three main counties which comprise the watershed – Lenawee, Washtenaw, and Monroe – all are members once again and have representatives on the EC. Under the chairmanship of Steve May, five committees have been formed to undertake the work of our organization: Technical, Outreach, Development, Administration, and Financial. All of these committees need volunteer members with energy and expertise to help our RRWC grow and accomplish its mission to



RRWC Executive Committee: Hedi Kaufman, Rolland Sizemore, Sybil Kolon, John Calhoun, Laurie Johncox, and Steve May. **Not pictured:** David Hoffman.

inspire behaviors that promote stewardship, improve water quality, and encourage public participation to protect, preserve and enhance the River Raisin Watershed. As you go about your life in the River Raisin watershed, please keep in mind how you can help the river and the RRWC. Then contact us with your ideas and to volunteer to help the RRWC accomplish its goals. Please see our updated website where you can find links to useful websites, including Woody Debris Removal, and our new information trifold for more information.

RRWC Seeking New Logo

In recognition of our new beginnings, the RRWC is seeking a new logo to help the public understand our mission to inspire behaviors that promote stewardship, improve water quality, and encourage public participation to protect, preserve and enhance the River Raisin Watershed. Please contact us if you have ideas or designs to share. We hope to select a new logo by the end of September for unveiling at our Fall Meeting.

Filling the Gaps – Environmental Protection Options for Local Govern- ments

The RRWC has obtained copies of this very useful resource to provide at least one to each of the 63 local units of government in the watershed. As an incentive for people to review this spiral bound book, the RRWC will provide either a RRWC hat or t-shirt to one person from each government who fills out a ten question survey before and after reviewing the book. That person could be your RRWC representative, a member of your board or planning commission, or just an interested resident. We will have the books and surveys available at our picnic on Sept. 14 in Blissfield, at our fall meeting on Oct. 24, or to pick up at our office by arrangement.

This is the second edition, 2010, published by the MDEQ and NOAA. How we use our land is the foundation of environmental quality. *Filling the Gaps* was created to equip local officials with important information to consider when making local land use plans, adopting new regulations, or reviewing proposed development.

A Short History of the Adopt-A-Stream Program

by Dr. James Martin, Professor of Biology, Adrian College

The adopt-a-stream program (also called stream search) we run is really a census of the insects and other invertebrates that live in various parts of the river. We put on waders and take nets out into the streams and visit locations across the watershed that are representative of its diversity and try to bring a catch back out that tells us about what kinds of these bugs were there on a particular day. We do these stream searches twice a year, in fall and spring. We've been running this program in the spring since 2002, and in the fall since 2006, so we have built up a long history of the biology on many parts of the river.

These various insects and invertebrates are an important part of the ecosystem. They are vital components of the food chain, supporting fish and other wildlife. Which ones we find also tells us something about the health of the river; some of these insects are very tough and can live in the



Saline River, RRWC Stream Search

most polluted of water. Others are like delicate flowers; they only thrive when conditions are at their most pristine. So knowing something about the biology of the animals we catch can aid us in monitoring our watershed and give us information about what parts of the system we should focus our efforts on. Further, doing this repeatedly, over many different years and seasons gives us some idea of the dynamics of the system. The seasons change from year to year, some are dry and some are wet, and sometimes unusual

events happen in the river and streams that make up our watershed. Our record of these searches, over long periods of time, helps us make sense of what the different parts of the river are like in terms of water quality, but also can be important to tell us if or when changes to the system do happen. The individual searches are like a picture of the system at a moment of time. When put together over years we get something like a motion picture of particular places that give us true trends through time.

Fall Stream Search Dates

Want to get your feet wet? Help the RRWC find aquatic bugs in the River Raisin and its tributaries. Volunteers are needed, we have 18 locations to cover. All start times are 9:00 AM at Peelle Hall, Adrian College. Contact Kyle Hoggarth at khoggarth@adrian.edu for details.

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| Sept. 28 | Training, including use of waders in the river |
| Oct. 5 | Field day, a minimum of two persons per team will inventory two or more sites |
| Oct. 19 | Bug ID day; learn which critters we collected, the good, the bad and the ugly |

River Raisin Partners

The RRWC is one of the founding members of the River Raisin Partnership, an informal group that meets quarterly to share information and collaborate on projects. In each issue we plan update you with news from one of our partners. The Lenawee Conservation District (LCD) was poised to take full advantage of the opportunities for grants that became available with the approval of the River Raisin Watershed Management Plan (RRWMP) in 2009. Since the RRWC obtained approval of the RRWMP from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), \$2 million in grants focused on implementing the RRWMP have been approved.

Lenawee Conservation District Grants Received

Since the approval of the RRWMP the LCD has been awarded four grants.

In January 2010 work began on the River Raisin Nitrate TMDL Reduction project. Landowners receive cost share incentives for installing Best Management Practices (BMP) to reduce nitrogen impacts to water quality on their property. A local match is provided by the landowner that includes equipment they have purchased for their farming operation, which

helps to monitor the application of nitrogen in their fields. Through this project an off-shoot grant was awarded through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Environmental Defense Fund. Through the grant 20 farmers set up plots using a variety of nitrogen saving tools, which evaluate the effectiveness of a specific practice that demonstrate the largest reduction of nitrogen on the field. Funds are from the MDEQ received from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

A second GLRI grant was awarded. Work on the River Raisin and Lake Erie Nutrient Reduction grant began January 2013. Landowners receive cost-share incentives to install drainage water structures to control the water leaving their farms. They provide a local match through their management of the structures and partial cost for the structure. Funds are from the MDEQ received from the EPA.

Work on the BMP Auction, a third GLRI grant, began January 2010. Through this project farmers submit a bid for the amount of money they are willing to accept as an incentive for installing BMP's to reduce the amount of sediment leaving their farm. Cover crops, filter strips and residue management are

practices being installed. Funding is through the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDA&RD) received from the EPA. Word was just received that LCD has been awarded a 319/CMI grant. The Nitrate Reduction via Water Management in the River Raisin is an extension of the second GLRI project and expands the priority area of the River Raisin and Lake Erie project. Drainage water management structures will be installed using cost-share incentives and local financial match from the landowners. Funds are from the MDEQ received from the EPA.

Lenawee Center for Excellence is a project that has been on-going since 1998 providing education opportunities for farmers and agribusiness. An annual field day is held in August and a results meeting in January. Two local farms in the Clayton and Morenci area host the field day. Attendance is 350 – 500 participants. Speakers provide information on new technology, conservation practices and soil health. Funding is provided through Corn Marketing Program of Michigan, Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee, Michigan Wheat Program, the GLRI grants, and agribusiness in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana.

River Cleanup in Dundee



The Monroe Conservation District received a grant from the Great Lakes Commission to do a cleanup of an eight-mile stretch of the River Raisin from just below the dam at Dundee. Rain caused a delay until June 22 when the river was quite high. Fifteen volunteers collected 1,040 pounds of trash in extra canoes that they towed. Items collected included an orange construction barrel, 55 gallon drum, two toilets, bed springs, car steering wheel, and exercise ball. Some of these things were probably thrown in on purpose, others may have been carried by wind or water. Please do your part to secure your belongings and trash so they don't end up in the river and Lake Erie, and volunteer for your next local river cleanup. The RRWC plans to help organize some of these activities next year.



Protect, Preserve, Promote

320 Springbrook Avenue
Suite 102
Adrian, MI 49221
(517) 264-4754
Email: RRWC@lenawee.mi.us

We're on the Web!
www.riverraisin.org

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RRWC FALL MEETING

October 24, 2013 ~ 7:00 PM

The RRWC Fall Meeting will be held at Cabela's in Dundee on Oct. 24, starting at 7 PM. Please join us for refreshments starting at 6:30 PM. The attendance of member representatives of the RRWC is critical, as we need to approve our budget for 2014 and other important business, please mark your calendars. All others are welcome, as we expect to have informative presentations.

We are pleased to announce that Paul Yauk, DNR Recreation Division and Jeffrey Braunscheidel, DNR Fisheries, will present information about DNR efforts to secure recreational access to the River Raisin, as well as information about the health and diversity of the fish population, including fishing opportunities, throughout the River Raisin.

The agenda will be distributed by email and available on our website in advance of the meeting.