

# G.R.E.A.T.

Grand River Environmental Action Team



Website: [www.great-mi.org](http://www.great-mi.org)

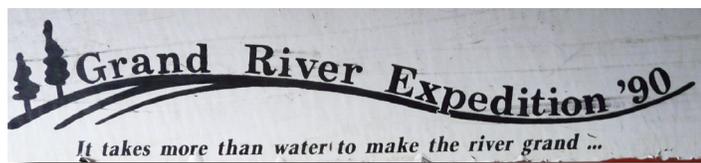
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## Expedition 2010 to Float Entire Length of Grand River Local Paddlers Are Welcome to Join For a Day or Entire Tour

By Kathy Kulchinski

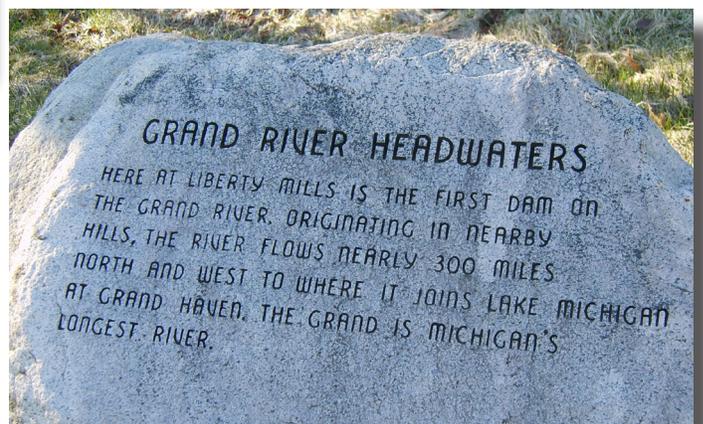
**T**wenty-some years ago, a few canoe enthusiasts, environmentalists and crazy people thought it might be a good idea to do an up-close-and-personal assessment of the Grand River in Michigan, to witness and document the existing conditions and make recommendations as to the preservation and utilization of the River and its Grand resources. Led by the intrepid marathon paddler and world explorer, Verlen Kruger as rivermaster, one hundred or so folks paddled from Michigan Center, near the headwaters of the Grand, some 225 miles to the mouth at Lake Michigan at Grand Haven. Thus a tradition was born, one that would be replicated every decade hence.



The Grand River is the longest river in Michigan. Its watershed includes 5,570 square miles, 18 counties and 158 townships. It flows through several municipalities including Jackson, Eaton Rapids, Lansing, Portland, Ionia, Grand Rapids and Grand Haven. It has served through history as a major thoroughfare for trade and transportation, a repository for waste matter, a source for drinking water and irrigation and multiple other uses. It functions as habitat for fish, wildlife and humans. It has been used and abused, loved and hated. It is well worth

our time to study and appreciate.

Planning is now under way for Grand River Expedition 2010. It is the hope of the planners that “scientists, historians, educators, students, environmental professionals, recreational paddlers, boaters and anglers, civic and business leaders, local, state and federal government representatives, writers, visual media specialists, riverfront landowners and other interested citizens” will participate in the continual monitoring and stewardship of our state’s longest river. Along with scientific monitoring of the route, displays and activities are scheduled at planned stops along the river. Some communities are planning festivals and events to run in conjunction with the expedition.



Expedition 2010, Continued on p.

GREAT is playing a very vital role in the organization of this year's event which begins on July 14 and continues through July 26. We are acting as hosts along with the Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance for the first three days of the 13 day event, as the participants spend time in our county. Paul Rentschler of the Alliance is serving as coordinator for the upper portion of the Expedition, putting in countless hours of planning meetings and keeping us all on task. Jim Seitz is organizing a tour of the headwaters area near Liberty and Somerset in conjunction with the opening ceremonies at the Liberty Dam. The commemorative boulder located at the dam will be "baptized" with water from all the tributaries of the Grand River watershed. Jim is also coordinating the extraordinarily difficult work of clearing a path through the tree clogged sections of the river by chainsaw crews. Kenny Price is working on historical presentations at the opening ceremonies and the downtown Jackson event as well as an art show and sale that will run at ART 634 during the month of July. Your author is serving as Rivermaster for the Jackson County portion of the paddle; organizing the "Bon Voyage" party scheduled for Wednesday July 14 at the Lions Club Park at Michigan Center and organized the wine tasting fundraiser that was held on May 7. Many folks are putting in many hours to help make this event a success.



*Barb Anderson, a veteran paddler of Expedition 1990 will paddle part of Expedition 2010.*

Several GREAT members are planning on paddling some or all of the trip. Barb Anderson has paddled in the two previous Expeditions and has warned that although meals are provided as part of one's entry fee, participants should be advised that they may get awfully

tired of hot dogs! She reports that a lack of coffee in the morning was a problem on the previous outings as well! It must not have been unbearable though, as she plans on participating in this year's event. Bill Kantor, Rod Monasmith and your fearless author are among some of GREAT members expecting to complete the entire route. There are several goals for the expedition; it is intended to increase knowledge and appreciation of the Grand River in the following areas:



*The view of downtown will appear much improved since Expedition 2000 paddled through Jackson.*

The historical role of the Grand River and its watershed;

- Recognition of the importance of the Grand River in industrial, commercial and urban development;
- Increased knowledge of geological and topographical features along the Grand River;
  
- An appreciation of the biodiversity of fish, wildlife and vegetation along the Grand River;
- Increased awareness of the recreational and economic opportunities offered by the Grand River which enhance health and overall quality of life;
- Better understanding of the problems affecting the Grand River to facilitate participation in solutions; and
- Further understanding of good environmental values and practices to enhance the integrity of the Grand River and its watershed.

Grand River Expedition 2010 promises to be one of discovery and increased awareness. It will be another tool toward our shared goal of protecting and improving our watershed.

# At Annual Membership Meeting Congratulations Are in Order...

Photos by Kenny Price



...to Nancy Lapinski for twenty years of service on the GREAT Board



...to Ken Dodge for five years service as a GREAT Board member.



...to artist Barb Anderson and Historian Betty Desbiens.



...to outgoing President Jim Seitz and incoming President Jon Hoover.

...to DNR Biologist Scott Hanschue for an informative presentation on the Ten-year Assessment of the Grand River.



...to Jerry Klima and Bob Arnold of Elks Lodge #113 as recipients of the Make It Happen award.

# Yes, We Do Have a Canoe Livery!

By Bryon Ennis

For years many of us connected with GREAT believed we did not have a canoe livery in the Upper Grand River Watershed. When asked, we incorrectly advised paddlers that there was no livery on the Grand below Lansing. Perhaps the main reason for our ignorance was that none of GREAT's paddle trips on the Grand River went north of Onondaga. Then, on a 2009 GREAT paddle outing which was to end at Onondaga, past president Jim Seitz saw what was obviously a livery service placing a fleet of red canoes at a bridge crossing up river (south) of Onondaga. So, Jim went searching and found, just about a half mile by river beyond our customary take-out at Baldwin Park in Onondaga, the **Grand Adventures Canoe and Kayak Rentals**.



*Look for this sign on Onondaga Road, just north of the Jackson/Ingham County line.*

Jim called the number listed on the sign and spoke with owner, Russ Bodell. After a spirited phone conversation, Jim followed up by sending Russ information about GREAT including the most recent newsletter which happened to include articles on GREAT's river clearing and cleaning efforts. This time, Russ called Jim. "Russ was almost moved to tears when he learned there was a group of people in Jackson who cared as much about the river as he did," said Seitz. Russ immediately sent in his membership fees, and has already taken part in the spring Adopt-A-Stream bug collection sponsored by the Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance, and he has promised to clear the river near his business for Expedition 2010.

Russ Bodell grew up on the land along the Onondaga stretch of the Grand River from which he runs **Grand**

**Adventures**. His parents purchased the sixty-acre parcel in 1969, when farming was lucrative and rich river bottom land did not come cheap. Strangely, says Russ, it was more his mother's dream to own land along the river, and when they finally had an opportunity to buy a parcel, it was much larger than his parents had intended. Russ says money was tight for the large family following this land investment, but now that they have owned the parcel along the river for over forty years, he believes it was well worth the sacrifice.

Russ did not immediately become a "river rat" when the family moved there, because his mom worried about the danger the river posed to her young children, but by the time he was moving into his teenage years, his mother relented and allowed her boys to go on the river by themselves. Most of the time Russ and his friends paddled a small pram to fish or explore the river in "Huck Finn style."

But, Russ does recall one memorable experience when he and three friends launched a peddle boat far up-river from their usual haunts, unaware of the many log jams that lay between their launch site and the Bodell property several miles downstream. Before they floated very far, the boys found they all had to lift a corner of their peddle craft over logjams, and sometimes the log jams were so large they had to carry it up on shore through brush and stinging nettles, wearing only shorts and flip-flops. The anticipated four-hour trip ended up taking eight hours, and to add to the tension, Russ recalled, one of his friends was diabetic, so the other three had to turn over any remaining snacks so their companion would not go into diabetic shock after being without food for so many hours.



*Grand Adventures proprietor Russ Bodell uses Old Town canoes and kayaks exclusively at his livery.*

Nowadays, Russ knows the Grand River intimately from the point upstream where it crosses under U.S. 127 (the start of his longest float trip), all the way to Onondaga. He knows what his customers are likely to experience and what they are likely to need. He offers an impressive fleet of Old Town canoes and kayaks and a large passenger van for transporting customers. Paddlers have a choice of four trips: one and a half hours, three hours, five and a half hours, and eight hours; however, Russ says that once he drops paddlers off at a specific starting point, they are free to lollygag

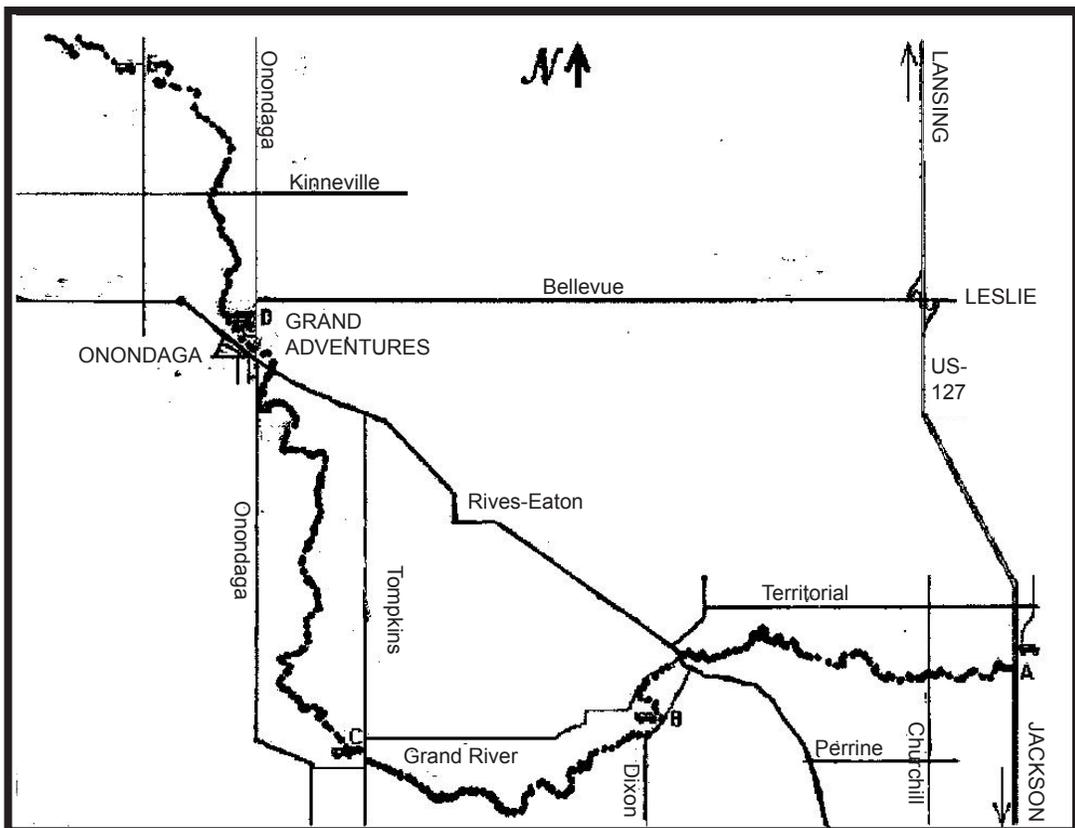
on the river as long as they want, provided they take out at his landing before dark. So that his customers do not have to encounter the many obstructions he faced on his youthful river ordeals, Russ clears a different section of the river on his own, every week with a chainsaw, hand saws, and pruning shears.

Throughout the regular paddle season from mid May to mid October, Russ is open all weekends and holidays for walk-in customers, and during the week by appointment. In addition, for hearty off-season paddlers, he will provide boats and transportation services all year by appointment. He has plenty of space for parking vehicles right down by the put-in site, and still more land nearby for single night tent camping for canoeing customers.

Russ found in the first year of his operation, that he needed to provide a portable toilet near the parking site, and when he knows that a large group is coming in, he will have additional toilet facilities. He even provides campfire wood, but admits that is partly a defensive measure so that visitors will not go ransacking his woods looking for firewood. Russ is a member of MAPP (Michigan Association of Paddlesport Providers), which assures that his livery business is run appropriately. One strict rule Russ enforces is, "No glass containers on the river."



Russ has provided steps for easy launching and take-outs.



GREAT is happy to have discovered **Grand Adventures**, and is pleased to learn of the pride owner Russ Bodell demonstrates in the way he runs his business, and in his respect and love for the Grand River. We hope Russ will be in business for many years to come, and we encourage our members to experience this part of the Grand River in southern Ingham County.

Call Russ at 517.712.6475.

## Seating of New Trustees Continues to Augment Board's Diversity

*At one point in GREAT's recent history, Nancy Lapinski was the only woman on the board of trustees, and the range of ages was decidedly skewed toward retirees. With the additions of Pegg Clevenger and Ben Whiting, we have not only maintained a gender balance (7 males, 5 females), but added more youthful representation as well.*



**N**ew GREAT board member Pegg Clevenger has a rich background of environmental and outdoor recreational experience. It seems only reasonable that the Parkside High School graduate who started an environmental club during her high school days would eventually land on one or more of the areas environmental organizations, and that is exactly what Pegg has done. She has served as Secretary of the Friends of the Falling Water Trail, and currently serves as a consultant to the farm program for the Dahlem Nature Conservancy, in addition to joining the GREAT board.

Pegg's paddling interests can be traced to canoe camping trips with her high school girl friends. "It was a blast paddling the Pine and Pere Marquette, and I'll never forget those times on the water." She was also part of a bicycle club in high school, which led to ownership of Pedal & Tour bike and ski shop after college graduation and marriage to her high school sweetheart, Bruce. When children Maureen and Tom were born, Pegg and husband Bruce did not forsake their love of paddling, but instead purchased a canoe that would adequately carry the whole family. Bruce later became one of the first recreational kayak reps in the Midwest, and another family business, Quiet Water Sports kayak school soon emerged. "We bike, hike, cross country ski, and kayak mostly in Michigan", Pegg

Pegg, Continued on p. 7

**B**en Whiting is a 2009 graduate of Albion College, where he was a member of the Canoe Club. As such, he participated in many white water canoe races on the fast flowing rivers of Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina. During one of his summer breaks several years ago, Ben joined one of GREAT's paddle outings and has since become more and more involved with the organization. Last summer Ben helped every weekend removing log jams in order that participants in GREAT outings could paddle comfortably without encountering numerous obstacles.

Although the entire GREAT board was aware of the generous contributions Ben had made in river clearing and boat handling at paddle outings, and they were very fond of this friendly and competent Albion College student, they never expected he would be a candidate for our board in 2010, carrying a full schedule of classes at Thomas Cooley Law School. However, Ben let it be known that he was available to serve, and when a board opening occurred, he was already high on the list of potential candidates.

Ben says that GREAT events have introduced him to many fine people who share his love of the rivers. "I have made many new friends that I paddle with both in and outside of GREAT events." "Through these events and the people I have met along the way, I have become more involved in river clearings and clean-ups, so that

Ben, Continued on p. 7

Pegg, Continued from p. 6

says, “but I really enjoyed paddling in the wide scenic Colorado River.”

Pegg joins the GREAT board well aware of the responsibilities of a trustee. She and Bruce have been consultants to GREAT for many years, and they have been co-participants with GREAT, as kayak paddling instructors in several activities. “I’ve been a long-time admirer of GREAT, and I’m pleased to be part of its well-organized board with members who have fun caring for the environment.” “I hope to help improve the health of the Grand. We owe it to future generations to take care of the unique birthplace of four rivers, most notably the Grand.

Ben, Continued from p. 6

other people can venture out onto the water and enjoy the natural beauty of the waterways of the Jackson area.”

Ben joins the GREAT board believing that continuing efforts are needed to open up and maintain waterways along the Grand River that have been clogged with debris and fallen trees. “Improving access through these waterways not only will open up these areas for all paddlers, it will also create better safety for those who venture into these areas of the river.” In addition, Ben expects to discover new goals that he will champion as he becomes more familiar with the internal operations of GREAT.

## News From the Michigan Lake and Stream Associations’ E-Newsletter

### *Proposed Legislation to Establish Public Trust Based Management of MI Waters Stirs Debate*

House Bill 5319 sponsored by Representative Dan Scripps of Leland, seeks to strengthen protection of Michigan’s natural resources by empowering the MI Attorney General and concerned citizens with the ability to “maintain an action in the circuit court having jurisdiction to enforce the public trust in the state’s natural resources.” The introduction of the bill has stirred vigorous debate between advocates for the state’s natural resources and business and individual property rights groups. The proposed legislation would amend Michigan’s Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act by adding specific language that would codify the public trust doctrine in managing Michigan’s water and other natural resources.

### *National Geographic’s Water-Our Thirsty World April Special Edition a Must Read*

If you are not yet convinced that Michigan and other Great Lakes states will be at the epicenter of an increasingly intense world-wide competition for freshwater, you should be after reading the April 2010, Special Issue of National Geographic Magazine which is entirely dedicated to the earth’s most valuable resource – water, and the social, economic, and political ramifications of trying to bring sustainable supplies of clean freshwater to a human population that is expected to reach nine billion by 2050

Read more at [www.mlswa.org](http://www.mlswa.org)

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO WEAR THE GREAT LOGO? GO TO THE GREAT-MI.ORG WEBSITE HOME PAGE. CLICK ON GREAT GEAR TO VIEW ALL THE TERRIFIC PRODUCTS AVAILABLE. PURCHASES HELP FUND GREAT ACTIVITIES.**



GREAT Welcomes the following first-time members:

Donald & Vicki Roberts	Dann Todd
Mike & Mary Trudell	John Bruner
Joanne Buckley	Richard Stotter
Jeffrey Draper	Deborah Wolter
Jack Ripstra	Madeline Lee
Nick Funkhouser	Gary & Libby Williams
Russ Bodell	
Monica Day	Browns Lake
Rosemarie Tanner	Improvement and
Rob & Lori Fitzgibbons	Protective Association
Helen Burnett	Vandercook Lake Lions

#### GREAT Newsletter

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GREAT

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GREAT is a tax deductible 501c3, non-profit organization.

## 2010 GREAT Board

Jonathan Hoover, President

Kenny Price, VP

Jim Seitz (Past President),

Membership Secretary

Kathy Kulchinski, Rivermaster

Carol Scott, Treasurer

Pegg Clevenger, Recording Secretary

Emily Curry, Trustee

Bryon Ennis, Trustee

DeAnn Monroe, Trustee

Don Nelson, Trustee

Lee Kettren, Trustee

Ben Whiting, Trustee

Special Assignments:

Louise Hefka, Publicity

Betty Desbiens, Historian

Todd Zeller, River Consultant

# Remaining Paddle Events

## Sunday, June 13--10:30 a.m.

Huron River (Washtenaw County)

Joint Trip with Great Lakes Paddlers (GLP); GLP hosts

Hudson Mills Metropark (N. Territorial Road) to Delhi (East Delhi Rd.) Stop for picnic lunch during paddle. Need to purchase a Metropark day pass for \$5. Option for car caravan departing Jackson Crossing near Shell Station at 9:15 a.m.

## Sunday, July 11--12 Noon

Grand River

Lyons Park (N. Blackstone) to Maple Grove DNR Access (Maple Grove Rd.)

## Wednesday, July 14 to Monday, July 26

Expedition 2010

Third decennial event to paddle length of the Grand River from Michigan Center to Grand Haven. GREAT boats NOT available. For details: <http://michigan.sierraclub.org/issues/greatlakes/articles/gre2010.html>

## Sunday, August 22--12 Noon

River Raisin

Brooklyn For (M50) to Norvell Dam (Mill Rd.)

## Saturday, September 11--9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Annual Grand River Clean-up

Grand River Clean-up CMS Energy band shell off Cooper St. in Downtown Jackson. Feel free to bring your own canoe, but no kayaks. No need to reserve a boat as GREAT canoes will be available. Lunch provided at Elks Club (Lansing Avenue).

## Sunday, October 17--12 Noon

Grand River

Joint Trip with Dahlem Conservancy as hosts Michigan Center Dam (end of Fourth St.; take State St. from Fifth St.) to Lions Park (N. Blackstone St.) Cookout after take-out with food provided