



# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you have a chainsaw, or can use a chainsaw, and a desire to help clear a path on the river so our paddlers can get through, we sure could use the help. The work falls on the same few and it would be nice to have more help.

Email [grand@great-mi.org](mailto:grand@great-mi.org) to volunteer or call 517-416-4234. Thank you!

## Board Meetings

The GREAT board meets on the second Wednesday of each month, with the exception of December, at 7:00 p.m. alternating between the Summit Township Hall (even months), and Blackman Township Hall (odd months).

Meetings are open and visitors are welcome. To be on the agenda, please contact us prior to the meeting.

## GREAT's Mission

The mission of Grand River Environmental Action Team is to promote the protection and preservation of the Grand River Watershed through activities and educational programs

Visit [www.cafepress.com/greatmi](http://www.cafepress.com/greatmi) to order a GREAT t-shirt and coffee mug

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Jeff Grund, Tax Statements  
Barb Anderson, Historian

## GREAT Newsletter

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Find us on Facebook: GREAT Grand River Environmental Action Team

If you wish to join or renew your membership visit: [www.great-mi.org/Membership2.htm](http://www.great-mi.org/Membership2.htm)



We accept these major credit cards at all of our functions.

# G.R.E.A.T.



## Grand River Environmental Action Team

P.O. Box 223, Jackson, Michigan 49204

Website: [www.great-mi.org](http://www.great-mi.org) 517-416-4234 Volume 27 Number 4 DECEMBER 2017

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## How you can join GREAT

Contact information is on page 8 for Mail, Email, Website, Facebook or Phone

Send \$20 individual membership  
\$30 family membership or  
\$100 for sponsor membership

## Annual Grand River clean up

The morning of September 9, 2017 started out at 45° and a light breeze warming up to 63° at 1:00 p.m. This weather did not dampen the spirits and enthusiasm of our 76 volunteers, which included 9 board members, 1 granddaughter, and 55 from the Junior ROTC Program.

Warm donuts from Hinkley Bakery and hot coffee from the Jackson Coffee House arrived soon after the volunteers at the CMS Amphitheater for registration and team assignments. Three teams consisting of trailers with eight canoes each and junior ROTC members for unloading the canoes and gear were sent out to spot the canoes and gear at five different locations along the Grand River.

At 9:00 a.m., the five teams were then formed, assigned their equipment, and transported with their team leader to the canoe drop off locations thanks to the buses and drivers provided by the Jackson Career Center and the Jackson Area Transportation Authority. Depending on water depths in the river, these teams would wade in river using the canoes as garbage barges or paddle the canoes while placing the collected trash around themselves in the canoes.

Roll off containers generously donated by Emmons Service Inc. and Granger were strategically placed along the river where trash and debris



Photo by Jack Ripstra  
Clean up crew working hard

picked up by the teams was deposited.

Over 10.5 miles of the Grand River was cleaned from the Center Lake Dam to the Portage River with 24 canoes and their 48 paddlers. The 12 cubic yards of trash collected from the Grand River included automobile parts, bikes, clothes, bottles, cans, carpeting, clothes, furniture, glass, highway barrels, plastic, shopping carts, styrofoam, and 12 tires. The tires were picked up and recycled thanks to the generosity of Modern Waste Systems.

Lunch was provided at 1:00 p.m. to all with food donated from Buffalo Wild Wings (Chicken Wings), Fazolis (bread  
Continued on page 7

# GREAT Barn

## Inside storage nears completion



The inside storage room is almost complete thanks to the hard work of our board members, Perry & Grandson and JK Inc. of Michigan. The solar lighting package is on order and should be installed next month.

# CLEAN UP

Continued from page 1

sticks), Little Caesars (pizza), Marino's (Pizza), Papa Johns (pizza), and Virginia Coney Island (coney dogs).

Thanks to our Grand River Clean Up volunteers, and the efforts of the Grand River Environmental Action Team, we are making an impact in the quality of the headwaters of the Grand River in Jackson County.



# G.R.E.A.T. SPONSORS

### Overall Sponsors

- Barbara Anderson
- Bo-Kay Studio of Photography & Fine Art
- Kay Brown
- Betty Desbiens
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### Clean-Up Sponsors

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Emmons Service Inc.

Fazolis

Granger

Hinkley Bakery

Golden Knights Cadets (Jr ROTC)

Jackson Coffee Co.

Jackson Area Transportation Authority

Jackson County Conservation District

Lester Brothers

Libra Industries

Little Caesars Pizza

Los Tres Amigos

Marino's Pizza

Papa John Pizza

Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance

Virginia Coney Island

*G.R.E.A.T. is very lucky to have had such great sponsors in 2016. We are very proud of our sponsors and wish to honor each one of them. Each one is a very vital access to our to the mission of GREAT, which is to promote the protection and preservation of the Grand River Watershed through activities and educational programs.*

# Invasive species removal

By Kurt LaFrance

Join Grand River Environmental Action Team on Saturday, December 9th from 9:00AM to Noon to help remove invasive species from GREAT land!

Invasive species are non-native species whose introduction causes economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. They often out-compete native plants. A study of the GREAT land in 2014 identified several invasive plant species, including garlic mustard, non-native honeysuckle, common buckthorn, Asian or oriental bittersweet, black locust, common privet, dame's rocket, multiflora rose, mullein, burdock, motherwort, slippery elm, and myrtle.

To help control the spread of these invasive species, GREAT has performed an annual invasive species removal over the past several years. Volunteers use chain saws and loppers to cut back the invasive woody plants and apply an herbicide to the stems to prevent re-growth. The cut plant material is piled and left onsite to decay naturally and provide habitat for wildlife.

Removing invasives is a labor intensive process, so it takes a lot of volunteers! We're looking to our membership and friends for help. No particular skill is required except the ability and motivation to work hard. Due to the nature of the work and the application of herbicides, it

is not recommended to bring young children.

Please plan to meet us at the new GREAT pole barn, Saturday December 9th from 9:00AM to Noon!

While you're there, check out our newly constructed equipment storage room!

Location: GREAT's property is located at the corner of Cardinal Crest and Canary Lane, Jackson.

From Parnall Rd, head north on Lansing Avenue, then east on Cardinal Crest.

GREAT's driveway is located on the left at the very end of Cardinal Crest.

Hope to see you there!

## TRAILS continued from page 4

a try. If not this fall, plan to give it all a go in the spring.

Beginning at ART 634, there is also a trail that travels north to Lions Park and slightly beyond and borders part of the Grand River along the way. Again another section of Jackson County that benefits from trails for pleasure riding and sightseeing.

Remember good trail riding rules. Give way to pedestrians, Call out when passing, dogs must be leashed, ride single file in congested areas and when stopped, park your bikes in the shoulder and not on the trail.

All totaled, it could be a 32 mile

ride depending on where you start and how far you want to go. Give them a try, start at different points to see more of the trails. Do what you can, enjoy the outdoors and leave the cell phone behind unless you want to include pictures of your journey.

Michigan overall is a great place to live and experience many trails for beautiful sights, wildlife and great fun. To learn more about trails throughout Michigan you can visit this link to find trails by region.

Happy Trails to you!!

<http://michigantrails.org/trails/trails-by-region/>

## LAST PADDLE continued from page 3

id paddlers coming out to enjoy a pretty easy float down this part of the river.

It took just about an hour and half to get to the take out. The water was up but there were a few trees that had moved around in all the rain from earlier in the week, so everyone had ample opportunity to practice their maneuvering skills. Helps keep the journey from becoming too dull.

The color was just coming on for the most part, but some trees had changed and we fond ourselves often surrounded with leaves floating down around us. I found the trip to be very pleasant and most everyone I talked with did as well. There was one guy who was using one of our GREAT kayaks and for some reason the drain plug had come out and he was taking on water and sinking fast at the

## Rail Trail Etiquette

- Keep right except to pass
- Yield to slower traffic
- Always travel at safe speeds
- Don't Block the Trail
- All Pets must be on a 6 ft. leash
- Alert others when passing by using voice or bell
- Park only at Trailheads

very end of the trip. For that I am truly sorry, but I hope he still enjoyed the adventure and comes back next year.

There were a lot of people helping each get into and later out of the boats, helping with loading the boats at the take out and just being part of the whole experience. Thanks to everyone that joined us that day and I look forward to seeing you all again next year.

# Last paddle that almost wasn't

GREAT's last outing of the season was on a stretch of the Grand River out north of Jackson.

As many of you know, we have divided up the Grand River within Jackson County into 12 sections or 'trips'. We have also further divided the river into a Northern, Central and Southern grouping, each containing four of our 'trips'.

Each year we have at least one outing (or try anyway) from each grouping. The first trip is in the southern section during the early part of the season, hoping to have enough water, but sometimes we end up with too much. One outing in the central region during mid summer, and the last outing is always out north of town.

The reasoning behind this is due to water levels and access to the river to allow clearing of woody debris. During high water in the spring with the snow melt and spring rains the water levels can be rather high, swift in areas and pretty darn cold to work in.

Out north of town the water is much deeper and cutting can be a challenge most of the year, but often during August and September the water levels lower some and the task can be a little easier. As it was this year when I went out to do my first test trip on the piece of river we planned to go down for our October outing. The section of river from the DNR boat launch on Dixon Road (off Rives Eaton Road North and West of Rives Junction) to the Tompkins DNR boat launch at Tompkins Road had the lowest water levels I had ever seen on this stretch of the river.

There was water and you could float a boat, most of the time. There were far too many places that you needed to get out and drag your boat down the channel where the water was meandering or over the sand bars.

There were times you would need to crawl through the branches of the downed and now exposed trees on the river bed as well.

The first outing took almost 6 hours

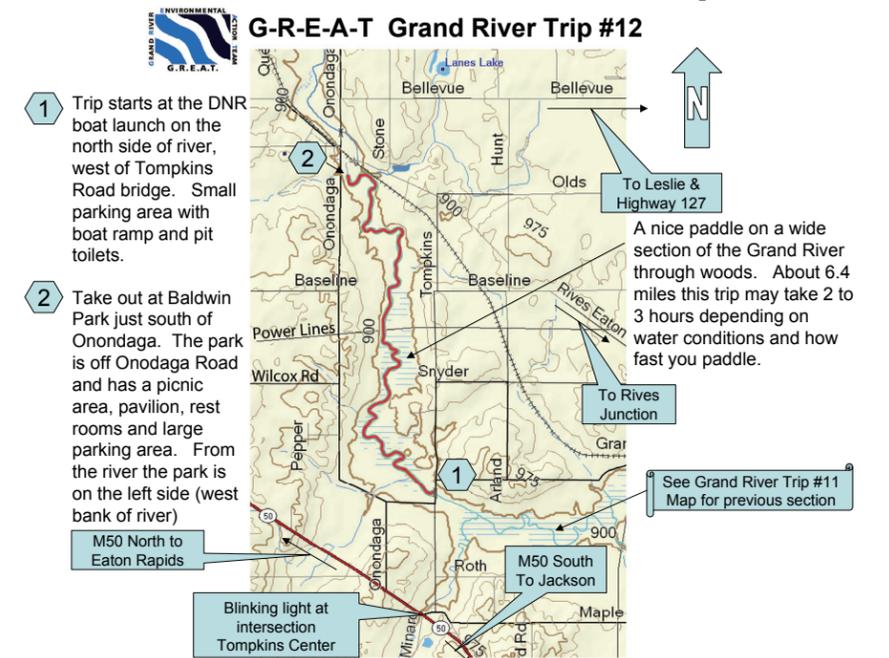
to go the four and half miles to the take out. One thing about this part of the river is that there are long stretches where it is rather flat and then others where there are large holes with deep water. Cutting was a bit of a chore but we did make a path through the tree branches where there was water.

I feared that we would still need to

weather, just bad clothing" or something to that affect.

We were properly dressed (well... I was) for the weather and sitting in my kayak with my skirt on and raincoat and a long billed hat to keep the water off from my glasses...I was good, warm, cozy and happy as a cat.

The rain was helpful and made the



postpone the outing due to the low water levels and the need to get in and out of the boats so often during the outing.

Wow, was I wrong. The rains came and when a few of us went out to do one last paddle before the originally planned trip (Sunday, October 15th) the water levels were up dramatically and we cruised over many of the trees we had cut just a couple days earlier. Now, it was raining that Saturday pretty darn hard at times and there may be a few of you out there thinking that we are nuts for paddling the river in the rain. But, if you have never done that you are missing out on an interesting experience.

My Uncle in Stockholm told me about an old Swedish saying, "...there is no bad

trip easy, but it just did not stop and the forecast for Sunday included lightening and strong winds. The winds were what concerned me the most. There are many trees leaning out over the river just waiting to fall in and if one were to land on someone...well, that would not be very good at all now would it? Fast forward to the next weekend and the day of the rescheduled outing, what a difference a week can make!

Sunday, October 22, we have blue skies, sunshine, warm breezes and the water levels were still up enough to make for a wonderful outing! The turn out was typical for this time of year with 32 intrep-

Continued on page 6

# Traversing Jackson by Trails



**Air pumps on the trail, compliments of On Two Wheels**

By Helen Burnette

Usually here at GREAT, we talk of water trails. But today I want to talk of other types of trails. The Falling Waters Trail for one. It is a 10.2 mile Rails to Trails pathway from Weatherwax Rd to Concord. Paved, 10 ft wide and a Linear Jackson County Park. Recently there were after dark solar lights added to the two trail heads at Weatherwax and Teft Road. In 2016 a bathroom was added to the Teft Rd parking area. No running water, but an upgrade from a port-a-john. When there are enough funds, they will add one to the Weatherwax parking area as well. You can check their webpage out to see how you can contribute to the ongoing development of the trail: <http://www.fallingwatertrail.org>. This past spring, in a cooperative venture with the Parks and other funders, the rental bikes were added at Weatherwax. They had a very successful first year.

This is a pivotal trail, traveled by bikes, roller blades, runners, walkers and strollers. It is open all year. The County Parks crew plows it in the winter. The broad shoulders are available for cross country skiing as well. Once when we asked what would make it better, someone said it should have hills. Being a rail-trail, there could be no incline greater

than a 3 percent grade as a railroad, so that is why no hills.

But do you want hills? Why yes, they add to the physical workout and some mental anguish at times as we break in to the challenge. So now, with two extension from the Falling Waters Trail, there are hills to be found on both extensions.

The Jackson City Parks added the PAKA trail that begins at New Leaf Park on 4th St, immediately north of Parkside and follows along 4th St. to Park Rd. As it approaches Park road just at the golf course, the incline begins. Ever so slow but you know you have something to conquer. The incline continues as the trail turns to follow Park Rd. and eventually levels off. You then cross Park Rd. at the Sharp Park Academy. There are plans to create a crossing mechanism, but last I was by there, it was not yet functional. As you approach Horton Road, the path changes to asphalt for the portion put in by Summit Township. Again you will have additional hill challenges. These inclines are a great workout however you are traversing these paths. It does come to a point that you will cross to the north side of Horton. Again a mechanism will be added to make it a safe crossing, but for now, watch traffic carefully as drivers are not used to having persons cross there. Come to Weatherwax and you cross again to the end of the Falling Water Trail and head for the Weatherwax



**Rollerbladers on the Fallen Rivers Trail**

parking area. This extension is about 3.5 miles long.

Yet another branch is the 1.1 mile trail off of the Inter-City trail that leads you to Kibby Rd. As the road construction is underway on Kibby, there will be a crosswalk to a path that will take you into Cascades Park. Woo hoo, we all know there is a chance for a reward for your hard work at the ice cream stand.

Don't forget the Inter-City Trail that takes you downtown!! That is another 3 miles to add to your fun. Last year the portion of the trail that bordered Louis Glick was resurfaced and broadened. It is a wonderful way to get downtown. Whether you want to shop or grab a bite to eat, you have plenty of options. Give it

TRAILS continued on page 6



**Aerial view of Falling Waters Trail in winter**

The Grand River ArtsWalk passes through Armory Art Village, the historic site of Michigan's former state prison.

East Michigan Trails

**Trails Legend**

- Paved Trail
- Connector Route
- Under Development
- Highways
- Roads

Scale: 0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Miles

**Jackson Area Trails Access**

Access Site	Parking	Restrooms	Water
1 Concord Trailhead	Yes	Portable	No
2 Teft Road Staging Area	Yes	Vault	No
3 Weatherwax Trailhead	Yes	Portable	No
4 New Leaf Park	Yes	No	No
5 Howard Woods Park	Yes	Portable	No
6 Lions Park	Yes	Yes	Yes

**Falling Waters Trail**

The 10.6-mile Falling Waters Trail connects the village of Concord with the City of Jackson where it continues as the Martin Luther King Equality Trail. Built on an abandoned stretch of the former Michigan Central Railroad, the 12-foot-wide asphalt multi-use trail is one of Michigan's most popular rail-trail destinations.

The Falling Waters Trail travels through a geologic region of springs and lakes in Jackson County that form the headwaters of four major Michigan rivers. Native Americans called this area "The Land of Falling Waters." At the western trailhead in Concord, the trail crosses a bridge over the Kalamazoo River where you can view a great expanse of marshy wetlands. One of the highlights of the trail is a causeway that runs through the middle of Lime Lake. This is a great place to stop, relax, view wildlife and enjoy the natural beauty of this turquoise blue lake. Along the way, the trail passes through a lush landscape of wetlands, shady woodlands and fields of soybeans and corn. This is a trail you will want to visit time and time again to experience the seasonal changes in scenery.

[www.MiTrails.org](http://www.MiTrails.org)

**Martin Luther King Equality Trail**

At Weatherwax Road, the trail changes its name to the Martin Luther King Equality Trail (formerly the Jackson Inter-City Trail). This 3.4-mile section of trail travels through quiet suburban neighborhoods, then turns north and follows Cooper Street to downtown Jackson and the Grand River ArtsWalk. Two extensions of the trail will be added this year and next. In June 2017, a northern half-mile extension should be completed, crossing a boardwalk over a wetland to connect with a 2.5-mile paved trail that encircles a wetlands complex at Cascade Falls Park. A second extension is currently under development, going south to the Ella Sharp Museum and Park.

**Grand River ArtsWalk**

The Grand River Arts-Walk is a 1.5-mile non-motorized trail that travels through

The Falling Waters Trail crosses a causeway through the middle of picturesque Lime Lake.

Photo by Scott Novak

A new trail extension connects the MLK Equality Trail with a trail encircling Cascade Falls Park.

Photo courtesy of Experience Jackson

Jackson's growing arts and entertainment district. The current trail route begins where Cooper Street meets the Grand River. From there, continue west on Michigan Avenue and go north on Mechanic Street through the Armory Art Village (historic site of former state prison). Follow the paved path north along the banks of the Grand River. The Michigan DNR is currently working on a plan to extend the trail along the Grand River to connect with the Michael Levine Lakelands Trail State Park in Munith.

Falling Waters Trail • Martin Luther King Equality Trail • Grand River ArtsWalk