

G.R.E.A.T.



Grand River Environmental Action Team

P.O. Box 223, Jackson, Michigan 49204

Website: www.great-mi.org 517-416-4234 Volume 28 Number 3

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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

LAST PADDLE DATE:

October 7th • 12 Noon
Grand River

(6.1 Mile Trip, 2.5- 4 Hrs)
Tompkins Rd. (DNR Site)
to Onondaga (Baldwin Pk)

Our Annual Grand River Cleanup Saturday, Sept. 8, 2018 9am-2pm

MARK THE DATE IN YOUR CALENDAR



Photo by Jack Ripstra

Clean up crew working hard

Grand River Environmental Action Team is once again holding its annual Grand River Clean-Up. This event is only successful with the help of many, many volunteers!

We will report to Consumers Energy Headquarters off Cooper St. (at the parking ramp located approx. 200 S. Cooper St) at 9:00A.M on Saturday, September 8th. Wear clothes to be in or near the river. Gloves, tools, and a lunch (around 1 PM) will be provided. Some will walk the banks while others in shallow areas will wade with a canoe to put trash into, or in deep sections, paddle canoes to the log jams with trash.

To successfully organize and implement the Annual Clean-Up event of at least 100 participants, we need to identify people to

We need volunteers to help us with this event!

help with specialized jobs. Unless you have already contacted us, please let us know if you can do one of the following:

- Team Leader (need at least 7 volunteers): Lead about 6-10 workers on an assigned part of the river. Prior, we will send you an info sheet which explains in detail what your will do and go over this in short meeting at 8:45 AM on the event day. Many of our volunteers are the Junior ROTC student cadets from the Career Center. They are exceptionally hard workers and their behavior is very polite and respectful.
- Pull boat trailers to distribute boats, pick-up, and return (need 1 volunteer)
- Pick up and deliver food from a list of local food vendors who are donating for our lunch (need one driver)
- Serve and clean-up lunch food (need 2 volunteers)
- Registration and Distribute Equipment (need 4 volunteers)

Please contact Jack L. Ripstra at e-mail jlripstra@aol.com or call 517 740-5680 if you can do one of these jobs, or if you plan on bringing your own canoe (no kayaks please).

Be a part of something GREAT – hope to see you September 8th!

The August Paddling Clinic

By Kenny Price

Sunny skies welcomed people to Vandercook Lake. G.R.E.A.T. does Earth Day to help people learn about paddling. G.R.E.A.T. does the Annual Clean Up to clean and protect the Grand River. G.R.E.A.T. has monthly paddles to show people the beauty of our Michigan lakes and rivers.

We decided we needed to offer an opportunity for folks to learn how to paddle safely, how to purchase the correct PFD, etc

The event in August was to solve all those areas where we have lacked. Kat Kulchinski with Quiet World Sports was at the lake to teach people that falling out of their boats is not the end of the trip. She also taught them to get back in their boats. Jessica with Krupa's Boats was there to show people how to purchase the right boat, PFD and paddles. Shikha Singh and the Jackson County Conservation District was there to inform people about invasives. Ken Mangus with the U.S. Coast Guard Aux was there to help with safe boating rules. Deb Snell and the D.E.Q. was there to show people how to clean the boats to protect against transferring invasives.

Several people told me they came to fall out of their boats and get back in their boats. They all feel more confident to be on the water. That made the day a total success.



Helen Burnett helping Julie Colyer Wyatt empty her kayak of water



Sandra Langly brings in her kayak



Jessica Morris helping Megan Hiler from Channel 10 news with PFD



Helen Burnett and Julie Colyer Wyatt being interviewed by Megan Hiler channel 10 news



Kat Kulchinski teaching boaters how to get back into their boats in case they have fallen out.

June's 2018 paddle highlights



Hawaii Maliga getting in boat, Ken Price helping



John Minar and Jack Ripstra on top dam on the Kalamazoo



Gina May paddling



Jack Ripstra helping Don Nelson out of his boat

The 2018 paddling has been a season of going with the flow. The trip down the Kalamazoo was scheduled to go from Homer to Albion Dam in May but was changed to June because of high water on the Kalamazoo in May. June played tricks with GREAT with high water at the beginning of June and then correct levels on paddle day. Due to high water at the beginning we were unable to cut the entire route to Albion Dam. So, the trip went from Homer to F Drive. The weather changed our plans and we went with flow. We had a small but happy group paddling down the river. Only one person went thru the Homer Dam, while the rest portaged around it. Nobody decided to go for a swim and everyone ended up with happy faces. After the paddle, a crowd went back to Homer and had a great supper at Cascarelli's Pizza.

A GREAT after-thought

By John Minar

I ran into a GREAT member I had not seen in years. While no longer active in GREAT he still pays annual dues, receives the GREAT newsletter and appreciates our work. Surprisingly to me - has named GREAT in his will.

It struck me. Even as a current board member, I never thought of putting G.R.E.A.T in my will. As an ALL volunteer non-profit organization we don't need a lot of resources to survive. Of course the more resources we have, the more we can accomplish. Resources are a polite word for money.

Human resources matter, perhaps more so, to protect our environment and keep this organization going. Currently we are in need of volunteers to help us clear the river(s) before each public paddle. Our dedicated team of cutters needs some younger manpower and womanpower to help us continue our public outreach program. These pre-paddle clearing expeditions are an opportunity to enjoy water, nature, fresh air and exercise, with a small group of like minded environmentalists. Not to mention contributing to the greater good. Sometimes it is even fun.

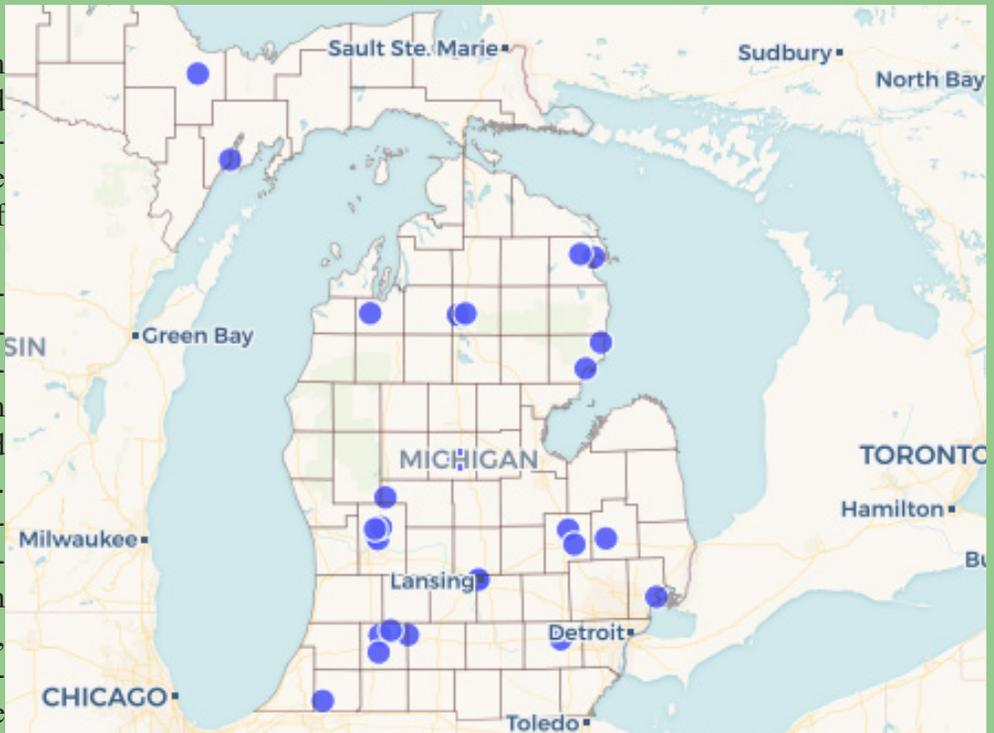
If you are interested, or know someone who may be interested in keeping the river clear, please leave a message on our phone 517 416-4234 or drop us an email grand@great-mi.org.

Why is PFAS in the news?

By Deb Snell

You may have heard about PFAS in the news lately. PFAS has been found polluting our waterways and groundwater. What is it? Why should we be concerned? Here's a brief summary of what we know:

What is it: PFAS is a group of chemicals called Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances. This group of chemicals includes specific compounds such as perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS). These chemicals have been used virtually everywhere since the 1950's in manufacturing, firefighting, and common household products—including Teflon, plastics, water-proofing products, lotions, and body care products. Because these chemicals are very stable and persistent, they have now been found



Confirmed PFAS Sites in Michigan

polluting our lakes, rivers, and groundwater throughout Michigan and around the country. We know that many of these chemicals cause adverse health effects in humans, but we don't necessarily know at what levels. Research in this area continues. The EPA has set a lifetime health advisory (LHA) level for certain types of PFAS in drinking water at 70 parts per trillion (one part per trillion is the equivalent of 1 grain of sand in an Olympic-size swimming pool!). The State of Michigan has adopted the EPA standard.

Where is it: PFAS has been confirmed at a number of sites across the state, including the Au Sable River, at sites in the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo areas, and in the Huron River, among others. Source investigation throughout the state is on-going. Nearby in the Huron River watershed, state agencies recently conducted surface water testing and fish sampling at a number of sites on the river. On August 4, 2018, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) issued a 'do not eat fish' consumption advisory for parts of the Upper Huron River due to high levels of PFAS found in fish in Kent Lake. The advisory applies to all fish along the Huron River from Milford to the Portage Dam at the Livingston/Washtenaw County border. The State of Michigan PFAS Action Response Team (MPART) website has more information on these and more sites of contamination throughout the state at www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse.

State Actions: The State of Michigan started the PFAS Action Response Team (MPART), a multi-agency action team, in 2017 to address the PFAS issue. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) is conducting testing at sites throughout the state trying to identify and reduce and/or eliminate sources of PFAS in surface water and ground water. Additionally, the MDHHS is collecting and analyzing fish samples. MDEQ has also begun testing drinking water from community water supplies and all schools that use well water for PFAS—the status of sampling and results are posted on the MPART website at www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse. Sample results for the Upper Grand River are still pending at the time of this article.

To learn more about PFAS, here a few good resources:

MPART website: <http://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse>; EPA – Basic Information on PFAS: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas/>; Center for Disease Control – PFAS health info: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/>. Residents can also call the Michigan Environmental Assistance Center with questions or concerns at 800-622-9278,

Grand River Expedition 2020

By John Minar

The year 2020 will mark the fourth Grand River Expedition. Started in 1990 this event happens once every 10 years and covers the entire length of the Grand, Michigan's longest river. Starting in 1990 with a bunch of dedicated individuals, it was sponsored by General Motors in 2000. Unfortunately however by 2010 the fortunes of GM deteriorated and did not sponsor the 2010 Expedition.

While details of the 2020 Grand River Expedition are in the planning stages, a few things are certain:

1. GREAT will need a LOT of volunteers next summer to clear the Upper Grand in Jackson County.
- We cannot wait until the spring of 2020 to accomplish this.
2. We have the heaviest clearing responsibilities as the river widens north of Jackson County with less clearing required.
3. The Expedition is a 12-day journey down the 260-mile length of the river.

July 2018 Paddle Highlights



Paddlers passing through Lions Park



Mechanic Street bridge



A GREAT day to be on the river!

By Deb Snell

The July paddle for GREAT was on the Grand River from the Consumers Energy Building in downtown Jackson to R.A. Greene Park on Lansing Ave. This was a last minute change in location due to an overwhelming amount of tree removal that we just couldn't get done in time on the originally scheduled stretch from Lions Park to Maple Grove Road. We sure appreciated everyone's flexibility with the last minute location change!

This 3 mile trip through the heart of Jackson took approximately 1.5 to 2 hours and gave us a river's eye view of the city. We passed under the I-94 bridge and took out just downstream of the Jackson Wastewater Treatment Plant. Thankfully we had a beautiful day and terrific turnout, with 38 adults and 6 kids participating.

DONATION REQUEST

GREAT often has difficulties at put in sites, and take out sites such as steep banks, muddy bottoms and swift currents. For safety reasons we are in dire need of one aluminum dock section with a few posts.



Wood docks will not serve our needs for portable, lightweight landings.

If you know someone who can make such a donation, please leave a message on our phone 517-416-4234 or drop us an email grand@great-mi.org. It is of course tax deductible.

In the Spotlight

The bird people love to hate

By John E. Minar

The double crested cormorant is the bird people love to hate. It is the only cormorant of six species in North America with a large population in the interior of the continent, and the only species to breed in Michigan. The reason some people hate this bird, particularly fishermen, is that they are blamed for the reduction of sport fish, especially yellow perch. Perhaps no other bird has as many web pages, including Facebook pages dedicated to their eradication as well as pages pushing preservation.

The cormorant was placed on Michigan's endangered species list in 1976. Eventually laws banning the use of organochlorine pesticides (e.g., DDT) and PCBs allowed cormorant populations to rebound along with a number of other fish-eating birds including the bald eagle, osprey, herring gull, Caspian tern and common tern. Estimated cormorant populations in the Great Lakes have gone from 125 breeding pair in 1973 to over 40,000 today. With each adult eating an estimated pound of fish every day, that is 80,000 pounds per day, or about 2.5 million pounds of fish per month. However not all fish in the cormorant diet are game fish. A 2004 study conducted around the Beaver Island archipelago found alewives comprised about 72% of the diet by weight. So you want to be a marine biologist and identify and weigh the partially digested stomach contents of double crested cormorants? Someone has got to do it.

Conversely a 1997 study in the Les Cheneaux islands found that primary prey species varied over six seasonal periods. Yellow perch represented 41% of the total biomass consumed by cormorants during spring and declined to less than 5% once spawning was completed.

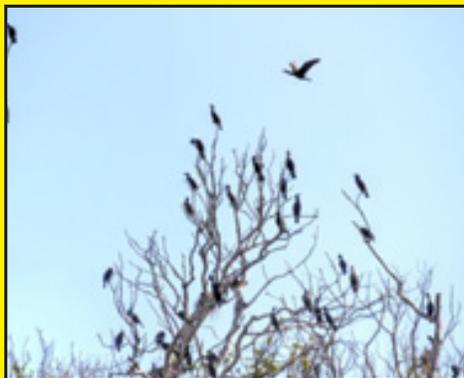
The US Fish and Wildlife Service will issue permits to kill up to 18,270 cormorants this year in eight Midwestern states. Permit applicants must submit photos of cormorant damage, how many cormorants they wish to kill and how they plan to do it.



Double Crested Cormorant



Double crested cormorants nesting on the SS Francisco Morazan, part of the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore South shore of S. Manitou Island. May 2018.



The acidic excrement of this bird kills most vegetation including the trees which they nest.



The south shore of South Manitou Island in May 2018 illustrates the deforestation caused by the double crested cormorant.

GREAT Saddened by death of former President

Andrew (Andy) LaFaive, the third president in the history of GREAT, has died after a long battle with cancer. He was 47. Andy and his wife, the former Maria Lapinski, and their two children, Adrien and Quinn, lived in East Lansing, Michigan. It is reported that his mother-in-law, the late Nancy Lapinski, appealed to her son-in-law to take on the responsibilities as president of GREAT in an emergency, when the previous president unexpectedly left the office. Andy, loved by many, accepted the responsibilities of leading the organization for one year until a more permanent replacement could be tapped.

Though Andy only served as an officer of GREAT for a short time, his fondness for the organization was long standing. As an employee first, and eventually the CEO of the MBTM Corporation, Andy and his father-in-law, Jack Lapinski, owner of MBTM, were always enthusiastic supporters of GREAT. It comes as no surprise that the Andy's family has asked that donations in lieu of flowers be made to GREAT.

Though many formerly involved with GREAT during the time when Andy was president have moved on, and perhaps themselves passed, several of those who remember Andy, such as Barbara Anderson, speak fondly of his affable character and his dependable leadership. Andy, in his final years, was pleased to see the permanent accomplishments GREAT has achieved in Jackson County.

There will a Celebration of Life for former GREAT President Andy LaFaive on Sept 9, 2018 from 1pm to 4pm. The event will be at the Huntington Club at MSU Football Field.



GREAT 2018 SPONSORS

Overall Sponsors

Barb Anderson
Myrna Berlet
City of Jackson Parks
Consumers Energy Foundation
Dawn Food Foundation
Betty Desbiens
Byron & Amy Ennis
Charles J. Falahee, Jr.
Jim & Joyce Grace
Jeff Grund
Great Lakes Paddlers (GLP)
Dr. John Hand
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James Justin
Dan & Molly Kaser
Krupa's Boat Mart
Kurt & Leah LaFrance
MBTM LTD (Jack Lapinski)
Don and Tracy Lynd
Charlene & Sherman MacCready
MACI
John & Emily Minar
Karen Mitchell
Don & Renee Nelson
Network for Good
Steve Rick (Abbott, Thompson, Mauldin, & ...)

Jack L. Ripstra
Jim & Pam Rossman
Kurt and Lisa Rudolph
Jim and Jan Seitz
Deb and Ray Snell
Trudell Auto Service
Benjamin Ward

Clean-Up Sponsors

Buffalo Wild Wings
Camp Storer (YMCA)
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
Marino's Pizza
Modern Waste Systems Inc.
Papa John Pizza
Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance
Virginia Coney Island



VOLUNTEERS NEED-

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 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 to order a GREAT t-shirt and coffee mug

GREAT Newsletter

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GREAT
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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



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

GREAT Board

Kenny Price, President

Kurt LaFrance, Vice President

Deb Snell, Secretary

Jack Ripstra, Treasurer

Don Nelson, Rivermaster

John Minar, Director

Pam Brown, Director

Kay Brown, Director

Dan Kaser, Director

Jon Hoyle, Director

Benji Ward, Director

Kurt Rudolph, Director

Special Assignments:

Jim Seitz, Webmaster

Kurt Rudolph, Publicity

Jeff Grund, Tax Statements

Barb Anderson, Historian