

G.R.E.A.T.

Grand River Environmental Action Team



P.O. Box 223, Jackson, Michigan 49204

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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

Jackson's Earth Day 2018



Dan Kaser, Jack Ripstra and Kurt Rudolph help boaters on Cascade Lagoon.

By Kenny Price

Earth Day 2018 was a terrific event even with a few problems. Denton Road was closed at Kibby Road. The weather had been iffy but on the day of the event it was perfect. This year Earth Day was a function of the Jackson County Conservation District. Shikha Singh was the leader of the event and did a fantastic job with help from Nicole Vanderploeg, Mitchel Reed and Jill Yoxheimer. The Michigan D.E.Q., the Upper Grand River Watershed, the Master Gardeners, Horse Havens, the Sierra Club, Jackson Water Dept. had very informative and creative booths at Earth Day. Kevin Nichol's mellow sounds once again kept

everyone in good spirits. Classroom Critters 'the Animals guys' brought turtles, skunks, a rabbit and opossum for the kids and adults to play with. This year's Earth Day event had around 500 people attend.

Once again G.R.E.A.T. was a major hit with 153 people riding our canoes and kayaks. 10 G.R.E.A.T. Board member kept the event going all day and all except the photographer/leader worked hard all day. We found we needed to fix one of our canoes, and that we need to purchase a few more Children PFD's and a couple of boat cushions for the canoes. We saw a great many smiles, heard a lot of Thank You's. The word around the event was that G.R.E.A.T. was great.

June 10th
South Branch of Kalamazoo
River Paddle
Homer to Albion Dam

July 15th
Grand River Paddle
Lions Park (Adams St.) to
Maple Grove (DNR Access)

August 19th
PADDLING CLINIC AT
VANDERCOOK LAKE

Invasive Species: What They Are and Steps Recreationalists Can Take in Preventing Their Spread

By: Shikha Singh, PhD.

JLW CISMA Coordinator/Biologist

Jackson County Conservation District

With warmer weather on the horizon, many people will be looking to enjoy Michigan's beautiful natural resources! Canoes, kayaks and boats will be taken out of storage, fishing gear prepped with care, and trailers prepared to haul equipment across county, state and international borders. If proper care isn't taken, people can accidentally introduce non-native species to their favorite parks and beaches, and some of them can be extremely invasive!

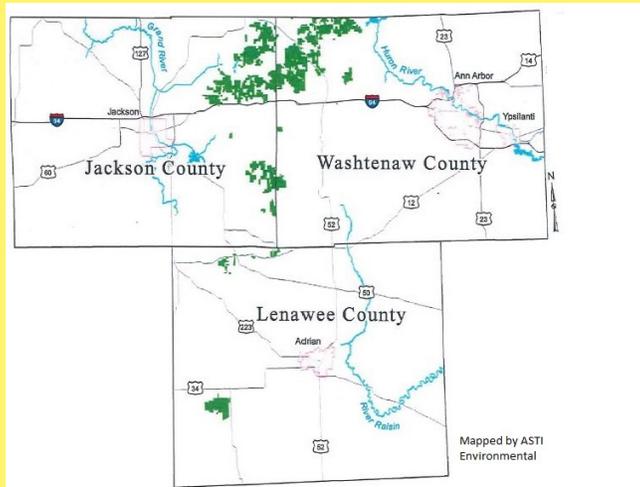
The Great Lakes region has over 180 non-native species, some of which are termed "invasive species". According to the Department of Natural Resources, invasive species are those that are "not native and whose introduction causes harm, or is likely to cause harm to Michigan's economy, environment or human health". Invasive species can arrive due to intentional and accidental introductions and include a variety of plants, animals and insects!

Invasive species can attach to boats, kayaks, canoes, snorkeling and fishing gear and spread when those items are used in another body of water. Some aquatic species like Eurasian watermilfoil can start infestations from a single fragment of a plant, and remain alive for weeks under moist conditions. Other invasive species already found in this region include phragmites, zebra mussels and parrot feather. These species can plug up water ways, reduce water flow, have negative impacts to water quality, ecosystem diversity and recreation and clog intake pipes. To put the treatment cost in perspective, according to The Nature Conservancy, it cost one municipal water treatment plant approximately \$353,000 a year to treat zebra mussels and some lakeshore homeowners will have to pay \$355 for a water filtration system to be installed.

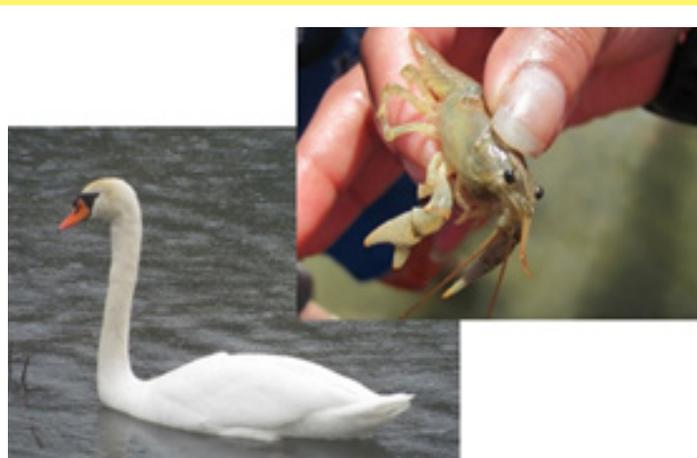
Steps recreationalists and outdoor enthusiasts can take to minimize the spread of invasive species include:

- Inspect and remove from your gear, shoes and clothing any seeds, plant matter, mud and small organisms
- Drain water from water craft bilge, livewell, motors and compartments and spray with hot high-pressure water
- Flip over canoes and kayaks to drain water and inspect for invasive species, if available, spray with hot high-pressure water
- Clean any burrs or seeds from your pet's fur after walks
- Do not empty fish tanks or release classroom study organisms into rivers or streams
- Do not release live bait into waterbodies
- Buy firewood where you will be burning it (and do not move it to new areas)
- Plant native species in your garden, and do not transplant water garden plants into streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands
- Report suspected invasive species at the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) website : <https://www.misin.msu.edu/>

To address invasive species management needs across the region, a collaborative group of stakeholders from Jackson, Lenawee and Washtenaw Counties established the "Jackson, Lenawee, Washtenaw Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (JLW CISMA)". The JLW CISMA wants to prevent, detect, eradicate and con-



trol invasive species in the area, create a strategic plan for reducing the threat of invasive species and provide outreach and educational opportunities for local citizens and stakeholder groups. The JLW CISMA would also like to coordinate and support partner efforts to survey and respond to new detections of priority invasive species. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the JLW CISMA coordinator, Dr. Shikha Singh, at (517) 395 - 2089 or via email at shikha.singh@macd.org.



Two of the main invasive species found in Michigan. The rusty crayfish at the top left and the mute swan on the bottom right.

References:

- NOAA (Great Lakes Region) – Invasive Species
http://www.regions.noaa.gov/great-lakes/index.php/great_lakes-restoration-initiative/invasive-species/
- MDNR – Michigan Invasive Species
<https://www.michigan.gov/invasives/>
- TNC – Great Lakes: Understanding the Cost of Invasives
<https://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/areas/greatlakes/cost-of-aquatic-invasive-species.xml>

April 29, 2018 paddle highlights

By Don Nelson

The April paddle for GREAT has been a bit of a challenge the past few years. We have had to postpone events and even cancel an outing because we had too much water or nearly none! A couple years back we held an event on the upper reaches of the Grand only to spend too much of our time out of our boats walking them down the river. This year we were blessed with plenty of water and cool weather making the task of river clearing rather difficult. So we rescheduled the April 15th outing to April 29th and wow, what a difference two weeks made. Even with that the extra time we did not get the river cleared of obstacles between the bridge on the highway (127 South) and Loomis Road bridge so we shortened the trip by

Continued on page 4



Paddling under Hague Bridge



Jack helps paddler in his boat



Photos by Kenny Price

Don Nelson comes to shore at Vandercook Lake with Dan Kaser, Jack Ripstra and Ken Price watching

May 21, 2018 paddle highlights

By Jack L. Ripstra

The second GREAT paddle of the year was scheduled for the South Branch of the Kalamazoo River, with this trip being postponed until June due to down trees, high water and low bridges. Instead 20 paddlers joining us for the 4.1 mile trip on the River Rasin from Swain Memorial Park in Brooklyn to Austin Road.

The weather cooperated even though the sky looked threatening at many times. Waterfowl and wildlife were spotted by the paddlers on this beautiful river.

Many thanks to the Great Board members and paddlers who made this paddle a success.



Paddlers coming into Custer Road take out



Waiting to take out



Barbara O'Kelly enjoys the day

Registration of paddle sport boats now dead... for now anyway

By Jim Seitz

Because of significant criticism, the state Waterways Commission last month said it “would not pursue a paddle sport craft fee at this time.” However, it has left the door open for possible future fee proposal. The committee says it will now seek more input from the public, evaluate its proposal with the seven other states who have canoe and kayak registration fees, and better define and communicate its benefits while keeping communications open with public and legislators.

In February, the Michigan Waterways Commission who is an advisory panel to the Department of Natural Resources, with a 6-0 vote, passed a resolution recommending various watercraft items including an annual registration fee not to exceed \$10.00 for canoes, kayaks and paddleboards longer than eight feet when used on Michigan waterways. For any of the recommendations to take effect, the Michigan House and Senate would have to pass it to have it signed by the governor. However, no such legislation was introduced. Instead, the Senate Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Committee unanimously approved a non-binding symbolic resolution in opposition to the Waterways Commission’s paddle boat registration proposal.

The rationale of the commission was to have paddleboat owners share in the costs of maintaining boat access, emergency response, and safety. Currently such costs are funded by registration fees assessed to owners of power boats along with some of the 2 cents per gallon gasoline tax allotment. The problem is state boat access facilities are increasingly now being used for paddle boats, thus driving up unfunded costs. For example, when a kayak, canoe or paddle board is discovered floating unattended in a lake or river, there is no quick way to check to see if it blew off a dock or was capsized. In such situations, registration numbers would make it possible to contact the owner to verify before sending out rescue and recovery teams as well more quickly return the boat to the owner. About half of the proposed registration revenue was designated for paddle sport safety programs as there has been a recent increase of paddle sport deaths.

Those opposed to the proposed paddle sport boats registrations bring up several concerns: 1.) There was no provision for re-

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a few miles and started at Loomis.

The day was warm and clear with a bit of breeze and no bugs (always a plus). We had a nice turnout of 16 adults, 6 board members and one child join us going down the river in mostly kayaks with a couple of canoes.

This is a nice stretch of river, with the first hour or so meandering through a mixture of marsh/grass lands and trees. Once we passed the bridge at Draper Road the remainder of the trip weaved us through grasslands all the way to Vandercook Lake.

As we approached the bridge at Hague Avenue several of us near the front of the group saw what was later confirmed to be an Osprey. Once we made it to Vandercook Lake those of us in the lead saw a Bald Eagle out fishing in the lake. Also along the way there were deer and other ‘critters’. For a two – two and half hour ride, this piece of river is nearly all ‘wilderness’ in that you pass very few houses and see mostly woods, fields or grass lands and quite a few animals and birds along the way.

As I mentioned earlier, we have often had issues with our April event and there has been some discussion about making some changes. It has been suggested that Earth Day be our only April event and we have our first paddle in May. An idea has also been offered to add a paddle event to September to make up for dropping April’s paddle.

Since the river has been cleared already for the clean up, let’s have a paddle on it. We have our annual clean up that month and the level of effort to manage that event has been considered to be enough for one month.

We have the river in Jackson County divided up into three regions each with 4 sections or paddle events. We schedule one paddle from each region each year. The plan is that if you join us on every paddle of the Grand River, at the end of four years you will have paddled the entire length of the Grand in Jackson. We have had our April events in the southern region due to that part of the river typically only has water enough for a paddle in the spring with the winter’s snow melt and spring showers... well, that has not worked so well in recent years.

Midsummer we paddle the central region where there is usually water and our last paddle of the year is in the northern section where we count on a late rain storms to have water for an outing. It has been mentioned that maybe we could have our first paddle of the year on a lake so we can wait for river water levels to drop enough to get into the water to clear woody debris (a.k.a. fallen trees) and also for the water to warm up some. The cold water is an issue for an early lake paddle as well and why we have traditionally not done this.

Healthy Homeowner Habits for Clean Water

By Deb Snell

Adapted from US EPA

Publication No. 833-B-03-033

As stormwater flows over driveways, lawns, and sidewalks, it picks up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants. Stormwater can flow into a storm sewer system or directly into a lake, stream, river, or wetland. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing and providing drinking water.

By practicing healthy household habits, homeowners can keep common pollutants like pesticides, pet waste, grass clippings, and automotive fluids off the ground and out of stormwater. Adopt these healthy household habits and help protect our lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands!

Vehicle and Garage

- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface to minimize the amount of dirty, soapy water flowing into the storm drain and eventually into your local waterbody.

- Check your car, boat, motorcycle, and other machinery and equipment for leaks and spills. Make repairs as soon as possible. Clean up spilled fluids with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand, and don't rinse the spills into a nearby storm drain. Remember to properly dispose of the absorbent material.

- Recycle used oil and other automotive fluids at participating service stations. Don't dump these chemicals down the storm drain or dispose of them in your trash.

Lawn and Garden

- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly. When use is necessary, use these chemicals in the recommended amounts. Avoid application if the forecast calls

for rain; otherwise, chemicals will be washed into your local stream.

- Select native plants and grasses that are drought and pest resistant. Native plants requires less water, fertilizer, and pesticides.

- Sweep up yard debris, rather than hosing down areas. Compost or recycle yard waste when possible.

- Cover piles of dirt and mulch being used in landscaping projects to prevent these pollutants from blowing or washing off your yard and into local waterbodies. Vegetate bare spots in your yard to prevent soil erosion.

Home Repair and Improvement

- Before beginning an outdoor project, locate the nearest storm drains and protect them from debris and other materials.

- Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris such as concrete and mortar.

- Use hazardous substances like paints, solvents, and cleaners in the smallest amounts possible, and follow the directions on the label. Clean up spills immediately, and dispose of the waste safely. Store substances properly to avoid leaks and spills.

- Purchase and use nontoxic, biodegradable, recycled, and recyclable products whenever possible.

- Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors. Filter and reuse paint thinner when using oil-based paints. Properly dispose of excess paints through a household hazardous waste collection program, or donate unused paint to local organizations.

- Reduce the amount of paved area and increase the amount of vegetated area in your yard. Use native plants in your landscaping to reduce the need for watering during dry periods. Consider directing downspouts away from paved surfaces onto lawns and other measures



DO YOU KNOW...

The difference between a storm drain and a sewer? *Storm drains collect water from outside our homes and businesses and carry it, untreated, directly to streams and rivers. Sewers collect water from inside homes and businesses and carry it to treatment plants, where it is cleaned before it reaches streams and rivers. So remember, only rain should go into storm drains, not trash, oil, or other pollutants.*

DO YOU KNOW...

The Grand River Watershed starts in Jackson County and travels 262 miles to Lake Michigan! *Jackson County is also home to the upper reaches of the Kalamazoo and Raisin River Watersheds. Polluted stormwater entering these rivers can affect the health of the river downstream.*

to increase infiltration and reduce polluted runoff.

Pet Care

Pick up the pet waste and dispose of it properly – either place it in the trash or flush down the toilet. Leaving pet waste on the ground increases public health risks by allowing harmful bacteria and nutrients to wash into the storm drain and eventually into local waterbodies.

In the Spotlight

The Osprey

By John Minar

The osprey — also called sea hawk, river hawk, and fish hawk — is a fish eating bird of prey found throughout the world. It builds large stick nests near a body of water which can provide an adequate food supply such as the one pictured near the Grand River and Vandercook Lake.

Human habitat is sometimes an aid to the osprey. The birds build large stick nests on telephone poles, channel markers, and other such locations as this cell phone tower.

It is a large raptor, about 2 feet tall (24 inches) with a wing span of nearly 7 feet (72"). The average lifespan in the wild is 30 years.

The osprey is unusual in that it is a single living species that occurs nearly worldwide on every continent, except Antarctica. Superb fishers which eat little else, fish make up some 99 percent of their diet.

Ospreys are often confused with bald eagles, but can be identified by their white under parts. Eagles and ospreys frequent similar habitats and sometimes battle for food. Eagles often force osprey to drop fish that they have caught and steal them in midair. In flight, ospreys will orient the fish headfirst to ease wind resistance.

Like the American Bald Eagle, Ospreys suffered population declines starting in the 1950s due to chemicals such as DDT which thinned their egg shells and hampered reproduction. Fortunately with the ban on DDT and similar chemicals in the US, populations of both species are increasing.



Osprey's nest



REGISTRATION continued from page 4

be proved, but this would be impossible in many cases for boats owned for decades; 3.) There is not a big need for more money to be spent on safety as most paddling organizations already do an adequate job with this; 4.) Paddle sports don't require as much public infrastructure as motorized boats and it is unclear how much of the paddle sport registrant money would be used to create and maintain public access and paddle trails; 5.) Such a fee could hinder Michigan's tourism.

States who require paddleboat registrations usually have reciprocal agreements for tourist who have valid boat registration from another state so they do not have to pay registration fees for their boats while visiting. States with non-motorized boat registration requirements are: Alaska, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania. For example, Ohio and Pennsylvania also have a titling process which in most cases is voluntary for paddleboats. Ohio's registration fee is \$20 for three years, while Pennsylvania is \$18 for two years. Pennsylvania's registration is only required for paddle boats used at state parks and forests and PA Fish and Game access sites where they also offer a one year \$10 and an \$18 two year permit as an option. Ohio also has a \$25 three year alternate registration option that uses smaller boat decals.

The American Canoe Association (ACA) encourages their members to reach out to paddlers in other states to learn how required non-motorized boat registrations have impacted paddling public. They suggest the following points to consider: 1.) The pluses must be greater than the inconvenience and costs to the state's paddlers; 2.) It should have widespread support from paddlers and most of the state's paddling organizations; 3.) The proposal should not use traditional boat numbers, as they are much too large for most paddle craft; 4.) The proposal should have a fee structure in line with the lower enforcement, access, and pollution costs of paddleboats use compared to motorized boats; 5.) The proposal should have a convenient registration system which is also affordable for multiple paddleboat ownership; 6.) The proposal should be reciprocal with other states; 7.) The proposal must have guarantees registration revenues will be used to benefit the needs of paddlers and documented with a yearly online report such as Ohio does.

GREAT's pole barn complete



Frame goes up



Completed building

Photos by Kenny Price

The Grand River Environmental Action Team kicked off a fund raising campaign the fall of 2016 to raise funds to construct a pole barn to be used to store our canoes, kayaks, trailers and cleanup supplies. This pole barn is located at 100 Cardinal Crest on the GREAT land along the Grand River in Blackman Township. The pole barn construction was completed in 2017 with solar lighting being added the summer 2018. This pole barn could not have been completed without the generous support from the following:

Barb Anderson
Kay Brown
Terry Beaver
Ted & Peggy Beals
Myrna Berlet
Kay Brown
Sandra & David Carpenter
Jeanette & Cliff Cole
Consumers Energy Foundation
William Dunphy
Ann Marie Eggert
Charles & Pamela Falahee
John & Nancy Francey
John Hand
Susan Harper
Joe & Lisa Hart

Steve Hoekman
Ron Hoffman
Jon Hoover
Jon Hoyle
Jackson Comm. Foundation
Terry & Susan Langel
Kurt LaFrance
Tim Lanning
Mary Lenardson
Don & Tracy Lynd
MACI
John & Emily Minar
Rod & Jackie Monasmith
Lynn McLean
Don & Renee Nelson
Barbara O'Kelly

John & Nancy Ocwieja
Alyce Oosting
Paul Rice
Kenny & Betty Kay Price
Quiet World Sports
Jack L. Ripstra
Jim & Pam Rossman
Kurt & Lisa Rudolph
Charity & Bill Steere
Jim & Jan Seitz
Deb & Ray Snell
Susan Sylvester
Trudell Auto Service
Bonita Vale
Benji Ward

GLP Schedule's Bill Dunphy Memorial Paddle



By Jim Seitz

The Great lakes Paddlers (GLP) have designated their Saturday, July 7th paddle on the Huron River as the Bill Dunphy Memorial Paddle.

Bill of Canton, MI who passed away earlier this year, was an active member of not only the GLP of his area. but also GREAT. Often attending our annual meeting, participating on many GREAT paddles, and many times as one of our Annual Clean-up team leaders.

The paddle trip will begin in the Lower Huron Metropark and end at the Willow Metropark. Meet 10 AM at the put-in for shuttling to the take-out. A lunch will be provided by GLP at the pavilion after the paddle.

Please RSVP by contacting Jim Seitz (seitz.jim@gmail.com or 517 795-9215) if you are interested in participating.



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 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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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