

# 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 28 Number 4 DECEMBER 2018

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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

**Merry Christmas  
& Happy New  
Year!**

## Annual Grand River clean up



Photo by Jack Ripstra

Just a fraction of the debris pulled from the Grand River

### By Jack Ripstra

The morning of September 8, 2018 started out at 58° with a brisk 12 mile per hour breeze out of the Northeast warming up to 66° at 1:00 p.m. This weather didn't discourage the enthusiasm of our 76 volunteers, which included 10 board members and many from CMS Energy and the Junior ROTC Program.

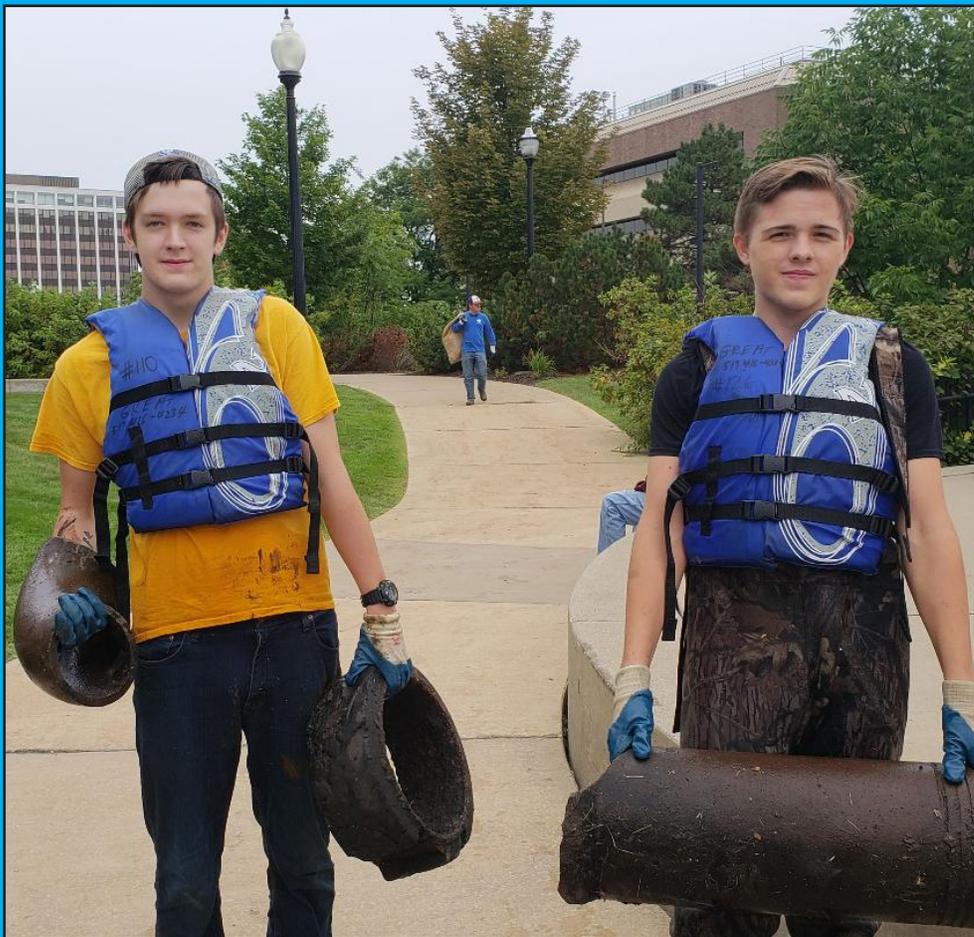
Warm donuts from Hinkley Bakery and hot coffee from the Jackson Coffee Company arrived soon after the volun-

teers at the CMS Amphitheater for registration and team assignments. Three 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 four 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

See RIVER CLEANUP on page 2

# RIVER CLEANUP continued from page 1



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. A walking team of volunteers also left from the CMS Amphitheater cleaning both sides of the banks all the way to Ganson Street.

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

Over 6.2 miles of the Grand River was cleaned from the US-127 South downstream to the Birdland Subdivision with 20 canoes and their 40 paddlers. The 10 cubic yards of trash collected from the Grand River included automobile parts, bikes, bottles, cans, carpeting, clothes, furniture, glass, highway barrels, plastic, shopping carts, styrofoam, and 6 tires. The tires were picked up and recycled thanks to the generosity of Modern Waste Systems.

Lunch was provided at 1:00 p.m. with food donated from Buffalo Wild Wings (chicken wings), Fazolis (bread sticks), Jackson Coney Island (coney dogs), Little Caesars (pizza), Marino's (pizza), McDonalds (lemonade) and Papa Johns (pizza).

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

# October's 2018 paddle highlights



By **John E. Minar**

The last GREAT Paddle of 2018 was held on October 7th 2018.

While the weather apps forecasted a cloud on our event, the predicted storms never came down on our parade of paddlers. It was however a misty paddle which some paddlers enjoyed amidst the fall colors.

The trip between DNR park on Tompkins Road and the take out at Baldwin Park In Onondaga was much faster due to recent rains.

In addition to the usual suspects (wearing reflective GREAT vests), we had two new paddlers and two new fami-

lies pledge to join on their first adventure with GREAT. They joined before the trip and thoroughly enjoyed the October color change. After the trip they asked, "When can we do it again!"

About half of the 32 participants went to Archie's Bar & Grill in 'downtown' Onondaga and enjoyed good food, and good company reflecting upon memories of rivers traveled in 2018. Having never been to Onondaga I was pleasantly surprised by the variety, quality, and reasonable prices of the food at Archie's.

The final highlight of the trip was watching the Detroit Lions beat Green Bay Packers 31-23.

## DOCK DONATION MUCH APPRECIATED!

GREAT would like to say THANK YOU to Eagle Point Marina for their generous donation of a portable dock section! The dock will be used at some of our trickier put in and take out locations where there are steep banks, muddy bottoms and/or swift currents. The dock will help improve the safety of our paddle events.

Eagle Point Marina's generous donation is very much appreciated.



# Strategies Used by Insects to Survive Winter

By Kurt Rudolph

During the cold winter months of Michigan, you tend to see various animals such as deer, raccoons, squirrels and birds out and about, but not a lot of insects. Unless you happen to live near water or are an avid angler, you may not have noticed that there are some curious insects who are active during the winter months.

Winter stoneflies spend most of their life in the juvenile life stage living in the water as larvae or nymphs. In winter, they emerge as adults from the rocky sediments, crawl through the ice to mate and lay eggs. Even though they have wings, they tend to stay close to the river. One question people ask is how do they do it? How do they survive the harsh and very cold temperatures? Most insects do not survive winter, instead, laying eggs and dying when the cold hits, others use “freeze avoidance” or “freeze tolerant” strategies. Freeze avoiding insects can try and find a dry area to hibernate (or in the insect world, diapause, a dormant state). Some insects replace the water in their body with an anti-freeze like solution called cryoprotectants, which supercools the fluids within the insects body by increasing the solute concentrations within cells. Examples of cryoprotectants include sorbitol, mannitol and eth-



ylene glycol, however, one of the more common ones used by insects is glycerol. Freeze tolerant insects can survive ice formation within their bodily tissues and are generally found in South America.

If you are interested in finding some winter insects, please join the Jackson Conservation District at their January/February Adopt a Stream Event contact Nicole Vanderploeg at [nicole.vanderploeg@macd.org](mailto:nicole.vanderploeg@macd.org) or phone: 517-395-2082.

## *It begins at home...*

# Protecting the Grand River in winter

By Deb Snell

*This year, try using less salt when clearing snow at home. Salt pollutes rivers, lakes and streams.*

*Frequent shoveling is best!*

In winter, salt and other deicers are applied to our roads, parking lots, and sidewalks throughout the Grand River Watershed to keep them safe for drivers and pedestrians. The most commonly used salt is sodium chloride, which is cheap and effective, but it can also be toxic to the environment.

Of course salt is needed for public safety. Yet too much salt can have negative effects on aquatic life, soil, and vegetation. And in areas with storm drains, melting snow and salt has a quick and easy path to our rivers, lakes and streams.



Limit your use of salt at home with these tips:

- Shovel early and often to avoid using salt or deicers altogether.
- Consider a deicer such as magnesium chloride and check labels for proper application tips.
- Use as little deicer as is needed to get the job done.
- Limit your use of sand. Instead of melting ice, sand provides traction. But it also increases the amount of sediment in our lakes, rivers and streams when it is washed into storm drains with melting snow.

- Promptly remove slush and any residual salt, sand or deicer from concrete surfaces to minimize polluted runoff.

When choosing the best snow removal techniques for your home, it's up to you to balance needs for safety, potential environmental impacts, costs and convenience. With careful application and avoiding areas near open water and drains, you can minimize potential adverse impacts to our watershed.



# A new and better GREAT website

By Benji Ward

How would you like to be able to register for a GREAT boat on the GREAT website for a paddle? Yes? Well you can help by donating to GREAT for the Wild Apricot project. Wild Apricot is a company that hosts websites with an established framework for managing non-profit membership, event registration, membership communications, etc. [www.wildapricot.com/membership-features](http://www.wildapricot.com/membership-features). The GREAT board is highly in favor of using Wild Apricot to manage GREATs online presence. Currently we rely on the generosity one person, Jim Seitz, to manage the GREAT website. Mr. Seitz has contributed immensely to GREAT but it is time to let him live his life. The current board members do not have the technical knowledge to build websites. We would prefer to use an established framework, saving our volunteer time to spend on the Grand.

I think that our members would

greatly appreciate being able to go to the GREAT website to see updates to our event schedule. Our current board members will be able to update the website as decisions happen. Most



spectacularly, you the member will be able to go to the GREAT website, see whether a boat is available for a paddle and register for a boat yourself. You won't have to call up the GREAT president to register a boat and hear about the greatness of Texas! (Lol, the president of GREAT is a generous Texan, who likes to remind everyone of the greatness of Texas.). As an introvert, I don't like to talk to people when I can just go to a website. Calling someone at a reasonable time of day to make an appointment is just

challenging for our busy lifestyles. Our enhanced website will allow you to get it done with a few clicks. However, don't get me wrong, the Texan's phone line will still be open if you want to chat.

In addition to the aforementioned opportunity to nab your own boat for a paddle, our enhanced website will have many features that will be helpful for administrative tasks handled by the board. The board will now be able to fully leverage all the internet age technologies that help manage this non-profit organization.

If this all sounds good to you, please consider donating to the Wild Apricot project. Our new enhanced website is expected to cost about \$600 per year, so with a \$6 donation from each of our roughly 100 members the cost would be covered for one year. Donations can be sent to GREAT, P.O. Box 223, Jackson MI 49203. If you have any feedback, please contact us at 517-416-4234 or [grand@great-mi.org](mailto:grand@great-mi.org).

## Pole barn solar system

This past month the installation of the solar system to provide electricity to the Grand River Environmental Action Team pole barn in the Birdland Subdivision was completed by A Plus Electric Inc. from Clark Lake.

The system consists of a 520 watt solar panel, 12 volt 79 amp hour battery, 350 watt inverter, two 24 watt LED motion exterior lights, four 36 watt LED interior lights and a 30 amp duplex electrical plug. The system will power the interior lights for over 6 hours.



# December 1, 2018

## GREAT land invasive species removal

**Kurt LaFrance**

With the turning of the seasons comes GREAT's annual battle against invasive species on the GREAT land. This is a project that has been ongoing for several years, but with over 25 acres of land along the Grand River, there may be no end to removing the invasive species in an effort to allow the native species to creep back in. Late fall is a "great" time to work on removing invasives, since they tend to be easier to spot. The native plants generally lose their leaves earlier in fall, but the invasive species hold their leaves longer.

The process to remove the invasive species includes chain-sawing the bigger invasives, or using loppers on the smaller plants. Once the plants are reduced to manageable size, they are piled tightly to provide habitat for mammals, birds and reptiles. The stumps are then treated with an herbicide to prevent regrowth.

We are looking for adults and old-



er teenagers to help with this work. No particular skill is required besides a desire to work hard. If you have your own chain saw or loppers you are welcome to bring them. Be sure to dress for the weather, as last year's event was very cold and snowy! But GREAT treasurer

Jack Ripstra provided a propane heater in the GREAT barn as a refuge for those who got too cold or wet from working.

The removal runs from 9 am to noon on Saturday December 1. If you are interested in participating, please RSVP to [grand@great-mi.org](mailto:grand@great-mi.org).

## Recycling Jackson

Recycling Jackson provides recycling drop off the first Saturday of every month from 9am -1pm. They are located one block behind Home Depot next to the Jackson Public Schools Bus Garage at 1401 N Brown St.

*Find out more information on their website at [www.recyclingjackson.com](http://www.recyclingjackson.com)*

Here's what they recycle:

- Plastic bottles, containers and packaging (Look for the recycling symbol with number 1-7)
- Styrofoam
- Paper, Newspaper, Phone Books and Magazines
- Corrugated Cardboard
- Boxboard (gift boxes, cereal and food packaging)
- Metal Cans & Aluminum (emptied and rinsed)
- Strings of tree lights
- Small appliances
- Clear glass containers
- Electronics – i.e. anything with a circuit board (some fees apply)



### 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.

# **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  
Jon W. Hoyle  
Andrew Hughes  
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  
Networkk 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 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

## GREAT Newsletter

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Grand River Environmental Action Team  
a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization

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Phone: 517-416-4234

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.

## GREAT Board

Kenny Price, President  
Kurt LaFrance, Vice President  
Deb Snell, Secretary  
Jack Ripstra, Treasurer  
Don Nelson, Rivermaster  
John Minar, 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  
Pam Brown, Historian