

G.R.E.A.T.

Grand River Environmental Action Team

P.O. Box 223, Jackson, Michigan 49204

www.great-mi.org



Surface Water Specialist to Address Annual Meeting

Few people know the rivers of Michigan in the way Jack Wuycheck does. As a thirty-year veteran aquatic biologist in the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Jack says he has seen the good, the bad, and the ugly aspects of environmental quality issues, elements of which he promises to share with GREAT at our annual meeting March 8.

Jack Wuycheck earned degrees in biology and environmental sciences at Michigan State University, and began his actual field work at the Kellogg Biological Research Station, where he believes he developed a sound foundation in aquatic systems. Since his early days as an aquatic biologist, Jack has been dedicated to protecting, conserving and properly utilizing our natural resources. He takes pride in the influence he has had on wildlife biology and water quality standards throughout his long career.

Due to his rich and varied experiences with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Mr. Wuycheck will be able to update us on surface water quality issues from around the State of Michigan as well as from our Grand River Watershed. Elements of his address will include information on important aquatic biological communities, recent technological development, and the importance of cooperative interaction between stakeholders of water resources, such as private citizens, local governments, business interests, and state agencies.

Our annual meeting, Wednesday, March 8, at Daryl's Downtown Restaurant is open to all GREAT members. Interested citizens are welcome to the dinner and meeting as well.



Featured Speaker Jack Wuycheck

**Annual Membership
Meeting
March 8, 2006
Daryl's Downtown Restaurant
Complimentary Light Dinner
at 6:30 p.m.
Meeting at 7:00 p.m.**

Portage River Sub-Basin Improvement Will Be Focus of Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Grant

The Jackson County Conservation District, still known to many as the Jackson County Soil Conservation District, will oversee a broad array of efforts to improve the quality of water flowing out of the Portage River into the Grand River. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality has sited Portage River Sub-Basin as one of the most environmentally degraded tributaries of the Upper Grand River Watershed.

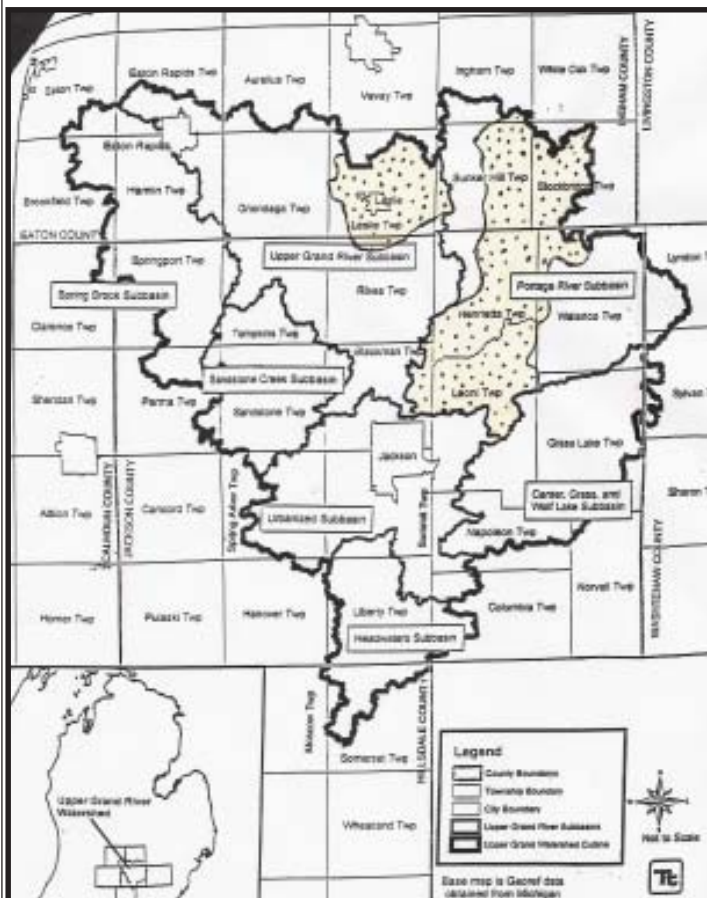
Newly appointed Water Project Coordinator for this mission is Cecelia Govrik. Cecelia previously worked for the Michigan Conservation Districts of Washtenaw, Lenawee and Monroe. She hails from the twin cities region of Minnesota, and received her science training at Hamlin University near St. Paul. Since Cecelia is new to the Jackson area, she said that she felt more comfortable that specific parameters of this project had been decided by the committee that wrote the grant. Although Cecelia is certain that she will eventually become more familiar with the entire Upper Grand River Watershed, she is happy



Cecelia Govrik of the MDEQ will speak at the GREAT Annual Meeting.

that she can focus on one sub-watershed for the present time.

In order for the Jackson County Conservation District to win the \$300,000 grant they had to first receive commitments from many partnering organizations who promised cooperation, work or financial support. One of the partners in the JCCD effort to improve the Portage River Sub-Basin is GREAT. Now WE must do our part to support this worthy mission. See the related article in this newsletter for GREAT's specific commitment to the Portage River Water Project.



Spring Waterfowl Watching in the Jackson Area

The Jackson area is blessed with many lakes and wetlands that attract a great variety of waterfowl during the Spring migration. Spring is the ideal season to look for ducks for several reasons. There are many non-resident species passing through the area and far fewer immature birds with their less than perfect plumage than would be present in the fall. Those species that would still be in their dull, “eclipse” plumage in September and October, are wearing their best breeding colors by Spring. Many ducks, especially the diving species, prefer large lakes in the Fall. These same birds are content to slowly wander north in the Spring, stopping at smaller ponds and medium size lakes such as those that abound in the Jackson area. Different duck species prefer specific types of habitat. For example, you are far more likely to see Wood Ducks in a small secluded, woodland pond, while Buffleheads and Goldeneyes are going to be found off shore in more open areas.

Rainfall and fluctuating water levels move concentrations of birds around from year to year, but there are many spots that have proven to be great locations in most years. Some of the best would include the following

Watkins Lake, which can be viewed easily from Arnold road approximately six miles east of Brooklyn, has been famous for many years for the large numbers and variety of waterfowl it attracts. Lombard Lake and its associated flood waters located on the Somerset State Game Area south of US 12 near Somerset Center, provides good viewing of many types of waterfowl. Walk the main trail from the parking lot on Stearns Road. The Haehnle Sanctuary that is maintained by the Jackson Audubon Society provides a great overview of Mud Lake a short walk from the parking lot on Seymour Road, approximately 6 miles northeast of Jackson.

The Jackson Audubon Society sponsors a one-day waterfowl viewing field trip each Spring that welcomes beginners as well as old hands. This year’s outing is scheduled for March 18th. Call (517-782-9466) and ask for Roy Dane if interested.

GREAT Makes Commitment to Conservation District for Portage Sub-Basin Improvement

Nearly a year ago, when the Jackson County Conservation District (formerly Jackson County Soil Conservation District) was applying for a Michigan Department of Environmental Quality grant, they came to GREAT to ask if we would sign on as a partner. The project they had in mind was to improve of the water quality of the Portage River. GREAT had already been informed by the MDEQ that the outflow from the Portage River was one of the worst influences on the quality of the Grand River in the entire Upper Grand River Watershed.

There was little question that GREAT needed to be a partner in this worthy, and long overdue effort. So now the grant has been won and it is time for our membership to respond. What did the board of GREAT agree to?

1. GREAT will develop and deliver an educational presentation on non-point source pollution and control as well as regulatory requirements in the basin, to be given to the local units of government covered by the JCCD project.
2. GREAT will bring our volunteers out to do a sample stream bank stabilization and buffer strip establishment project, which will be documented to produce an educational pamphlet.
3. GREAT will coordinate two volunteer stream cleanups, during the three year period of the grant.
4. GREAT will attend the steering committee meetings and assist in project planning.

To express your willingness to help the JCCD and GREAT in fulfilling their promises contact JCCD at www.jacksoncd.org or GREAT at www.great-mi.org.

GREAT Board Members

Chuck McKeown President	Dennis Whitehead Vice President
Nancy Lapinski Secretary/Treasurer	Betty Desbiens Historian
Todd Zeller Rivermaster	Louise Hefka Bank/Publicity
Barbara Anderson	Jeff Grund
Bill Bivins	John Hand
Ken Dodge	Bill Sonnet
Bryon Ennis	Warren Renando

The GREAT board meets on the second Wednesday of each month, at 7:00 p.m. at the Summit Township Hall, 2121 Ferguson Road. Meetings are open and visitors are welcome. If you would like to have an item placed on the agenda, please notify Nancy Lapinski at 783-3661.

GREAT,
P.O. Box 223
Jackson MI 49204

The GREAT Newsletter editor is Bryon Ennis.
amy.ennis@sbcglobal.net

Upcoming GREAT Activities

Quiet Water Symposium, MSU, March 4, Saturday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the MSU Agricultural Pavilion in East Lansing. GREAT will have a booth. View scores of hand made kayaks, canoes, and small sailing craft. Talk with the craftsmen who built them. Also hear presentations by experts on outdoor water adventures. Admission is about \$5.

Annual GREAT Meeting, March 8, Wednesday, 6:30 at Daryl's Downtown Restaurant. Light appetizers and conversation at 6:30 followed by update of GREAT activities. Featured speaker on environmental concerns especially water quality.

Falling Water Trail Corridor Clean-up and Inventory, April 22, Saturday-- Earth Day, Noon Falling Water Trail Corridor Clean up and Inventory. We will be removing trash and inventorying non-native species for removal.

Canoe Trips:

May 21, Sunday, Noon
Headwaters, Grand River
Jefferson Road and 127S
to 127S

June 25, Sunday, Noon
N. Branch of Kalamazoo
River
King Rd. E. of Albion/
Concord Rd.
To 29 1/2 mile Rd.

July 16, Sunday, Noon
Grand River
Ella Sharp Pond, southside
Near Probert Rd. to E.
High & 127S

August 20, Sunday, Noon
Grand River
Put in at Onondaga park
Take out at Gale Rd.,
Drive back to Onondaga Park
for picnic.

September 16, Saturday, 9am to 2pm Grand River Clean-up
Equipment, food, water
provided. Meet at Consumers
Energy Park bandstand--Boat
drawing and happy hour at
Daryl's Downtown after.

October 15, Sunday, Noon
River Raisin
Vinyard Lake Park to Brooklyn
Dam. Picnic at Vinyard Lake
Park

GREAT's fiscal year runs from January 1 through December 31. Your dues is a tax-deductible contribution as are other donations to GREAT.

Name _____

_____ GREAT Membership \$15.00

Street Address _____

_____ ACA(American Canoe Association)
membership \$30.00. Dual Membership is \$45.00

City _____

ZIP _____ State _____

Make checks for \$15 or \$45 payable to:

GREAT
P.O. Box 223
Jackson MI 49204

Telephone _____