

G.R.E.A.T.

Grand River Environmental Action Team



Website: www.great-mi.org

517.416.4234

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Twenty-Year Anniversary Milestone Will Highlight Annual GREAT Meeting

Expedition 2010 Rivermaster Is Evening's Featured Speaker

Everyone with even a modest connection to the Grand River says the river has not been in such good condition for a hundred years. Much of the credit for this vast improvement in water quality is attributed to the 1972 Clean Water Act which laid the foundation for removing various kinds of pollution from our nation's waterways, and for continually reducing the amounts of pollution added. But much has been done by local groups and local people like GREAT for educating the public on the desirability of cleaning up our portion of the river, and for doing something physically to clean it up.

Part of the origin of GREAT can be traced to Expedition 1990, a dream of world famous canoeist

Verlen Kreuger to float the entire Grand River with souls brave enough to join him. One of the brave souls to accompany Verlen on Expedition 1990, was Charlie Parmalee, who has kept alive the dream of Verlen, by organizing a trip down the length of the Grand from Jackson to Lake Michigan every ten years. This past year Charlie agreed to be rivermaster for Expedition 2010. Come join other paddling enthusiasts, supporters, and defenders of the Grand River, as Charlie takes you on a pictorial and narrative adventure with Expedition 2010.



Charlie Parmalee, Expedition 2010 Rivermaster, paddles through downtown Jackson.

GREAT Annual Meeting

Wed., March 23, 2011

**Daryl's Downtown
Restaurant**

Light meal--6:30 p.m.

Meeting--7:00 p.m.

Meal \$12.00 per person

Free dessert and coffee

for all

RSVP: 517.416.4234 or

grand@great-mi.org

Consider a Sponsor Membership

In this tough economy, GREAT has tried to keep its individual and family memberships at affordable levels, but to obtain adequate funding for its ambitious goals, GREAT must also have several annual sponsor level memberships. To encourage public participation, there are no charges for GREAT events, other than food at the Annual Dinner. GREAT has no paid staff, but recent increasing insurance and other costs have put more pressure on GREAT's tight budget.

Sponsor memberships are \$100. Sponsors will have their names (individual and/or business posted on GREAT's web site (if a business, with link to its site); in GREAT's quarterly newsletter; and on a poster displayed at all GREAT events: public paddles, clean-ups, Earth Day, QWS, annual dinner/meeting, and other activities.

As a 501 (c) (3) GREAT memberships is tax deductible. If you have already paid your 2011 membership, just make a donation for the difference. Send a check to GREAT, PO Box 223, Jackson, MI 49204 or go to <http://www.great-mi.org/Membership2.htm> to use a credit card or PayPal.

Thanks!

Jim Seitz, Membership Secretary

GREAT Member Receives State Conservation Award



Cecilia Govrik, Upper Grand River Project Implementation Coordinator displays her award as Conservation District Technician of the Year. Cecilia has worked very closely with GREAT on many of its projects and has supported GREAT with assistance and funding.

QUIET WATER SYMPOSIUM

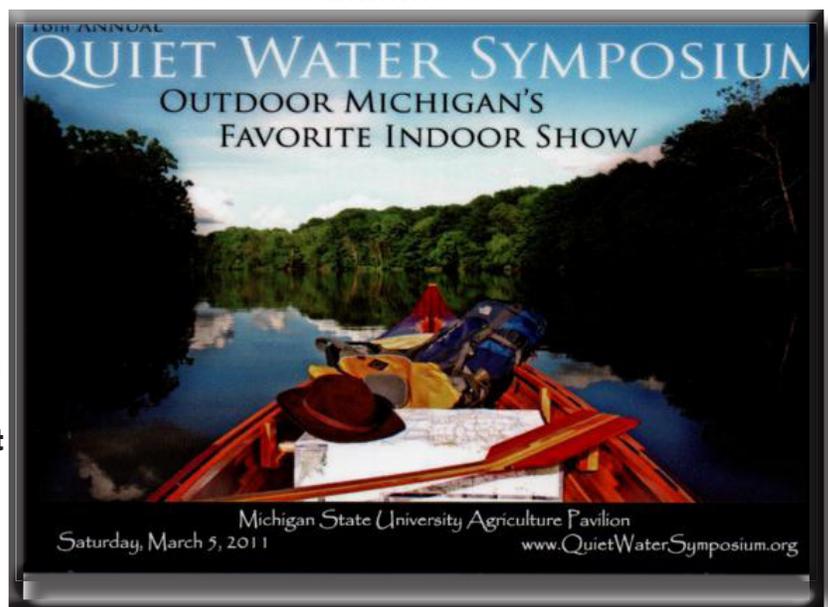
Date: Saturday March 5, 2011

Time: 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

**Cost: \$10 for Adults, \$5 for students
(with ID). Under 12 Free**

**Place: The Pavilion for Livestock and
Agricultural Education on the campus
of Michigan State
Southwest corner of Farm Lane and Mt
Hope.**

www.QuietWaterSymposium.org



*******VISIT GREAT'S BOOTH WHILE YOU ARE THERE!*******

GREAT Earns Statewide Conservation Honor



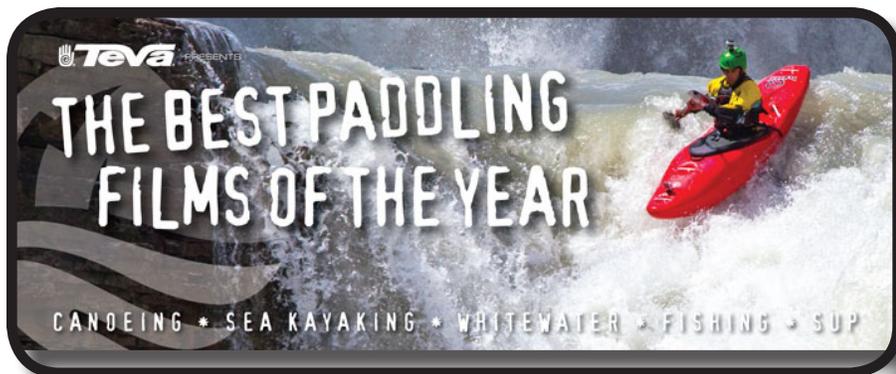
Jim Seitz and Kenny Price accept the Friends of Conservation award from the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts at their annual meeting. Cecilia Govric, Upper Grand River Watershed Project Coordinator (on left) nominated GREAT for this award.

The Michigan Association of Conservation Districts selected GREAT as its 2010 recipient of the Friend of Conservation Award. The award is based upon demonstrated contributions to: 1) improving the public's understanding of natural resources conservation, 2) partnering with a local Conservation District on resource management projects, and 3) furthering the mission of Michigan's Conservation Districts to help our citizens conserve their lands and our State's resources by working for a cleaner, healthier, and economically stronger Michigan.

Cecilia Govric, Upper Grand River Watershed Project Coordinator wrote that she was pleased to nominate GREAT for the award due to an exceptional

year for the organization. In 2010, GREAT hosted its 100th free public paddle event, held another hugely successful volunteer river cleanup, and dedicated over 200 hours of hard labor in clearing the headwaters for the Grand River Expedition. GREAT and the Jackson County Conservation District have successfully worked together for over two decades.

GREAT Vice President Kenny Price and Membership Secretary Jim Seitz accepted the award on behalf of GREAT at the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts annual convention, December 16, 2010.



Sunday, March 20, 2011
Michigan Theatre
124 N. Mechanic
Jackson, MI
Show time: 12:00 - 8:30
Tickets: \$12.00 in
advance, \$15.00 at the door

Hosted by
Quiet World Sports
517.783.0962
katkoff@ameritech.net

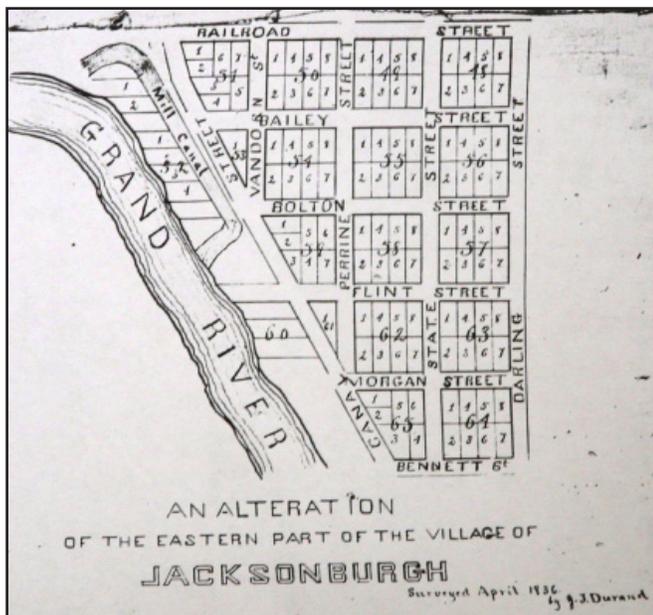
Few Today Remember One of Downtown The Holton Mill Pond.

By Bryon Ennis

Great swamps historically lay both to the north and south of Jackson, but Native Americans knew there was an area of gradient where the Grand River, Washtenong Sepe to them, flowed shallow and swift. In fact, there was a low sandstone ridge across the river here, and that is why a number of Indian trails from the east and west converged at this location. When Horace Blackman and his party arrived at the Grand River from Ann Arbor in 1829, they also noticed the stretch of swift water, and instinctively envisioned a mill and a town at this location. Blackman must have been sorely disappointed when he returned to Jackson from New York State less than one year later, after gathering up his family and supplies, to find another group of pioneers had established itself. “Anticipating Blackman’s plans, Isaiah Bennett and William Thompson built a dam and a rude sawmill in 1830 upstream from Blackman’s claim. It would force Blackman to compromise the plan he had for the village.”¹

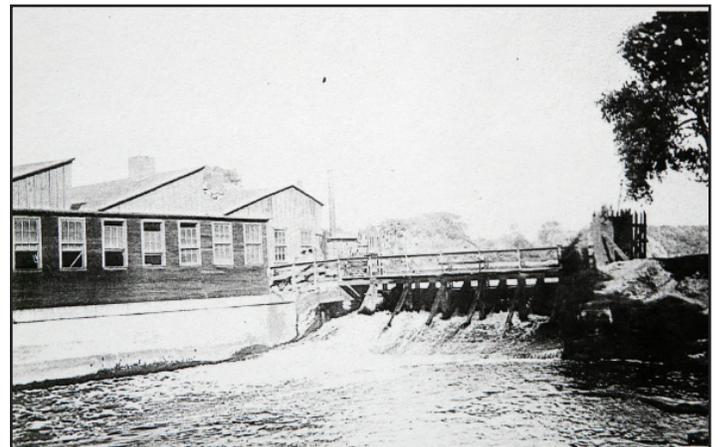
marsh ran from what is now downtown Jackson all the way back to the confluence of the east and west branches of the Grand River, today just east of US-127 South. The Grand River could easily be dammed where the river narrowed (downtown) to create a large reservoir to supply reliable mechanical power even during the low-water summer months. In addition it could serve as a convenient ice harvesting location in winter, an important consideration in any growing village for keeping food before the advent of refrigerators. Thus from the time of Jackson’s earliest non-native settlement in 1830, until the mid 1930’s, a period of over one hundred years, a Mill Pond was a significant feature of the City of Jackson.

For the three decades following the founding of Jackson, the village grew slowly but steadily, an important stop along the old Territorial Road across southern Michigan. It also appears that water power was contributing to Jackson’s growth, as it was recognized as an important flour milling site. From 1862, however, Jackson grew quite rapidly, becoming an important supplier of food and provisions for the Union armies. This was the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the United States, at least for the northern states, and Jackson fully embraced it. Coal began to be mined in the area. Jackson was selected by several railroads as a hub and repair center for steam engines, and other rolling stock. Many horse-drawn farm implements were manufactured here. The Jackson Mill Pond grew



An 1836 map of Jacksonburg shows only a mill race diverted from the main flow of the Grand River. No mill pond yet.

Perhaps this new location for a mill was a better choice. Directly upstream lay a narrow valley of wetlands surrounded on the west by low hills and on the east by heavily forested uplands. This long narrow



The Holton Dam formed the mill pond downtown. This dam was at the approximate location of today’s Liberty Street.

¹ Deming, Brian; Jackson: An Illustrated History, p. 13

Jackson's Most Prominent Historic Features:

In this issue, Part One: The Evolution of the Mill Pond

more extensive as the need for more water power grew.

Immediately following the Civil War, a new science and its related technologies was dawning that would have significant consequences for Michigan, for Jackson and for the Grand River mill pond. Many curious individuals began to experiment with the strange new force called electricity, which though invisible, seemed to exert tremendous influence on metal objects. If a sharpened piece of carbon carrying a current was held near a piece of metal that completed the circuit, a tremendously bright arc would jump the across the small gap. It was not long before visionary entrepreneurs saw the potential for lighting the dark, especially the out-of-doors. One of these individuals was William A. Foote. During this time, Foote ran a struggling flour mill in Adrian. "In 1884, the Thompson-Houston electric people asked Foote permission to install a generator in his mill. They were in the process of obtaining a contract for twelve arc street lights [in Adrian] and needed a power source. Foote agreed readily enough: his business could use any income it could get."²

It is not clear exactly why Foote moved his business interests to Jackson. Perhaps it was a better venue for business, or it may have been that a franchise for public electric lighting had already been awarded in Adrian, but in 1886, we read in the minutes of the Jackson City Council that permission was granted to Foote to install six electric arc lamps in downtown Jackson.



*The first home of Consumers Energy, Jackson 1888
Photo courtesy of Consumers Energy*



A 1917 map shows the Grand River (Holton) Mill Pond at perhaps its greatest extent. The island shown was employed to bridge the mill pond at Losey Street.

This is widely considered the origin of the Consumer's Power Company, although at the time Foote's company became known as the Jackson Electric Lighting Works.

It is not clear whether Foote actually drew power from the river for his electrical dynamos for those first arc lights. One source says, "In 1884, a small group of Jackson businessmen, banding together as the Mitchell-Reid Company, purchased a small dynamo and set it up in a mill driven by power from the Grand River at the Holton Dam."³ Another source says, "On the appointed night, Foote started his little engine, and the lamps – the inverted dishpan type- sputtered and glowed."⁴ However there clearly was electric power now being generated in downtown Jackson by water power.

Eventually, especially after the advent of electric powered street cars in Jackson, the inadequacy of the Upper Grand River for hydroelectric installations was recognized. Foote soon built his first large hydroelectric dam near Kalamazoo, while coal became the mode for generating electricity in Jackson. But there was still a vital need for the Jackson Mill Pond. Now large quantities of Grand River water were needed to cool the condensers in Foote's coal fired steam turbines.

3 Ibid.

4 *Jackson Citizen Patriot*, July 4, 1979, p. A-14

Mill Pond continues on page 6

From the earliest days of Jackson's founding until well into the twentieth century, the value of most rivers lay in their service to mankind. The larger rivers served as highways for transportation and commerce, and most smaller rivers were a source of mechanical power and perhaps more importantly, a receptacle for man's various waste products, both human and industrial. Unlike the Native Americans who populated this country before us, we altered the course and conditions of rivers. When the population of settlements along rivers was small, the rivers could adequately dilute whatever was added. However as populations of river towns grew, the change in the health of the rivers became noticeable. Jackson and its mill pond did not escape this fate, and the value of a standing body of water within the city's business district began to be questioned.

Maps and Mill Pond photo courtesy of the City of Jackson

Continued in the next GREAT newsletter: *The Devolution of the Holton Mill Pond*

MI Enacts Law Limiting Use of Phosphorus

From Michigan Lake & Stream Associations

*Act 299 Restricts Phosphorus Use on Turf Lawns
(middle number on fertilizer bags)*

In the final days of a lame duck session, the Michigan legislature passed and Governor Granholm signed a bill limiting the application of phosphorus on turf lawns in Michigan. Michigan now joins Illinois, Minnesota, New York and Wisconsin in restricting the use of phosphate based turf lawn fertilizers. The passage of the legislation is considered a major milestone in the protection of Michigan's freshwater resources. The legislation exempts the agricultural community and establishes conditional phosphorus application criteria for those maintaining golf courses. Phosphorus is considered the limiting nutrient within aquatic ecosystems, that is, the growth of plants and algae are primarily limited by the availability of phosphorus. Overly abundant phosphorus levels contribute to excess aquatic plant growth and dangerous algal blooms in aquatic ecosystems.

Proposed Changes to R.A. Greene Park May Benefit Both the Grand River and Paddlers

In an effort to reduce the sediment and ecoli flowing into the Grand River at R.A. Greene Park at the Jackson Wastewater Treatment Plant, a plan to alter the two ponds near Lansing avenue has been proposed. A January 17, article in the Jackson Citizen Patriot describing the proposed changes to the ponds also noted a rare dispute between animal advocates and environmental advocates. Along with alterations proposed to the ponds was the elimination, as much as possible, of ducks and geese from the park. Signs have already been posted at the park prohibiting the feeding of the waterfowl.

It has been determined that ecoli from waterfowl feces was running into the Grand River, just a short distance from the ponds. Perhaps a more important reason for altering the ponds is to provide a marsh area where melt waters and storm waters from a drain to the west of R.A. Greene Park could drop their sediment load before reaching the river. Currently the volume of storm water coming in from a largely developed area west of the park flows with a sufficient velocity to keep sediment in suspension all the way to the Grand River.

According to Paul Rentschler, an environmental consultant working on the pond proposal, some changes will have to be made to the stream leading from the ponds to the Grand River. Among the improvements, the possibility of a canoe, kayak launch site was considered just before the stream enters the river. Members of GREAT attending the informational meeting were very happy to learn of this possibility. Currently there are no suitable put-ins or take-outs north of Jackson. Although GREAT has used the R.A. Greene Park for take-outs, the river banks are steep and uneven and have contributed to several minor injuries when hauling boats and trash out of the river. If the Grand River in Jackson County is to continue to be a recreational venue, improvements and facilities such as those being considered for R.A.Green Park must move forward.

Two New Board Members Share Enthusiasm for River Protection and Improvement



Debra Bucholtz has held such varied jobs as egg picker, 7-11 clerk, business analyst, treasurer, and employment specialist, but recently she completed a degree in an area she believes she was always meant to be in, elementary education.

Deb believes she has always had the mind and of a teacher. Perhaps that is why she hopes that during her tenure on the GREAT board she can, “help educate people how the ecosystem is affected by our watershed areas, how runoff from roads, parking lots and lawns kills wildlife due to excess of oil and fertilizers, and how citizens can take responsibility to prevent water pollution.” Debra says that her love of Michigan waters grew from her childhood and youth, always living near a stream, creek, lake or bay. Deb has been involved in GREAT annual cleanups for the past five years. The very first cleanup she and her daughter, Tami, pulled out tires and barrels along with all the regular trash. Deb says she and her daughter had piled so much trash in their canoe that they had to keep it perfectly balanced so that it would not tip sideways and fill with water. “We came home stinking and dirty, but we felt great because we helped accomplished something beneficial to the community.” Deb has not been able to participate in many of GREAT’s paddle outings during the past year, but she says the one she did participate in was memorable because the weather was beautiful and because she saw a small painted turtle sitting on a log in the water. Among the varied responsibilities carried out by all GREAT board members, Debra has also agreed to take on the office of treasurer.



Jack L. Ripstra came directly to Jackson upon finishing a degree in civil engineering at Michigan Technological University. Jack was interviewed at MTU by Drain Commissioner

Geoffrey Snyder, and was immediately hired to work on the County Drains in Jackson County the next nine years. Jack has since founded his own company, Ripstra and Scheppelman Inc. to solve engineering problems inherent in building municipal water supplies and waste water collection systems for ten Jackson County municipalities including the County of Jackson. Born in Petoskey and raised in Grand Rapids, Jack’s earliest memories of paddling include days in a canoe hunting ducks with his Uncle Andy on the Hay Marsh Flooding. He also has fond memories of traveling to the Boundary Waters where he paddled the famed back country lakes and rivers of Minnesota and Ontario. More recently Jack and friend Jim Hall dedicated themselves to clearing a path through Sandstone Creek from Benn Road to the dam at Minard Mills. This summer Jack joined crews from GREAT to clear the Grand River of obstructions south of Jackson for Expedition 2010. His first paddle with GREAT was on the Rasin River this past summer. In addition to paddling Jack enjoys the water sport of scuba diving, with Lime Lake being one of his favorite dive sites. As a board member of GREAT, Jack hopes to see the organization open up more river courses in our region for paddling. He is also dedicated both in his vocation and his avocation to improving the water quality of the Upper Grand River Watershed.

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY...APRIL 30, 2011...SEE PAGE 8 FOR MORE INFORMATION



be green...

The Jackson Area Outdoor Coalition invites you to the...

“Celebrate Earth Day” OUTDOOR FESTIVAL

FREE!

SATURDAY, APRIL 30TH

1-4 PM

*Sparks (Cascades) Foundation Park
in Jackson*

Hands-on fun for the whole family!

- Kids crafts & prizes
- Canoe & kayak rides
- Bike Round Up--donate used bikes
- Educational displays & materials
- and MORE!

For more information visit
www.jacksonareaoutdoorcoalition.com

2010-2011 GREAT Board

Jonathan Hoover, President
Kenny Price, Vice President
Jim Seitz (Past President), Membership
Secretary

Emily Curry, Recording Secretary
Carol Scott, Treasurer
Kathy Kulchinski, Rivermaster
Debra Bucholtz, Trustee
Bryon Ennis, Trustee
Don Nelson, Trustee
Jack Ripstra, Trustee

Special Assignments:
Louise Hefka, Publicity
Jon Hoover, Historian
Bill Kantor, Accounting Services

GREAT Newsletter

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GREAT is a tax deductible 501c3 non-profit
organization.

- 3% of the world's water is potable.
- 20% of world's potable water is in the Great Lakes.
- The Grand River flows to Lake Michigan.
- Let's keep the Grand River clean!