

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 29 Number 2

MAY 2019

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Page 2

- GREAT Annual Meeting
- Jackson Spring Garden Event

Page 3

- Adopt-A-Stream

Page 4

- Earth Day cont.

Page 5

- First Paddle
- * Farmers for Water Quality

Page 6

- New Board Members

Page 7

- GREAT sponsors

Earth Day 2019 – a GREAT success!



Photo by Kenny Price

Kayaking on the Cascades lagoons at the Earth Day celebration.

By Kenny Price

Earth Day April 22, 1970 gave voice to an emerging consciousness, channeling the energy of the anti-war protest movement and putting environmental concerns on the front page. The 2019 Jackson Area Earth Day Event still strives to put an emphasis on the Environment.

Several groups, including Master Gardeners, The Dahlem, Recycle Jackson, The Audubon Society, Sierra Club, Save Our Youth, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (formerly Department of Environmental Quality), Bikers and others were there to promote helping the environment.

Once again, the great sounds of Kevin Nichols were heard over Cascade Park. The event was under the umbrella of the Jackson County Conservation District. Sponsors of the event were Michigan Automotive Compressor Inc. (MACI), Emmons Serv

See **EARTH DAY**
on page 4

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

GREAT Annual Meeting a Success

By John Minar

GREAT's Annual Dinner Meeting was held March 13, 2019 at Gene Davis and Sons Banquet & Convention center. Rodolfo Zúñiga Villegas, the keynote speaker discussed the Grand River Fen Preserve which he manages for the Michigan Nature Conservancy. The Michigan Nature Conservancy is part of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), an international organization.

The Grand River Fen Preserve straddles northern Hillsdale and southern Jackson Counties. This unique wetland community also includes southern swamp and southern shrub-carr. Southern shrub-carr is a shrub community dominated by willows, dogwoods, winterberry, and bog birch. It typically occurs on saturated, organic soil and is characterized by fluctuating water levels and poor drainage conditions. This makes it critical habitat for special insects, including the blazing star borer, tamarack tree cricket, pine tree cricket, regal fern borer, angu-



lar spittlebug and red-legged spittlebug. One globally-rare plant, the bog bluegrass, is also found here, as well as a very high diversity of flowering plants, sedges, and

See ANNUAL MEETING on page 3

Jackson Community Spring Garden Event

**Saturday May 18th
8:00 AM – Noon**

Jackson County
Fairgrounds – North Street
Entrance



The 2019 Jackson Spring Garden Event will be changing location this year. Due to the construction taking place at the Jackson County Fairgrounds, this event is moving from the Herman Gumper Building to the large barn located near the North Street entrance to the Fairgrounds. The date of this event is May 18th from 8:00AM until Noon.

This year's event will have all of the usual attractions. Gardeners can choose from a wide variety locally grown plants that will be offered for sale by the Jackson County Master Gardener's Association, The Men's Garden Club, and the Women's Garden Association. Whether you are looking for perennial flowers, shade plants, sun plants, plants to attract pollinators (bees and butterflies) to your garden, shrubs, or trees, you will proba-

bly find it for sale. The Jackson County Conservation District will have information on Invasive Plants. The Jackson County Master Gardener's Association will have information on Smart Gardening and a composting demonstration. In addition, both Beck's Flower Shop and Gardens and Summit Landscaping are schedule to have booths there.

Be sure to bring any garden tools that need to be cleaned up and sharpened

to the Jackson County Master Gardeners sharpening station. For a donation, the crew will put your tired old tools into tip top shape. This service is well worth it just in the time that you will save.

In short, if you have any interest in gardening, there is no better way to spend a Saturday morning than browsing a multitude of plants, getting great advice on their care, and learning some new skills.

Spring Adopt-A-Stream Collection Event

By Nicole VenderPloeg
Program Manager, Jackson County
Conservation District

Do you like water? Do you enjoy insects? If you answered yes to both of those questions come and join the Jackson County Conservation District (JCCD) for their Spring Adopt-A-Stream Collection event. This event will be on May 11th from 9am-1pm. During this event volunteers join JCCD to go to different areas within the upper Grand River watershed. At each site, volunteers search for aquatic insects or benthic macroinvertebrates. These aquatic animals have no backbone, but are large enough to be seen without a microscope. Why? Benthic macroinvertebrates are important indicators of the water quality in that particular area. The presence of certain species like mayfly nymphs, caddisflies, and stoneflies are a good sign of a healthy environment. In addition there are other species that are more tolerant of poor water quality.

During the event volunteers will split into groups and go to different sites to collect the aquatic insects. This will be done in waders using a scoop net, to capture insects from the river bottom. While bugs are being collected, the remaining group members will sort through the material and collect the captured bugs. On May 22nd at the Jackson Community College volunteers will ID the insects

that have been collected from 5:30pm-8:30pm.

If you are interested, RSVP is required for the collection and ID night. No experience is necessary, and JCCD will provide some quick training and equipment (we will work as a team, so you will not be left wandering lost and alone!). For the collection we will meet at 9am at the Jackson County Conservation District office (211 W Ganson St in room 200, Jackson, MI 49201). There is plenty of parking available. This event is open to the community; children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. If you have any questions, please contact Nicole VenderPloeg via email (nicole.vanderploeg@macd.org) or call the office at 517-395-2082!

If you can't make the spring collection, the fall collection is scheduled for October 5, 2019.



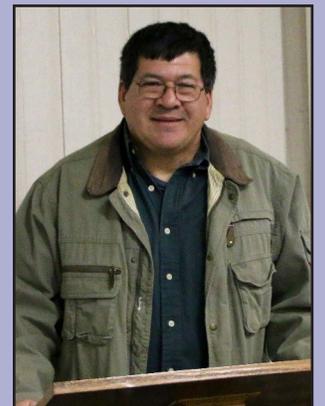
ANNUAL MEETING continued from page 2

grasses.

Three separate areas of high-quality prairie fen are the heart of this site. These areas are renowned by lepidopterists for the diversity of butterflies and moths, including four globally rare species. Incidentally, today's secret word is lepidopterist. (pronounced Lep-ă-dop-ter-ist); a person who studies or collects butterflies and moths. Using that word frequently however, could turn you into a Sesquipedalian.

While progress should never come to a halt, there are some places it should never come at all, like headwater streams, wetland complexes, and rare Great Lakes marshes. Check out www.vimeo.com/136845017 for a close up look at the Grand River Fen Preserve from TNC.

Our sincere appreciation to Rudolfo for a very interesting talk. Thank you to all who attended GREAT's annual meeting.



**Rodolfo Zúñiga
Villegas**

EARTH DAY

continued from page 1

es, Little Caesars of Jackson, Green Stone Farm Credit Services, and Modern Waste Systems.

G.R.E.A.T was there again for the thirteenth year, bringing our canoes and kayaks to let people experience the joy of paddling the rivers, lakes, bays, and ponds of Michigan. One hundred and thirty-four people took a tour of the Cascade Lagoon in one of G.R.E.A.T.'S canoes or kayaks. Some were greatly impressed and wanted to know where they could buy a boat or how to ride our boats again. A few people were less impressed and were glad to walk on dry land again. This year had one "First" at the Earth Day event. We were joined by a gaggle of five baby geese in the Lagoon. They wanted to stay by our boats in the water. Children and adults alike, loved seeing the babies. The babies were a big hit at Earth Day 2019. We had eleven board members helping to sign people in, helping with PFD's, and putting them in and getting them out of our boats. It was once again a very successful event.



Photos by Kenny Price

A peaceful paddle on the Cascades lagoon



Baby geese encounter



A budding young kayaker



Earth Day at the park

Join us for GREAT's very first paddle of the season

GREAT's first paddle of the year is Sunday May 19, 2019, on the South Branch of the Grand River. This 2.0 mile trip on the headwaters of the Grand River will last 2 to 3 hours with 2 portages and a chance to paddle around beautiful Grand Lake. We will be meeting at the takeout for registration and a reverse shuttle at Liberty Township Hall, 101 W. Liberty Road, Clark Lake, 49234.

Plan on arriving at Liberty Township Hall no later than 11:00 a.m. to participate in this paddle. To reserve a canoe or a kayak for this paddle, please call (517) 416-4234. Due to the cold water you should bring a change of clothes in a waterproof bag. Go to www.great-mi.org and click on Calendar to access trip map and river attributes.

This area has some of the most pristine land in the Jackson County area!

We hope you can join us for GREAT's first paddle of 2019.



A view of the south branch of the Grand River that will be paddled this trip

Farmers on the Forefront – Working to Protect Water Quality

By Alana Helin, Jackson County Conservation District

Farming has existed, in some form or another, for thousands of years and continues to be inextricably linked to the land and its natural resources. The seasonal flooding of rivers resulted in fertile soils for crop production. Rain would irrigate the fields and, with the floods, would also provide drinking water for livestock. This dependency required farmers to be in-tune with the environment – the seasonal changes, soil health, the needs of livestock, etc.

Although farming looks different today than it did all those years ago, the link between agriculture and the land is just as, if not more, important. With the development of new technologies and improved understanding of how farming practices impact the environment, especially our waters, farmers are able to better protect our rivers and lakes. The implementation of practices such as no-till, buffer strips, nutrient management, cover crops, contouring, etc. reduce the amount of soil erosion and nutrient runoff that would otherwise be entering the nearby surface waters.

Farmers have been and continue to be stewards of the environment. Here in Michigan, many farmers implement the type of practices mentioned above, either independently or by



working with Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP, www.MAEAP.org) or the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS Michigan, <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mi/home/>) for guidance. Farmers are doing their part to protect our waters so that we all can enjoy our resources today and for generations to come.

GREAT welcomes two new board members

Cathy Jehnzen was born and raised in Warren, Michigan and lived in the metro Detroit area for the first 30 years of her life. She moved to Jackson in January 1990 and recently retired as a Senior Financial and Systems Analyst after twenty-nine years of employment at Dawn Food Products. At Dawn, she was involved in and led multiple financial accounting, reporting, and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)



CATHY JEHNZEN

system implementations, the most recent being the ongoing SAP ERP implementation. She was proud to be a member of Dawn's first Sustainability Team, helping to champion the implementation of a recycling and composting program at the corporate office in Jackson. She regularly participated in the Adopt-a-highway clean-up when Dawn adopted a two-mile stretch of I-94 (and with First United Methodist Church cleaning up US-127 before that). Cathy was introduced to the Jackson County Conservation District during this time and has since become a regular participant in the Adopt-a-stream insect collection and identification events. She is passionate about environmental issues, especially clean and healthy waterways.

Cathy has been happily married to husband Jeff for twenty-nine years in June 2019 and they own a home and property along the Grand River in Rives Township. They have two awesome adult children who are both currently pursuing post-graduate degrees. She is a yoga and outdoor enthusiast, and enjoys biking, hiking, boating and fishing, gardening, and reading. Of course, she also enjoys kayak-

ing and purchased her own kayak a few years ago, but still considers herself a novice kayaker. In her retirement she is looking forward to being more physically active, exploring new interests like invasive species management and genealogy, learning new skills like using a chainsaw and playing the flute, and travelling near and far. Cathy is excited about her new position on the GREAT board and hopes that she will be able to help with GREAT's goal to increase visibility in the community and to become a better advocate and educator on the environment.

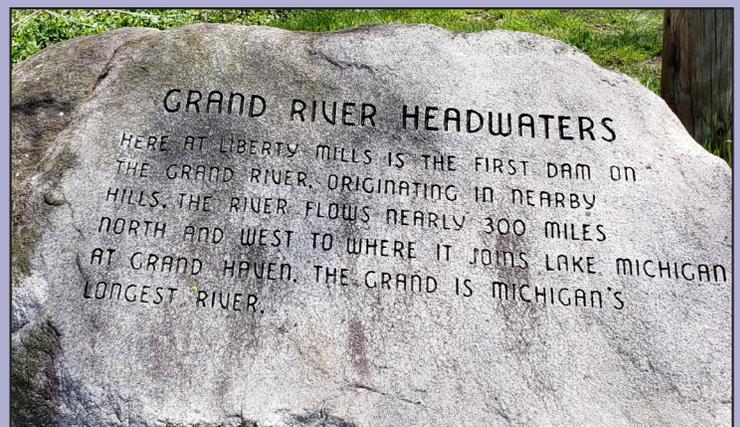
Jeff Lolkus is happy to be one of GREAT's new board members! He has always had a passion for the outdoors and is very active in Jackson County at promoting conservation and educating the public about land and water stewardship. Since 2009, Jeff has worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service. He currently serves as the



JEFF LOLKUS

District Conservationist in Jackson County. Additionally, Jeff teaches an introductory sustainability course at Jackson College, where he loves to share his fieldwork experiences while getting students out of the classroom to learn more about our amazing local resources. Jeff earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Michigan State University with a major in crop and soil science. In his free time, Jeff enjoys just about anything outdoors, whether it be hiking, running, cycling or gardening. He anticipates adding some paddling adventures to his repertoire soon and looks forward to being part of the team!

When making boat reservations, we request to all, if you cannot attend, please let us know as soon as possible, anytime right up to the hour of the event. We often have a waiting list of people to use our limited supply of canoes and kayaks, who we will contact accordingly. Please be responsible. Thanks!



Thank you to GREAT's 2019 Sponsors!

Overall Sponsors

Myrna Berlet
Betty Desbiens
City of Jackson Parks
Emmons Service Inc.
Byron & Amy Ennis
Charles J. Falahee, Jr
Jim & Joyce Grace
Great Lakes Paddlers
Jeff Grund
Dr. John Hand
Steve Hoekman
Jon & Susan Hoover
ITC
James Justin
Krupa's Boat Mart
Kurt & Leah LaFrance
Dan & Molly Kaser
Don and Tracy Lynd
Michigan Automotive Compressor, Inc.
John & Emily Minar
Kurt & Leah LaFrance
Charlene & Sherman MacCready
MBTM LTD (Jack Lapinski)
Steve Rick (Abbott, Thompson, Mauldin, & ...)
Jack L. Ripstra
Jim & Pam Rossman
Kurt and Lisa Rudolph

Jim and Jan Seitz
Dale & Susan Sylvester
The Exponent
Trudell's Auto Service
Benjamin Ward

Clean-Up Sponsors

Buffalo Wild Wings
Camp Storer (YMCA)
Emmons Service Inc.
Fazolis
Granger Waste Services
Golden Knights Cadets (Jr ROTC)
Hinkley Bakery
Jackson Area Transportation Authority
Jackson Coney Island
Jackson Coffee Company
Jackson County Conservation District
Lester Brothers
Libra Industries
Little Caesars Pizza of Jackson
Marino's Pizza
McDonald's
Modern Waste Systems Inc.
Papa John Pizza
Upper Grand River Watershed Alliance



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

Published quarterly by the
Grand River Environmental Action Team
a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization

GREAT
P.O. Box 223
Jackson, MI 49204

Email: grand@great-mi.org
Website: www.great-mi.org
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



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
Cathy Jehnzen, Director
Jeff Lolkus, Director

Special Assignments:

Jim Seitz, Webmaster
Kurt Rudolph, Publicity
Jeff Grund, Tax Statements
Pam Brown, Historian

