



River Raisin
WATERSHED COUNCIL
Partner - Protect - Preserve

Streamlines Newsletter

River Raisin Watershed Council
Partner | Preserve | Protect

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MISSION

To inspire behaviors that promote stewardship, improve water quality, and encourage public participation to protect, preserve, and enhance the River Raisin Watershed

RRWC seeks volunteers and members to achieve our mission!

Please contact us to find out how you can help with or participate in the various activities outlined in these pages.

Our success in improving water quality in the River Raisin Watershed depends on you!

Contact us by phone:
(517)264-4754

Contact us by email:
rrwc@lenawee.mi.us

Periodical Cicadas

By Meija Knaff

With big red eyes and armored bodies as dark as the night, it might feel more like Halloween than summertime when these mysterious creatures break free from the earth to scream into the void... but in fact, the emergence of Brood X (spoken aloud as "Brood 10") cicadas predicted to occur this year is a very special opportunity!



Cicadas are a unique type of insect with stout bodies, broad heads, and large compound eyes. These distant relatives of the grasshopper fall into two distinct categories; annual cicadas (*Neotibicen* or *Megatibicen*), which can be observed every year, and periodical cicadas (*Magicicada*), which spend most of their lifecycle underground and only come out once every decade or two. An apt name for our cohort, Brood X, which last emerged in 2004.

PERIODICAL /ˌPIRĒˈÄDƏK(Ə)L/ (NOUN)

Published with a fixed interval between the issues or numbers.

These insects will emerge in the billions and trillions across the eastern half of the United States, including Michigan. Here in southeastern Michigan the largest emergence will occur in Hillsdale and Washtenaw counties. Although there will not be any deafening blankets in the River Raisin Watershed, we'd love for you to send any observations of this species you do find!

The periodical cicada will begin to emerge in late April through late June. A nice, warm rain will often trigger an emergence, but only after soil temperatures are 64 degrees Fahrenheit or above. In heavy clay soils they will even build chimneys from the soil, much like some crayfish will!

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Join us for a River Clean-Up in Blissfield!

WHEN: Saturday, May 22 from 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm

WHERE: Blissfield, MI

WHAT: Trash pick-up and log jam removal. Please be sure to bring long pants, close-toed shoes, and a face mask! Garden gloves recommended. All minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

RSVP at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)

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Partner
Thank You:



Executive's Corner

By Steve May

This past year "2020" was an interesting year and we had to get a little creative to continue partnering with others to preserve and protect the River Raisin. With a worldwide pandemic and phrases like: social distancing, masks, hand sanitizers and wash your hands more frequently, vaccines, Zoom, and virtual meetings have dominated our lives. We were able to virtually create videos on YouTube about our river, plants, and animals, offer virtual field trips to classrooms, virtual storytimes with natural resource-related books, and strengthen partnerships with other organizations.

Other successes from RRWC in 2020 include: treatment of Japanese knotweed in Adrian & Tecumseh, a clean water poster contest for K-12 students, mini trash cleanups in Dundee, partnership with the Manchester Canoe race, partnership with River Raisin Institute and volunteers to pick up over 120 lbs. of trash on the beach at Sterling State Park, partnership with City of Tecumseh for public algae bloom discussion at Globe Mill Pond, and partnership with Loch Erin Property Owners to secure grant funding for their watershed management plan.

This past year we scheduled several educational opportunities and river clean-ups around the watershed but we sadly had to cancel them because of public health considerations. We are optimistic we will have a physical presence at several fairs, festivals, schools and during 2021!

Farmer-Led Conservation Group Updates

By Lori Phalen

Spring is here, and with the change in season, we find our farming community back out in the fields! Deep family roots tie many to the land, with some families involved in agriculture for generations. They hold close their land not only because of its history, they understand the value of their soil, their most precious commodity

To promote a further understanding of soil health and the sharing of soil conservation opportunities, a group of farmers are working together to promote conservation to protect and enhance this precious commodity which is tied so closely to water quality. Today, this farmer-led effort is still going strong!

Now called the Farmer Led Conservation Working Group (FLCWG), farmers from across Lenawee, Monroe, and Washtenaw Counties meet regularly to work together and engage others in this learning community. The FLCWG provides opportunities for farmers to connect through one on one conversations, workshops and educational events called Shop Talks.

These opportunities share information, tips, experiences, cost-share availability, and how programs such as the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) can assist them. Farmers discuss how to adapt conservation practices to fit their individual operations; they share the tried and true and discuss the latest in science and technology with other farmers.

The website, WaterQualityFarming.org and the group's Facebook page (@FarmerLedWatershedConservationWLEB) help connect the farming and non-farming communities alike to the work of the FLCWG. The FLCWG is also very fortunate to receive funding support from the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation. This funding has been integral to the successful promotion of conservation practices and the many educational activities of the FLCWG.

To learn more about the FLWG, please visit the WaterQualityFarming.org website, and connect with your local conservation district or the RRWC. Watch for the many educational opportunities coming your way, including virtual tours and opportunities for conservation!

Once they emerge, male *Magicicada* species begin to sing with trills that trail from high to low. They can reach into the 90's in decibel intensity, which is the same as a power motor or nightclub. In fact, you may find that an interested cicada may come to check you out if you run power tools in your yard during their breeding cycle!

These cicadas emerge in such large numbers in order to overwhelm potential predators. It is said that as many as 1.5 million cicadas may crowd into a single acre! Although they may be mighty in numbers, their visit will be an ephemeral one, as adults die-off in only 4 to 6 weeks. James Dunn, a professor of entomology at Grand Valley State University, recommends the Waterloo Recreation Area near Chelsea, or wooded areas around Coldwater, such as the Coldwater Lake State Park as likely areas for an emergence.

Eat Your Lawn!

By Trudi Cooper

Spring is arriving, and with the warmer weather comes the neighborhood competition for the perfect weed-free lawn. But before you get out the pesticides, consider this: those "weeds" are important to insect life. The bees, long-dormant, survive because the dandelion is among the first of the year to flower. And we all know how important it is to keep herbicides out of our beautiful waterways.

"Instead of eradicating these plants, I suggest you eat your lawn."

- Trudi Cooper, River Raisin Watershed Council Board Member

All parts of the dandelion are edible and nutritious. The flowers make a nice salad garnish or can be battered and fried. Unopened buds can be made into pickles similar to capers, or fermented to make wine. Harvest the leaves in the early spring for delicious enhancements to salads, add them to stir-fries, or boil for tea. The roots can be cooked and eaten, and taste similar to a turnip. You can also grind the dried roots to make a delicious, healthy coffee substitute.

Dandelions are the perfect spring tonic. They are high in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Among their many medicinal benefits, dandelions are good for gastrointestinal and liver problems and help with digestion of fat and toxin removal. Dandelion contains inulin, which helps maintain healthy gut flora and helps to regulate blood sugar levels. Research has shown that dandelion root coupled with burdock root has great potential in treating cancer. Dandelion prevents iron deficiency anemia, treats hypertension, boosts the immune system, is effective for urinary tract disorders, and fights inflammation and arthritis.

While you are foraging in your lawn for your wild salad, look also for purslane (good for asthma and bronchial complaints help with shortness of breath, diabetes, fungal infections, lowers cholesterol, and fights certain cancers); plantain (good for auto-immune diseases and leaky gut, toothache, sore throats, and inflammatory bowel disease); and red clover (osteoporosis, eczema, psoriasis, cardiovascular health).

Far from being annoying pests to be eradicated at first sight, those "weeds" in your lawn are actually wonderful medicine. Consider appreciating the wonderful abundance that nature offers you, and sample the delicacies offered you just a few feet from your front door.



Lydia Lopez is the new Watershed Stewardship Coordinator for River Raisin Watershed Council. She is currently a student at Siena Heights University in pursuit of a degree in Environmental Science and Biology. Lydia is very excited to be a part of RRWC and have the opportunity to get hands-on experience in preserving, protecting and enhancing the local environment. Outside of RRWC, Lydia enjoys spending her free time outdoors and working on expanding her small business.



Meija Knafl is the new Outreach Coordinator for the River Raisin Watershed Council. Her previous work includes 3 years as an Outreach Assistant with the City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation and 3 summers with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Meija earned her Bachelor's in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Maine, is an accredited Associate Wildlife Biologist, and is excited to work for the good of the watershed and the communities it supports! In her free time, Meija enjoys sport fencing and beekeeping.



Faith Scheffler is an intern with the River Raisin Watershed Council. She is currently a junior at Michigan State University, and is majoring in Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources Education with minors in Biology & Environmental and Sustainability Studies. Faith grew up on a family farm in Macon, where her family works to implement new sustainable practices. In her free time, Faith enjoys kayaking, fishing, and shooting archery.



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Partner

Membership and donations fund activities and projects throughout the watershed.

Contact us for more information or donate online!

Protect

We promote stewardship! Ask us about group projects, community service, and scout opportunities to help us protect and preserve our natural resources across the watershed.

Preserve

Clean parks are one of the many ways we protect the watershed! Join us at Hayes State Park the morning of June 20 for a boat wash, or clean up the beach with us at Sterling State Park on June 19.