



River Raisin
WATERSHED COUNCIL
Partner · Protect · Preserve

Streamlines

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River Raisin Watershed Council

Our Mission:

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

The RRWC seeks volunteers and members to help achieve our mission. Please contact us to find out how you can participate in the various activities outlined in these pages or to find out how you can help. Become a member today. Associate and individual members contribute to the strength of the RRWC through membership dues, volunteer activities, and participation in various committees that make recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding RRWC activities. Our success in improving water quality in the River Raisin Watershed depends on you!

Contact Us:

rrwc@lenawee.mi.us
(517)-264-4754

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AmeriCorps Team Cleaning River Raisin in Adrian

The nine-member Cedar 3 AmeriCorps team arrived in Adrian in mid-September to clear brush that is obstructing views and access to the South Branch River Raisin in downtown Adrian. The team is also removing a large amount of trash from the river and riverbanks. The team planned to work into November, but recently got called away to cover a disaster in Illinois.

AmeriCorps approved the application from RRWC with partners One Lenawee, Lenawee Conference and Visitors Bureau, and the City of Adrian. The Cedar 3 AmeriCorps team is part of the Corporation for National and Community Service. The members of the team get a stipend and meal allowance, as well as funds for continuing education.

After only a month of work, the

value of their service is already apparent. Views to the river are opening up in places where it had not been possible to see the river for years. The crew has generated a lot of excitement and the community is noticing. This project is being recognized as being one of the important keys to revitalizing the city and creating more navigable water trails.

As part of their service, the team planned to sponsor a community service day on Oct. 22. RRWC will now sponsor the event, where local residents will be encouraged to help clean up litter and clear brush along boardwalks in Trestle Park. One of the goals of this collaborative project is to engage community members in helping to maintain this important work in the future. A project of this extent is never complete,



because the environment is constantly changing.

The RRWC and the City of Adrian are committed to maintaining the work the AmeriCorps team is doing, through continued community engagement. The RRWC also hopes to use this success both upstream and downstream, as surrounding communities look for ways to make the River Raisin an attractive resource.

Partnerships Produce Results - Recreation on the Raisin

The work being done by the AmeriCorps team was an outgrowth of two plans. In 2015, the Connecting Lenawee Task Force received funding and sought public input to produce *Connecting Lenawee Plan: Non-Motorized Vision for Lenawee County*. While that plan was focused on walking/biking trails, there was much interest in better utilization of the River Raisin for recreational opportunities. Private funding was ob-

tained to fund a study to evaluate recreational opportunities available on the river in the City of Adrian.

The *South Branch River Raisin Environmental Interaction Study*, completed in March 2016 and performed by Eng Engineering and Surveying, identified numerous impediments to recreational use of the river in the City of Adrian. The study itemized numerous grant and funding opportuni-

ties to improve access to and use of the river.

The recommendations in the study provide a framework for future efforts, as well as potential funding sources. The RRWC believes this study provides an example of how other communities can leverage a small amount of private funding to support ongoing improvements to the River Raisin and its tributaries.



Fred A. and Barbara M.
Erb Family Foundation

This project will result in three major outcomes: Continuation and strengthening of the Farmers Advisory Committee (FAC); Conduct farmer-led cost share program in the River Raisin Watershed to promote conservation practices; & Communication materials developed to encourage farmers to adopt best management practices.

Erb Family Foundation to Fund Farmer's Advisory Committee—FAC

The Lenawee Conservation District (LCD) works with farmers on a daily basis to help them improve practices that minimize impacts to the River Raisin. A grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in 2013 allowed LCD to formally support a Farmers Advisory Committee (FAC). The RRWC was a partner to that grant, and assisted with the FAC.

The RRWC worked with the LCD to explore options to continue the FAC, resulting in a \$480,000, three-year grant from the Erb Family Foundation to the Michigan Association of Conservation Districts. The grant will be administered by LCD with assistance from the RRWC. The project covers the Western Lake Erie Basin with a focus on the River Raisin watershed.

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- Conduct farmer-led cost share program in the River Raisin Watershed to promote conservation practices; &
- Communication materials developed to encourage farmers to adopt best management practices.

The initial FAC met twice a year to discuss conservation initiatives, new research results, cost share opportunities, and ways to improve water quality. Meetings were attended by farmers, agribusiness, and friends of agriculture. This effort gathered significant momentum, and built trust among the partners and the agriculture community. That grant ended in Sept. 2016 and no additional funding was available to continue the FAC. The FAC had grown to over

100 farmer participants representing over 20,000 acres of farmland. This grant will provide support to continue and expand the FAC into four regional areas of the River Raisin Watershed, led by four farmers who have volunteered to lead a local FAC chapter and encourage neighbor action.

The FAC subgroups will hold up to three rounds of cost share cycles to promote conservation practices that reduce sediment and phosphorous runoff. This cost share will be an opportunity for farmers who are not interested/successful in applying for federal cost share programs. Many farmers have been discouraged by the lengthy wait times and red tape of government programs. This cost share would have a quick and transparent ranking and payment process.

National Park Service Project: Water Trail Designation Goal

The National Park Service (NPS) recently announced an award of technical planning assistance to the RRWC. Additional partners on the project include the Lenawee Conference and Visitors Bureau, Connecting Lenawee, and City of Adrian. The purpose of the assistance is to connect communities in the River Raisin Watershed with trails and better access to recreational opportunities. Assistance will be provided from Oct. 2016 through Sept. 2017.

One of the first steps will be to establish a stakeholders group. Public input will be sought to guide the process. The ultimate goal of the project is to attain official designation of the entire River Raisin as a Water Trail. This designation would have mul-

iple benefits, including allowing easier access for recreational activities and increased tourism throughout the region. Check the RRWC website and Facebook page to find out how you can provide input on this exciting opportunity.



EPA, Michigan and Local Officials Mark the Restoration of the River Raisin Area of Concern

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Senior Advisor Cameron Davis joined Michigan Office of the Great Lakes Director Jon Allan, Monroe Mayor Robert Clark and local partners in Monroe to mark the near completion of restoration work at the River Raisin Area of Concern (AOC). According to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, an AOC is a geographic location that has experienced environmental degradation from human activities, causing beneficial use impairments.

"The River Raisin AOC cleanup is proof positive that Great Lakes Restoration Initiative investments are delivering real, on-the-ground and in-the-water results," said Davis. "With support from a strong bipartisan alliance of senators, representatives, states, tribes, municipalities, conservation organizations and businesses, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) will keep resuscitating communities and waterways around the Lakes."

"This significant accomplishment was achieved through the transformative power of collaboration by communities

who have worked for decades to reinvent their relationship with their river for a brighter economic, ecological, and recreational future," Allan said.

All of the work needed to prepare this AOC site to be delisted from the national list of AOCs targeted for cleanup in the U.S.-Canadian Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement will be finished this fall. Environmental monitoring will continue at the site.

"Today's announcement is a tremendous achievement that reflects years of hard work by local partners and underscores the importance of federal funding from the GLRI," said U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow. "With clean up nearly complete, the River Raisin is one step closer to getting a clean bill of health thanks to this federal partnership."

"I applaud the work to transform the River Raisin AOC into an Area of Recovery, which was made possible in part by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative," said U.S. Sen. Gary Peters. "Not only is protecting Michigan's Great Lakes and waterways vital for the conservation of the state's diverse fish and wildlife habitats, but it also helps sup-

port critical facets of the state's economy. Southeast Michigan's fishing, boating, shipping, and tourism industries all depend on clean water to create jobs and foster growth, and will benefit greatly from this change in designation."

"Delisting the River Raisin as an AOC will be a tremendous development for the health and vitality of our local waterways and quality of life in our communities," U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg said.

Since 2010, EPA has provided more than \$27 million in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding to accelerate implementation of actions to restore the River Raisin AOC. The GLRI funds have leveraged an additional \$18 million in state and private funding for AOC work. The federal, state, local, and private partnerships on GLRI projects have remediated over 150,000 cubic yards of contaminated sediment, restored over 300 acres of aquatic habitat, and opened up an additional 23 miles of the River Raisin to fish migration and spawning.

Michigan gets New State Park through \$2.9 Million Land Purchase

Michigan's newest state park contains some Jackson County land rich in history.

The state's recent \$2.9 million purchase of 717 acres in Norvell Township, helped create the Watkins Lake State Park and County Reserve, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources says.

Combined with 405 acres of contiguous land in Manchester Township now owned by Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission, the new 1,122-acre park becomes the first state park in Michigan to be jointly managed by the DNR and a county.

It's also the state's 103rd state park.

"We originally tried to purchase a greater amount, but they retained some of the land for now," said Olson, the Chief of Parks and Recreation for the DNR. "Maybe down the road, we'll be able to secure more."

While it is open to the public now, the park has limited parking access. The DNR and Washtenaw County are collaborating to create multiple public access points this fall.

The state park offers hiking, bird watching, upland hunting, mountain biking

and other activities. Watkins Lake is known for its large numbers of waterfowl during spring and fall migration periods.

Jim O'Brien, the park manager of Hayes State Park, is creating a friends of the park group at Watkins Lake State Park and County Reserve.

Funding for the DNR purchase of the farm land came from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, which was created with revenue from the development of state-owned minerals, primarily oil and gas, and is used to help acquire and develop public recreation.



River Raisin

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River Raisin ... Own it!!!

320 Springbrook Ave.

Adrian, MI 49221

(517)-264-4754

e-mail: rrwc@lenawee.mi.us

website: www.riverraisin.org

Get Involved!

The RRWC is run by a board of directors appointed by local member governments who pay dues of 10 cents per person living within the boundaries of its jurisdiction. We encourage others to join and provide additional support to help us with programs and activities that protect and preserve the River Raisin. It's easy to do on our website using PayPal:

Individuals - \$25 Non-Profit - \$50 Corporations - \$100

New Website Design

The River Raisin Watershed Council has recently published a brand new website design. This has been created to be more interactive and easy to use. Within the website are many new features including: a calendar of events, recent news, photos, river monitoring links, and much more in-

formation. An online store will be a new feature that will be coming soon! Be sure to check out the website and even send us your comments and suggestions and any recent photos of the river. We hope you like it and will help us make it even better.

Second Round of Discover the Raisin

The River Raisin Watershed Council is requesting applications for the second annual *Discover the Raisin* Award Program. This year, 3rd, 4th and 5th grade teachers of any subject, whose schools are in the River Raisin watershed, are eligible to apply. Five successful applicants will receive \$200 for classroom supplies or other expenses relevant to the proposed project.

Eligible teachers are asked to submit a short application form and narrative by January 13, 2017 to be considered for the award. Winners will be announced on February 24, 2017.

The application is available on our website. Contact the RRWC at 517-264-4754 or rrwc@lenawee.mi.us for more information.

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Stephen May
steve.may@lenawee.mi.us

