



River Raisin
WATERSHED COUNCIL
Partner · Protect · Preserve

Streamlines Newsletter

River Raisin Watershed Council
Partner... Protect... Preserve...

Vol. 8 No. 2
Fall 2020

www.RiverRaisin.org

2020 Manchester Canoe Race

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.

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:

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Manchester Canoe Race	1
Virtual Programs	2
High School Artists	2
Farmer-Led Conservation	3
Japanese Knotweed	3
Enjoying our Watershed	4
Upcoming Events	4

The 54th Annual Manchester River Raisin Canoe/Kayak race faced many obstacles this year. In spite of that, the organizers and participants pulled off a successful race on July 19, exactly two months late. 53 canoes and kayaks signed up. They all completed the journey, though most of them faced a significant downpour and thunderstorm that went through after the last boat launched.

Most of the participants were from the Manchester area, but people also traveled from Livonia, Ann Arbor, Saline, Dexter, Clayton, Horton, Clinton, Lincoln Park and Bellaire. Many of those out-of-towners had some connection to the Manchester area. Most had participated in the race before. This is the tradition that the organizers worked so hard to maintain. This annual race likely takes the distinction as the longest running canoe race in Michigan that has never been interrupted. The famed AuSable race has been going on longer, but missed a few years, including 2020.

RRWC played an important role by being the official sponsor of the race. Manchester Kiwanis, which had hosted the race since 2003, had disbanded last fall. The planned sponsor was not able to procure the required event liability insurance at a competitive cost. The RRWC was able to obtain a rider to its standard policy to cover that. The Manchester Men's Club stepped up to donate \$250 toward the insurance. The RRWC also received a \$250 grant from the 5 Healthy Towns Foundation. The remaining balance of \$87 was donated by the RRWC.

The proceeds from the race are always donated to a local community cause. This year \$1,170 was raised, over and above expenses, for the Manchester Music Boosters' trip to Europe next year.

Once organizers had a confirmed date, they needed to find a unique t-shirt design in short order. They called upon Joy Matthews, who had won last year's t-shirt design contest. She agreed to do a drawing that will help us remember the unique conditions surrounding



The 2020 Manchester Canoe Race official t-shirt features animals you might find in the river, all safely wearing masks!

this particular race.

The organizers enacted many new procedures to keep everyone safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. We started by assigning start times and having drive-through registration at the starting line. That was a big improvement, because usually everyone shows up at the same time and it is pretty chaotic. Participants and spectators were asked to wear masks (not while racing) and keep social distance. We needed to limit the number of people at the finish line, and that worked well. Compliance with all procedures was good and everyone was pleased with how well things ran. There were certainly some glitches, but everyone was patient and understanding.

The weather cleared for the final finishers and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place medals were presented to the winners in ten classes. Another great race in the books!

Written by Sybil Kolon, RRWC Secretary

See updated events at riverraisin.org/calendar



Artist: Karlee Szczesniak
Website: karleeszczesniak.weebly.com [@karleeszczesniak](https://www.instagram.com/karleeszczesniak)

RRWC Gone Virtual

Everyone has had to make some kind of adjustments this year. At RRWC we have been able to work from home, use Zoom to its fullest capacity, and begin some virtual programs.

Before the pandemic, RRWC often got to visit K-12 classrooms across the watershed, usually toting our water models. While the students can't see the water models working in person, they are able to see a whole lot of new places on virtual field trips with RRWC!

One of our new virtual field trip options is called "Wild Wetland Exploration". The virtual class is able to watch some short pre-recorded clips of our Outreach Coordinator exploring wetlands. We are able to answer questions from students and explain wetland functions in more detail between the video clips.

In one wetland exploration, classes can virtually visit the Ives Road Fen, located near Tecumseh. Classes are able to see the sensitive wetland plants and animals like sundews, pitcher plants, and Blanchard's cricket frogs up-close and personal.

Other virtual classroom field trips through RRWC are possible with our partners at other organizations. Our "Migrating Birds and Wetland Habitats" features the Program Coordinator from our partner organization at the River Raisin Institute. This virtual field trip gives students a look at wetlands in Sterling State Park in Monroe. Here they learn how important wetlands are for migrating birds and other animals, what kinds of



Screenshot from a video of a Blanchard's Cricket Frog birds might be migrating through our watershed in the spring and fall, and tips on how to identify birds.

Another virtual field trip in the works is in partnership with the Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission all about prescribed fires and how they contribute to the health of our watershed.

We are also offering a list of books that we can read to younger virtual classes. These are all related to rivers, water health, and taking care of our natural resources.

The list of these programs and books is continuously growing and can be found on our website at: www.riverraisin.org/for-kids-and-educators

If you are interested in assisting RRWC with these programs or if you have natural resource-related books for K-12 students that you'd like to donate, please reach out to us via email.

Local High School Artists Contribute to RRWC

This spring RRWC had a poster contest for students in PreK—12th grade—a fun thing to do from home! The theme of the poster contest was "Water We Doing to Keep It Clean". We had a great turnout and all the winners and participant's artwork can be found on our website.

Two of our high school participants created posters that will be used for RRWC programs! The first is winner of the 10th-12th grade category: Karlee, 11th grader from Clinton. Her poster is on the top left. This poster will be used for RRWC outreach events and handed out to teachers in classrooms around the watershed. This is a great visual that gives some easy advice on how we can keep the water in our river clean!

The bottom poster to the left was created by 11th grader, Sky, also from Clinton. Her poster will be the new logo for our Discover the Raisin program. This is a grant program for teachers in our watershed who have an interactive lesson on the River Raisin to apply for \$200 toward their project.

Thanks to all our artists who share their talent with the community!

Discover the Raisin



[@skychandlerart](https://www.instagram.com/skychandlerart)

Farmer-Led Conservation Updates

The RRWC has continued our partnership with the Erb Family Foundation, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts and local conservation districts including Lenawee, Monroe and Washtenaw.

The Farmer Led Conservation (FLC) Advisory and Leadership Committees have identified three targeted audiences to concentrate expansion efforts on in the coming grant cycle. These include: Women Farmers, Young Farmers/Multigenerational farms, and Certified Crop Advisors. Working with these audiences will provide valuable information to influence practitioners and conservation messaging. This will in-turn result in an increased acreage covered by conservation practices.

Women farmers have significant influence as a partner in the farm, or as the lead owner/operator in the farm. Field

days and farm workshops are primarily composed of male presenters and attendees. By listening and creating a space / network for women farmers to connect with each other and specialists, we hope to encourage more active leadership and participation among women in agriculture. According to the 2017 Ag Census, there are 2,753 female farmers in the counties of Lenawee, Hillsdale, Monroe, and Washtenaw.

Young Farmers, especially those from multigenerational farms, might have little influence today, but will be the long-term sustainable future of agriculture in the region. Younger farmers expressed interest in innovation, water quality data, and precision agriculture, and concern with how to change the way the farm had always been run. Older generations have an interest in keeping the farm financially solvent, so that it can be passed down to the next generation and are hesitant to make changes. To date, we have

95 young farmers that we will reach out to as part of the Farmer-Led Conservation effort.

Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs) are individuals, either self-employed or as part of an agriculture retailer business or large farm, that provide crop and fertilizer recommendations to farmers. In addition to providing product, CCAs provide a variety of soil sampling and variable rate application. Throughout the entire WLEB, there are 1.2 million acres and 2,645 farmer customers working with 4R Certified Crop Advisors.

We look forward to another successful year in 2021 and hopefully more face-to-face engagement soon.

Written by Stephen May, RRWC Executive Director

The Saga Continues: Japanese Knotweed

You may remember in our last fall newsletter an article about the invasive plant, Japanese knotweed. It is a plant that's able to grow through concrete, can grow from snippets of stem, easily takes over native vegetation, and can cause damage to home foundations and driveways.

We partner with the Jackson Lenawee Washtenaw Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (JLW CISMA) to treat a couple of high priority patches of Japanese knotweed. Last year we started the journey by using the small grant we were awarded from the JLW CISMA to hire a contractor to treat one patch in Adrian with herbicide. Herbicide is the best known way to treat Japanese knotweed because mowing or burning it can cause it to grow more aggressively.

The patch in Adrian is along the high-traffic Kiwanis Trail, near the River Raisin. The reason it's a high priority area is because the Japanese knotweed could easily get caught in bike spokes or broken off and blown into the river, causing it to spread far and wide. The other patch was found this year in Tecumseh on the banks of Evans Creek near the high school.

In 2020, we were awarded the same JLW CISMA grant again. We hired the same consultant to treat both the Adrian and Tecumseh patches. Since Japanese knotweed is such an aggressive grower, one treatment of herbicide usually isn't enough. It typically takes multiple years of herbicide treatments and steady monitoring to be sure it doesn't grow back.

Before treating the Adrian patch again this year, it looked smaller and weaker than last year—a good sign that this treatment method is working!



Japanese knotweed a day after it was treated with herbicide. Note the zig-zagging stems and white flowers to ID.



River Raisin

WATERSHED COUNCIL

Partner · Protect · Preserve

Partner... Protect... Preserve...

320 Springbrook Ave.

Adrian, MI 49221

(517)-264-4754

E-mail: rrwc@lenawee.mi.us

Website: www.riverraisin.org

Get Involved! - Join today!

Individuals: \$25

Non-Profit: \$50

Corporations

Supporter: \$100 - \$499

Partner: \$500 - \$1,000

Sponsor: \$1,000 +

WE NEED YOU! - Become a member today.

Members contribute to the strength of RRWC through membership dues, volunteer activities, and participation.

The RRWC is run by a board of directors appointed by local government members who pay annual dues based on jurisdiction population. We encourage others to join and provide additional support to help us with programs and activities that protect and preserve the River Raisin.

Upcoming Events, 2020

- **Virtual Fall Semi-Annual Meeting: Oct. 22, 6:30-8pm**
- **Virtual Wetland Tour @ Blissfield's Schultz-Holmes Memorial Library Facebook Page: Nov. 3, 7pm**
- **Virtual Migratory Bird & Wetland Exploration @ Blissfield's Schultz-Holmes Memorial Library Facebook Page: Nov. 5, 7pm**
- **Virtual Fen Tour: Nov. 14, 10am @ RRWC's Facebook Page**

**RRWC will continue to follow Executive orders and guidelines to keep our volunteers and community healthy. Events may change. Stay updated by joining our email list (rrwc@lenawee.mi.us) or follow our Facebook page.*

Enjoying our Watershed

This spring, summer, and fall have been much different than any other year. Through the chaos of our world, we are constantly reminded that nature is fairly consistent: Wildflowers blooming in March and April, frogs singing through May, sweet berries in June and July, and the changing of leaves in September and October.

We hope you have been able to get outside more than ever to explore and enjoy nature in the River Raisin Watershed. There are so many parks and preserves in our area that provide solace to those who visit.

Here are our Executive Committee members' favorite parks and preserves:

- Phil Kittredge: Hidden Lake Gardens, Tipton
- Katie Goplerud-Smith: Draper-Houston Preserve, Milan
- Harry Sheehan: Riverbend Preserve, Clinton
- Steve May: Hidden Lake Gardens, Tipton
- John Calhoun: McCourtie Park, Somerset Twp
- Sybil Kolon: Walter J. Hayes State Park, Onsted

Maybe some of these are new to you. Regardless, we hope you continue to explore the beauty of our public preserves in our watershed!

Executive Committee

Chair:

John Calhoun
Columbia Township Representative, Jackson Co.

Vice Chair:

Harry Sheehan
Chief Deputy Water Resources Commissioner Representative, Washtenaw Co

Secretary:

Sybil Kolon
Manchester Township Representative, Washtenaw Co.

Treasurer:

K Z Bolton
Lenawee County Commissioner Representative, Lenawee Co.

Director:

John Chandler
Summerfield Township Representative, Monroe Co.

Director:

David Hoffman
County Commissioner Representative, Monroe Co.

Director:

Phil Kittredge
Cambridge Township Representative, Lenawee Co.

Outreach Coordinator:

Katie Goplerud-Smith
rrwc@lenawee.mi.us

Executive Director:

Stephen May
steve.may@lenawee.mi.us

Partner

Donate today!

Membership dues and donations fund activities and projects throughout the watershed. Contact us for more information or donate online today!

Protect & Preserve

We promote stewardship in educating people about what YOU can do to help us protect and preserve our natural resources in the River Raisin Watershed.

Promote

Check out our website at:

www.RiverRaisin.org

Find us on Facebook & Instagram!
RRWC Merchandise is available - Order t-shirts and hats online today!