



River Raisin

WATERSHED COUNCIL

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Streamlines

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River Raisin Watershed Council

Water Quality Partnerships

Outstanding progress is being made in the River Raisin watershed in our efforts to promote agricultural environmental conservation and to restore Lake Erie. The River Raisin Watershed Council, the MSU Institute of Water Research, and Adrian College (the water quality team) have collaborated to work one on one with farmers participating in the pay for performance program, which is currently being promoted in the South Branch of the River Raisin. Participating farmers are provided with real-time water quality data, which can be helpful in making on-farm business decisions, and raises awareness to potentially simple fixes for improving environmental conservation. Also, working in collaboration with the water quality team is Michigan Agricultural

Environmental Assistance Program (MAEAP) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), who work with the farmers to help them implement practices. In addition to helping farmers find new solutions to old problems and getting them involved in the research process, we are also collecting stream samples throughout various locations in the watershed. This will allow us to establish baseline data so that in future studies we can better track improvements that have been made, as well as areas which still need work. There is also a gap in our understanding of what farmers need to make environmentally conscious business decisions and how data, figures and numbers are interpreted. It is our goal to treat each farm as a

fingerprint, and to discover what kinds of information are most useful to farmers, and cost-effective ways in which we can implement best management practices, while still maintaining high production. This program is funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and is being implemented with leadership from the Grand-Raisin Cluster of The Stewardship Network.



RRWC Needs Volunteers

Your skills and talents can help the RRWC increase its capacity to accomplish its mission. We need members for a Teachers Advisory Committee, to provide recommendations to the RRWC on future topics for Discover the Raisin awards, and other efforts the RRWC can pursue to help our kids learn about

and enjoy the natural areas that surround us. We need members to serve on the RRWC's existing committees, to help guide its programs and activities: Technical, Outreach, Development, Financial & Administrative. We need volunteers to help staff outreach booths, Adopt-A-Stream, help with river

cleanups and other tasks that can put your talents to work. More information can be found on our web-



Connecting Lenawee- Non-Motorized Transportation Plan



“Equally important, improving the Quality of Life in Lenawee will greatly assist in attracting and retaining businesses, and enhancing the economic vitality of our Lenawee community”

Donate to RRWC

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:

www.riverraisin.org

Memberships

Individual - \$25

Non-Profits - \$50

Corporations - \$100

The Connecting Lenawee Non-Motorized Plan of September 2015 is a vision and roadmap for connecting the many points of interest in Lenawee. It demonstrates how existing and new trails, highways, and possibly abandoned railroad beds could be connected for use by pedestrians, bicyclists, and even residents who use wheelchairs. Our aim is to improve the health and well-being of the community by making it safe and attractive for people to engage in physical activity. Equally important, improving the Quality of Life in Lenawee will greatly assist in attracting and retaining businesses, and enhancing the economic vitality of our Lenawee community. The plan document provides each community a framework for their local portion. It meets MDOT guidelines, which will assure that MDOT will consider non-motorized transportation in their future road improvement plans. It also provides each local community a document to incorporate by reference in their streets and roads plans, if they wish. You can read the Master Plan at <http://adriancity.com/> The Non-Motorized Transportation Plan contains a brief section

on River Raisin restoration. Since last September, we worked with the River Raisin Watershed Council to help fund a similar vision for the River Raisin, focused specifically on the river running through the City of Adrian. This work has been completed: the South Branch of the River Raisin Environmental and Recreational Assessment Report of January 2016. You can read the report at <http://riverraisin.org/> We see these plans to improve our land and water trails as a long-term effort to help make Lenawee County the place where people want to live, work, learn, worship, play, and invest. Putting all the pieces of the plans together will perhaps take many years, but the Master Plans will provide a solid foundation for keeping our communities focused on the effort 5, 10, or 15 years from now.

Priority Projects

Complete the Kiwanis Trail to Car Zorn Park in Tecumseh; trailhead sign at S. Main intersection; wayfinding & safety signage, and crossing stripes. Create an endowment fund for maintenance and improvements. Signage and striping between Tecum-

seh and Clinton; Hudson and Hudson State Park; Adrian and Hidden Lake Gardens/ Hayes State Park; Adrian College & Siena Heights University and Kiwanis Trail/ downtown Adrian. Walking trail between Maple Avenue and Maumee Street in Adrian. Remove obstructions and improve depth in River Raisin between Riverside Park and Island parks (these will improve both appearance and water quality); construct canoe/kayak access points at both parks. Remove River Raisin obstructions between Island Park and Tecumseh. Goal is possibility to canoe or kayak from Adrian to Tecumseh.

Our Needs

To make these plans become reality, we always need the community support of volunteers and donors. If you are interested in becoming part of Connecting Lenawee or the River Raisin Watershed Council, please contact Dave Maxwell at (517) 902-4793 or davemaxwell40@yahoo.com; and/or Stephen May at rrwc@lenawee.mi.us or (517) 264- 4754.

Geocaching on the River Raisin

Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location. We recently discovered the web page below, an archived geocache that is near the River Raisin Battlefield. Although it has been archived, we think the idea of geocaching in the River Raisin is an exciting way to learn about and experience the Raisin. We plan to learn more about geocaching and hope you will, too.

More information on geocaching at: https://www.geocaching.com/geocache/GC14VGB_theworlds-most-crooked-river-raisin Contact Us! www.riverraisin.org rrwc@lenawee.mi.us (517) 264-4754



International Geocaching Logo

On January 21, 2016, the Committee on the Environment and Water Quality (COTE) held a strategic planning workshop to discuss the future of the river. The River Raisin is close to being delisted as an Area of Concern so the strategic planning day focused on continuing the restoration and revitalization of this great river. Close to fifty people representing federal, state and local governments, environmental agencies, and non-profit organizations attended the workshop and developed vision statements for four focus areas related to the River Raisin: habitat, recreation, water quality and maintenance. The group also

created five year plans and action steps for each focus area to help carry the energy from that meeting into meaningful changes over the next ten years. The RRWC plans to stay involved as the Committee moves forward, and looks forward to working with many partners to help achieve these goals.

PROPOSED VISION STATEMENTS:

Water Quality Vision Statement

By the year 2026, the River Raisin, through watershed-wide stewardships and partnerships, supports, without restrictions, human uses and fish and wildlife populations.

Habitat Vision Statement

By the year 2026, the River Raisin supports healthy habitat for fish and wildlife populations, recreation opportunities and economic benefit.

Maintenance Vision Statement

By the year 2026, the River Raisin Legacy Projects, through the work of engaged urban and rural municipalities, citizens and businesses, have been sustained, enhanced and widely promoted.

Recreation Vision Statement

By the year 2026, the River Raisin is the heart of our

communities and serves as a world-class resource for recreation and education. These are some of COTE's initial thoughts and possible next steps. The COTE believes this can be the beginning of a watershed-wide legacy project. To comment, or for more information on the planning strategy, contact Barry LaRoy at City of Monroe barry.laroy@monroemi.gov.



Star Gazing in the River Raisin Watershed: Lake Hudson

By Hedi Kaufman, Frenchtown Township Delegate

Lake Hudson Recreation Area
5505 Morey Highway, Clay-ton MI, 49235 (517)-445-2265

When my son comes back to Michigan with his family to visit us this summer, he wants to take his six year old son camping with Grandma for the first time. What are his criteria for selecting a campground? "Not too many people, less than two hours' drive, fishing, and dark, starry nights," he says. I can show him a spot on the map that fulfills all four. Unbeknownst to me until recently, we have such a place in our very own watershed: Lake Hudson Recreation Area, about 13 miles west-southwest of Adrian, and less than two hours' drive from anywhere else in the watershed. Lake Hudson Recreation Area - 2,796 acres was designated a Dark

Sky Preserve in 1993, the first one in Michigan. (A Dark Sky Preserve is an area usually surrounding a park or observatory that is kept free of artificial light pollution.) Wes Boyd and Jim Whitehouse, who both lived in Hudson and were amateur astronomers, played a pivotal role in this action. They invited then State Rep. Tim Walberg to their presentation at Adrian College's Robinson Planetarium which convinced Rep. Walberg that a dark sky designation for the Lake Hudson Recreation Area was a good idea. Within a year, the Legislature agreed - the sky was there for the viewing. This legislation was in effect for ten years, after which the Amateur Astronomers of Jackson succeeded in having the recreation area designated a dark sky preserve in perpetuity. To tell you the truth, I've not been to this place, but we'll take our grandson (and his fa-

ther!) this summer. The lake is good for beginning paddlers, there are fish, and there's overnight camping space available. The DNR website says it's one of "the least used state parks near Detroit." The Lake Hudson Recreation Area is a place where you can experience what living in the River Raisin watershed felt like a hundred years ago. Instead of closing your eyes to imagine being surrounded by vast areas nearly untouched by the human hand, just open your eyes, day or night, to go back to a time when the lakes, rivers, wild land and skies touched every aspect of our daily lives. As for how two people could achieve so much for so many others to enjoy, you can read Wes' and Jim's own accounts at <http://aaoj.info/ida/wesstory.htm> and <http://aaoj.info/ida/jimstory.htm>. Our website, www.riverraisin.org provides links to other dark sky pre-

serves in Michigan. Writing this brings back memories of a song we Camp Fire girls sang one night a very long time ago as the moon rose over Washington Lake at Camp Tawanka - Camp Kanessatake, in Cambridge Township:

Across the silver'd lake, the moonlit ripples break, their path a magic highway seems. We'll send our good canoe along that highway too, and follow where the moonlight gleams...

My thanks to Wes Boyd of Hudson and Bob Frybarger, Amateur





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*River Raisin ...
"Own it !!!!!!"*

Our Mission ...

The River Raisin Watershed Council is a nonprofit membership organization with a growing constituency of individuals, businesses, municipalities and community groups seeking to protect the natural resources of the watershed.

Working in partnership with these diverse interests, RRWC acts as a catalyst to improve the watershed environment through planning, advocacy, education, science, and protection of watershed lands.

We combine watershed science and land use planning as a framework for decision-making.

Our Board of Directors represents varied interests in the watershed and carries out governance, while work is coordinated and implemented by a professional staff and many volunteers.

Since its creation, the RRWC has experienced many changes. These changes include the passing of new bylaws, the formation of new policies, and the development of new partnerships.

In 2009 we published the Watershed Management Plan. This document is a great resource that can be used and cited by anyone interested in the River Raisin Watershed.

"Discover the Raisin" Award Winners

Six middle school science teachers will receive water quality testing kits to help students investigate the water quality of the River Raisin and its tributaries in their area. Jessica Smith & Jon Way, Britton Deerfield Schools, 6th & 7th grade · Jackie Murray, Clinton Middle School, 8th grade · Shawn Dreslinski, Clinton Middle School, 6th & 7th grade · Jackie Shane, Lenawee Christian School, 8th grade · Leigh Ann Roehm, Saline Schools, 7th grade. More than 700 students will be involved in the testing this spring. The teachers will guide student learning and help them understand basic chemical and biological processes about the water that flows through their communities. Test kits include guidebooks, chemicals and tools needed to measure nitrate, phosphate, dissolved oxygen, chloride, pH, and E. coli. This data will be used by students to assess the health of the watershed and to propose solutions to address any problems they identify. These students can become part of a new generation of stewards of

the watershed, helping to improve water quality in the Raisin. The RRWC will ask the teachers to share their results and will provide a summary of the information collected in a future newsletter. Jackie Murray, 8th grade science teacher at Clinton Schools, has been doing some water quality testing with her classes for the past five years. These kits will allow her students to collect much more information. Starting in May, she will take each of her four classes to the River Raisin in Tate Park. Students will work in pairs to collect water samples each week for four weeks. The students will record the results of each test and Jackie will compile the results for later discussion back at the classroom. Jackie will be coordinating with Shawn Dreslinski, whose 6th and 7th grade science classes will have their own kit. Shawn has not done water sampling with her classes before. Nearly 200 Clinton students will be making new connections to the Raisin this spring.

The RRWC initiated the program last fall and is in the process of planning for the next round. We will be convening a Teachers Advisory Committee to help guide the process. In addition to science, other topics to be considered for future awards include engineering, the arts, literature and history. The "Discover the Raisin" award program is made possible through a generous donation from ITC, which is responsible for high-voltage power lines in most of the River Raisin Watershed. We thank ITC for providing the support to allow the RRWC to launch this program. The RRWC is seeking additional sponsors for future awards.

