

The Huron River Watershed Council

Annual Report

2003-2004



Huron
River
Watershed
Council

“It’s inspirational to see everyone working so hard and actually concerned about the environment.”

Thank you to our volunteers, individual, business, and government members, technical advisors, board members, and funders. HRWC would not have the breadth and impact without you.





The Huron River Watershed is Michigan's cleanest urban river, the main source of drinking water for the City of Ann Arbor, home to ½ million people and several threatened and endangered animals. The Huron River is the only state designated "Scenic River" in southeast Michigan under the Natural Rivers Act and has a great reputation for its wealth of recreational opportunities and for having some of the State's last bogs, meadows, prairies, and forests.

Unfortunately, this unique river is also threatened. The cumulative impacts of urbanization throughout the watershed, but particularly in the headwaters, growing volumes of sewage discharge, alteration of the hydrology by 98 dams and filling in wetlands and floodplains, and a number of other pressures threaten the Huron's beauty, its usefulness, and its very life. The Huron is estimated to have lost over two-thirds of its wetlands and is projected to lose 40% of the remaining open space by the year 2010. Concern over the Huron River has resulted in the river's placement on the state's Unified Watershed Assessment as a *category 1* watershed indicating its high restoration priority.

Since 1965, The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) has been working to protect and restore the Huron River System. We have over 500 individual members, 39 member governments, and 55 business members. The Council's nine-person staff coordinates a dozen programs and the work of hundreds of volunteers who serve on our boards, committees, and in other volunteer activities. Our efforts fall into three major categories of Education, Technical Assistance, and Conservation. Our programs cover pollution prevention and abatement, hands-on citizen education and river monitoring, natural resource planning, mass media education and information, and wetland and floodplain protection.

The Huron River Watershed covers 910 square miles and includes 73 governments. The Huron River Watershed Council bridges these political boundaries by building partnerships—between communities and community leaders, residents, and businesses.



We are the only organization working to protect and restore the entire Huron River system and are a respected voice in the communities that make up the Huron River Watershed:

- We have developed the premiere citizen river-monitoring network in the State. Our strong quality assurance and quality control mechanisms allow agencies all over the State to confidently use this data to direct water protection programs.
- We are in the seventh year of implementing an award-winning mass media campaign aimed at changing behaviors to make our water safe and clean.
- Our initiatives to reduce phosphorus pollution in the Middle and Upper Huron produced numerous ordinances to protect natural areas, provide stronger protection of wetlands, and reduce conversion of land and natural habitat to pavement and buildings.
- Our science and policy experts respond daily to residents, businesses, and government representatives to help them manage development in ways that protect creeks, wildlife, and natural features.
- We have written an award-winning community guide that communities all over the State of Michigan are using to develop drinking water protection plans.



Summary of Accomplishments

Wrapped up an innovative program addressing urban sprawl. Created and successfully applied methodologies that help answer the question “*How much development is too much?*” as it applies to impervious surfaces and gravel roads. This is an often-asked question for which there previously has been no clearly defensible answer. Our research and guidebook provides specific answers to these questions in terms that local government officials can readily relate to. This is a very substantial advancement in this arena that is of both state and national significance.

Completed the Mill Creek Watershed Management Plan, a tool to guide the future protection and restoration activities in this subwatershed. The plan identifies current conditions in the system, existing impairments, future threats, and opportunities for resource protection and restoration. The MDEQ is using this as a model watershed management plan to the EPA and throughout Michigan.

Hosted the First State of the Huron Conference on October 24th, 2003.

It was a great day filled with informative presentations, vibrant conversation and loads of learning. The attendance of 185 people exceeded our expectations and represented a diverse group of people. Many familiar faces were among the crowd along with new faces of interested citizens, developers, planners, local government officials, researchers, and regulators. With over 22 topics, people found sessions for all interests. Some of the comments from attendees were that the most beneficial aspect of the conference was: “the holistic summary of all aspects of the watershed and not just the river,” “listening to people who are knowledgeable and dedicated to protecting our water,” and “Great presentations — the quality was high.”

Engaged more watershed residents in river protection, making it easy and fun. Designed five tip cards that were mailed to homeowners so that they could learn to help protect the river from the comfort of their own homes.

Worked with the Village of Dexter, the Washtenaw County Road Commission and other stakeholders in finding funds to begin pre-dam removal studies.

Protected and upheld the Natural River Act and the Huron River’s Natural River Designation, the only river designated as such in SE Michigan, against attacks to weaken the Act and the Huron River Plan.

Reviewed the Codes and Ordinances of 6 Huron River Watershed Communities and recommended improvements for better water quality protection. Secured funds to take the next step and work with the Mill Creek communities to implement ordinance and code changes to improve water quality.

Worked with 22 municipalities to begin to develop roadmaps for protection and restoration of the Lower Huron and Chain of Lakes subwatersheds in the Huron as part of the new federal stormwater regulations affecting urban and urban fringe municipalities.

Secured the Middle Huron partnership agreement, an innovative agreement between point and non-point source pollution partners to voluntarily reduce phosphorus pollution. Coordinated efforts to reduce phosphorus pollution and report progress to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

Convened all of the dam operators on the main stem of the Huron River. Facilitated discussion among the operators, heard concerns and common problems, and gained insight into how HRWC could assist operators.

Trained and coordinated HRWC volunteers to measure flow, channel shape (geomorphic characteristics), stream life, and habitat on eight sites in Miller's Creek as part of the development of a Millers Creek Improvement Plan. Completed the Millers Creek Watershed Improvement Plan, a plan to guide future protection and restoration efforts.

Secured funding to host four riparian management workshops throughout the watershed in 2005.

Completed three site plans for Structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) in the Kent Lake subwatershed in strategic locations to reduce phosphorus pollution. Submitted proposals for funding two of the plans.

Directed a team of graduate students that studied the feasibility of Argo Pond restoration. A survey of residents, willingness to pay scenario, and economic analysis were completed as part of the project. Findings will direct future restoration efforts.

Conducted water chemistry monitoring in the Middle Huron subwatersheds. Volunteers conducted nutrient, total suspended solids, and flow monitoring at 10 sites to provide a better understanding of pollution contributions from non-point sources in the middle Huron Watershed. An improved understanding of sources will help the Middle Huron Partnership select appropriate management practices to reduce and prevent pollution.

Completed a bioserve mapping project. Mapping the last remaining open spaces in the watershed and assessing their ecologic "value" helps HRWC work with local governments, private landholders, businesses, and the state to develop methods to protect these valuable lands.

Worked with local governments in the watershed to pass local phosphorus fertilizer ordinances and continued advancing statewide phosphorus fertilizer legislation.

Surveyed residents to find out how the *Pledge Book* may have changed behavior and what motivated people to return the pledge card. Highlights: 90% of the respondents reported having a greater awareness of the issues covered in the pledge book, with over 60% reporting changes in daily or weekly practices related to water and the environment.



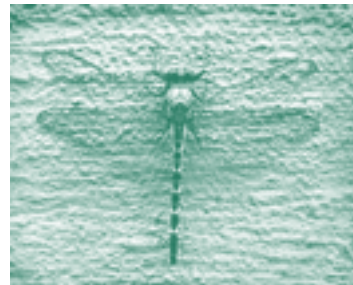
Assisted local watershed governments interpreting and implementing new federal standards for stormwater management. HRWC worked with counties and municipalities in the watershed that are coming under the new stormwater regulations. In an effort to make compliance cost effective for local watershed governments, we stepped in to give advice and provide services.

With the help of over 350 volunteers, monitored 65 sites for macroinvertebrates; 10 sites for habitat assessment, and our flow team swelled to 24 volunteers monitoring 6 sites for flow measurement.

Advocated for stronger, corrective action to bring Michigan's wetland protection program into compliance with the federal program. Michigan is one of only two states in the nation that have assumed administration of the Federal wetland program and the state-run program is in need of numerous improvements.

Partnered in an effort to reduce or eliminate noxious algae blooms that for years have plagued Ford and Belleville Lakes. HRWC provided technical and land use information data and served as a liaison to the public about research findings and their potential for improved management of the river.

Trained agency, local officials, and conservation group staff to use proven marketing techniques to inspire lasting behavior change. Conducted two "Marketing the Environment" Workshops reaching over 50 professionals.



“The organization and execution of the winter stonefly survey were truly awesome to me, a newcomer to the group. All that equipment, all those maps (including the elegant and detailed site maps), the training of the team leaders, the folks on hand at the office to help us when we got back. I’ve been involved in a lot of volunteer monitoring (mostly chemical testing, sediment, or coliforms), but have never seen anything of the scope of yesterday’s festivity, nor anything carried out with such a high degree of competence.”

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HRWC staff, 2003-2004

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“...The river is lucky to have you guys.”

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 Mary Lirones
 Pat Little
 Hilary Lowe
 Khaled Mabrouk
 Cindy Mahalak
 Dean Maiberger
 Richard Manczak
 Emily Marinaro
 Greg Marker

John Martin
 Dianne Martin
 Erin Mayernik
 Mac McCauley
 Trevor McCauley
 Marianna & Lucas
 McEvoy
 Cheryl McGill
 Carol and Tom
 McGrath
 Lynn Meadows
 Rosalie Meiland
 Karla Metzger
 Linda Michele-Dobel
 Joeseph Miller
 Jean Milligan
 Colin Mindel
 Laura Mindel
 John & Tui Minderhout
 Tui Minderhout
 Dan Minock
 Jill Money
 Dallas Moore
 Lily Morishima
 B J Morrison
 Mike Morrissey
 Suzy Morse
 Roger Mourad
 Edie Mueller
 Hannah Murray
 Nan Nelson
 Paul Nugent
 Diane O'Connell
 Marcela Orlandea
 Spyridon Pavlidis
 Mart Perkins
 Lisa Perschke
 Dan Peters
 Ted Peters
 Larry Peterson
 Eric Piehl
 Karen Pierce
 Louise Piranian
 Martha Pollack
 Evan Pratt
 Karen Prochnow
 Ellen Rambo
 Joe Rathbun
 Bonnie Reardan
 Reef, Don L
 Lee and Simon Ren
 Bob Richards
 Ariana Rickard
 Carrie Ricker
 Chris Riggs
 Joe Riley
 Catherine Riseng
 Peggy Roberts

Stacey Lang Roberts
 Bill Rodgers
 Joe Rogers
 Don Rottiers
 Rob Rougeau
 Dawn Roush
 Esther Rubin
 Anne Rueter
 Theresa Samosiuk
 David Sawicki
 Chuck Scherwitz
 Charles Scott
 Bill Seib
 Harry Sheehan
 Candace Shelly
 Maria Silveria
 Andrea Smith
 Andrew Smith
 Bob Smith
 Hal Smith
 Jerry Smith
 Jim Smith
 Preston Smith
 Eric Sokol
 Beth Sparks-Jackson
 Mary Spence
 John Stahly
 Margaret Steiner
 Lia Stevens
 Nancy Stokes
 Faye Stoner
 Joy Strawser
 Kathleen Sullivan
 Nancy Sweet
 Brian Swisher
 Dave Szczygiel
 Ryan Tefertiller
 Waylon Thacker
 Chad Theismann
 Dan Thiry
 Sandy Thomas
 Erin Trame
 Lewis Tripp
 Carrie Turner
 Rebecca Turner
 Murat Ulasir
 L J Ulrich
 Ben Upton
 Marie Valentine
 Wes Vivian
 Norma Jean Wade
 Scott Wade
 Kari Walworth
 Fred Wark
 Mark Weiss
 Mara Werner
 Mike Wiley
 Jay Williams

Scott Williams
 Chris Wilson
 Dave Wilson
 Larry Wolicki
 Lev Wood
 Chris Wood
 Mahya Wood
 Al Wooll
 Ann Zinn
 Anita Zot

Middle Huron Initiative Monitoring

Ron Oldfield
 Randy Schneider
 Chris Riggs
 Debi Weiker
 Steven Hufnagel
 David Katz
 Nate Bosch
 Janice Brummond
 Kyle Meister
 Steven Parrish
 Baku Takahashi

Mill Creek

Paul Richards
 Art Guzowski
 Tom Borton
 Phil Boham
 Dave Brooks
 Mary Lirones

Upper Huron Technical Advisory Team

Bill Stone
 Ron Fadoir
 Chris Carson

HRWC General

Laura Ghiron
 Jim Mudd
 Murat Ulasir
 Jason Zawacki
 Susan Bryan
 Dave Brooks
 Christianson Design
 Larime Photographic
 Paul Cousins
 Don Rottiers

Statement of Activities
Fiscal Year April 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004

REVENUES	
Membership Dues	\$148,986
Government Grants	295,073
Foundation Grants	226,891
Contributions	9,563
Interest Income	3,011
Miscellaneous	13,885
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 697,409

EXPENSES	
Program Service Costs	
Watershed Planning & Management	280,244
Education	109,747
Development of Stewards	149,942
Total Program Service Costs	539,933
Supporting Service Costs	
Management & General	66,582
Fund Raising	73,970
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 680,485

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	16,924
Net Assets, beginning of year	204,717
Net Assets, end of year	\$ 221,641



EXPENSES BY FUNCTION	PROGRAM	MANAGEMENT & FUND RAISING	TOTAL
Salaries	277,519	97,936	375,455
Payroll Taxes	21,815	7,698	29,513
Benefits	31,641	9,710	41,351
TOTAL PERSONNEL	330,975	115,344	446,319
Consultants	116,053	2,299	118,352
Depreciation	6,453	1,934	8,387
Dues & Publications	1,167	971	2,138
Insurance	1,200	2,042	3,242
Media Buys	8,513	-	8,513
Meeting Expenses	3,789	-	3,789
Newsletter	6,732	-	6,732
Other	16	428	444
Postage & Fax	4,688	1,669	6,357
Printing & Copying	25,946	4,771	30,717
Professional Fees	2,886	1,014	3,900
Rent	19,916	7,000	26,916
Supplies & Equipment	6,662	1,585	8,247
Telephone & Internet	2,934	618	3,552
Travel & Registration	2,003	877	2,880
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 539,933	\$ 140,552	\$ 680,485



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