



JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

FRIENDS OF THE JORDAN NEWSLETTER

2006 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

On the evening of October 19, 2006, Friends of the Jordan (FOJ) held its 15th annual membership meeting. The evening started with the annual business meeting. President Richter gave an update on accomplishments of the last year, provided copies of last year's minutes and Treasurer Hank Ross delivered the treasurer's report. John Richter, Joe Nerone and Hank Ross were reelected to the board and three new members were elected: John Teesdale, Tom Krause and Bruce Barber. Welcome John, Tom and Bruce! Bill Chase, who decided against another term, was recognized for his past contributions. Melissa Kendzierski was the honored recipient of the 2006 "Director of the Year Award".

The main event was a presentation by Valerie Olinik-Damstra of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council about the development and the present status of the Lake Charlevoix Watershed Management Plan (LCWMP). The concept of the plan goes back to 1984 but it did not pick up steam until the late 1990's when partnerships were formed to provide the appropriate push. Further polishing of the plan and pursuant funding have brought us up to the present time, but progress has already been made in a number of areas. The LCWMP can probably be described as a flexible plan, that will have changes along the way and has a loose ten year time horizon – the clock keeps ticking until the job is done.

Basically the plan deals with four sources of non-point pollution:

- Sediment – from road/stream crossings, stream banks and lakeshores
- Nutrients – fertilizer, stormwater, pollutants, livestock near shore, septic systems
- Toxics - oils, grease, heavy metals from stormwater and runoffs, pesticides
- Bacteria – from livestock and wildlife



A review of the LCWMP (available on www.friendsofthejordan.org) shows a large number of endeavors that come under these four categories that have already been started, are in progress or to be tackled in the future. Valerie reviewed a few of these. Several that are already well along the way are revamping access sites on the Jordan, streambank restoration on the Boyne (450 feet above Dam Road) and work on a number of road/stream crossings. Most of the initial efforts were to identify the various problem areas. One example was a cladophora (algae) survey conducted several years back and that should be updated in the next few years. A review of the plan is well worthwhile to get an appreciation of how extensive the project is.

The lead group that is heading up the endeavor is the Lake Charlevoix Watershed Advisory. The Advisory is working with about thirty different environmental organizations and meets quarterly with representatives of these groups. The next meeting is December 5 from 10:00 am to noon at the Jordan River Watershed Center. Kelly Martin with the Charlevoix Conservation District was also in attendance and works closely with the Tip of the Mitt on the project.

In closing, Valerie encouraged all to:

- Look at the plan
- Be an active member of at least one local group
- Keep informed
- Be an advocate
- Participate in local government decision making

Hank Ross

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EUREKA - IT'S OFFICIAL!

In the summer of 2006, FOJ reached a major milestone. The Charlevoix County Department of Building Safety officially approved the Jordan River Watershed Center for final occupancy. That means that we have met the building code standards for safety and accessibility for a modern public building. Collectively, our "community" of supporters should feel a deep sense of much deserved pride in having transformed East Jordan's oldest commercial building into the beautiful facility it is today. Since 1999, when this dream was born, countless individuals have generously contributed to hold this vision together and see it to spectacular fruition! Many, many heartfelt thanks to you all.

Now we have a new and exciting challenge, namely developing programs and activities to utilize this building and campus to its fullest potential. Once again we call upon our cadre of supporters for your input. Do you have a special skill, hobby, talent or idea that you'd like to share? Are you interested in being a presenter, docent or volunteer? Two garden clubs and a bible study group currently use the Watershed Center on a regular basis and we welcome other groups to take advantage of this pleasant place.

We also encourage your participation in projects already planned which include next years 3rd "Visions of the Valley" photography contest, our regular River/Valley cleanups, various provisions of the Lake Charlevoix Watershed Management Plan (the subject of our 15th annual membership meeting), Michigan's Clean Water Corps "Adopt-A-Stream" volunteer stream monitoring program, and others. We have entered a new era where we can build upon the remarkable successes of the past and together forge a shining new path into the future.

President John Richter



NEW SIGNS AND LOGO

With the Jordan River Watershed Center tucked away behind houses on Bridge Street, there has been a need to identify the location. This past spring, we requested proposals for road signs from several sign companies. The signs were intended to be visible to cars using Bridge Street with a second sign by Sportsmen's Park.

Two excellent proposals were received, but the one that stood out was from Bruce Janssen's The Wood Shop in Boyne City. Bruce undertook the project and developed a creative design that includes an eagle in flight over a river bordered by woodlands. By July, the signs were installed. The sign facing Bridge Street is two-sided and the one by the park is single-sided. The signs are constructed of laminated cedar strips with acrylic paint for durability. The background was sandblasted to be recessed, which makes the wording and the design stand out boldly.

The design was considered so attractive that a derivative was developed (with Bruce's help) for our new logo that can be seen on the newsletter's cover. A generous grant from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation made the signs possible.

Hank Ross

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE UPDATE

Though strikingly beautiful, the purple loosestrife at the river mouth is a menace to the Jordan River ecosystem. Purple loosestrife is an invasive species which spreads rapidly, chokes out native streamside vegetation and leaves terrestrial and aquatic wildlife without the food, shelter and nurseries necessary for their survival. As with other invasive species, total eradication is very difficult. It is our hope, at best, to keep the Jordan River's purple loosestrife at bay.

In early June, FOJ members, Cheryl Sothard and Peg Myers, donned waders and joined Tip of the Mitt Watershed in collecting Galerucella beetles from purple loosestrife plants at a wetland site in Emmett County. Seventy beetles were then relocated to a site along the Jordan River. Both the adult and larval stages of the insect will feed on the loosestrife, hindering its production of flowers and seeds. The site is being monitored. Beetles were observed there and at the site of last year's release later in the summer. Peg Myers

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BE A "FRIEND OF THE JORDAN"

This vital, growing organization needs YOU... all of you.... to share your time, talents, energy, interests to help us achieve our goals.

- Are you a Teacher, Ecologist, Scientist, Hobbyist? We intend to develop an interesting and diverse array of programs to offer to the community, to educate children and adults about the Jordan River and its environment, to teach ways to respectfully enjoy its vast resources. Share your Knowledge and Interests by offering a class or developing a program for us.
- Are you an Artist, Graphic Designer, Photographer? Help us develop interesting and attractive ways to promote the organization and its goals through promotional materials, fund raising activities like our annual photography contest, producing instructional materials and brochures. Share your Talent by helping create beautiful and interesting experiences which promote our goals.
- Are you a Writer? We have stories to tell and need you to help us develop newsletters, brochures, booklets, press releases, promotional materials. Share your Gift of Language by helping us communicate with our members and the community in interesting and effective ways.
- Are you a Computer Wiz? We have educational materials that we would like to develop into multi-media presentations that visitors can experience when visiting the Jordan River Watershed Center. Help archive documents, photographs and other materials into digital records that can be cataloged and easily accessed. Help develop and maintain records, efficiently communicate with members through the Website and email. Share your Expertise by helping us use technology effectively.
- Are you a Gardner, Landscaper, someone who loves to work outside? The Jordan River Watershed Center is surrounded by grounds that need to be developed, cared for and maintained. Plants need to be maintained. Trails need to be developed and maintained. Share your Skill to help us create an attractive setting for visitors to the Jordan River Watershed Center.
- Are you an Organizer, Leader, Manager? Help us develop our business strategies, marketing plans, policies and procedures. Speak to other business leaders to promote the goals of the organization, develop fundraising activities, develop and manage our finances and set priorities. Share your Leadership by serving on the Board of Directors, committees or offering business advice.
- Are you someone who loves the river and the forests? Help us by promoting respectful use of the resources, keeping the river and valley wild and natural by carrying out anything you bring in, cleaning up what others leave behind, by safe use of campfires and by being aware of sensitive environments to prevent damage when you are out enjoying the area. Advocate with businesses, state and federal lawmakers to develop laws and policies that promote conservation and protection of the natural places that are so vulnerable. Share your Love of Nature by assuring that you and others preserve and protect it.
- Are you someone who likes to help however they can? We would like to have the Jordan River Watershed Center open for the public and need people to be available to staff the center. You can help do mailings, fold, label and stamp newsletters, and postcards. We hold work bees to prepare for special events, to maintain the Center and to clean up the river, highway and access sites at least 3 times per year. Support us by teaching your children to respect nature, learn how to conserve and protect the environment when you work in your yards and fields or your business. Provide financial support by contributing through membership, donations and sponsorship of FOJ activities. Share Yourself. BE A FRIEND OF THE JORDAN. You will find you gain even more than you give!

Margaret Moran

"We intend to develop an interesting and diverse array of programs to offer to the community, to educate children and adults about the Jordan River and its environment, to teach ways to respectfully enjoy its vast resources."

WE NEED YOU

If you see your name highlighted on the label, that means after December 2006, you will no longer be receiving newsletters or updates from FOJ. To keep receiving the benefits of membership, please renew your membership either by the renewal notices to be sent in November or by the website www.friendsofthejordan.org. Thanks!

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FRIENDS OF THE JORDAN CELEBRATION

You could not have asked for a more beautiful afternoon for the gathering at the Jordan River Watershed Center for the Friends of the Jordan Celebration on Saturday afternoon, Sept. 16, 2006. The sun was bright and warm and FOJ President John Richter noted that even the eagle flew over to bless this event. The celebration was highlighted by an exhibit of photographs entered in the Visions of the Valley: Seasons of the Jordan photography contest. A total of 94 photographs were entered and judged strictly on merit with no knowledge of the photographer or title. Darren Podskalny, the photography teacher for East Jordan High, was the judge this year. The Grand Prize, sponsored by Bay Winds Federal Credit Union, went to Vic Ruggles of Boyne City for his photograph, "The Old Beaver Ponds," an almost surreal photograph of early fall trees reflected in the river scattered with the ghostly stumps of old trees. The Charlevoix State Bank Viewers' Choice Award went to Glenda Clark. President's Choice, sponsored by East Jordan Plastics was awarded to Dr. Lucien Joubert. Melissa Moran won the Youth Award sponsored by East Jordan Iron Works. In all more than \$1,000 in prize money was awarded with the Jordan Valley Animal Clinic, Greg Klinker DDS, Floyd and Nancy Wright, Alden Lumber, Boyne River Inn, BC Pizza, Central Lake Pharmacy, John



VIC RUGGLES



Kempton DDS, Stark Realty and Valley Graphics sponsoring additional photographs which were made into a calendar for 2007. Over 100 visitors to the Watershed Center enjoyed the exhibit and excellent refreshments catered by Alison McKay of Alison's Bakery. Musical entertainment by Rick Miesterheim and Kelly Shivley, a talented duo playing folk, bluegrass and Celtic music, provided a festive backdrop to the event.

The photographs remained on display at the Jordan River Watershed Center through October. Additional exhibit hours will be listed in the events section of the newspaper. Calendars and notecards are available for purchase at exhibits, at the Jordan Valley Animal Clinic, from FOJ Board members and from the website www.friendsofthejordan.org. The calendar has an added value in that 12 local businesses have included valuable coupons in the calendar. Margaret Moran, photo contest chairperson, stated that "we are already planning for our next photography contest so keep your cameras ready to capture all the beauty and wonder of the Jordan River Valley all year long."

Margaret Moran

FOJ WISHLIST

- *Good Quality Insect, Bird and Mammal reference materials
- *Vacuum Cleaner
- *DVD Player
- *Garden Shed in good condition
- *4-Drawer File Cabinets
- *Television set

Please call (231) 536-9947 if you have one of these things you would like to donate.

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A STUDY OF THE JORDAN RIVER

The City of East Jordan has recently announced plans to hydraulically dredge 50,000 cubic yards of almost pure sand from its harbor and boat launch area near the mouth of the Jordan River. These sediments, believed to have been transported to Lake Charlevoix from the Jordan River, fill what once was a relatively deep harbor. Moorings, once used to dock deep drafting lake steamers far up river, are now nearly buried in sand. River guides, who once used 10'-12' poles to push fishing boats up a rocky bottomed river channel, must now simply wade the sandy shallows. The river channel, once deep enough to accommodate these boats, can barely float a canoe in places today. A once vibrant grayling fishery has long gone extinct due to extreme alterations in riverine conditions.

These notations, and many others like them, are not just legends of the good old days. They are facts. And they are not unique to the Jordan River. They are testimony to the obvious, that the Jordan River contains and slowly transports a very heavy burden of sand. What is not obvious or clearly understood is where these sediments came from, how they were deposited throughout the river system and what impacts or changes have occurred as a result. Answers to these basic questions could provide valuable insight into modern river management decisions and possibly refocus remediation efforts. At the very least, a stronger scientific understanding of sediment loading of Northern Michigan streams would emerge.

In 1988, early founders of Friends of the Jordan, MDNR, and others excavated several sand traps in the Jordan River following techniques developed by Alexander and Hansen. The goal was to halt the delivery of sand sediments downstream from the traps and allow the river's natural hydrologic forces to transport remaining sediments to "reveal" the original streambed. If properly maintained it was estimated that the river would "revert" or "convert" approximately one-half mile of stream every five years. While it is generally agreed that downstream conditions from one of the traps have improved over the years and that the technique works, sound scientific analyses have never been performed to document these claims. Furthermore, due to funding constraints, proper maintenance has not been performed. What has been established is that one trap can collect over 1,000 cubic yards of sand annually and below the sand bedload lays an earlier streambed.

When the sand traps were originally excavated some striking observations were made. Below several feet of sand, stream cobble was discovered. Furthermore, woody debris, including "saw logs" were found. What was assumed but never proven was that these findings represented the original stream bottom prior to the logging era and the impacts of modern man. Similar observations have been made on other rivers where sand traps or excavations have occurred.

Prior to the 1880's, Michigan experienced several thousand years of geologic calm. Lakes and streams stabilized after the retreat of the glaciers and the ice age. Forests matured and biologic communities reached equilibrium. Then, in a few short years, (1880's- 1920's) entire landscapes were clear-cut right to the waters edge and then burned. Hillsides and stream banks were left bare and scoured. Log drives and over harvesting radically altered the watershed ecosystem. Poor farming practices and community developments followed, further straining the environment's capacity to heal and cleanse itself. The river's capacity to transport sediments was simply overwhelmed and the sand bedload burden ensued.

Now, the forests have been allowed to regenerate. Stream banks and hillsides have largely been stabilized. The Jordan River is protected by Natural Rivers designation. The lessons of the past have mostly been learned and many good remediation efforts have been successful. Yet the massive erosive forces unleashed years ago manifest themselves today in the form of a self-perpetuating, slow steady transport of the sand bedload and impaired aquatic habitat. If this problem is to ever be solved, it first must be understood. Soil boring studies, like Aldo Leopold's time travels while sawing through a log, could provide a road map for this geomorphologic journey. A prerequisite for this type of inquiry should include a morphologic assessment of current conditions utilizing existing inventories and data. These data could be enhanced and validated by conducting soil boring study.

MSU CONNECTION

At the present time, Dr. Richter is in discussion with Michigan State University (MSU) about conducting the soil boring study. Preliminary plans include a two year graduate level research project with an estimated cost of \$50,000 to \$100,000. At the appropriate time, FOJ will contact major donors and submit grant applications.

President John Richter

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CLEAN-UPS

Three times a year in April, May and September, members and non-members gather at Graves Crossing for our annual clean-ups. Friends of the Jordan (FOJ) cleans up a two mile section of M-66 from about Pinney Bridge to the over pass at Green River and the access sites to the river. FOJ also launches one or two canoes/boats to go down a stretch of the Jordan as well as picking up other portions of the watershed. The treasures that are collected include fast food containers, cigarette packs, beer cans (primarily from the river run) but on occasion more interesting items are found: tires, appliances, furniture, and car parts.

The clean-ups are held on Saturdays or Sundays with each session lasting just a couple of hours and the volunteers usually gather for refreshments when the work is done. These clean-ups are important for maintaining the beauty of the watershed and provide an opportunity to socialize with others interested in the Jordan River area. We hope you can join us next spring.
Hank Ross

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead



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