



# JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

FRIENDS OF THE JORDAN NEWSLETTER



Franny Bluhm leading the wildflower walk



Collecting insects at the Young Friends



Building birdhouses at the Watershed Center

## AN EVENT-FULL YEAR

What a year it has been! More than 300 people participated in the Friends of the Jordan scheduled events, with the most popular being the Saturday Nature Hikes held during the summer and fall months with up to 40 participants each! Franny Bluhm, a naturalist from Grass River Natural Area and member of FOJ led most of the hikes and was an excellent resource on the flora and fauna of the Jordan. Probably the most memorable event was the Full Moon River Trip on a beautiful summer evening with the full moon rising over the Jordan as we made the turn toward town. A cookout afterward gave us an opportunity to get to know each other better. It was a small group but I am sure this will be more popular when we repeat it next summer. We are particularly proud of the Young Friends Program developed in partnership with the Little Traverse Conservancy bringing "hands on" activities to teach the students about the relationships in nature. From lectures and discussion groups to nature hikes, birdhouse building, snowshoe hikes and more there was something for every interest and age group.

The challenge is getting the word out to the members and the community. The best way to assure that you are kept informed is to join the FOJ so that you are on our mailing list and will get postcards and newsletters periodically. And of course, check the website for the most up-to-date information. The education committee is looking for volunteers to help plan and present activities. If you have a topic you would like to suggest, we welcome your suggestions. If you have a topic you would like to present, contact us to get on the schedule. If you would like to join the committee we would love to have you. We meet no more than one evening per month to plan these events. For information, comments, and recommendations or to volunteer, please contact Margaret Moran through [members@friendsofthejordan.org](mailto:members@friendsofthejordan.org). Looking forward to meeting all of you at one of our events.

Margaret Moran

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**Collecting macroinvertebrate samples in the Jordan River this fall**

## **VOLUNTEER STREAM MONITORING PROGRAM**

The health of the Jordan River depends on everyone watching the river and making sure problems do not occur. That is what the Volunteer Stream Monitoring program is all about. Every spring and fall volunteers go out and sample the Jordan River in two places to find out what kind of macroinvertebrates such as aquatic insects, crustaceans, snails, and leeches are there in order to determine the health of the river. If a type of pollution or other problem is starting, small insects in the river will be affected long before it would be visible to the eye. If a certain type of insect is missing or its numbers are dropping, we can determine what types of pollution affect that type of bug and start looking for the cause.

The stream monitoring program is done in conjunction with the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. Tip of the Mitt provided training to many FOJ members and volunteers who go out and do the actual work. The two locations checked are at Fair Road and Old State Road. At each location the water is tested for temperature, velocity, depth, and every kind of macroinvertebrates we can find. Different types of macroinvertebrates we look for are stoneflies, mayflies, caddisflies and their larvae, dragonflies, and midge larvae. This fall, in addition to the regular volunteers, we picked up several people at the river clean up that wanted to see how it was done. We also had a teacher and two students from East Jordan High School join us.

Two weeks after the collection volunteers from stream monitoring projects all over Northern Michigan gathered at North Central Michigan College to identify all the macroinvertebrates that were collected under microscopes. Then experts trained in bug identification positively identify the samples and enter them into a database and final results are published. Last spring was the first stream monitoring ever done on the Jordan and I am happy to report the results showed a very healthy stream. Although the final results from this fall's session will not be known for several months we will be looking closely at them always, hoping for good news.

John Teesdale



## **GREEN RIVER DAM REMOVAL**

For a number of decades, a dam existed on the Green River just down stream from the M-66 overpass. This structure was needed to provide a flow of water to the Green River Trout Farm. The dam's presence came with several unfortunate consequences, a primary one being the restriction on the ability of fish to migrate.

The dam, which backed up water to a height of eight feet, has been replaced by an elevated run of about 175 feet. The run was designed so fish can migrate and contains pools that can provide accommodation. The revised portion of the stream has numerous rocks that create small rapids, and after plantings this spring and a little weathering, this portion of the Green River will look quite natural. Because the eight foot height is maintained at the top of the run, the trout farm continues to have the water needed for its operations.

The upper portions of the Green River have brook trout. Some concern has been expressed that the native trout may be subjected to small migrations of salmon, steelhead and brown trout. Although some concern may be justified, the lower portions of the Jordan have brook trout as well and continue to survive when migrations occur. The Green River water is quite cold which favors brook trout as well as be a deterrent to the lamprey from moving up stream.

The Conservation Resource Alliance, along with the assistance of other organizations including the DNR, spearheaded the project. The results can be seen from M-66.

Hank Ross



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Winner of 2007 President's Choice Award, Mary Jane Ulrich



Winner of 2007 Grand Prize Award, Mike Schlitt

## LET'S CELEBRATE

Nature photography, great food, cool sunshine and hot blues music made for a winning combination as the community helped the Friends of the Jordan celebrate the natural beauty of the Jordan River Watershed at the third annual Celebration. The highlight of the afternoon was the photography exhibit featuring nearly 100 photographs entered in the FOJ's annual photography contest. Awards were presented for 14 photographs that make up the 2008 Friends of the Jordan calendar. The Grand Prize was presented to Mike Schlitt of Charlevoix for his spring photograph of the Jordan titled "Smooth as Silk." He also won for another photograph that graces the cover of the calendar. The Viewer's Choice Award was won by Marybeth Wakulat of Gaylord, for "A Curious Encounter by the Fish Hatchery." The Youth Award was presented to Elizabeth Chipman of Boyne City. The President's Choice Award, chosen by FOJ president John Richter, went to Mary Jane Ulrich of Petoskey for her serene photograph titled "Peace." Calendar awards went to Mary Lou Bachman, Julie Christiansen, Rosie Evans, Jan Goodwin, Jane Korthase, John Porter, Jim Schumann, Jen Towns and Ann Zukowski



Winner of 2007 Youth Award, Elizabeth Chipman



Elizabeth Chipman accepting her award at the 2007 Celebration

While viewing the exhibit, visitors to the Jordan River Watershed Center were entertained by a blues combo of Steve Little, Roger Lilac, and Jim Clark. Harvest themed refreshments were provided by Allison MacKay of Allison's Bakery. One visitor left a note saying "Thank you for an uplifting afternoon! The music and food-awesome." FOJ President John Richter thanked the sponsors for their generosity in support of the Friends of the Jordan and the photographers for contributing to the appreciation of this vital resource noting that the calendars are used not only for fundraising purposes but to promote the goals of the organization and an ongoing reminder of the value of the wild and natural places that remain.

The calendars may be obtained through a donation to the Friends of the Jordan of \$15 or 2 for \$25 and are available from any Friends of the Jordan Board Member, through the website [www.friendsofthejordan.org](http://www.friendsofthejordan.org). or may be picked up at the Jordan Valley Animal Clinic.

Margaret Moran

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## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The following events are being planned by the Friends of the Jordan Education Committee. "TBA" means that dates are not yet set. Watch for further information in local newspaper, mailings and on our website [www.friendsofthejordan.org](http://www.friendsofthejordan.org). Most activities will be at the Jordan River Watershed Center (JRWC) at 101 Union Street in East Jordan.

### DECEMBER

- Dec 16, 2007. Sunday, 1PM Christmas Tree for the Birds. We invite families to come learn to make ornaments that provide food for birds and small animals. We will decorate a tree at the Watershed Center and participants will have some to take home for their own trees. Meet at the JRWC.

### JANUARY

- Jan 12, 2008 Saturday, 10:00 AM Nature Hike/Snowshoe hike. We will meet at the Rogers Homestead Family Preserve (directions to follow) Join us for Chili afterward at the JRWC.
- Jan 27, 2008 Sunday, 2:00 PM, Video series Planet Earth, the Future. Part 1: *Saving Species*. View and discuss. Meet at the JRWC.

### FEBRUARY

- Feb 9, 2008 Saturday, 10 AM. Nature Hike/snowshoe/ski with Cory Arsnoe, Naturalist. Winter Animal tracking. Meet at the Cosner Preserve on M-66 just south of East Jordan.
- Feb 23, 2008. Saturday, Winter River Rafting evening trip under the Full Moon with Jordan Valley Outfitters. Rafting is \$35/person with stop for hot chocolate and a snack. Time outdoors is 2.5 hrs. Departs at 5:30 PM Registration and \$20 deposit required. There are a limited number of spaces available. Watch for details on registration on the website or send an email indicating your interest and we will get back to you as soon as we finalize the plans. We will have a waiting list if needed in the event of cancellations.
- Feb 24, 2008 Sunday 2:00 PM, Video series Planet Earth, the Future: Part 2: Into the Wilderness. View and discuss. Meet at the Jordan River Watershed Center (JRWC)

### MARCH

- (TBA) Rain Gardens: Heidi Lang and Scott Olin. Date to be arranged.
- (TBA) Program on Bees, what may be killing them off and what impact that could have on the environment
- March 30, 2008 Sunday 2:00 PM, Video series Planet Earth, the Future. Part 3: *Living Together*. View and discuss. Meet at the Jordan River Watershed Center (JRWC)

### APRIL

- (TBA) Nature Hike: Mushrooms
- April 19 (TBA) Earth Day Activity
- (TBA) (Late April-Early May) Nature Photography with Rick Hawley. Learn techniques of lighting, composition, subject selection that can make the difference between a good photograph and a great photograph.

### MAY

- May 3, 2008 9 AM-Noon: River/Highway Cleanup. Jordan/River/Highway Cleanup. Meet at Graves Crossing off M-66. Bring work gloves and dress for the weather. We will meet at the Watershed Center for a cookout afterward.
- May 3, 2008. Afternoon. Stream Monitoring. With trained team leaders, you will gather samples from the river to be tested to assess the health of the river.
- May 8, 2008 Thursday, 6:30PM, All about Eagles Glen McCune and Joel Evans will talk about the life cycle of the American Bald Eagle, how it has begun to thrive in Northern Michigan and the Jordan Valley. Use the telescope to view the nesting eagles at the JRWC. Meet at the JRWC.
- Nature Hike Spring Flowers, May 10 or 17th, 10AM, Pinney Bridge parking lot.
- (TBA) Bird walk Saturday, late May

### WE NEED YOU

If you see your name highlighted on the label, that means after December 2007, 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 soon or by the website [www.friendsofthejordan.org](http://www.friendsofthejordan.org). Thanks!

# JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

## WINTER SURVIVAL IN THE JORDAN VALLEY

While we enjoy the transition season with its beautiful colors, moderate temperatures, and bountiful harvest, many animals of the Jordan Valley are making preparations for the winter season. The extent of their preparedness will determine whether they survive the winter.

The white-tailed deer is the most abundant of the large mammals in the valley. During the summer they have a reddish coat color, but in their winter preparation, the deer take on a bluish-gray appearance. The pelages (coat of a mammal) of the two seasons differ in texture as well as in color. The summer pelage is short, relatively thin, and somewhat wiry in texture; the winter coat is long, thick, and the individual hairs are hollow in the core, thereby serving as good insulators. In the fall deer seek out foods that are high in energy; acorns are preferred and the best for storing up fat for the winter. The availability of nutritious winter foods is not assured, thus fat reserves are critical to their survival. During winter deer become browsers, feeding on a variety of twigs from shrubs and small trees. The best winter food are the green tips of white cedar boughs. White cedar trees can always be identified from a distance in deer country, due to their pruned appearance as high as the deer can reach. The deer conserve energy by reducing their periods of activity and seeking shelter in dense wooded areas during extreme cold. Even with all these measures of survival, in a typical winter, it not uncommon to lose deer to starvation. The old deer (past their prime) and the youngest are the first to succumb.

*White cedar trees can always be identified from a distance in deer country, due to their pruned appearance as high as the deer can reach.*



The black bear is not unlike the deer in its preparation. Putting on fat reserves is even more important for the bears. Acorns and berries are major staples for adding fat for the winter. When these are scarce, bears may enter hibernation underweight. The bear is a partial hibernator, since it comes out of its sleep frequently during the winter. The bear enters a specially selected den on an empty stomach. The stupor they enter into lowers their metabolism and conserves energy. It will never urinate or defecate until it leaves the den in the spring. The female bear gives birth during the winter and must have enough fat to produce milk until they leave the den in the spring.

Raccoons are also partial hibernators. The females den up for long periods in the winter. The males are much more active, except for the coldest of weather.

Beaver and muskrat are active beneath the ice of frozen ponds. The beaver stores saplings for the winter on the bottom of the pond and takes them into the lodge to eat the tender bark. Aspen and willow are favorite foods. The muskrat does not store up food, but eats the roots and shoots of water plants, such as cattails. Both of their houses are quite safe against possible predators from above the ice and against the frigid winter temperatures. There are a few true hibernators in the Jordan Valley. The largest is the woodchuck (groundhog), which is actually a marmot. The heart rate and metabolism of true hibernators becomes much lower than partial hibernators. Another true hibernator is the thirteen-lined ground squirrel (gopher). Both of these hibernators will not emerge until about April.

Some animals prepare for winter by storing up food supplies. Chipmunks, field mice and squirrels are but a few of such animals. The meadow vole is a mouse-like animal that carries on its normal activities beneath the snow. Their tunnels and nests in the grass become visible after the snow leaves. Voles are a common food source for the Red and Gray foxes.

As you venture out this winter, be cognizant of the struggles animals are going through for their survival. Nature can be very unforgiving, but those animals who make proper preparation can survive even the harshest of winters in the Jordan Valley.



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## WHY FOJ IS OPPOSED TO THE ALBA DISPOSAL WELL

The Jordan River receives over 90% of its flow from groundwater. That steady, cold flow helps keep the Jordan River stable, balanced and biologically rich. This same groundwater is the primary source of drinking water for many citizens of Antrim, Charlevoix and Otsego Counties.

The source of this groundwater begins east of Alba and flows westerly toward the Jordan River and Lake Charlevoix. Any contamination of this underground aquifer will adversely impact the Jordan River, Lake Charlevoix and the drinking water of many people.

CMS proposes to dispose of approximately 120,000 gallons per day, 365 days a year for 20 to 30 years of a concentrated residue of cement kiln dust leachate from Bay Harbor Resort into a disposal well near Alba. This leachate contains high levels of toxic heavy metals like mercury. Northwest Michigan Community Health Agency, MDEQ and the U.S. EPA have declared this leachate a public health hazard and a dangerous substance. The people of Antrim County and Alba don't want it.

CMS contends that the proposed disposal well is a safe, responsible and proven way to dispose of this toxic leachate. FOJ and a group of renowned experts disagree. Respected professionals in geology, geophysics, hydrology and hydrogeology have written technical reports warning of the hazards of this proposed disposal well. These experts come from major universities, industry and government and warn that the disposal of toxic leachate in a deep well in Alba is dangerous, supported by faulty science and represents an unacceptable risk. Furthermore, it is unnecessary.

FOJ has consulted with others who have performed cleanups at cement plants elsewhere. We believe the technology currently exists to encapsulate the kiln dust piles at Bay Harbor Resort, negating the need for the Alba disposal well. The U.S. EPA has already ordered CMS to do just that. What seems to be missing here is either compliance to the "Order" by CMS, or enforcement of the "Order" by U.S. EPA.

John Richter

## KEEPING YOU INFORMED

*Where can I see the pictures that won the photography contest?  
What is the current status of the Alba Well opposition activities?  
What is a Watershed and where is the Jordan River Watershed exactly?  
What activities are planned for the FOJ?  
I missed the Full Moon River trip; I wonder how it turned out?  
How can I get a 2008 Calendar?  
How do I become a member of the Friends of the Jordan?  
Where can you find the answers to these and many other questions about the Friends of the Jordan?*



The FOJ Website of course! Visit [www.friendsofthejordan.org](http://www.friendsofthejordan.org) to find information about these and many other topics. We strive to keep it fresh, current and interesting with news about recent events, upcoming activities, current projects, our history and how you can participate. A recent addition on Advocacy was developed to keep members and the public informed about our efforts to preserve and protect this valuable resource. Through the website more than 500 signatures and comments were gathered in opposition to the Alba Injection Well allowing all these voice to be heard by the parties who will decide the fate. Visit us regularly to see what is happening. We welcome submissions by members and guests with information that is relevant they wish to share.

Pictures, articles, announcements etc may be sent to [webmaster@friendsofthejordan.org](mailto:webmaster@friendsofthejordan.org). If you don't find what you are looking for drop us an e-mail at [foj@friendsofthejordan.org](mailto:foj@friendsofthejordan.org) and we will try to get the information you need.

Jack Moran

# JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

## THE ROGERS FAMILY HOMESTEAD PRESERVE

The Little Traverse Conservancy has announced the acquisition of the Rogers Family Homestead Preserve with 86 acres of land, and 6,714 feet of frontage on the Jordan River from Rogers Bridge to the Dressel Preserve, and (yes there is MORE) over a mile of railroad bed. The decision by the Ashley and Stokes families to forever insure that their East Jordan, Rogers Family Homestead be preserved is a gift of enormous importance to the community and region and to the Jordan River Watershed.

I fell in love with this critical, rich and sensitive fragment of the free flowing Jordan River. The Stokes Family was generous, allowing community members to walk the rail bed, asking only that visitors respect the land. The farm had been homesteaded by Marguerite Stokes' ancestors. Her father, Sam Rogers Jr. and his father, Sam Rogers Sr. were dairy farmers. It was hard work for everyone. Cows need to be milked on holidays like any other day. They have to be fed and cared for even if you're sick. The Rogers family cared for the land, the animals, the gardens and each other. Their hard work created a self-sustaining farm. After Marguerite married, she and her husband moved back to the farm. She taught school in East Jordan, raised a family and helped her husband with the Stokes/Rogers farm.

Years ago, Marguerite Stokes, then in her 80's, had given me permission to walk the mile long rail bed on the Stokes property that runs from Echo St. all the way to Rogers Road. Walking the old Detroit Charlevoix rail bed is pure joy. The mile long, uninterrupted expanse of grassy bed tempts the child in the oldest of us to RUN, cartwheel, roll, skip and dawdle, drinking in and celebrating the beauty all around. The grassy bed travels through wood, open field, and marsh. At one point, the mighty Jordan is just a hefty stone's throw away. Wild flowers adorn the open fields and marsh. The quiet buzz and whir of insects is interrupted only by the cry of birds all around. The Eagle and Osprey circle lazily over the valley, and all around, the flattened grass and worn paths give testimony to a world of unseen critters.

Later, in the Fall, friends and I rented a canoe for a day of exploring the lower Jordan, from Sportsmans Park to Rogers Road. After a false start ("Those ducks are not swimming JoAnne, they're walking!") I freed us from the mud and pushed the canoe back to the channel of the river, we paddled past the Eagle platform and the Sedge Marsh and Dressel Preserves and were soon gliding past the old Rogers homestead. This fertile land is home to otter, mink, songbirds, and waterfowl. Here, the river swings in wide, lazy meanders. Around each bend lies a new landscape, from the wide expanses of carex marsh to scrub-shrub, alder and field, to tree-covered banks. We paddle past the DNR site and the "Sucker Hole" where Deer Creek enters the Jordan. Here the river channel narrows and deepens somewhat as we continue on to Rogers Bridge, named after Marguerite's pioneer ancestors.

Unlike the intense, wild, cold and very wet adventure I had had on the upper Jordan, this late summer day was lazy, filled with the quiet delight of minnow schools, dragonflies, darting birds, the fragrance of sun on grassy banks and warm earth, and the luxury of sharing beauty with good friends. Inspired, my friend quoted Thoreau, "In wildness is the preservation of the world!". My other friend responded with a lovely and lengthy Emily Dickinson verse. Searching desperately for a worthy contribution, I lamely offered, "...there is nothing - absolutely nothing - half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing, messing - about - in - boats..", Ratty, 'Wind in the Willows'." Laughing, we headed the canoe back down the River.

In the near future, groups of children and adults will walk the rail bed to enjoy nature and to learn about eco-systems, Eagles, bugs, wildflowers, water-sheds and water-cycles. They will float the Jordan River taking water samples and doing species inventories. Some of the lessons will include studies of sedimentation, and life cycles of micro and macro invertebrates. As great and valuable as these scientific lessons are, the greatest lesson may well be the contribution of a small town teacher, a daughter, mother, farm-woman who watched over and honored her parents and grandparents and kept her family's land undeveloped and intact until she was able to ensure that it would be kept safe forever. We will always be grateful for and remember Marguerite Rogers Stokes and her family.

Joanne Beemon

# JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

## TRAIL NEWS

### THE JORDAN RIVER PATHWAY/NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL

What is good for the hiker is good for the watershed! That is the philosophy bringing area groups together to focus on pathway improvements. Almost always, situations involving hazards to hikers involve soil and erosion or other land use issues. Take, for example, the collapsed boardwalk along Cascade Creek between Cascade Road and the Landslide Overlook. If you've hiked that trail section in the last few years, you know the spot! Years ago the boardwalk collapsed into a gully, forcing hikers and backpackers to either jump or slide to reach the boardwalk. Doing so risks injury to the hiker, causes further erosion and, ultimately, degrades Cascade Creek.

Friends of the Jordan, the Antrim Conservation District and the North Country Trail Association worked together this fall to assess the site and obtain necessary permits and permission to repair the boardwalk. On a cold rainy day at the end of October, fifteen North Country Trail Association and other volunteers carried in two 25 foot trusses, lumber and tools to make the repair. A new section was constructed spanning the gully with the original boardwalk sections attached at either end. It was a job well done by the volunteers and a perfect example of what can be attained through partnership.

The North Country Trail Association looks forward to future trail projects with FOJ and the ACD for the benefit of hikers and the watershed.

If winter holds off or if you are a snowshoer, be sure to check out our endeavor. As always, you will find beauty and peace hiking the trail.

Peg Myers, NCTA Volunteer and FOJ Member



## JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

FRIENDS OF THE JORDAN RIVER WATERSHED, INC.

P.O. BOX 412

EAST JORDAN, MI 49727

Phone/Fax: (231) 536-9947

E-mail: [foj@friendsofthejordan.org](mailto:foj@friendsofthejordan.org)

### Friends of the Jordan River Watershed

P.O. Box 412

East Jordan, MI 49727

Phone/Fax: (231) 536-9947

[www.friendsofthejordan.org](http://www.friendsofthejordan.org)

E-mail: [foj@friendsofthejordan.org](mailto:foj@friendsofthejordan.org)

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