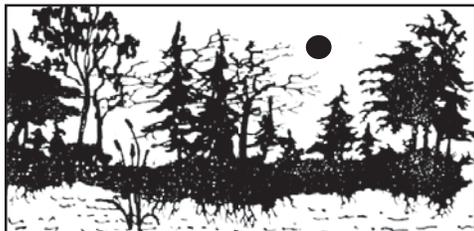


JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

FRIENDS OF THE JORDAN NEWSLETTER

WILDFLOWERS OF FIRST SPRING



HEPATICA

USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. 1913. *Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada*. Vol. 2: 101.

CLEANUP

The Spring Jordan River and Highway Cleanup will be held on **Saturday, April 23, 2005 at 9am to 12pm**. We will meet where Graves Crossing Road crosses the Jordan River, off of M-66. FOJ will have a barbeque at the Sportmans Park afterwards. Everybody is invited to the cleanup and lunch, come rain or shine.

DID YOU KNOW...

The Jordan River Watershed encompasses approximately 127 square miles in Antrim and Charlevoix counties. The Jordan River is 22.9 miles long and the headwaters consist of several small springs located one mile west of Highway 131 and north of Jordan River Road. There are 29 named tributaries to the Jordan River, including Green River, Landslide Creek, Stevens Creek and Deer Creek.

March is such a glorious month of anticipation. During those last two weeks of March, I am warmed by the sure knowledge that the snow storms, and frigid weather will be gone within two to three weeks. The snow *must* be gone for it is during the first week of April that the first wildflowers of the Jordan River Valley appear like clockwork.

For 30 years, I have watched for the appearance of the first tenacious blooms. Hepatica is always the first true flower that I find, nestled usually into a protected nook on a south facing hill. Search for the mottled brown and green year-old hepatica leaves: triangular and 4" from the ground. At first, only the new hepatica flower stems appear, slowly uncurling themselves, hairy and glistening. The flower buds may still be wrapped up tight in their sepals. Sooner or later though, within those first five days, I find the first fully opened Hepatica inflorescence. Six delicate bluish-white petals brave the crisp spring air, long before the new leaves unfurl.

With the Hepatica blooming, I know that the glorious and secretive Trailing Arbutus will surely be sporting its pink fragrant flowers. This is one flower that you must observe from your knees, because you have to lift up the leaves ever so slightly to see the blooms hidden underneath. The fragrance of Trailing Arbutus drives away any lingering fear of winter's return. Sure the snow may make a comeback, but once you've seen the Hepatica and Arbutus, winter storms can not dispel the joy of new spring.

Within a week of the Hepatica, Spring Beauties will pop up on every trail and forest floor. You can hardly take a step in some areas without trampling them. It is as much as four weeks later, after these first three wildflowers of the forest floor have appeared that Trillium make their grand debut. That triple decked lady cannot take the early cold the way the little ones can.

Bloodroot is another bloom of early to mid April. I have found a great stand of Bloodroot by the East Jordan High School on the cross country trail that leaves the auditorium parking lot from the Northeast corner, and travels parallel for a few yards next to the scrap yard. Less than ¼ mile along the trail is a hillside bedecked with a great white stand of bloodroot.

Another wonderful trail lined with great stands of purple Fringed Polygala, Trailing Arbutus and Goldthread to mention a few, is a two-track off of Mt Bliss Road that travels down toward the Jordan River's east bank. The two-track entrance is four miles south of the snow mobile club. There is an area available for parking near the road. As you walk farther along this trail, you find yourself on the moss-covered remnant of an ancient almost indiscernible railroad bed. A curved ceiling of cedar and tamarack hangs over your head, and small wildflowers flourish along every inch of the trail edges. Beds of twinflower, starflower and foam flower will be on this trail during the end of April. In May, scores of Pink Lady Slippers appear along the edge of the pathway. I am overwhelmed by the good fortune of living so close to such a treasure.

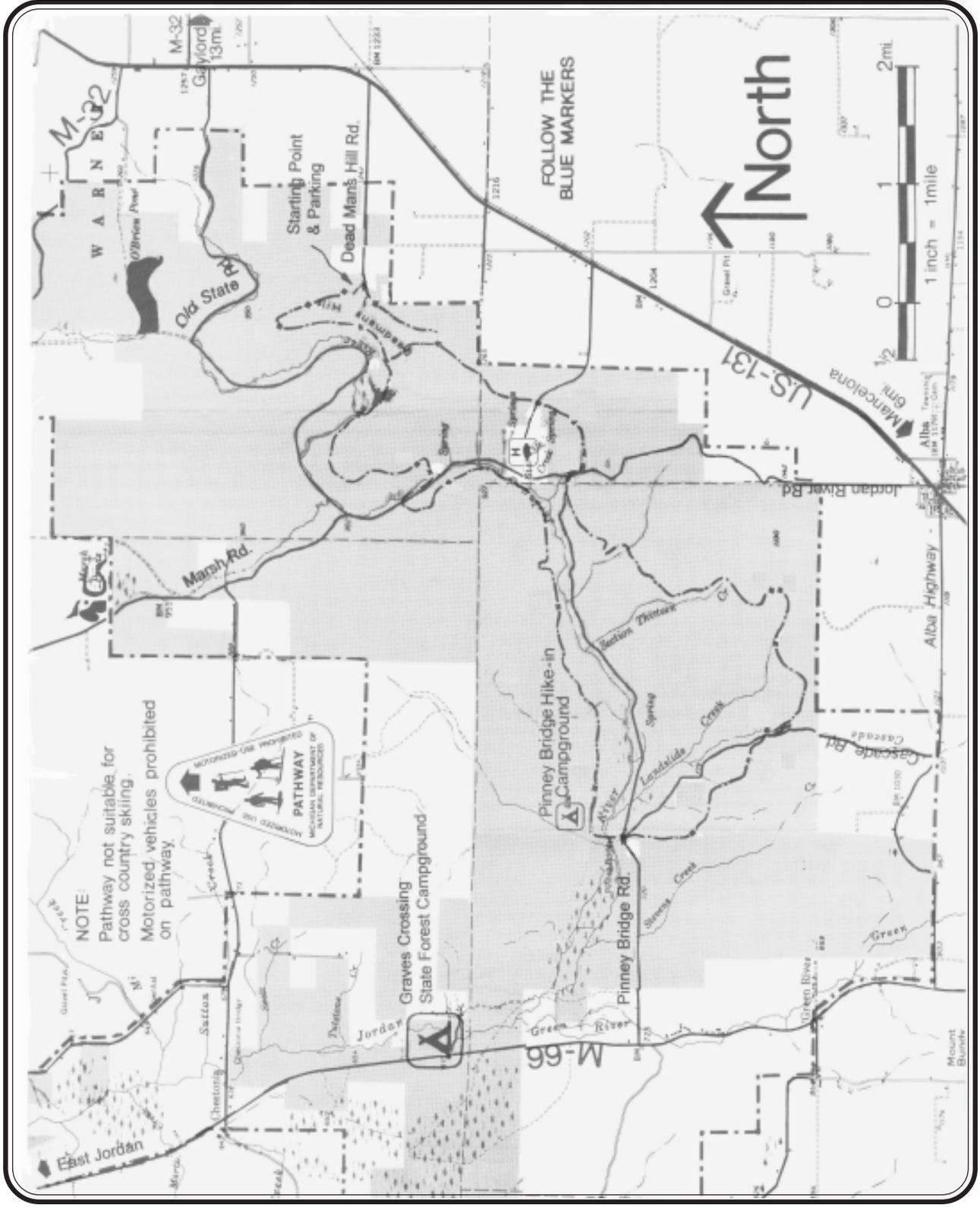
The Jordan River Valley has a milder climate than the neighboring hills to the east. The heaviest snows get dropped on the eastern and southern rims of the valley which creates a gentler winter climate and the additional benefit of lots of spring runoff. Any trail through the valley floor will provide exquisite pockets of the earliest wildflowers in this unique environment.

This year, try April! The glorious Trillium of May are an exquisite treat, however nothing in May can provide the emotional charge that comes from seeing the sudden appearance of the first woodland wildflowers on hillsides that five days earlier were covered deep with snow! It is one of the magical experiences of living up north.

Franny Bluhm

The Jordan River Pathway

The Jordan River Pathway was established to provide an opportunity for hikers, backpackers, and snowshoers to take in the abundance of natural beauty that the Jordan River Valley offers. While on the Pathway, one will enjoy many scenic, biological and historic aspects of the Jordan Valley. The Pathway offers several trail options. The main starting point and parking facilities are located at the top of Deadman's Hill off U.S. 131 north of Alba. The Deadman's Hill loop is three miles long.



JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

REDS MIXED WITH BLUES MAKE VIOLETS

Recently while reading a popular outdoors magazine I encountered a series of articles depicting deep animosity between the “Hook & Bullet Crowd”(hunters and anglers) and environmentalists. These articles also described the likely political persuasion of these “different” groups and their partisan influence on policies regarding natural resource issues. I was troubled and surprised by the angry, polarized comments from some of the readers. It reminded me once again how we are unnecessarily portrayed by the media as a divided nation. My mind was saddened with disparaging images of the current red states vs. the blue states discord.

As a hunter, angler, environmentalist and conservationist I wondered where that left FOJ and me. I have never thought that being a hunter or angler came at the exclusion of being an environmentalist or conservationist or that it labeled me red or blue. I am convinced that outdoor enthusiasts have much more in common than we differ. I am discouraged that the political pundits and mass media seem to foster divisiveness and fuel conflict. The issues that impact our natural resources are rarely all or nothing, black or white, red or blue. What ever happened to e pluribus unum, “one out of many”?

Throughout my tenure with FOJ, I have tried to frame our mission and activities as pro-watershed, biodiversity and sustainability rather than anti-something. I have never met anyone who did not love the Jordan Valley even if his or her reasons were different than mine. Healthy watersheds can accommodate many varied activities and the Jordan Valley Management Plan is based on this multi-

use concept. This concept and plan have been successful because they place the needs of the resource first. FOJ remains committed to working cooperatively with various organizations and governmental agencies to preserve the ecological fabric and environmental integrity of the Jordan River Watershed.

As I pondered these issues my thoughts turned to a congenial wild flower, the violet. This graceful delicate herb is a welcomed find wherever you encounter it, which for me is usually when I am fishing or hunting mushrooms. In literature and mythology the violet symbolizes the peaceful fusion of powerful antagonists. In painting, the subtle shades of violet are derived from mixing the bold primary colors of red and blue. If either color is used in excess the result usually resembles mud, exemplifying chaos.

I could not help but compare the symbolism of the violet to watersheds and then, even to politics. The powerful competing forces of nature forge, over time, the delicate balances comprising watersheds. Watersheds thrive on diversity that is interdependent. If together we resolve to protect our watersheds for sustainability and biodiversity we preserve the life giving forces that allows all of us to reap and appreciate the bounties of nature. Therein, united in respect for the resource, hunters and anglers, environmentalists and conservationists, loggers and tree-huggers, snowmobilers and nature walkers can go in peace where the wild violet grows.

Dr. John W. Richter
President, Friends of the Jordan River Watershed

SUMMER KIDS PROGRAM

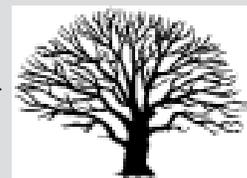
During June and July of this year, Friends of the Jordan will be providing free educational sessions to schoolchildren in the 4th through 7th grades. The sessions are tailored to be fun and hands-on. They will be held at the Friends of Jordan Watershed Center, located off of Bridge Street, behind Sportsman Park in East Jordan. FOJ’s own board members and teachers, Bill Chase and Paul Nachazel will be instructing the following sessions:

Saturday, June 11th, 9am to 10:30am
Earth’s Water and Water Use

Friday, June 17th, 9am to 10:30am
Rivers, including looking at diagrams, interactive webshots and looking at the Jordan River Watersheds and a look at how water moves through our land

Friday, June 24th, 9am to 10:30am
Entomology – The study of insects
Pollution – What goes down the drain...

Friday, July 1st, 9am to 10:30am
Fishing and Discovery



If you have any questions, please call Bill Chase at 536-7250 or Paul Nachazel at 536-1218.

The Browns Creek Restoration Project

Recently FOJ procured grant funds through the Lake Charlevoix Watershed Management Project and purchased water resource educational materials for East Jordan's Middle School. These materials include water quality test kits, kick nets, textbooks, computer-linked microscopes and much more. The purpose of these procurements is to equip the Middle School with the necessary tools to enable students' hands on learning experiences while restoring a degraded trout stream. With the enthusiastic support and participation of Middle School teachers Craig DeHoog, Paul Nachazel and others, plans are underway to integrate existing curriculum with an ongoing water quality testing and assessment project on Browns Creek.

This multi-year project intends to empower Middle School students and teachers with the basic knowledge of water quality, watershed dynamics, non-point source pollution and stream restoration. Students will then be expected to utilize this information to perform stream assessments, conduct water quality tests and assimilate these skills with the overall goal to restore and protect a degraded tributary of the Jordan River, Browns Creek. Additionally, to establish year-round and year to year continuity, plans call for coordination between the Middle and High School as well as summer enrichment programs at the Jordan River Watershed Center.

According to FOJ's president John Richter, "We are absolutely thrilled to help expand water quality studies beyond the High School's highly acclaimed MST Program to include the Middle School. These two programs will greatly compliment one another. We know students learn best when they can reinforce their classroom work with hands-on real life experiences. This is a project that will make learning fun. The positive energy and support from the teachers and the administration has been contagious. We can't wait to get our feet wet."

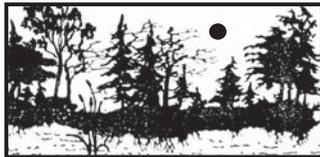


Hilarious Geography Test Answers

A watershed is a shed in the middle of the ocean where ships shelter during a storm.

Imports are ports very far inland.

Nearly at the bottom of Lake Michigan is Chicago.



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Purple Loosestrife Control in the Jordan River Watershed

Anyone who loves wildflowers has been struck by the beauty of Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) in bloom. Redwing blackbirds love to nest within its growth and historically it has been valued as a medicinal plant and as an abundant source of nectar and pollen for beekeepers. As many know, however, this tall, perennial herbaceous plant often becomes the dominant vegetation in wetland, lake and river ecosystems, impeding water flow and choking out many native plants and habitat needed by our wildlife for food, shelter and breeding their young. Reducing stands of Loosestrife will help prevent the resulting loss of biodiversity and help maintain the healthy functioning of our wetlands.

Purple Loosestrife first arrived in eastern North America from Europe in the early 1800's with settlers who wanted it for their flower gardens, and seeds also traveled here on imported sheep, raw wool and in the soil based ballast of ships used to help maintain stability on voyages. Without its native natural enemies on board to help check its growth, this plant has since spread westward and can now be found in much of Canada and the United States. In Michigan, Purple Loosestrife is now present throughout much of the lower peninsula and is expanding its range in the upper peninsula, preferring wet or moist areas but establishing itself elsewhere as well. One mature 4-7 ft. plant can produce up to 2.7 million seeds annually. Each as small as a grain of sand, these seeds have a longevity of at least 3 years, may lay dormant for several years before sprouting and are often carried great distances by water, wind, wildlife and humans. It is easy to understand why trying to eliminate this plant would realistically be impossible but why putting control measures in place is so important.

Legal, physical, chemical and biological control methods have been used so far to help manage the spread and density of Purple Loosestrife. Physical controls (digging entire plants, hand pulling and cutting flower heads before they produce seeds) and chemical controls have been used with some success on areas of low density and younger

growth but are very labor intensive and have also acted to spread the growth of Loosestrife in some instances. For three consecutive years several 'Friends of the Jordan' volunteers used physical control methods to attempt to check the spread of Loosestrife near the mouth of the river. However, as water levels have since lowered and exposed the soil, many more new plants are now continuing to sprout and take hold there.

Biological control methods have been more recent in development and hold promise for a more viable and longer term impact on areas of Loosestrife that are higher in density, spread and older growth. Biological control simply means using a pest's or invader's (in this case, Purple Loosestrife's) natural enemies to reduce its density and the damage it causes. In 1992 after years of extensive testing in Europe and North America for safety, host specificity (prey specifically on Purple Loosestrife) and effectiveness, the small leaf eating 'Galerucella beetle' was approved by the USDA for use as a biological control for Purple Loosestrife. Since then, this beetle has been introduced to many Loosestrife populations throughout Michigan and nationwide and is being closely monitored for its success and effectiveness. In Michigan the project has been coordinated by the Michigan Sea Grant, MSU Extension and the Michigan DNR. Estimates range from 5-15 years for large impacts of these beetles to be realized but some have been reported within as little as 3 years, hence the importance of getting started soon with this control method.

This year, the 'Friends of the Jordan' will sponsor the introduction of the 'Galerucella beetle' as a biological control for the growth of Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) within the Jordan River Watershed area. If anyone is interested in helping with this project, if you have knowledge about populations of Purple Loosestrife in other areas within the Jordan River Watershed or if you would like more information, please contact John Richter or Cheryl Sothard.

In reuniting Purple Loosestrife with its natural native enemy, the 'Galerucella beetle', we will not only be protecting the health of our Jordan River Watershed but perhaps some wildflower enthusiasts will one day no longer need to feel uncomfortable about savoring the majestic beauty of this plant.

Cheryl Sothard

WANTED FOR THE WATERSHED CENTER

Now that the Watershed Center is almost finished, we need a few items in order to use the building as an education center:

Coffee Maker	Small Refrigerator	Telescope
Spotting Scope	Binoculars	Storage Shed
Large Screen TV	VCR	Wooden Rain Barrel
Podium	Television Cart	Portable PA System

We are also accepting donations for the purchase of the following items:

- *Chairs, Desk, Bookshelves, Window Blinds
- *Wood Identification Signs for the driveway entrance and the Sportsman's Park Walkway
- *Landscaping materials and plants

Please call us at (231) 536-9947 if you would like to donate any of these items.

JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

WILD LUPINE

My fascination with the Wild Lupine wildflower all started by accident, when I was researching Michigan threatened and endangered species. In the midst of the process, I discovered that the Karner Blue Butterfly is federally listed as endangered and, in Michigan, listed as a threatened species. Historically, the Karner Blue was distributed widely throughout the western and southern Lower Peninsula. However, due to habitat loss and butterfly collectors, the population is threatened.

The Karner Blue Butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa samuelis*) is silvery-blue in color and has about a one inch wingspan. There are two hatches of these butterflies during the spring/summer season and they feed on the nectar of a variety of flowering plants. However, Karner Blue caterpillars are extremely particular as to their appetite. The caterpillars feed exclusively on the leaves and flowers of the Wild Lupine wildflower. The adult butterflies only lay their eggs on or near Wild Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*).

Many of us are familiar with the showy Garden Lupine (*Lupinus polyphyllus*) from our flowerbeds and landscaping. Lupine has blue, violet, pink or white pea-like flowers on 1 to 3 foot tall spikes. The common Garden Lupine is a close relative to Wild Lupine, however Wild Lupine only comes in shades of blue/purple.

I was surprised to learn that Wild Lupine is a native species and was formerly prolific in undisturbed open fields or prairies. Surprising because I have never seen this plant growing in the wild. Before settlers arrived, wildfire was an important process in maintaining the prairie habitat, killing trees and shrubs that cause excess shade. Now, wildfires are quickly controlled and development has virtually wiped out all undisturbed prairie habitats in Michigan which were necessary in maintaining prairie plants like Wild Lupine.

Wildflowers do abound in Northern Michigan. The stately Queen Anne's Lace, Sweet Peas and the cheery blue Chicory are easily observed in the summer along roadsides. Drifts of Purple Loosestrife blanket wet areas, like the mouth of the Jordan River. Fallow fields are covered in the prickly Spotted Knapweed, yellow St. John's Wort and the white-blossomed Bladder Campion. However, none of these common Northern Michigan wildflowers are native to Michigan or even the United States. Many of these non-native species were imported from Europe or Asia and escaped the confines of the garden bed. These non-native wildflowers are typically not subject to any native pests or diseases, thus out-compete the native species.

The reason for the threatened status of the Karner Blue butterfly became all too clear to me. No Wild Lupine, no Karner Blue. While not an avid butterfly watcher, I can still appreciate the beauty and grace of the colorful creatures. My only solution to this was obvious - plant Wild Lupine on my property.

After obtaining Wild Lupine seed from a certified source, I discovered growing Wild Lupine from seed was surprisingly easy. In the fall, I planted my Wild Lupine plants in a prepared bed. Next spring, they were one of the first to bloom in the spring and kept the green distinctive foliage throughout the growing season. The seed pods look like pea pods and cover the plants. The spring after that, the seeds self-sowed and I had numerous volunteer Wild Lupine Plants. Each year now, the plants get bigger and brighten the flowerbed with the lush blue spikes.

It has been four years now since I planted Wild Lupine and I have yet to see a Karner Blue butterfly. I am not disappointed though. While I haven't yet provided habitat for the Karner Blue, I have brought back another native species, the Wild Lupine, to the area. Last summer, I took the seed pods off the plants and scattered the seeds on all the upland open field portions of my property with hopes that maybe the Wild Lupine can grow along with all the non-native wildflowers. I will also keep my eyes open for a tiny blue butterfly.

Melissa Kendzierski

FOR THE BIRDERS



ANNUAL SPRING BIRD WALK

All are welcome to join our bird expert Jerry Aydrott in viewing our native and migratory bird populations at the Jordan River Watershed Center on May 21, 2005 at 8am. Don't forget to bring your binoculars! If you don't have binoculars, we have some to share.

JORDAN RIVER WATERSHED TIP

If you see tangled fishing line while out enjoying the Jordan, please take it home and dispose of it in the garbage.