



JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

FRIENDS OF THE JORDAN NEWSLETTER

JORDAN RIVER WATERSHED

As spring and summer approach, many elegant seasonal features of nature begin to appear in the Jordan River Watershed (JRW). Gone is winter's icy snow-covered dormancy and stormy winds. Warm breezes now encourage plant and animals to emerge into a more favorable setting. Fortunate are those visitors of the JRW who can experience the full range of these natural presentations.

In 1999, after prolonged discussion and debate, the board members of Friends of the Jordan formulated a multiple use plan for a headquarters building. The use plan included a headquarters, an interpretive/tourist center and an educational center for schools around the area.

By creating our own headquarters we were able to centralize the housing of our records and office appliances, engage in programs such as FOJ's photography contest in 2005, provide a central place for monthly meetings, and provide similar organizations a facility they could use.

As an interpretive/tourist facility, it will enable visitors to view written and visual resources related to the JRW. These resources will include charts, maps, identification manuals for plants and animals, video tapes and CD's describing

various biological principles and models of natural phenomena. The library/archive room is now nearly complete and will provide a quiet place to read and look out onto the beautiful natural garden area just outside the many windows of the library.

All of the above resources shall afford a more informative and meaningful visit to the JRW Center. During one trip, a visitor can gain insight into the biology of plants and animals, the geology of how the land was formed, the meteorology (weather), botany such as plant identification, the chemistry of how the water quality is monitored, and the history of past land use and its significance. Visitors will also be able to meet and converse with the experts in many of the above areas of science.

FOJ is planning educational enrichment programs for elementary, middle and high school students who will be able to receive instruction in a diverse science program during the summer.

During the summer, FOJ will be able to use the Jordan River and its surrounding as a living laboratory for instructional programs such as entomology (study of insects), hydrology (dynamics of water), chemistry (how water quality is determined by chemical tests) and

meteorology (the weather patterns of the JRW).

As one area citizen remarked, "The Jordan River Watershed Center is truly a community asset. It is an outstanding landmark, a 'must visit' item when in the JRW."

The JRW Center is an accomplishment that could not have been achieved by the board members alone. The financial investment alone is too great. Non-board members have been very instrumental through their financial donations, their membership fees and their actual physical participation in renovating the 130+ -year-old Vance Building, donated to the FOJ in 1999. In addition to our FOJ membership, we have been aided by many local businessmen who have donated their time and skill in this renovation project.

Numerous foundations have provided financial grants with which to purchase building materials and employ skilled tradesmen. We thank them all for their foundation grants.

Many thanks also go to our state, county, and city governmental agencies who have provided guidance and direction in the technical matters related to the renovation of the Jordan River Watershed Center.

Bob Sayer, FOJ Board Member

COME JOIN US FOR THE SPRING CLEANUP

Winter has passed, and it is time once again for the Friends of the Jordan River Watershed's spring cleanup of the Jordan River, public access sites, and a two mile portion of M-66 in the valley. The cleanup will begin at **9 AM on Saturday, May 6** and will be completed around noon. Participants will meet on M-66 at Graves Crossing and proceed from there. A complimentary bratwurst and burger BBQ will be provided afterwards at The Sportsman's Park in East Jordan. Everyone helping with the cleanup is reminded to wear appropriate clothing, including gloves and waterproof footwear. For additional information and to reserve a canoe for the river portion of the cleanup, visit the FOJ website at www.friendsofthejordan.org.

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2006 VISIONS OF THE VALLEY PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

We hope you were out enjoying the Jordan River Valley in all its glory this winter. Whenever we had a sunny day with fresh snow, I wanted to grab my camera and head out to capture the magic of the pines burdened by thick blankets of snow or the crystalline web of frost on bare trees sparkling like sequins in the sun. I am already anticipating the first buds of marsh marigolds blooming and the rushing water bubbling over log jams as spring approaches. The eagles are back and the songbirds are beginning to migrate through the valley. Each season brings fresh opportunities to discover both small wonders and grand vistas. We hope you are inspired to capture your experiences on “film” and invite you to submit your pictures to our 2006 VISIONS OF THE VALLEY Photography Contest. This year we are focusing our contest on the *Four Seasons of the Jordan*. Winning entries will represent the changing character of the Jordan River Watershed throughout the year. Watch for details on the website, through e-mail and news releases. In the meantime, get out and get “clicking.” You may just “develop” a real winner! See the 2005 entries on our website for inspiration.

Margaret Moran, FOJ Board Member



photograph by Jan Luptowski



photograph by William Wilson

GETTING CONNECTED

Have you visited the Friends of the Jordan website lately? Some additions that you are sure to enjoy are a section in the Photo Gallery labeled FOJ Archives which captures photographs and information about the early years of the organization including a touching memorial to Bud Jones, a photo essay on Teddy Kotowich, and a “Journey Down the Jordan”. The Photo Gallery also has a new section for Member Photos where you may submit your photographs to share. Moving Day under the Watershed Center page captures the adventure of moving the Trading Post, formally called the Vance Building to its current location and the transformation into the Watershed Center. Previous newsletters are available for reference along with updated maps, contact information and information on upcoming events. We hope to keep the website current and interactive so your feedback and suggestions are always welcome.

- Visit us at www.friendsofthejordan.org. If you wish to submit news or information to share with FOJ members send it to webmaster@friendsofthejordan.org.
- If you would like to receive periodic e-mail about FOJ activities, you may send your current e-mail address to members@friendsofthejordan.org.

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CONSERVING THE LAND

A pair of Bald Eagles have been sighted flying over the Jordan River south of East Jordan. One can only suppose, or hope, these are the same pair that nested here last year. By the time you receive this newsletter, we will know whether they have chosen the same tree, the same bend in the river, the same fields as their hunting grounds on which they will nourish their young. This pair does not know the threats that this river faces, the threats that the land faces from subdivision, houses, septic tanks, fences, fertilizers, and chain saws. They only know the instinct they have to return year after year to a place they call home.

Every time we thought a deal was close at hand, it seemed it was just out of reach of what we, as a community, thought we could afford.

For decades now conservationists have been trying to protect a property on the east side of the Jordan River, just south of East Jordan that comprises 40 acres of land and 3,515 feet of frontage on the Jordan. Every time we thought a deal was close at hand, it seemed it was just out of reach of what we, as a community, thought we could afford.

“There is great news!” reported MaryKay O’Donnell, Field Representative for the Little Traverse Conservancy. “After years of negotiations, we have signed an option which gives us an opportunity to purchase the property . . . if we can raise the money in the next few months.” She went on to say that this is a cooperative effort between the Friends of the Jordan River, the Charlevoix County Land Conservancy, the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, and the community. The efforts of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council and the Lake Charlevoix Watershed Initiative have been instrumental in bringing attention and assistance to this project and we thank all of these groups for their help.

We are not so unlike the eagles - we seek our wild places, we need our wild places. It will be the members of the community coming together, digging deep into their pocketbooks to ensure this special place is protected forever; for us, for the eagles, for the spirit of the river itself.

MaryKay O’Donnell, Little Traverse Conservancy

AN INTERESTING LETTER ABOUT A FAMILY’S LOVE OF THE JORDAN

December 30, 2005



Dear Friends of the Jordan,

I am looking forward to receiving your book. My dad, Calvin Kidder, was born and raised on the Jordan River. He lived in Antrim County until he was about the age of 25.

He was the one that brought this book to my attention, not knowing the author or book title. His birthday is January 6th, he’ll be 78 years old, and this book is his gift from his girls.

It was a year ago when he was able to take us to the “old homestead” of the Kidders on Cascade Road. Three of his four daughters were able to go and hear our family history. How they used to take a shower at “the flowing well” once a week, carry water from the river to the house and the long walk into town to get supplies. What a treat it was to go back in time and walk the same path my dad did when he was a boy.

While we were hiking I stopped and filled an empty water bottle with water from the river. My daughter was currently taking an environmental science class at LCC. They were studying water from the Grand River, finding out what chemicals were present in the water. I gave her the water from the Jordan River to analyze, asking her not to say what river in Michigan it came from. My thoughts were confirmed - it was pure. The instructor was impressed and he put the rest of the 12 ounces of water in ice cube trays to use in further teaching. He asked if there was more where that came from. My daughter replied, “Yes, somewhere up North.” There was a speck of algae in the bottle. It must have come from the nearby rocks, when I submerged the bottle.

I truly hope we can keep this beautiful river clean and pure as God intended it to be. May God bless you and your efforts to “keep it clean”.

Sincerely, Venita Grimwood

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Just Who or What is Friends of the Jordan, and What Do We Do?

When I get this question I'm at first surprised, and then I smile. "We are many things" I say. Then I am reminded that as president and founding member, I can get too absorbed with the details of running the organization and fail to adequately communicate our purpose. The pages of this newsletter are not sufficient to list and explain our many activities and accomplishments. Yet the questions asked are sincere and honest, but not easily answered.

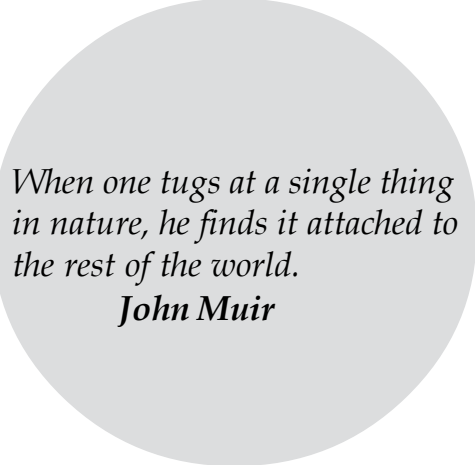
Many people know bits and pieces of our history and assume they know who we are. "Oh, you're that river group". Well, yes, partly. "You're against oil and gas development". Only when it degrades the natural resources or violates people's property rights I reply. "You're a bunch of tree/bunny huggers". Sometimes, but we also support sustainable forestry, hunting and fishing. We advocate for the resource.

My first answer to these questions is that FOJ is a watershed group. That reply is usually met with a blank stare and I know from experience that it is insufficient. My next response is that we promote watershed-based ecosystem management of our natural resources. This reply too, is unsatisfactory but I'm intentionally baiting the questioner to seek a more comprehensive answer.

Deliberately couched in these responses is the key term, **watershed**. Because this word is not universally understood, the concepts it embraces are confusing to many people. Long ago we decided to incorporate this word into our namesake and our mission to promote its use and understanding. Consider our name, Friends of the Jordan River **Watershed**, and our headquarters, the Jordan River **Watershed** Center. To

many this word is cumbersome, but to us it is vital to understanding our mission, "To conserve the natural resources and protect the environmental quality of the Jordan River **and its Watershed**."

It was once written that, "A river is the memory of the lands through which it flows." That phrase describes a watershed. The environmental quality of rivers and streams is, in large part, determined by the lands and conditions surrounding them. Successful river management requires prudent stewardship not only of the stream itself, but of the lands and forests around it; once again the watershed. Thus a watershed group is concerned with any land use activities



When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.

John Muir

that affect the watershed as a whole. Road-stream crossings, developments, forestry and agriculture practices, water withdrawals, and recreational activities are all land use examples that can and do influence watershed health and water quality.

Ecosystems are interrelated communities of plants, animals and people that share a common environment. Healthy ecosystems maintain a natural balance between producers, consumers and decomposers. For example, a vibrant fishery requires good water quality, suitable habitat and a stable food

chain. Erosion, storm run-off and sedimentation often result from land use activities that disrupt this balance and can negatively impact water quality, aquatic ecosystems and fish.

Biodiversity, the ultimate measure of environmental quality, requires key ecologic components like wildlife corridors, free-flowing streams, large blocks of unfragmented forests and undeveloped riparian zones. Watershed based ecosystem management therefore seeks to conserve, link and protect these key interconnected components, often running head-on with development pressures.

The Jordan River Watershed is uniquely well preserved, balanced and biologically rich. It is one of the last unfragmented, free-flowing, cold water, riverine ecosystems anywhere. Many consider it globally rare. From the beginning, the founders of FOJ realized that we were the lucky heirs of a successful conservation legacy. Leaders from bygone eras, like Governor Milliken and Dr. Pray, had the wisdom and foresight to recognize and protect many of these natural treasures. Large blocks of forest lands were placed in public or protected ownership (~23,000 acres). The Jordan River was protected as Michigan's first designated Natural River. The Jordan Valley Management Plan was adopted to manage these lands for sustainability in a near natural state. Incompatible uses were identified and restricted. Most of all, people cared and shared in these activities. I have never met anyone who didn't love the Jordan Valley. We just must be careful not to love it to death.

Today, FOJ faces the daunting task of continuing this legacy. To do this we get deeply involved with many of the topics already mentioned. We continuously meet and network with a host of organizations and individuals to keep abreast of current events and issues

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affecting the watershed. We enter into policy and management decisions to advocate for the resource. We mentor and assist educational activities with our schools and students and sponsor events designed to promote our mission. We are constantly vigilant to recognize threats to the fabric of the watershed ecosystem and strive to stay informed, current and educated about natural resource issues. We then try to convey and share this information to the public.

One unique feature of watershed based ecosystem management is that it transcends traditional geo-political boundaries. The Jordan River Watershed encompasses three counties, eighteen townships and the City of East Jordan. In addition, many other agencies share jurisdictional responsibilities like MDNR, MDEQ, EPA and US Fish & Wildlife Service. FOJ, however, stands alone among them in our role to view, understand, promote and manage this watershed as a single, unified, living, breathing entity. The river nor the wildlife care that they have crossed a boundary from one jurisdiction to another. FOJ therefore seeks to rectify and accommodate the many competing interests within the watershed to preserve ecosystem health and identify our proper place in it. In the end, our mission is not just some lofty, blurry-eyed idealism but also a tangible means for our own self-preservation and quality of life.

FOJ understands that to be successful our mission must be bigger than any one person and this torch must pass from one generation to the next. We have built the Jordan River Watershed Center to serve as a beacon to guide this legacy on to future generations. If you learn and understand it, you will respect and appreciate it. If you respect and appreciate it you will take care and protect it. Enter the watershed.

Dr. John Richter, FOJ President

Building Renovations Nearly Complete at the Watershed Center

Over the winter, carpenters Tom Sothard and Steve Middaugh completed the library/archives reading room addition. This cozy room, with its wrap-around windows, faces the Jordan Valley and is absolutely beautiful. They also built cupboards and drawers in the kitchenette and finished the trim. Steve handcrafted a cabinet/shelf ensemble from some of the original lumber salvaged during reconstruction. These pieces are refinished virgin hemlock, logged from the Jordan Valley over 100 years ago and symbolize a link to the past. Tom and Steve have done a remarkable job transforming an old relic into the fine facility we have today. Soon we will be filling the shelves with books and reference materials. We also owe a very special thanks to electricians, Jennifer and Jacob Johnston (3-J's Electric) and painter, Chuck Richter. This outstanding project was made possible through the generous contributions and grants from; Ray and Vicki Wallick, The Charlevoix County Community Foundation, The Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and of course, you, our loyal members.



Handcrafted cabinets and shelves in the Library/Archive Room

BIRDING IN THE JORDAN WATERSHED

With the arrival of spring, the great outdoors beckons, and a number of different activities come into focus. One activity that is pursued by many and given a thought by others is bird watching. Birding is best pursued during the early morning hours (sooner versus later) while the birds are active and feeding. The best time of year, most years, is from late March through late May while the migratory birds are around and before the trees are in full bloom (creates great camouflage). The only requirements are a pair of binoculars and a bird book.

The birds of northern Michigan can be broken down into three groups. The first are the year round residents, such as chickadees, nuthatches, cardinals and a variety of woodpeckers: hairy, downy, pileated and red bellied. The second group encompasses those that are migratory, but spend spring and summer with us. A profusion of bluebirds, robins, chipping sparrows and song sparrows and a variety of colorful warblers are summer residents. The third group includes birds that migrate through to points further north such as the white crowned sparrow, tree sparrow and many waterfowl. During this time of year these birds fill the air with song and color for our delight.

The Jordan River Watershed is a paradise for birders! The location with the greatest variety is probably the Watershed Center/Sportsman's Park area harboring waterfowl, shore birds and upland songbirds. Along the waterfront, ducks, be it divers or bobbers, mergansers, mallards, geese, and great blue herons are frequently found. The trees and shrubs in Sportsman's Park conceal a variety of songbirds and warblers. Around the Watershed Center you may spot robins, redwing blackbirds, bluejays, grosbeaks, cedar waxwings and more. The bald eagles are nesting again this year on the high platform in the marsh. Ospreys are also seen fishing from time to time. Another fine birding area is the access to Pinney Bridge from M-66, continuing east to the fish hatchery. A great variety of songbirds can be found along this route. Scarlet Tanagers have been seen in the trees as well as hermit and wood

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thrushes. Ponds created by beaver dams along this route are attractive to wood ducks, herons, and cranes. Follow the Jordan River Road to the base of Deadman's Hill where you will be gifted with the sighting of a warbler: Canada, magnolia or ovenbird.

A sunny morning in May in the Jordan Valley will addict you to bird watching. The beauty and song of the birds will enrapture your spirit. If you are open to an exalting experience put the **Friends of the Jordan River Watershed Bird Tour** on your MUST DO list. Mark your calendar for **May 20, 2006 at 8:00 AM** and gather at the Watershed Center.

Jerry Aydlott

Green River Dam

FOJ has participated in a series of meetings sponsored by CRA to determine the best way to remove the Green River Dam and restore free-flowing conditions. Issues to be considered include, how to maintain 5-7 cfm water flow into the trout ponds after dam removal, avoiding the release of fifty years of sediment piled up behind the dam and preventing washout of the M-66 bridge abutments. Fishery and sea lamprey concerns are also being discussed. Requests for proposals from engineering firms have been sent out and funding sources are being pursued.

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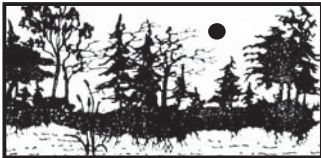
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