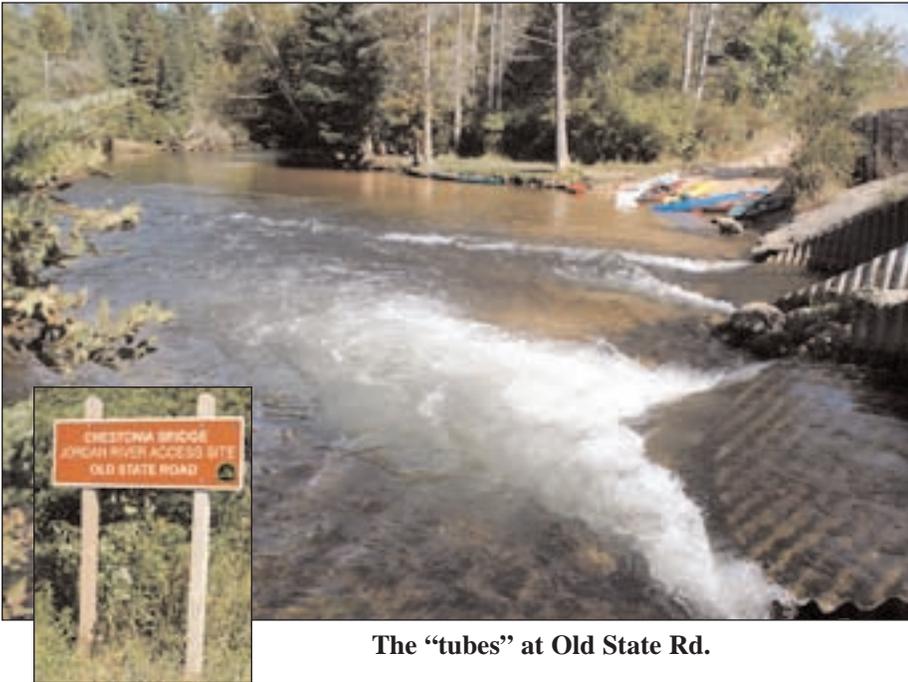


JORDAN VALLEY VOICES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE OF THE FRIENDS OF THE JORDAN RIVER WATERSHED, INC. • SPRING 2012



The “tubes” at Old State Rd.

State, Conservationists Differ on How to Protect Jordan River from Overuse

BY ANDY MCGLASHEN

November 11, 2011 • Reprinted from Michigan River News

If you've ever run the rapids of northwest Michigan's Jordan River in a canoe or kayak, you know what makes it a paddler's paradise. There's the clean, swift water, the springs trickling out of shadowy cedar forests, and the chance of spotting a mink or a bald eagle.

And sometimes there's the band of beer-drinking revelers, whooping it up on the riverbank.

Heavy use of the Jordan by party-minded paddlers is raising tough questions about how to preserve the wild character of Michigan's first designated Natural River. Local conservationists want to build structures to protect the resource, but they face opposition from the state program that restricts development on wild streams.

"It's a fragile resource that's being

loved to death," said John Richter, president of Friends of the Jordan River Watershed. "Somebody told me we should let nature take its course. And I said, Wait a minute. This isn't nature. It's people."

Richter says about a half-dozen sites on the river are being degraded in one way or another from overuse. Paddlers and tubers litter and relieve themselves on private land. Stream banks are eroding, which can ruin fish spawning habitat. And the landings where people launch and end their canoe trips don't have enough space or parking.

"People are just pulling off the river where there's high ground and converting them into campgrounds," Richter said.

Perhaps the most popular party spot on the river is Frog Island, an area of

continued on page 6

CCCF Grant to Fund 'Keep the Jordan Clean' Stations

The Friends of the Jordan River Watershed, and its Jordan River Action Group committee, was recently awarded a grant for \$934 from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation for JRAG's "Keep the Jordan Clean Stations" for the collection of trash and returnable cans and bottles.

The grant will fund the purchase, anchoring and construction of new stations at Graves Crossing, Old State Rd., Webster Bridge and Rogers Bridge, replacing bulkier and heavier booths used since 2008, which the DNR had required to be removed each fall.

Secondary and elementary students of local schools are involved in collecting trash and returnables, raising funds for their programs and awareness of the delicate river ecosystem. Since JRAG began the project in 2008, approximately 140 bags of trash and 15,000 returnable cans and bottles have been collected each year.

"It is wonderful to be able to offer this support for the Friends of the Jordan River Watershed, Inc.," said R.A. "Chip" Hansen, president of the foundation. "The trustees of the Charlevoix County Community Foundation join me in extending best wishes to you for a successful project."

JRAG expects the new stations to be up and running by Memorial Day.



Young Friends Program Returns
– See Story Page 3



Hitting the Road

It was a chilly, sunny day April 21 as FOJ volunteers took to their stretch of M-66 as part of Michigan's Adopt-A-Highway program. One of more than 3,000 such volunteer groups throughout the state, the FOJ collected 10 bags of trash this time out. Also cleaned were landings at Graves Crossing, Old State Rd., Webster Bridge and Rogers Bridge. Participants included [l to r] Mitchell Heick, Jinny Heick, John Richter, David Heick, Joe Nerone, Terry Ryan, Dennis Choate, Lynne Goodwin and Tim Goodwin. Since Michigan's Adopt-A-Highway program began in 1990, volunteer groups have collected more than a million bags of roadside trash covering some 6,400 miles of Michigan roads.

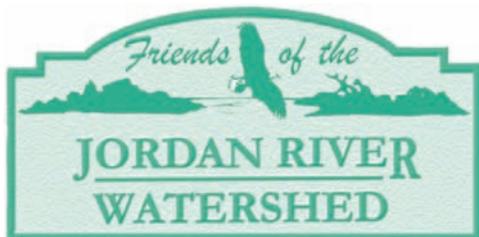
Photo: Tim Goodwin.



Earth Day at Landslide

James Manning, outdoor educator at Concord Community School in Mancelona, brought a group of students and parents to celebrate Earth Day by cleaning the North Country Trail in the Jordan River Valley. Volunteers from the Antrim Conservation District, Friends of the Jordan River Watershed and Bellaire residents rounded out the cleanup crew. The FOJ's Terry Ryan cut fallen trees on the trail from Pinney Bridge to Landslide Overlook prior to Earth Day. Splitting into two crews, one group cleared fallen trees and trash from Cascade Creek to Landslide Overlook, while the other cleaned from Pinney Bridge to Cascade Creek. The crews cleaned the parking area at Landslide and Cascade Creek Road where the NCT crosses the road and back to Pinney Bridge parking area. What a fabulous day! A successful trail cleanup! And a wonderful hike!

Left to right. Gillian Nevarez, Annette Nevarez, Heidi Shaffer, Shanna Alpers, Jake Crawford, Laura, Mini Griffiore, Max Curtis, James Manning, Jerry Alpers and John Teesdale. Photo: Anne Zukowski.



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The Friends of the Jordan River Watershed, Inc. is a grassroots, nonprofit, 501 [C] 3 non-governmental organization whose mission is to "conserve the natural resources and protect the environmental quality of the Jordan River and its watershed."



Remembering Thora Kotowich

BY JINNY HEICK

We are saddened by the loss of another elder River-Keeper, Thora Kotowich, 92, who died March 24, 2012.

Thora and husband, Teddy, owned a flat boating and fly-fishing guide service on the Jordan River, which they maintained for 50 years. Thora became an expert fly fisherwoman tying her own flies, which were in demand by fly fishermen all over the country.

Thora was a founding member of the Jordan River Watershed Commission. The "Save the Jordan" steering committee held their first meeting June 27, 1957. A motion was made to organize under Act 200 of Public Acts of 1957 to establish and organize an Intermunicipality committee to study the Jordan River and its tributaries and watershed. By Dec. 4, 1967, eight townships and East Jordan and Mancelona had approved resolution for Act 200. Others agreed to follow. The Jordan River Watershed Committee was formally organized January 15, 1968.

As a member of the board led by Dr. David Pray, Thora served with John Hodge, Ed Rebman, Bryce Vance, C.C. (Ode) Walker and other commission members, and the state DNR, to achieve the designation of the Jordan River becoming the first "Wild & Scenic River" in Michigan. These visionaries recognized the critical importance of protecting the Jordan River Watershed for present and future generations and worked hard to ensure its protection. Today, the FOJ actively seek your involvement and support in continuing this vitally important work.

Young Friends Program Returns

FOJ has always considered the environmental/outdoor education of our youth a high priority. One of the reasons we established the Jordan River Watershed Center was to be able to host educational programs. The Young Friends Program allows us the opportunity to show kids some of the wondrous things in nature and have fun doing it. The natural heritage of the Jordan Valley that we all enjoy will one day be in their hands to steward. It is our duty to prepare them for this responsibility.

This year we plan to double the program run for the past three years. We are pleased to have back two experienced outdoor/science educators, John Thompson and Fischer Jex. They have constructed a curriculum that complements a student's formal school year education with some good ole' summer time outdoor fun. Because of our generous members and the success of our Photography Contest/Calendar sales we are able to offer this program at low or no cost to participating students. We will be sending out informational brochures in the near future as well as posting more details on our website.

**Young Friends of the Jordan
2012 Summer Program
for Grades 4 to 8
2 Sessions – 6 Classes; 9AM–1PM,**

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Session 1: June 25, 27, 29

July 9, 11, 13

Session 2: July 16, 18, 20

July 23, 25, 27

Deadlines for Registration:

Session 1 – June 15

Session 2 – July 2

Cost: \$12 per student per session

\$20 per family

Scholarships Available

Class 1: What is the Quality of the Water? Water quality testing of the Jordan River by the students.

Class 2: Bird, Blooms and Bugs. Observation and identification of birds, flowers and common insects.

Class 3: Salamanders and Slimy Stuff. Exploring organisms for the Michigan Herb Atlas Project.

Class 4: Exploring the Jordan Valley. Hiking in the Valley exploring plants, animals and geological features.

Class 5: Cattails and Animal Trails. Visit Wagbo Farm investigating edible and unedible plants, animal tracks and nature awareness games.

Class 6: Rafting the Jordan River. Exploring the beauty of the river with a picnic at the Watershed Center.



Gas Companies Reveal Truth About Fracking

BY ANNE ZUKOWSKI

“Our business involves a variety of operating risks, including well site blowouts; cratering and explosions; equipment failures; uncontrolled flows of natural gas, oil or well fluids; fires; formations with abnormal pressures; pollution and other environmental risks; and natural disasters. Any of these events could result in injury or loss of human life, loss of hydrocarbons, significant damage to or destruction of property, environmental pollution...” (Cabot Energy, 2008 10-K disclosure form to the Securities Exchange Commission SEC). The SEC requires companies to disclose significant risk factors to protect investors and stockholders. Truth in advertising, however, does not extend to the public.

The information given to the SEC is NOT divulged to homeowners asked to sign drilling leases. It is NOT given out to communities where these wells are located. Instead, we are fed “The Lady in the Pantsuit” TV version of gas drilling extolling its virtues as safe, clean and good for the economy.

Who Protects the Public? The Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Superfund Act and the Michigan water withdrawal rules were enacted to protect public health and the environment. But gas and oil companies fought for and won exemptions from ALL these acts. The Halliburton Loophole in the 2005 energy bill even exempted them from the Safe Drinking Water Act.

As a result, every state allowing horizontal fracking has experienced poisoned air, rivers and streams; gas well leaks and explosions; debilitating health problems; dead wildlife and livestock; earthquakes; toxic gas plumes causing families to evacuate their homes; poisoned and exploding water wells; loss of property value and ruined roads from 24-hour truck traffic.

Northern Michigan residents dodged a bullet on Christmas Eve when a plume of deadly hydrogen sulfide gas escaped from a frack fluid injection well. Fortunately, winds dispersed the gas before it could fall in high concentra-

Why We Do What We Do

As members of Friends of the Jordan, we take protecting our River very seriously. The Jordan Valley encompasses a large expanse (25,000 acres) of unfragmented forests with free-flowing streams and cold water springs that bubble out of the hills. It is a truly magical place, and we want to keep it that way.

But it is not the only magical place in Michigan. (It just happens to be in our backyard). There are many great rivers and wild areas that deserve protection.

That is why we oppose horizontal fracking for gas extraction and are working with Don't Frack Michigan to call for a ban on its use.

Because gas companies must use and poison enormous quantities of water which can never be returned to the hydrologic cycle; and because gas companies are exempt from abiding by federal and state environmental laws (including Michigan's Water Withdrawal Rules); regulation of this industry is impossible. The continued expansion of horizontal fracking destroys the health and threatens the very existence of our rivers and forests, and simply delays the transition to sustainable, green energy technologies.

The threat is real. 5.3 million acres of state land, which include the Pigeon River and Mason Tract, have been recommended for auction on May 8 to oil and gas drillers. Even though these areas are “protected,” the Natural Gas Subcommittee recently released a report calling for “drilling and extraction of minerals in currently prohibited areas.” Will the Jordan Valley be next on the chopping block?

Horizontal Fracking is a global problem, and with all problems of such a huge scale, it's easy to get overwhelmed and think nothing can be done. But this is where the power of grassroots organizations shine. While the problems we face may be global in scope, the solutions often start at the local level, because that is where we live and organize. FOJ is just one individual group. But if we join our efforts with other environmental groups around the state and throughout the country, and even join with people around the world, we can become a powerful and unstoppable voice to protect those wild areas we love.

— Anne Zukowski

tions in populated areas. People smelled the gas in Charlevoix, Boyne City, Harbor Springs and Cheboygan, over 80 miles from the release site. Also in the news is the spike in earthquakes in Oklahoma, Arkansas and most recently Ohio. The US Geological Survey cited underground injection of drilling waste water and chemicals as the likely culprit. These earthquakes have, and will continue to damage homes and businesses, and fracture rock, allowing for the upward migration of toxic frack fluid.

The DEQ claims to have the best regulations in the country, but they cannot even force companies to clean up

when accidents and damage to forests, water and communities occur. Significant changes were made to Michigan's Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA) in December 2010 to accommodate industry needs. Attorney Joseph Quandt explained these changes at an industry seminar, reported on in Oil and Gas News, 2/25/11).

“The new law has a burden of proof clause in which the government bears the burden of proof that contamination has occurred...old operational memorandums, bulletins and other instructions of the Michigan DEQ are

specifically excluded from having any legal effect and cannot be enforced.”

He also explained that self-directed cleanups without DEQ involvement are now allowed, and that economics can now be considered with equal weight with other factors when proposing a cleanup plan. In other words, in most cases the taxpayers foot the bill to clean up the mess.

One more industry advantage – ownership of the mineral rights to land takes precedence over surface rights ownership. The future of the Jordan River and all our rivers and forests in Michigan are in danger. Chesapeake Energy report to the SEC spells it out.

“We embarked on an aggressive lease acquisition program, which we have referred to as the ‘gas shale land grab’ of 2006 through 2008 and the ‘unconventional oil land grab’ of 2009 and 2010. We believed that the winner of these land grabs would enjoy competitive advantages for decades to come...”

Chesapeake’s 13.2 million acre land grab comprises an area twice the size of Maryland. Most of the leases (some 500,000 acres) in Michigan have been on state land. Now consider that according to the DEQ, at least 5 million gallons of water are needed to frack a well, the same amount needed to grow 8-10 acres of corn for an entire growing season. The difference – most of the water used to grow corn goes back into the hydrologic cycle in some way. Now picture Michigan with thousands of horizontal fracking wells, each using millions of gallons of water which becomes so toxic it can NEVER be returned to the hydrologic cycle. It is happening in other states, and the groundwork is being put in place to do it here. This does not bode well for the future of our rivers, streams and forests.

Horizontal fracking is a shortsighted industrialization of rural and forested landscapes that benefits only a privileged few. Its total carbon footprint is dirtier than coal. As long as these companies enjoy exemptions and subsidies not available to other businesses, green and sustainable energy will not have a chance. The exemptions and subsidies must end.

People who live and work in

Michigan should be provided with the same information enjoyed by shareholders and investors on the dangers and risks of horizontal fracking. We deserve the truth from the gas companies and from the DEQ, not the rosy lies we get from the TV lady in the pantsuit.

Fracking has been banned in Quebec, France and South Africa. Over 100 municipalities around the country have passed resolutions against fracking, including Detroit, Wayne County and Cross Village. Over 4,000 citizens in Northern Michigan have signed a petition from Don’t Frack Michigan calling for a state-wide ban. Several other groups around the state are circulating similar petitions. Our efforts, along with those of groups throughout the state and the country, can make a difference. Visit dontfrackmichigan.org for more information, including scientific studies, videos, links to other groups around the country, latest available information on well locations, and how to contact us if you would like to get involved.

*Find out more about
the effects of fracking at
www.DontFrackMichigan.org*

Safe Disposal

Hazardous Waste

Antrim County’s house hold hazardous, HHHW, waste drop offs are held in May and August every year. One was held in Bellaire on May 5, but there will be another in Elk Rapids on August 25. Contact the Antrim Conservation District, 231-533-8363, if you have any questions about what materials are accepted and where the events are located. Contact Kelly Martin, at the Charlevoix Conservation District, 231-582-6193, to see when their HHHW collections are in Charlevoix County and where they will be held. Do your part to keep hazardous materials out of our water supply and our natural environment.

Unused Pharmaceuticals

Unused pharmaceuticals are being collected at Emmet, Charlevoix, and Antrim County Sheriff Administration Offices. Antrim County Sherriff’s office is at 107 Grove Street, Bellaire and can accept unused medications from 8-5 Monday - Friday. The Sheriff Offices have monitored lock boxes.



While there’s no message on the reverse side of this postcard to indicate a date, the photo of these ladies fishing the Jordan River, with their guide manning a pole in the river boat, likely was taken sometime between 1898 and 1917, when the rate for postcards was one cent, which is indicated on the reverse side. A similar boat to the one pictured is on display at the Friends of the Jordan River Watershed Center in East Jordan. From the collection of Tim and Lynne Goodwin.

continued from page 1

riverbank surrounded by wetlands where repeated loading and unloading of canoes and kayaks has caused severe erosion.

“Frog Island is probably a third the size today of what it once was,” Richter said.

When Friends of the Jordan and other partners installed woody debris a few years ago to shore up Frog Island’s banks, “people just ripped it up,” according to Brian Bury, administrator for the Natural Rivers Program of the Department of Natural Resources.

Richter said he would like to see stream banks at Frog Island and other sites stabilized with logs—larger than the woody debris used there previously—to stop erosion. At Old State Road, where heavy paddling traffic creates problems with parking and trespass on private property, he favors building a new parking area and a landing with toilets and a boardwalk just upstream from the road, on public land.

But those ideas have met resistance from the Natural Rivers program, which was created in 1970 to ensure that development doesn’t diminish designated rivers’ aesthetic character, wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities.

“We’re looking for a natural river that offers a certain kind of experience,” Bury said.

For now, Bury said any ecological damage caused by overuse of the Jordan isn’t significant enough to merit changing its aesthetic character, and building new landings would just set the table for heavier traffic and more elaborate parties.

“The general thought is that, at this point, we’d do more harm than good” by building the structures, he said.

Richter said he respects Bury and his work, but thinks the state’s position is shortsighted. The “certain kind of experience” the program promotes has disappeared on the Jordan, he added.

“I’m not sure Brian has spent enough time on the river, say on Memorial Day or the Fourth of July,” he said. “I understand their point of view, but the program isn’t working. They want no man-made features, but what’s happening is worse.”

Richter said another solution pro-

posed in public meetings is a limit on the number of watercraft on the river. But he and Bury agree that such a limit would be unpopular and hard to enforce.

Paddlers need permits to float some rivers within national forests, but the state has no permit system.

“To control private use of watercraft, we’d need a legal mandate,” and that’s not something the state is interested in, Bury said.

Don Montfort, whose family owns the Swiss Hideaway canoe and kayak livery, said his clients are on too tight a schedule to cause much trouble. He said the main problem is the growing number of locals who have flocked to the river as canoes and kayaks have gotten cheaper, a position Richter shares.

“The locals say, ‘This is our river, and we’re going to stop wherever we want to stop,’” Montfort said.

Other ideas under consideration include increased law enforcement and more signs indicating restrooms, access rules and river etiquette. But enforcement has already been stepped up with little effect, said Montfort, and signs are unlikely to discourage bad actors.

“When you block off one area” from riverside partying, “it’s just going to pop up in another,” he said.

Richter agrees that it will be tough to find solutions that work for paddlers, conservationists, anglers, homeowners and the state, but his group will continue holding meetings and seeking input.

“We’ve got to do something,” he said. “Before we know it, I think we’re going to have a dozen Frog Islands.”

Michigan River News is available online at michiganrivernews.com

We want to help...

To: foj@friendsofthejordan.org

Sent: Thursday, April 19, 2012 11:27 AM

Subject: We want to help...

Hello,

My name is Andy Brouwer. I grew up in EJ my whole life and one of, if not THE, fondest memories I have of my life in EJ was canoeing and enjoying the Jordan River. Even though I’ve been in North Carolina the last 7 years, I still come up twice a year and make a point of getting a canoe trip in. I try to keep up with local EJ news and recently a friend of mine emailed me a link regarding the river and how excessive and irresponsible use is taking a noticeable toll on the River and its beauty. This deeply hurt to read. Obviously I’ve noticed things like Frog Island getting smaller, but honestly I never stopped to think about how MY actions and those I bring with me could lead to this. Everyone I ever go with practice things like bringing any trash with us, and if we see trash, we pick it up too. I’ve even had to have some candid conversations with others not in our group about things I’ve seen on the River. I know I can do more.

I’d like to see about raising some funds for the FOJ. I know I have some friends locally and that I went to college with that would all be willing to donate as a group. My question to you is what kind of things do the FOJ’s need money for? Is there anything specific that’s being looked at that funds are the limiting factor on? Is there anything that some good ol’ fashioned elbow grease could help with? Being that I live so far away, I am somewhat limited in physical presence, but I am one heck of a hype man when I see a good cause, and The River is something I’d like to enjoy responsibly my whole life, for my childrens lives, and their kids lives.

I look forward to hearing from you and learning more about your plans for keeping the River healthy and a place that people can enjoy for many generations to come...and more importantly, how I can go from an ordinary canoer, to a canoer for a cause!

I sincerely thank you for your time.

Kind regards,

Andy Brouwer

Letter Supporting Landing Receives Reply

March 14, 2012

Mr. Brian Bury, Northern Michigan Rivers Administrator
Natural Rivers Program, Michigan DNR

RE: Proposed Jordan River landing at Old State Road

Dear Mr. Bury,

My name is Rebekah Fuller. I am a resident of Antrim County, Michigan, an Environmental Consultant, and a frequent paddler of the Jordan River. I am writing today in support of a proposed landing on the Jordan River to the south side of the Old State Bridge.

I first heard about the proposed project from Tressa Youmans, a member of the Jordan River Action Group. The idea was broached during a fall paddle that I attended with members of the Jordan River Action Group, Friend's of the Jordan, Tipp of the Mitt Watershed Council, and the Department of Natural Resources. We all convened to see first hand the issues facing the river due to over use by the public. We discussed the challenges that are currently facing both the Frog Island location and Old State.

I believe an official landing will benefit the Old State area for multiple reasons. Firstly, it will eventually alleviate the use of the existing popular pull out area, which is currently privately owned land. The majority of people utilizing the river for recreational purposes do not realize they are trespassing when they stop their canoes and kayaks to the northeast side of the bridge. Given that this property is utilized by local livery companies and that the area lacks a landing that looks official, it is exceptionally confusing. Secondly, a landing to the south side of the bridge would alleviate safety issues that arise when paddlers attempt to make a sudden turn out of the culverts on the north and toward the eastern bank. This location is known by locals as one where someone will inevitably capsize. Add to this, the swirling and strong currents at this particular location and you have a recipe for disaster. Finally, an official landing will secure the banks at one specific location and prevent further erosion issues. The banks along the area that is currently utilized as a landing have not been able to support any vegetation aside from a few cedar trees in years. It is, in short, a muddy mess. Every time a canoe or kayak runs into the bank, or someone attempts to step onto the bank, a little more of that mud falls into the river. There are locations on the south side of the river where people have begun to stop and go ashore. These locations, without any structural support, will inevitably end up looking like the area to the northeast of the bridge. This is particularly crucial given the wetlands that exist to the south of the bridge.

I believe the Department of Natural Resources, who aims to protect the river, and the Department of Forestry, who owns the land, are faced with a unique opportunity here. I often hear people complain about the DNR or say the state offices need to "do something". But rarely do you find a group of citizens willing to step up to the plate and work with you. It is my understanding that the Jordan River Action Group, Friends of the Jordan, and Tipp of the Mitt are working together to secure a grant to pay for the installation of the proposed landing. You

have at hand someone who is willing to provide the funding and the effort to install an official landing that will ease existing environmental and safety hazards at the unofficial landing site.

I would ask you, today, to support their efforts; to hear out their plans for the location and work with them to see it to fruition. We all have the same goals, to preserve the river environment and reduce safety hazards to those who use the river recreationally. This can happen by getting paddlers off the privately owned land to the northeast, out of the newer stops within the watershed area to the southeast, and onto a secured and designated landing area. Given budget and staffing concerns within state offices, I believe it would be difficult for the DNR to take on this project alone. The non-profits spearheading this plan certainly can not do it without the support of the DNR. I believe that by working together, it is possible to see an official landing installed.

Thank you for your time in reading my letter.

Sincerely,

Rebekah Fuller

From: "Bury, Brian (DNR)" <BURYB@michigan.gov>

To: Rebekah Fuller

Sent: Friday, March 23, 2012 2:49 PM

Ms. Fuller,

Thank you for your comments regarding management issues at the Old State Road crossing of the Jordan River. The conceptual landing upstream of Old State Road that you referenced hasn't been formally proposed to our office. If a proposal for the landing is submitted for our review, the proposal would be reviewed under the Rules for Utilities and Publicly Provided Facilities in Designated Natural River Areas. In the broad sense, our decision on the application would consider the proposed activity, the site conditions, the applicable rules, and input from interested parties.

Some of the specific review considerations would be the impact to natural resources, including wetlands at this location, the need for the structure/new access, recreational use patterns, and responsibility for site management. Also, in addition to the idea of a new landing, I understand that Conservation Resource Alliance is currently determining if funding can be secured to replace the existing road crossing with a clear span structure. Whether the Old State Road crossing is going to be replaced would be critical to this discussion, as any changes to the layout and orientation of the crossing could have a large impact on the existing state access site on the SW corner, the private land that gets used on the NE corner, and the proposed location of any new structures/access sites.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance at this time. Thanks again for taking the time to review and provide comments to us on this issue.

Sincerely,

Brian Bury

DNR - Natural Rivers Program

Gaylord Operations Service Center

989-732-3541 ext. 5088

www.michigan.gov/dnrnaturalrivers

Soil Erosion Growing on the Jordan River

BY HEIDI SHAFFER

Antrim County Soil Erosion Officer

I cannot believe I am saying this, but the Jordan River is being loved too much!

How, you might ask, can you love the Jordan River too much? Well, let me tell you! Have you been on the river during a hot day in the summer? Hundreds of river enthusiasts hit the Jordan River every summer, some with an understanding of the river's fragile environment and some without. Without designated pull out areas along the river, most folks pull off the river wherever they can for party or potty stops. That unchecked ingress and egress on the river is creating severe erosion along its 33-mile length. We are loving the Jordan to death.

Friends of the Jordan (FOJ), the Jordan River Action Group (JRAG), Antrim County's Soil Erosion Officer, DNR and Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council have been exploring remedies to fix the man-made erosion and overall degradation that occurs on the Jordan in the summer. JRAG has put in trash receptacles at Graves Crossing, Old State Rd., Websters Bridge and Rogers Bridge. They also have created a great mesh bag for returnables and trash that can be carried on a river trip to keep trash out of the river. The DNR has put a porta potty on the southeast corner where Old State Road and the Jordan River cross. Tip, ACD, FOJ, JRAG, and the DNR have floated the river to evaluate erosion sites to see what can be done to fix the problems.

Instead of closing the river to its many admirers, which would be devastating, the Jordan River erosion committee is suggesting designated armored pull outs, minor location signage, maps, and some basic education provided to river enthusiasts before they set off down the Jordan. We don't believe anyone would purposely damage the Jordan during a downstream float, but we do think there is a lack of understanding on appropriate river etiquette and erosion protection. The Jordan River Erosion Group is working with DNR Natural Rivers' Program staff and the DEQ to maintain compliance with the Jordan River Management Plan, environmental protection laws and Natural River zoning limits to protect the Jordan.

FOJ Calendar

MAY — Begin 2012 Photography Contest (Ends August 6)

MAY 19 — Water Quality Monitoring; Jordan River, 1–4 PM, Meet at JRWC

JUNE 2 — Sort Macroinvertebrates; Harbor Springs High School, Noon–3 PM

JUNE 25, 27, 29 — Young Friends Program; Week 1, 9 AM – 1 PM, JRWC

JULY 9, 11, 13 — Young Friends Program; Week 2, 9 AM – 1 PM, JRWC

JULY 16, 18, 20 — Young Friends Program; Week 3, 9 AM–1 PM, JRWC

JULY 23, 25, 27 — Young Friends Program; Week 4, 9 AM–1 PM, JRWC

JULY 22 — Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup ; 9 AM–Noon, Meet at Pinney Bridge Rd/M-66

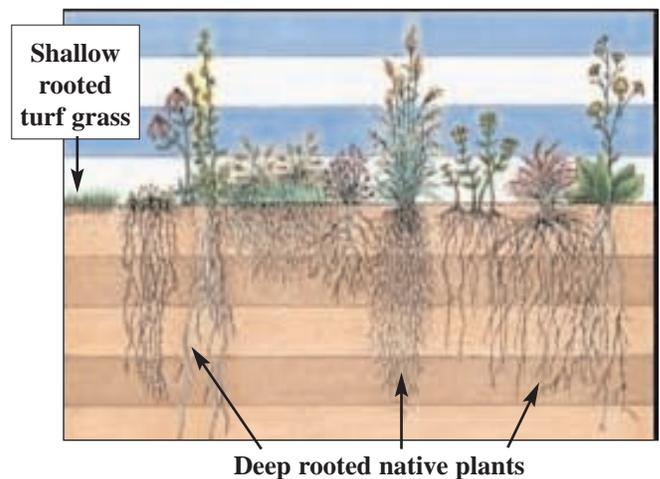
AUGUST 6 — Final Deadline for entering Photography Contest

SEPTEMBER 15 — Photography Contest Celebration & Awards; 1–4 PM, JRWC

SEPTEMBER 22 — Adopt-A-Highway / River Cleanup; 10 AM–Noon, Graves Crossing

SEPTEMBER 22 — Water Quality Monitoring, Jordan River, 1–4 PM, JRWC

SEPTEMBER 30 — Sort Macroinvertebrates; NCMC Petoskey, 1–3 PM



Greenbelt Buffers: What are they and why are they important?

A greenbelt buffer is a strip of native vegetation, not sod, between a lawn and a body of water. Why are they important? Greenbelt buffers help stabilize the soil with their deep root systems, help filter potentially contaminated runoff water, provide great habitat for birds and butterflies, provide shade to cool the water, and provide aquatic habitat to fish and the critters they eat.

Greenbelt buffers can be formal or wild, whatever your landscaping preference might be. Shrubs, grasses and flowers can fill the buffer....you choose....just make sure you pick the right plant for the right situation. Plants are picky: wet vs dry, shady vs sunny, tall vs short.

The Antrim Conservation District can help with plant selection, and we have a native plant sale this June. Check our website at www.antrimcd.com or give us a call for plant selection assistance at 231.533.8363.

A Fond Farewell to Bob Sayer

Dear Irene, Lise, Kristin, Andrea, Tamara and all those who knew and loved Bob,

If you look up on a clear night now, you might notice a new bright and shining star in the heavens. Our dear friend and long standing board member Bob Sayer left us April 24 to join the chorus of Angels in the Cosmos. Few of us who knew Bob can doubt that he is actively engaged in exploring his new place in the Universe. Maybe now he will finally perfect his weather predictions or complete his understanding of nuclear physics. He'll certainly strike up some conversations and meet and make new friends up there.

I first met Bob when he brought his neighbor's dog, Bear, into my clinic. Bear had just been shot with a high-powered rifle, nearly severing his front leg and ripping apart his lower jaw. Time was critical as Bear was in shock and hemorrhaging badly. Between Bob and me, we stopped Bear's bleeding and stabilized his condition. Bob was so much help, he was in my way. But without him, we would not have had enough time. I've known few people capable of that kind of feat.

This episode began our long friendship and typifies the Bob I came to know and admire. He later adopted Bear and nursed him through a long recovery, providing him with a secure and loving home for many years to come. Through the course of Bear's sojourn, Bob and I engaged in countless conversations. I was repeatedly amazed at Bob's depth of knowledge and grasp of details. His love of knowledge was only exceeded by his passion to share it, especially with students and young people. He was the consummate teacher. His love of learning was infectious and touched everyone who knew him.

Bob would talk with and engage everyone he met with the same genuine compassion and concern as he did with Bear. Bob would reach out to the underdog, yet challenge the haughty with his kindness, grace and intellect. He was a caring, hard working, virtuous, self-



Bob holds forth on climate change at the FOJ Watershed Center.

made man, father and husband. I don't ever recall seeing him angry, despondent or depressed, even right up to the end. All his days were "10s", he'd say.

It should come as no surprise that Bob was a great asset to Friends of the Jordan. He was a perfect fit. We constantly relied on his vast scientific knowledge to guide us through various issues. His love of the Jordan was immeasurable. He could steer a boat in the swift river current like no other. I will never forget his enthusiasm remodeling the Watershed Center. I remember watching as he stood on the top rung of a step ladder running a chainsaw over his head to cut away some rotted beams. I didn't know whether to continue to hold the ladder or run away. Even in the darkest days he was always optimistic. "Failure is not an option" he'd say.

To me, one of Bob's crowning achievements was serving as a mentor to the students at East Jordan High School's Math-Science-Technology Center. Bob loved to teach and excelled at it. Teaching was his life's calling. It didn't matter if the students were the highest achievers or the under performers. He didn't just give them the facts, but rather showed them how to learn.

One group of students, all co-valedictorians of their class, performed a comprehensive, year long analysis of the water quality of the Jordan River. This body of work, worthy of a college level Masters Thesis, set new standards for the MST Program that remains unsurpassed. The night those students presented their project to a packed audience, Bob beamed with pride for them.

Today, those of us who knew and loved Bob suffer the heavy burden of his loss. Where will we turn to find his smiling friendship, willing acceptance, uncanny knowledge or genuine compassion? We can only fill that void with the simple satisfaction of having known him and witnessing all the goodness he stood for. I am ever grateful for all those things we shared together and what we accomplished. Experience tells me that my tears will dry up and the pain I feel will gradually lessen. It also tells me that I will always have a special place reserved in my heart where the memory of Bob dwells. I will honor that place with bittersweet joy and sadness forever. Thanks for being my friend Bob. I will deeply miss you.

Love,
John [Richter]



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An individual human existence should be like a river: small at first, narrowly contained within its banks, and rushing passionately past rocks and over waterfalls. Gradually the river grows wider, the banks recede, the waters flow more quietly, and in the end, without any visible break, they become merged in the sea, and painlessly lose their individual being.

– *Bertrand Russell, philosopher, mathematician, author, Nobel laureate (1872-1970)*

Calling All Photographers!

FOJ is pleased to announce its 8th annual “Visions of the Valley” photography contest. This year’s theme will be, “The Jordan Valley, Portraits of Nature.” The rules and procedures will be the same as last year, meaning all photos must be from within the Jordan River Watershed. The deadline for entries will be August 6. Please visit our website, friendsofthejordan.org, for details.

All photographers, young and old, novice or pro, are invited to enter their favorite photos. Each year contestants have fanned out across the valley to capture spectacular images of this marvelous place. Once again we will select 14 photos for our 2013 Calendar and award those photographers cash prizes. Please reserve the third Saturday in September (9/15/12) in order to attend the Awards Celebration at the Jordan River Watershed Center. On that day, prize winners are announced and together we share

good food and fine music while viewing an exhibit of this year’s entries.

When we started this project eight years ago we hoped to bring together a diverse group of people united in their love of the Jordan Valley. We also wanted to raise awareness of its fragile beauty and share this belief with others in a positive way. In addition, we wanted to establish a fund raising mechanism that would help finance

other programs like The Young Friends Program. Today, we are pleased to announce that these goals have been successfully met. We look forward to this year’s entries and extend a special thanks to all the many participants who make this possible. This a worthy endeavor for which we can all be proud.

If you would like to participate in this project please contact us by email at foj@friendsofthejordan.org or telephone at 231.536.9947.

