

# Riffles & Runs

Rogue River Watershed Project Newsletter

Grand Valley State University Annis Water Resources Institute

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## Rogue River Watershed Council Forms


Andy Bowman – Grand Valley Metro Council (GVMC)

It has been long anticipated by the Rogue River Watershed Project that a Rogue River Watershed Council be formed to help carry on and expand the work of the Project. Since the summer of 2000, staff members have been writing bylaws and actively promoting membership by visiting and holding discussions with 41 municipalities and organizations. On Wednesday, February 26, 2003, the Rogue River Watershed Council held its first meeting. At opening gavel, current membership was found to include eight local units of government, five organizations, and one state program<sup>1</sup>.

The Rogue River Watershed Council's purpose will be to continue performing many of the tasks currently handled through "319 grant"<sup>2</sup> project dollars. These tasks include information and education activities, watershed planning for stream maintenance and enhancement, ongoing stream studies and active engagement with federal and state agencies. One additional, but very important, aspect of this organization will be to represent the interests of the watershed in land use planning through Grand Valley Metro Council's Blueprint II Framework planning process. By being involved in regional planning in the Grand Rapids metro area, the Council will influence the direction and extent of development throughout the watershed. This will establish a solid link between local land use planning and the protection of vital waters on the Rogue River and its tributaries.



Rogue River near Garden Club Park

Watershed Councils must have widespread support and effective involvement of all those who care about the watershed. As membership in the council grows, it will include other governing authorities, public agencies, resource organizations and watershed residents. If you would like to know more about the Council or wish to become involved in any aspect of the Rogue River Watershed Project, please call Andy Bowman at (616) 776-7611 or Nichol Stout at (616) 331-3092. 

<sup>1</sup> Not all representatives were in attendance and some organizations present had not completed their authorizations for representation

<sup>2</sup> Section 319 of the Federal Clean Water Act (Nonpoint Source Program)

For a schedule of upcoming Rogue River Watershed Council meetings please visit :  
<http://www.gvsu.edu/wri/isc/rogue/council.htm>



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## Brower Lake Nature Preserve

Doug Powless – Land Conservancy of West Michigan

Residents of the Rogue River Watershed can celebrate the establishment of a new nature preserve just outside Rockford. Thanks to the generosity of Peter Wege and the Wege Foundation, the Land Conservancy of West Michigan now owns its seventh nature preserve - the new "Brower Lake Nature Preserve".

Located within the Rogue River Watershed, the 61-acre nature preserve includes oak forest, stands of white pines, two wetlands, jack pine and red pine plantations, and a wooded ridge that overlooks nearby Big Brower Lake. The creation of this preserve will help protect the water quality of Big Brower and Little Brower lakes and provide habitat for the resident wood ducks, herons, amphibians, and song-birds.

The Land Conservancy will host a preserve dedication and field trip on Saturday, May 31, at 10 a.m. to noon. Visitors to this new preserve will be able to hike the trails that wind through the woods and may be able to glimpse at the ducks and herons that frequent the two wetlands. The mature woods provide excellent habitat for migrating warblers in the spring and for owls year-round. 



*Brower Lake Nature Preserve located on Je-Ne-Be Dr. in Rockford.*



## Farming for the Future


Laurie Beth Nederveld - Annis Water Resources Institute

"Farming for the Future" was the theme of two farmer workshops given by the Annis Water Resources Institute of Grand Valley State University. The workshops were intended for farmers and ranchers in the Rogue River Watershed and were held on January 8<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at the Grant Depot Restaurant and Sparta Township Hall. Respectively over forty landowners, business owners, farmers, local decision makers, and homeowners attended one of the two workshops. Presenters included Kelly Bishop and Steve Utic from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rob Zbiciak from the Department for Environmental Quality (DEQ), Erika Rosebrook from the Kent County Administrator's Office, and Kendra Wills and Sarah O'Donnell of MSU Extension.

Presentation topics included information on Kent County's PDR (Purchase of Development Rights) process, rural land use issues in Newaygo County, the Wetlands Working Group which provides technical and regulatory guidance on existing wetland restoration programs, and the Farm Bill Conservation Programs administered through the NRCS. Specific Farm Bill Conservation Programs included:

For more information call the Land Conservancy of West Michigan at (616) 451-9476 or send an e-mail message to [lcwm@naturenearby.org](mailto:lcwm@naturenearby.org).

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

As a result of the workshops, several farmers have started the application process for a Farm Bill Conservation Program with a local NRCS or DEQ office. Those who evaluated the workshops considered them to be informative and useful and indicated the information provided will help them in making future land use decisions. 

For More Information about NRCS programs contact your local USDA Service Center, listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture, or your local conservation district. Information is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/farmbill/2002/>



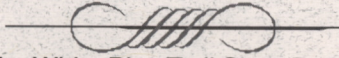
This project has been funded wholly or in part by the United States Environmental Protection Agency under the assistance agreement to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation for use.



## What is in Your Rogue River Watershed ?

Laurie Beth Nederveld - Annis Water Resources Institute

As we all know, the Rogue River Watershed is a region of natural beauty. The watershed supports a very diverse environment, and sometimes it is hard to notice the little things. As this watershed is studied and explored, any neat little things we stumble across we will take note of, conduct research on, and let you know about it through this newsletter.



At 92 miles, the White Pine Trail State Park is the longest rail to trail linear state park in Michigan. Formerly the Penn Central Railroad, it was purchased from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and dedicated on July 20, 1994. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) currently manages the trail with assistance from The Friends of the White Pine Trail Group. This non-profit group is dedicated to assisting the MDNR in completing the White Pine Trail, educating the public about the trail's history, and securing funding for the trail.

The trail travels from North Park Street in Grand Rapids to the network of trails in Cadillac, winding through portions of forests, farm fields, and pond areas. Biking, walking, and rollerblading are permitted on the trail and snowmobiling is allowed north of Russell Road located between Rock-



Two views of the White Pine Trail by the Rogue River.

ford and Cedar Springs. It can be found in Rockford skirting the Rogue River's east bank and approaching the Rockford Dam. Bordering the trail is Garden Club Park, a great spot for picnicking and enjoying the beauty of the Rogue River.

Information about Friends of the White Pine Trail can be found at [www.whitepinetrail.com](http://www.whitepinetrail.com), and Northern Michigan Connection at [www.michiweb.com](http://www.michiweb.com). For more information about the White Pine Trail State Park call Brad Wurfell at 517-335-3014.



### Wandering Through Your Watershed



Welcome back to another exciting adventure! In the last newsletter the mystery location was in the City of Cedar Springs at the Cedar Springs Historical Museum. The object in the picture is a stump puller. This piece of machinery was used to clear the stumps so that the land could be farmed. After cutting away as much earth as possible from around a stump, oxen were hitched to the stump puller and the stump was dragged out of the ground.

Can you guess the name of the trail pictured to the left?



Stump Puller

Sources: Rochester History Resources [www.history.rochester.edu](http://www.history.rochester.edu); Cedar Springs Historical Society- [www.cedar-springs.mi.us](http://www.cedar-springs.mi.us)



If you have questions about this newsletter or the Rogue River Watershed program, please call Nichol Stout at (616) 331-3092 or e-mail her at [stoutn@gvsu.edu](mailto:stoutn@gvsu.edu).



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## Upcoming Events

**May 17, 2003- Stream Search 2003-** We need your help to gather scientific information about the Rogue River and its Tributaries! Be a citizen scientist for a day. This is a great event for older families. We will meet at the corner of Summit Ave. and 12 Mile Rd. at 8:45 am. The event will last from 9 am - 12 pm, and lunch will be provided.



**May 31, 2003- Rogue River Celebration-** This is a fair for kids, and families to learn about water science. Some activities include fishing, tree identification, and activities with birds, fish, plants, and reptiles! Come join the fun! The event will be held at Parkside Elementary at 156 Lewis in Rockford from 9 am - 2pm. Lunch will be provided



Contact Laurie Beth Nederveld for more information  
616-331-3979 or [nedervla@gvsu.edu](mailto:nedervla@gvsu.edu).

Grand Valley State University  
Annis Water Resources Institute  
Lake Michigan Center  
740 West Shoreline Dr.  
Muskegon, MI 49441

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

