



THE LOOKOUT

Huron Valley Group

Vol.28 No.3 Summer 2006



The Green Governor: Michigan's Golden Age under Governor Milliken



Former Michigan governor William Milliken
(Photo by Bill Rustem)

What do you get when you match a boyhood spent near one of the world's most magnificent lakes with an adulthood that includes the longest tenure in the governor's office of anyone in Michigan's history?

You get the legacy of William Milliken, recognized by most today as Michigan's most environmentally concerned chief executive. Milliken, a Republican who served from January 1969 to the end of 1982, was the instigator or signer of most of the major state environmental laws that once defined Michigan as a green leader among the states. His legacy includes:

- The Michigan Environmental Protection Act (1970).
- The Natural Rivers Act (1970)
- The Great Lakes Shorelands Act (1970).
- What is now the Natural Resources Trust Fund (1976).
- The voter-approved beverage container deposit law (1976).
- The Sand Dune Protection and Management Act (1976).
- The Wetland Protection Act (1979).

Milliken happened to serve at a time when environmental protection was coming of age as an issue around the country. But the combination of a vibrant citizens' movement and the concern of the governor vaulted Michigan to the forefront of the states in cleaning up the messes of the past and charting a new course.

Born in Traverse City in 1922, Bill Milliken grew up playing on the shores of Grand Traverse Bay, swimming and fishing in its waters, and admiring its majesty. At the family's summer cottage a few miles east of town along Acme Creek, the

continued page 2.



By Dave Dempsey

He took risks to do what he thought was right

Dave Dempsey is Great Lakes Policy Advisor for Clean Water Action and lives in St. Paul, MN. He is the author of three books, including William G. Milliken: Michigan's Passionate Moderate, available at www.davedempsey.org.



Governor William Milliken continued

governor-to-be began to appreciate the wonder of the natural world.

"I spent many wonderful summer days and nights there," he recalled. "You could paddle right up the stream in a canoe. We fished for trout, never with very much success. I learned every part of that shoreline."

By the time that boy grew up to be a state senator, winning election in 1960, he was making what was then known as "conservation" a personal issue. He sponsored legislation to restrict highway billboards and called for protection of the state's scenic beauty.

Becoming lieutenant governor in 1965, Milliken saw a wider swath of the state. He toured Detroit in the aftermath of the 1967 riots and witnessed the appalling disparities in opportunity between white and African-American citizens, and between the wealthy and the poor. He later became an unlikely Republican champion of Detroit, forging an alliance with Democratic Mayor Coleman Young to redeem the state's largest city.

Perhaps it was the same ability to build coalitions that enabled Milliken to work with both the 'hook n' bullet' crowd and those who

birdwatched and backpacked. Revered by both, Milliken counted on their support to win increasingly easy re-elections three times.

There may have been no finer moment in his time as governor than the 1976 bottle deposit victory. Stalemated in the legislature by special interests, the deposit law got a boost when Milliken signed the first petition to put the issue on the ballot and lent his environmental advisor to the campaign to gather 300,000 signatures and win a fall campaign. Michigan voters approved what is now the most effective deposit law in the country by a whopping two-to-one margin.

The most important point to make about Milliken's environmental record is that he *took risks* to do what he thought was right. He defied major contributors to the GOP to push through a rule cleaning up phosphorus pollution in Michigan's waters, a major factor in the recovery of southern Lake Michigan and Lake Erie. He remembered a phone conversation with Jay Van Andel of Amway Corporation, an opponent of the phosphorus controls, this way: "I can still remember how incensed he was. He was adamant, but so was I. There was always a constant suggestion from industry that anything you wanted to do to solve a chemical pollutant problem would hurt the bottom line. But it was so evident [phosphorus] was harmful that I knew we had to do something."

Mark Van Putten, who directed the Great Lakes Natural Resources Center of the National Wildlife Federation in Ann Arbor and ultimately became president of the Federation, looked back on Milliken's years thus: "Governor Milliken's environmental leadership exemplified the bipartisan tradition of natural resources conservation and environmental protection that distinguished the 20th century. It's a lesson elected leaders of the early 21st century would do well to learn, as it's the key to meeting the environmental challenges of the future, as it was in the past."

It's also a lesson that leaders are shaped not just by the times in which they serve, but also the times in which they were raised as children.

Somewhere out there, another William Milliken, a young boy or girl, is being shaped by moments in nature's majesty.

It's probably the best argument for outdoor education that anyone could make.



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The Beauty of Waterloo

Some years ago when I was a young and mobile man, I pondered where I would like to set down roots and call a place home. I'd visited a number of the continent's great wilderness areas and hoppin' urban sites and developed a set of criteria for evaluating options. I wanted to live in a place that had a vibrant community with open-minded people, good music and food, and that wasn't too big or crowded. I also wanted to live where there was close proximity to large chunks of public land to wander, and relatively easy access to some outstanding natural feature of our living planet. I saw all that in south-central lower Michigan and made this my stomping grounds.

The outstanding natural feature was of course the Great Lakes. From the sand dunes of Lake Michigan to the limestone cliffs of the Bruce Peninsula to the wild shore of Lake Superior, there are several lifetimes of stunning diversity to explore on the big fresh water. A few hours' drive from Ann Arbor gets one to some of the world's most special places.

Closer to home, it was the presence of the second largest collection of public land in the southern Lower Peninsula that grabbed and kept my interest. The Pinckney and Waterloo State Recreation Areas are part of the Erie-Saginaw interlobate, a northeast/southwest-trending jumble of hills, lakes, rivers and wetlands. Those two lobes of the last major glacial advance collided (albeit slowly and quietly over many years, not like a car crash!), pushing dirt and rocks of their respective moraines together to make the varied and diverse landscape we see today. Pinckney and Waterloo are our local "big wild."

I remember an old high school chum inviting me to meet him at "Pink Knee" to go for a hike nearly 20 years ago. At the time I was living in Jackson and had little idea of the wonders that existed at my doorstep. We hiked the Crooked Lake Trail, up and down hills with outstanding scenic views of pristine lakes surrounded by woods and marshes. I had no idea where I was, and I was hooked.

Covering such a large region—30,000 acres between the two rec areas—the landscape is very mixed. Most of the original state conservation lands (as they were first called) were acquired through tax reversion. The sandiness of the upland soils, the rolling terrain and the presence of large wetland areas made farming difficult; many landowners just gave up and moved on. Those lands then fell into state ownership for failure to pay property taxes, and someone in the post-World War II era recognized their potential for recreation. Some of our public lands, consequently, are old fields covered in smooth brome grass and other invasive species.

But some of those lands are as attractive as any. With some prowling, one can find a number of lakes with few or no houses, but a public access site to drop in

a canoe, fishing boat or windsurfer. Some of the highest points in Washtenaw and Jackson counties are crossed by foot trails, with 180° or wider views of the surrounding lands for several miles. Huge expanses of wetlands, many of very high quality, can be found in many places like the Portage Swamp or the Embury Swamp. For the paltry number of quality ski days around here, trails that challenge the best skiers with steep, winding, narrow routes abound. Hikers can also get excellent physical and visual workouts on those runs. There's even a smattering of old growth forest stands around. Botanists, ornithologists, geologists and others all have ample opportunities to study and learn.

I've covered a lot of the ground in our big wild, but there are places yet to explore. Every now and then I'll be driving down a road and see a small parking area or a trailhead and wonder where that goes. Sometimes they're "hunter's trails" that just run into the woods and die out, but other times they lead off to unexpected delights. We're lucky to have that kind of opportunity virtually in our backyards.

Barry Lonik of Treemore Ecology and Land Services is a land use consultant who specializes in farmland preservation and protection of natural areas.



by Barry Lonik

Sometimes
trails lead
off to
unexpected
delights



The Waterloo and Pinckney State Recreation Areas include 30,000 acres of public nature area.

Protecting The One Thing You Cannot Live Without— Will a New Industrial Lake Drain Your Water Supply?

By Karen Flahie

The industrial lake would be located on the dividing line between the River Raisin and Huron River watersheds

Michigan enacted new water-use legislation that will help protect our water – but it may not go far enough.

The legislation enacted earlier this year will help protect our water and other natural resources from the potential devastation caused by water diversions and withdrawals. It requires items such as new permitting regulations, encourages conservation practices and addresses adverse impacts to some natural resources.

This is a good step, but it needs to go further to protect all water resources. Lakes, residential wells, wetlands, and groundwater are still at risk. Families, homeowners, and farmers could lose the one thing they cannot live without - clean abundant water.

A Local Example

Pleasant Lake, in Freedom Township in southwestern Washtenaw County, continues to be under attack. Barrett Paving Company has resubmitted a request for a permit from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Land and Water Management Division to mine below the water table.

The original request from July 2005 proposes the creation of a 125-acre, 140-foot deep lake about a ½ mile from Pleasant Lake, a natural spring-fed kettle lake with approximately twenty acres of wetlands on the east end, a migration rest stop for a variety of birds. In total, there are fifty-six acres of wetlands identified on the mining pit site map. The proposed industrial lake will be located on top of the dividing line for the River Raisin and Huron River watersheds.

The problems could be devastating. Removal of solid material, such as in this proposed mining extraction, creates a "bathtub" effect. Think about what happens when you get out of a water-filled bathtub: the water level drops as the water rushes in to fill the space where you were. This same thing is likely to happen when the soil below the water table is removed. With the proposed

mining extraction, nearly 3,000,000,000 (three billion) gallons of water would be necessary to fill this industrial lake. Where would it come from? What happens to the River Raisin and Huron River watersheds? To the existing lake and wetlands? To residential wells?

Information about what lies beneath the surface can be difficult to come by. Where are aquifers located? What type of soil separates the aquifers? How deep are they? Where exactly are the defined areas of each aquifer? Under what hydrostatic pressures do they operate? How does the groundwater flow within these areas? What aquifers feed the existing lake, wetlands, residential and agricultural wells? What changes will be caused by diverting ground water to the industrial lake? None of these questions are easy to answer.

Information – and local residents – to the rescue

Compiling the best possible information is crucial. If not, problems are bound to arise, as in the aquifer pollution in Ann Arbor by the Gelman Company, which is currently threatening the Huron River, the water source for the city. New technology is helping experts get a better picture of what is under our feet, but it is not a perfect science. Monitoring wells, three-dimensional mapping of aquifers, and topographical analysis from tests such as soil borings are some of the scientific tools that can help determine some of these physical features.

Presently, the MDEQ is reviewing a new hydrogeology report submitted by Barrett Paving Company which hopefully responds to the questions and concerns of the MDEQ and Freedom Township hydrogeologist Robert Hayes. Next, if the MDEQ does approve this permit request, it is up to the Township

continued page 5.



The star on this map indicates the approximate location of Pleasant Lake, a natural spring-fed kettle lake just a half mile away from a proposed new industrial lake.

Water continued from page 4

Board to make the final determination of whether or not this activity can go forward based on local ordinances.

Residents in and around the proposed lake are not waiting. They have taken action to stop this attack on their water and have been very vocal about their concerns by writing letters, sending e-mails, and making phone calls to township officials, State Senator Liz Brater, State Representative Pam Byrnes, and officials at the MDEQ. More than 400 residents signed a petition asking MDEQ to deny this permit. Township officials were also notified of the petition results at their monthly board meeting in June.

It has made a difference. A Barrett Paving Company representative told the Freedom Township Planning Commission at its monthly meeting in June that their consultants were very surprised by the amount of data the MDEQ is requesting. Never before had they been asked to compile so much information for a permit. Then again, never has a mining extraction operation requested to go so deep below the water table anywhere else in the entire state of Michigan.

Next Steps

Even though Michigan has new, tougher water-use legislation in place, it is still up to citizens like you and me to protect our water, especially at the local level. We are all responsible for being aware of what is happening around us. Being involved in local government is very important because local ordinances are ultimately what protects residents, and not just in rural areas. Even if you don't have your own private well, remember that "city water" comes from a local well or a local waterway. Natural features ordinances, wetlands ordinances, and other protections are crucial to protecting these water resources.

Right now, our local water is fairly clean and abundant. We can help keep it that way. There are increasing demands put on our water sources by activities such as mining extraction, water withdrawals for bottling, agricultural and recreational practices, to name a few. We all need to be vigilant, or one day we may not have the abundant clean water coming from our faucets that we now take for granted.

To learn more about the mining near Pleasant Lake, contact Citizens Respecting Our Waters (CROW) at crowmichigan@yahoo.com.

For sale: Home with 10+ acres

Looking for a home with magnificent year-round views and a tranquil setting?

Situated on Summer Hill, this Scandinavian-inspired home comes with a panoramic view of over 30 undisturbed acres including meadows, wetlands, a spring fed pond, and Baetke Lake. (We call the family room our own "nature channel.")

Neighbors include heron, sandhill cranes, wild turkey, and pheasant, but the house is only minutes from downtown Brighton and 1 mile to I-96. Enjoy the constantly-changing scenery by day and view the moon and stars by night.



The open floor plan is enhanced by oak floors, trim and cabinetry, vaulted ceilings, large south-facing windows, skylights, and a fully exposed walkout with wet bar in the finished lower level. An attractive and fuel efficient Finnish soapstone Tullukivi fireplace/oven provides a cozy warmth on winter. All this plus a Jenn-Air kitchen built for a professional chef.

The statistics: Brighton schools, approximately 2544 sq. ft., 4 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath, formal dining room, outbuilding, paved driveway, 3 car garage with ample storage space, workbench, and epoxy-sealed floor, in a neighborhood of 10 acre lots that may not be subdivided. Horses are welcome. Offered at \$568,000.

Contact Brenda Nelson at Charles Reinhart Co (734) 845-7630 for more information or to arrange a tour. This property is worth the visit.

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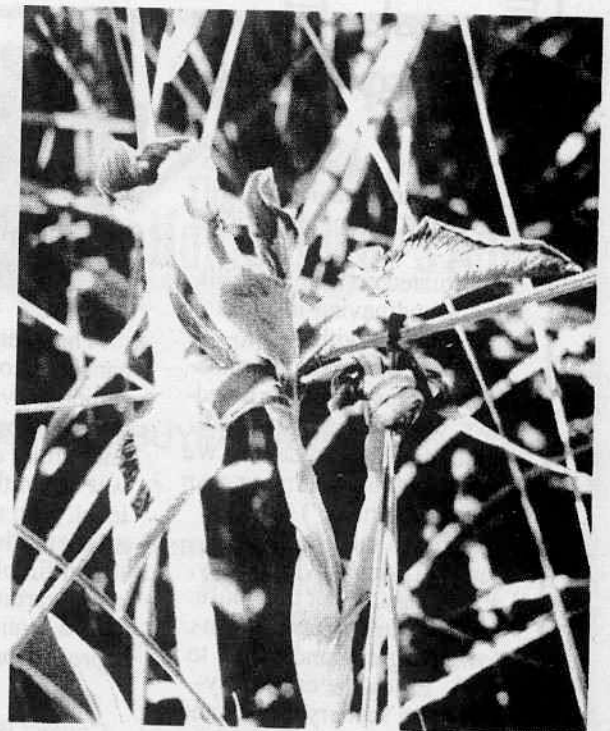
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In June, the rich blue-purple of wild flag iris flowers dot the green meadows of Waterloo.



Sierra Club—Huron Valley Group Calendar

Participants in Sierra Club outings will be asked to sign a liability waiver. If you wish to read the waiver before coming to an outing please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/> or call 415-977-5630. When carpooling is used to facilitate logistics for an outing, participants assume the risks associated with this travel, as well. Carpooling, ridesharing and the like are strictly a private arrangement among participants. Park fees may apply.

For up to date information, visit our website at <http://www.michigan.sierraclub.org/huron/>

Tuesday July 18. HVG Monthly Public Program. 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **Trekking the Himalayas: Kathmandu to Everest and Beyond**, by Heather O'Neal, Of Global Interest Adventure Travel. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided. NOTE: Before this program, we'll also have a potluck dinner that starts at 6:30 pm. Please feel free to drop in anytime—newcomers are welcome!

July 24-August 1. Isle Royale Backpack Trip. Learn what summer is all about in one of the most remote areas in Michigan. The natural beauty of the island is an absolute pleasure. Trip cost TBA will cover direct costs only—no overhead added—including ferry, fees, and meals. Some group equipment provided. Limit 10 people. Contact Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details and to sign up.

Monday July 24. Conservation Committee meeting. 7:00 pm, 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at DorothyK@isr.umich.edu or 734-668-6306 for location.

Monday August 7. Executive Committee Meeting, typically first Monday of each month, 7:30 pm. Call Doug Cowherd at 734-662-5205 for location.

Tuesday August 8. Sierra Club Book Club. 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola's Books, Westgate Shopping Center, corner Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **The Living Great Lakes: Searching for the Heart of the Inland Seas** by Jerry Dennis. Join us for discussion - all welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

Sunday August 13. Inner City Outings. 7:00 pm, 2nd Sunday of every month, Room 302 Halle Library on the EMU campus. Inner City Outings introduces urban children in Washtenaw County to outdoor and environmental experiences that might not otherwise be available to them. Interested chaperones, sponsors, planners, and contributors are always welcome.

Tuesday August 15. HVG Monthly Public Program. 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **Hunters of the Sky: Up Close and Personal with Live Hawks, Falcons and Owls** with Francie Krawcke of Leslie Science Center. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided. Co-sponsored with the Washtenaw Audubon Society.

Sunday August 27. Hewenes Creek Hike 2:00 pm. Join us for a fun hike and possible bushwhack for about 5 miles. Never gone off-trail? Come learn how it's done! Contact Norm Roller at 734-426-5737 for meeting location.

Monday August 28. Conservation Committee meeting. 7:00 pm, 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at DorothyK@isr.umich.edu or 734-668-6306 for location.

Monday September 4. Executive Committee, 1st Monday's, 7:30 pm. Call Doug Cowherd at 734-662-5205 for location.

Saturday September 9. Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup. If you've never come, check it out, then try it! Please wear boots and bring gloves if you have them. Snacks and refreshments provided. Help clean up this lovely forested and undeveloped 2-mile stretch of M-14. Meet at Big Boy's parking lot on the north side of Plymouth Road just west of US 23 at 9:15 am. Contact Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for more information.

Sunday September 10. Inner City Outings. 7:00 pm, 2nd Sunday of every month, Room 302 Halle Library on the EMU campus. Inner City Outings introduces urban children in Washtenaw County to outdoor and environmental experiences that might not otherwise be available to them. Interested chaperones & planners welcome.

Sierra Club—Huron Valley Group Calendar continued

Tuesday September 12. Sierra Club Book Club. 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola's Books, Westgate Shopping Center, corner Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **TBA**. Join us for discussion - all are welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

Saturday September 16. Bird Hills Hike. Compare birch trees and tulip trees along the trail, and see the red oak climbing tree, on this leisurely paced 3-4 mile walk. Meet at Ann Arbor City Hall entrance at 10:00 a.m. to carpool, or just meet us there! Contact Ken Morley at 678-0264 for information.

Tuesday September 19. HVG Monthly Public Program. 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **Exploring Our Local 'Big Wild': Five Unknown Hikes in the State Recreation Areas** with Barry Lonik, Treemore Ecology and Land Services. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

Sunday September 24. Silver Lake Hike. Join us for a fun, leisurely paced hike at Pinckney State Recreation Area to see how autumn comes to the lake. About 2 miles. Meet at Ann Arbor City Hall parking lot at 1:00 pm to carpool. Contact Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for information.

Monday September 25. Conservation Committee meeting. 7:00 pm, 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at DorothyK@isr.umich.edu or 734-668-6306 for location.

Monday October 2. Executive Committee Meeting, typically first Monday of each month 7:30 pm. Call Doug Cowherd at 734-662-5205 for location.

Sunday October 8. Inner City Outings. 7:00 pm, 2nd Sunday of every month, Room 302 Halle Library on the EMU campus. Inner City Outings introduces urban children in Washtenaw County to outdoor and environmental experiences that might not otherwise be available to them. Interested chaperones, sponsors, planners, and contributors are always welcome.

Tuesday October 10. Sierra Club Book Club. 7:30 pm, 2nd Tuesday of every month at Nicola's Books, Westgate Shopping Center, corner Maple and Jackson, Ann Arbor. Book: **TBA**. Join us for discussion - all welcome. Check the Ann Arbor Observer or call Nancy Shiffler at 734-971-1157 for details.

Sunday October 15. Waterloo Recreation Area Hike. Join us for fall colors and good conversation on this leisurely hike, and see the changes that have come to the forest now that fall is here. Meet at the Ann Arbor City Hall at 1:00 pm to carpool, or at Waterloo Recreation Area Discovery Center parking lot at 1:30 pm. Call Jay Schlegel at 734-477-5715 for more information.

Tuesday October 17. HVG Monthly Public Program. 7:30 pm, 3rd Tuesday of every month at Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N. Dixboro Road, Ann Arbor. Topic: **TBA**. Non-members welcome; refreshments provided.

Sunday October 22. Crooked Lake Trail Hike. Join us for a leisurely paced nature hike, 5.1 miles, within Pinckney State Recreation Area. Meet at the entrance to Ann Arbor City Hall at 1:00 pm to carpool. Contact Ken Morley at 734-678-0264 for more information.

Monday October 23. Conservation Committee meeting. 7:00 pm, 4th Monday of every month. Contact Dorothy Nordness at DorothyK@isr.umich.edu or 734-668-6306 for location.

October 28-31. Haehle Sanctuary Bird Watch. This is not a guided outing, but it *is* very cool to see, and you're encouraged to go on your own! Watch the sandhill cranes return to the marsh amongst 900 beautiful acres of natural area. Call Kathy Guerreso at 734-677-0823 for directions.

Sunday November 12. Waterloo Recreation Area Hike. Join us for good company and a leisurely hike in the outdoors, and see how the forest prepares for winter. Meet at the entrance to Ann Arbor City Hall at 1:00 p.m. to carpool or at Waterloo Recreation Area Discovery Center parking lot at 1:30 pm. Contact Jay Schlegel at 734-477-5715 for more information.

Other Local Events

Key: NAP = City of Ann Arbor Natural Area Preservation. For more information, call 734-996-3266.

For workdays, please wear long pants and closed-toe shoes, and note that minors must either be accompanied by a guardian or contact NAP in advance to obtain a release form.

County = Washtenaw County Parks & Recreation. For more information, call 734-971-6337 x318 or visit www.ewashtenaw.org and select "Parks," or email stonerf@ewashtenaw.org.

Thursday July 27 - Nature Fun: Wading the River! at Osborne Mill Preserve. Must wear shoes; no program if high water; call for times and to pre-register: 734-971-6337 x318. *County*

Saturday July 29 at Furstenberg Native Plant Garden, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Park steward and master gardener Aunita Erskine will lead a wonderful cleanup workday and botanical walk. Join her in improving the demonstration garden. Meet in the parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School. Workday orientation starts promptly at 9:00 am. A short nature walk will be held at the end of the workday, time permitting. *NAP*

Thursday August 3 - Nature Fun: Caterpillar Carnival! at County Farm, 11:00 am. Meet at the Platt Road entrance. Pre-registration required - 734-971-6337 x318. *County*

Saturday August 5 at Riverwood Nature Area, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. You get to be Indiana Jones! We need to make a new trail; will you help us? Meet us near the park sign on Riverwood Drive, just west of Newport Road. We will provide the snacks if you provide the muscles. *NAP*

Sunday August 6 - Ferns of a Summer Swamp at Brauer Preserve, 2:00 to 4:00 pm. *County*

Thursday August 10 at County Farm Park, 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Join us for trash pick-up workday! Bags will be provided. Meet at the Medford Road entrance. *County*

Saturday August 19 at Bluffs Nature Area, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. It's buckthorn season! How many of you know the allure of cutting down this invasive shrub? Come find out. We'll meet at 9:00 am in the James L. Crawford Lodge parking lot (220 Sunset Road). *NAP*

Saturday August 19 at Black Pond Woods Nature Area, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Help us keep the invasives in check in this amphibian-friendly park. Meet in the Leslie Science Center parking lot off Traver Road at 1:00 pm for our workday orientation. We will have a nature hike on the way and learn more about invasive and native plants. *NAP*

Saturday August 26 at Sunset Brooks Nature Area, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Neighborhood round up! Get your friends and meet us at the park entrance at Sunset Road and Brooks Street to do some trail maintenance and invasive shrub removal. Snacks and tools provided. Non-neighbors invited too! *NAP*

Saturday August 26 at Furstenberg Nature Area, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Enjoy a morning at Furstenberg with your friends and a pruning saw, while combating invasive shrubs. Snacks and refreshments provided! We'll meet in the Furstenberg parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School. At the end of the workday we will take a short nature hike through the park. *NAP*

Sunday August 27 - Wildflowers of the Prairie at Independence Lake, 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Please note that there is a vehicle entry fee to this park. *County*

Monday September 11 - Native Gardening Workshop, 6:30 to 9:00 pm, at Leslie Science Center Nature House - 1831 Traver Road, Ann Arbor. Interested in native plants? Would you like to learn how to establish them in your yard? Then this workshop is for you! Topics will include site assessment and preparation, seed and plant selection, installation, and maintenance. Program fee: \$15. Please pre-register by September 4, by calling NAP at 734-996-3266. *NAP*

Saturday September 23 at Furstenberg Native Plant Garden, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Park steward and master gardener Aunita Erskine will lead a wonderful cleanup workday and botanical walk. Join her in improving the demonstration garden. Meet in the parking lot off Fuller Road, across from Huron High School. Workday orientation starts promptly at 9:00 am. A short nature walk will be held at the end of the workday, time permitting. *NAP*

Saturday September 30 at Dicken Woods Nature Area, 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. We will spend the morning removing the invasives that usurp valuable light and nutrients from other plants, and we'll have a great time doing it! Meet us at the end of Dicken Drive, off South Maple Road. At the end of the workday we'll spend a little time exploring the ecology of Dicken Woods. *NAP*

No Sharks Discovered in Wayne County Marsh



By Megan Beardsley

"Are there sharks in the water?"

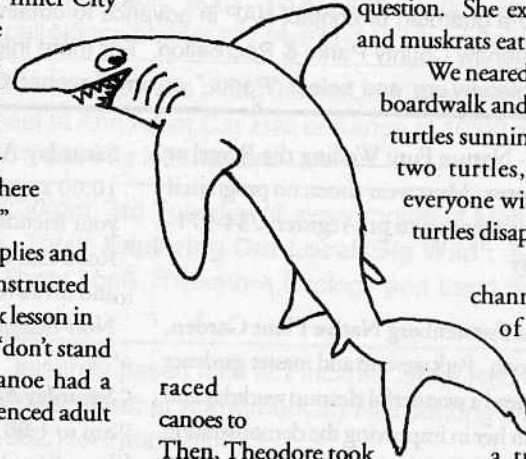
On June 3, Sierra Club Washtenaw Inner City Outings took six kids from Hikone Community Center canoeing at Crosswinds Marsh. In the morning, the kids, Hikone staff members and Sierra Club volunteers gathered in the Hikone parking lot. Nine-year-old Theodore was full of questions. "Where are we going? Are there sharks in the water?"

The kids loaded up the van with supplies and we all drove 45 minutes to the marsh, a constructed wetland in S.W. Wayne county. After a quick lesson in basic canoe skills (focusing on the essential "don't stand up in the boat"), we divvied up. Each canoe had a beginning paddler in the bow and an experienced adult volunteer in the stern.

It was difficult to steer our canoes in the wind, but we made it across the marsh to a spot where Jennifer Zaenglein, the Crosswind's naturalist, pointed out a 7-foot-high eagle's nest. A pair of adult bald eagles perched nearby.

Theodore was my paddling partner, and I was surprised by how little attention he paid the eagles. He was still focused on sharks. "What's salt water?" he asked. "Is there any in the United States?" And moments later, "What chewed on that lily pad?"

We paddled up to Jennifer and repeated the



question. She explained that insects and muskrats eat the lily pads.

We neared a bridge under the boardwalk and Theodore spotted turtles sunning on a log. "I saw two turtles," he hollered to everyone within earshot. The turtles disappeared.

In the narrow channel on the far side of the marsh, the wind died and we the other the bend.

raced canoes to

Then, Theodore took a turn steering the canoe. "Just sit back and relax," he said. So I put down my paddle and watched him as he experimented with paddling on the left and right. The canoe spun, but with the wind at our backs we progressed steadily toward the launch site.

On shore, volunteer Mary Wise set up her spotting scope and we got a better view of the eagles. We also had a quick snack and walk on the boardwalk before returning to the van and the drive back to Hikone.

Later this summer, WICO will be taking kids up to Sleeping Bear Dunes where the Traverse City Sierra Club group is hosting a camping trip for us. Other trips will be closer to home, but just as fun. Shark sightings are unlikely.



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If you're interested in helping with ICO, contact our group chair Vera Hernandez by email at washtenawico@yahoo.com.

For more information on the Washtenaw ICO program and photos from our trips, check our website at www.ICOsierclub.org/washtenaw.

The Real Simple Life: Simply Eating

First of all, thank you to everyone who sent me nice emails regarding my recipes in the last issue of the Lookout. I hope that those who tried the recipes enjoyed them!

“Use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without” was a common phrase during World War II. I wish our society would still live by these simple rules! In this column, we are going to talk about “using it up” and “making it do.”

When you find yourself with a refrigerator full of vegetables about to go bad (and let's face it, many of us don't eat our vegetables quickly enough!), there are a couple of fun ways to use them up. One way is to **make homemade pizza**—actually easier than you think, and also much tastier than buying a frozen pizza.

First, you need to make the dough. Put about 1¼ cups warm water in a bowl and sprinkle in one package dry, active yeast. Stir to dissolve. Add about ½ teaspoon salt and ½ teaspoon sugar along with 2 cups flour. Beat the mixture with a fork or spoon, then add another 1½ - 2 cups flour. Now, knead the dough for 10 minutes or so, adding flour to keep the dough from

sticking. Put the dough into a greased bowl, and turn the dough over so that the greased part is on top. Cover and let rise. The recipe I adapted suggests letting the dough rise for ½ hour, which is fine if you are in a hurry. However, the longer you let the dough rise, the bigger and better it will be. When it is done rising, punch it down, then knead for a few minutes to force out bubbles. Roll, pat and stretch the dough (and yes, throw it over your head if you want!) until it is the size you want. Put the dough on a greased pan, cookie sheet, or even into a greased baking dish (as I was forced to do once when I didn't have anything else clean).

Making the sauce is simple. You just need a can of tomato sauce (or pureed fresh tomatoes), fresh or dried oregano and garlic. Of course, you can spice it up however you like, but that is all you need for a simple sauce. Spread the sauce onto the pizza. Shred mozzarella cheese and add any toppings you want. This is when you can raid your fridge and find all those leftover vegetables just waiting for use!

Bake the pizza in a 450 degree oven for about 15 minutes, or until the cheese topping is melted and the crust edges have browned. Enjoy! (Recipe adapted from southernfood.about.com's website)

“Making things do” is easy, too! **Mending clothing** is often faster than shopping for a replacement, and a great way to hold onto a wardrobe favorite just a little longer.

How many times have you had a sweater or shirt that lost a button? Or had a seam tear? Before you throw that piece of clothing into a landfill, make it do!

There are three sewing basics you should have at home. You probably already have scissors. You will also want a small collection of needles and some thread in basic colors. That's it. There are many other things you can add to a sewing kit, but those basics are enough to get started. (See “Mending 101” for more sewing how-to's and tips.)

Thanks for reading and we hope you enjoy the “simple life”!!



Mending 101

Replacing a lost button is quick and easy. Thread a needle with about 30 inches of thread. Tie the ends together. Figure out where the original button was, lining the fabric up with the button hole to check. Starting in the place where the button was, on the back side, insert the needle and pull it through to the front of the fabric. Now take the needle and insert it through the button from back to front. Pull gently till the knot and the button are against the fabric. Repeat about 10 times, then tie a knot again on the back side, and trim the thread close to the fabric.

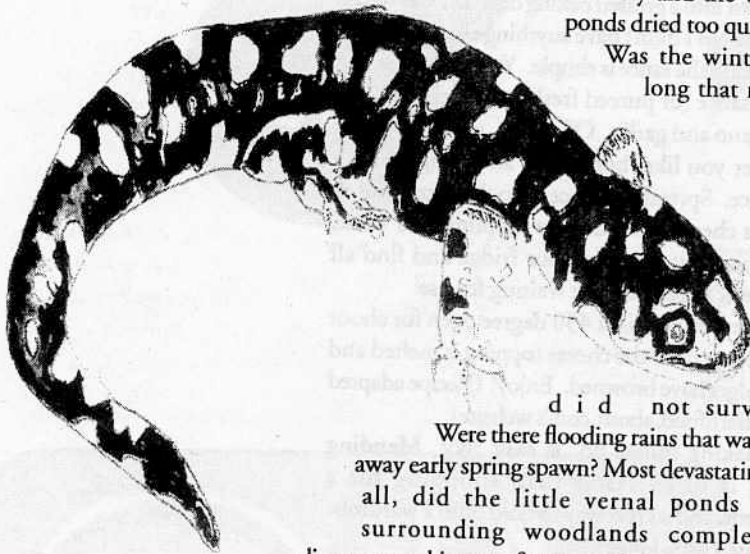
Some additional hints:

- * If you have trouble threading the needle, try wetting the thread.
- * Look at the remaining buttons to see what color thread was used and what direction the stitches are. For a good match, try to copy this.
- * Finding a button that matches can be difficult. If you can't find an exact match, and the missing button is prominent, you can often move a matching button from a less prominent place, and replace the less prominent button with the mismatched one.
- * Another option is to replace all the buttons with a new set. This can also be handy for changing the look of an item.
- * You may want to start a button collection. Megan keeps hers in an old glass jar. She adds buttons from new clothes that come with a spare button attached and from threadbare clothes headed for the rag bag.
- * Sometimes the problem is not that the button is missing, but that the fabric holding the button has ripped. Such problems are a little harder to fix. You'll either need to patch the fabric, or sew the button with wide stitches that go into the unripped fabric.

So Far 2006 Is a Good Year for Salamanders in Ann Arbor, and for Frogs Too!

By Gwen Nystuen

For John and myself, this is our third year of surveying for salamanders, our 12th year of surveying for frogs with NAP (Natural Areas Preservation) program of Ann Arbor Parks. It is a totally fascinating pursuit. Each year is as different as the weather and very dependent on the weather. Was it a severely long, cold winter, did it thaw and then become dry, did it rain frequently or maybe not for weeks? Was it hot and dry and the vernal ponds dried too quickly? Was the winter so long that many



did not survive? Were there flooding rains that washed away early spring spawn? Most devastating of all, did the little vernal ponds and surrounding woodlands completely disappear, making way for yet another sprawling subdivision or shopping mall? And then there are the long term changes in the environment that we do not yet understand.

Amphibian Decline

Most environmentalists are familiar with the worldwide decline in amphibian populations. Unfortunately while this is a good year here for amphibians so far, it does not mean that it will end up a good year. And nationally and internationally the news is not good. People from all over the country send me information on frogs. The latest was a copy of a BBC report for July 7th "clarion call to save amphibians. Hundreds of amphibian species will become extinct unless a global action plan is put into practice very soon, conservationists warn." Conservation International scientist, Dr. Simon Stuart, led the Global Amphibian Assessment report of 2004 that confirmed the extent of the collapse of many populations. Of the approximately 6,000 amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders and caecilians) nearly

2,000 may be at risk of extinction. While there are obvious causes for some declines, including loss of habitat, invasive species pushing out native amphibians, exploitation as food (frozen frog legs and live frogs), climate change, pollution, and waves of disease, there are also many unknown factors. Recently a disease caused by a fungus, *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis*, identified in 1998, is considered the biggest single threat and it is firmly established in parts of the Americas, Australia and Europe. There are areas of Central and South America where some formerly abundant species are rare or missing due to the ravages of this fungus.

Surveying for Frogs

The move to establish better baselines on frog populations came about when the declines in many parts of the world were noted about 25 years ago. Those of us with a few years behind us can all recall times when frogs and toads were much more common and abundant, as well as places that they used to be yet are seen no more. Several states including Michigan are conducting surveys to establish where populations exist and how abundant and persistent they are. Ann Arbor was the first Michigan city to conduct a survey. The abundance of a species has huge natural fluctuations. It takes several years to get a good base-

continued on page13



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SALAMANDERS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

line. Volunteers learn the calls of the frogs—each species has a distinct call (you all know the spring peeper!)—and the time of year and degrees of melt and warmth for when to listen. Here, the chorus of wood frogs, spring peepers and chorus frogs usually begins with the first real thaw of late February and early March. Then the leopard frog calls, and the American toad with his long melodic trill into April, and the gray tree frog starting in late April to early May, next the green frog, and last, but not least, the biggest of all, the bullfrog. The last three are heard all summer, the tree frog often heralding a rain storm. We go out on nights when the conditions are right and listen at each pond on a route for 4-5 minutes and record species heard. We score whether only one or two individuals are calling (1), or there are overlapping calls of several (2), or there is a great chorus (3). In Ann Arbor teams are monitoring about 150 sites. There are many changes in the past 12 years including whole areas disappearing to development, and other locations where the traffic is now so loud it is nearly impossible to hear the frogs. There are also the good surprises when after several years we suddenly hear a new species in a pond. (That probably means that we just didn't listen at the right time on previous stops—but it is very satisfying nonetheless.)

We can listen for frogs and know they are there, but that is not the case for salamanders. And salamanders don't want to be seen. The main time to find them is in the early spring when they come out from holes under logs and make their way to vernal ponds to breed. This often happens at the first heavy rain of spring when the ground has thawed enough. In some places they may be really abundant. But even then, they are easy to miss, and if they are not abundant they are very, very easy to miss. Then you may see egg masses. But you can miss those

too. Then you may use a net funnel trap a little later and catch a few of the larvae, and you may turn over many logs and leaves and find a few if it is damp enough. You may not be successful at all. John and I survey two sites. In one site for two years we came up with nothing. But this April we found two blue-spotted salamanders near the edge of the wetland under bark. Then with funnel traps we found first one and then a few days later several blue-spotted larvae, and a newt in June! That was super satisfying. And then a location we had given up on produced another newt. So that isn't much, is it, but it is more than we had before.

For our other site, the first year we found a couple of blue-spotted salamanders on a cold rainy April night and saw two or three in the water. After that we found only two more, and trapped nothing the entire season. Last year started out poorly—missed the best nights somehow. But then we found some eggs widely scattered, again they seemed to be blue-spotted salamander eggs. Later we trapped and got several larvae about an inch and a half long. These, except for one, matched the blue-spotted—mole salamander larvae are hard to tell apart. The three mole salamanders in this area are the spotted, the blue-spotted (and hybrids), and the tiger. There are also red-spotted newts, and red-backed salamanders, the ones that do not go to water to breed. Last year we found we had one tiger salamander larvae, and late in the summer we found newly metamorphosed blue-spotted little salamanders and an oddball that we believe was a tiger. This year we saw newts in the water early, quite a few blue-spotted in the leaf litter, later some eggs, and recently many blue-spotted larvae and a few really large 5 1/2 inch tiger larvae, and some adult newts. So a place that seemed to have little is really crawling now! We are having a great hunting season.

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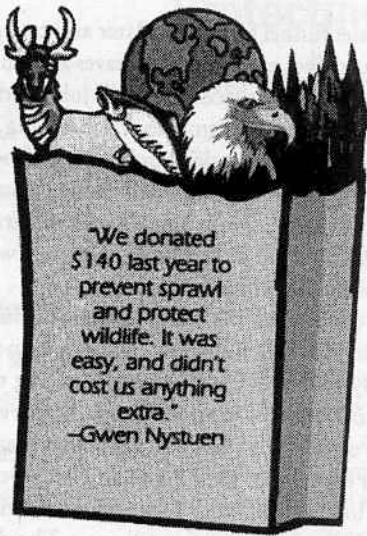
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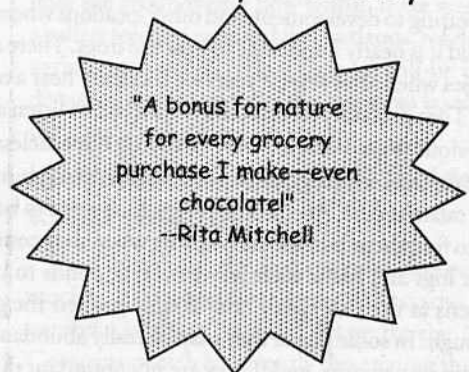
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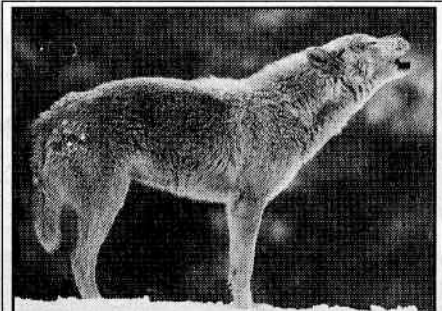
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