

G.R.E.A.T.

Grand River Environmental Action Team

P.O. Box 223, Jackson, Michigan 49204

www.great-mi.org



Fall 05

River Cleanup Has New Date, New Place

A message from the president...

Fall 05

It is an exciting time for us. We have formed a partnership with the Upper Grand River Watershed Council (UGRWC) to jumpstart the campaign to educate and inspire our local communities into action. Our role to serve as executive director of the watershed council for one year will allow the council and our organization to focus on accomplishing the goals as identified within the Upper Grand River Watershed Management Plan, which is designed to benefit and improve the river and its watershed.

Our annual river cleanup this year is scheduled for September 17. The UGRWC and G.R.E.A.T. will partner together this year to hold a Grand River Day which includes storm drain badging in addition to our river cleanup. The purpose of the storm drain badges is to remind people that all the drains lead to the river and we need to keep both cleaner. We need volunteers to come out and help with the cleanup and badging effort.

Grand River Day will be held at the Amphitheater in downtown Jackson by Consumers Energy Corporate Headquarters. Parking will be available in the parking structure by the building. Lunch will be provided for all volunteers and after the cleanup everyone is invited to Daryl's Downtown for after cleanup snacks, drinks and camaraderie. In addition to the cleanup efforts, educational material will be distributed by local environmental groups including the Dahlem Center and the Audubon Society. Together, we can have a successful event that will help to improve water quality in our river. Thank you for your support and we hope to see you there.

This fall should be a fantastic one for being on the lakes and rivers, so please get out and enjoy it.

Fair Winds
Charles McKeown

Grand River Clean-up September 17, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Meet at downtown Jackson Ampitheatre

A Dream No Longer Deferred

I had dreamed for a long time that when I won the lottery, I could finally buy a boat and go out on the water whenever I felt like it, not just when I could borrow one. In early 2004, a friend of mine told me how he had made several boats of plywood over the years at a fraction of the cost of a new boat. It wasn't long before my newest obsession was born. In a little over 18 months, I have built two canoes, two kayaks, and a small rowboat. A sixth boat project is nearing completion.

What started as a desire to just get a boat cheap became a relaxing hobby. Like all hobbies, I enjoy the building of these craft. It is a welcome diversion from my profession as a college chemistry professor to spend a few hours in my garage cutting wood, a few hours mixing and spreading two-part epoxy, and a lot of hours sanding down the curves of a wooden hull. It has been great fun and very rewarding.

None of these boats are works of art, mind you. When you see them, you can tell they are handmade and are loaded with "personality." A common phrase I use to describe my boats is, "I build for utility not for looks." Yes, I have seen kayaks made by some hobbyists that would sell for more than two thousand dollars. I put about two hundred dollars of materials into each boat, and I think they look pretty good—they have all proven seaworthy. I

never have kept track of how many hours have been required to build each craft, but with five boats completed in about a year and a half, I seem to be moving along pretty fast.

I do not have a fancy woodshop. I do not have years of experience crafting intricate wood cabinets or chairs. I do not have a tremendous amount of patience for fine detail. What I do have is basic shop tools (circular saw, jig saw, belt sander) a few dollars for materials, some space in my garage, and some available time.

This is truly a hobby that anyone can pick up easily. I thought it was beyond my ability, but in short order, I like to think I have become a legitimate boat builder. I joined GREAT in the fall of 2004, and greatly enjoy floating each of my new creations with fellow river folk. See you on the river.

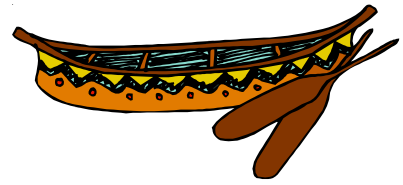
By Mark Ott

If you would like to see photos of the boats Mark has built and read more about their construction, go to <http://tinyuri.com/9zbd> or email Mark at doc_ott01@yahoo.com.

Mark Ott paddles his handmade "Opus 3 Calista,"
a 16' sea kayak made from scrap wood.



Summer '05 GREAT River Outings



May Outing-Park Road(Vandercook) to High Street (Jackson) — Barbara Anderson

Our May trip from Park Road in Vandercook Lake to our take-out on High Street was well attended in spite of a cool, cloudy, uninviting Sunday. This stretch of the Grand River does a lot of horseshoe loops through wetlands with enough man made structures in view to keep you in mind of civilization, unlike other stretches of the Grand which seem more pristine. We saw signs of beaver work, large spawning carp, blue herons, mallard ducks and several species of warblers.

Here is the list of hardy paddlers on the May Outing- Charles Riesdorf, Stephen Nason, Terry Beaver and canines, Mark Mathias, Jack Larsen, Don Watkins and his daughter Kimberly, Jim and Jan Seitz, Bill and Nancy Bivens and our esteemed rivermaster Todd Zeller and GREAT president Chuck McKeown. Diane Valen was my paddling partner.

June Outing-Stoney Lake — Bill Sonnett

Our June canoe trip was on one of the hidden gems of Jackson County, Stoney Lake in Napoleon Township. After an overview of the lake and a briefing on the history of Stoney Lake and its preservation since 1918 by YMCA Storer Camps, about thirty participants were free to paddle the 240 acre lake and get a close-up view of the many natural areas. Common sightings of marsh wrens and least bitterns make the area a favorite among bird watchers. After a hardy lunch provide by GREAT, those who wished were provided a tour of some of the facilities as well as the 1400 acres owned by the YMCA. Of particular interest to some was the large fen on the south shore of the lake. The fen underwent a controlled burn this spring and has been the location for the discovery of many rare plants by local botany classes and clubs.

July Outing- River Raisin — Ken Dodge

On Sunday July 10, the GREAT monthly paddling trip was on the River Raisin from the Ford dealership in Brooklyn to the dam on Norvell Lake. The weather conditions were extremely hot and sunny. Approximately thirty-five people participated in the trip, and all of GREAT's canoes and kayaks as well as several private boats were in use. After launching the boats and paddling a short distance down Goose Creek, we entered the River Raisin that meanders through a large wetland area fringed on the upland slopes with oaks and other hardwoods. The wetland is heavily vegetated with wetland shrubs and emergent aquatic plants. The abundant white water lilies and purple flowers of pickerel weed added beauty to the trip. Yellow water lily is abundant in this area, but was not yet blooming. Unfortunately the invasive non-native plant purple loosestrife was also present. This pretty plant out-competes the native plants that have far more value to wildlife. In several locations we saw deer, either in the wetland or on the adjacent wooded hillsides.

The slow current and lack of fallen trees in the broad wetland made for an easy, enjoyable trip. Since high water levels made the culverts at Austin Road unnavigable, the trip was concluded there. However several paddlers carried their canoes or kayaks across the road and proceeded downstream to the Norvell Lake dam where cars had been left. Barb Anderson had an unpleasant surprise when she returned after fetching her car from the starting point. Everybody and all the boats were gone including her canoe. Barb was anxious for a while because it would have been quite possible for someone to have come by and thrown an unattended canoe into the back of a pickup truck. Barb was relieved when she returned to Austin Road to find that another participant had hauled it back there rather than leave it unattended. "All's well that ends well," Shakespeare said.

Caddisflies



Some Types of Cases



Drawings by Terry Beaver--See Terry's article on page 5



Mark Ott's daughter, Salacia, learns to row Opus 2 [Nymph](#), "a good rowboat, a so-so sailboat," under Dad's watchful eye.

Caddis Flies of the Grand River, Nature's Monitors of River Health

By Terry Beaver

On the May 15 GREAT canoe trip down the Grand River, we were fortunate to see the many swarming caddis flies depositing eggs on the water's surface. This was done by females dipping the end of their abdomens into the water while flying close to the surface. Some unfortunate females became fish food, but those who succeeded in depositing eggs began a very unusual and interesting insect life cycle.

Caddisflies are a unique group of insects that look like small moths, are called "flies," but are neither. The adults (18 families and over 1000 species in the U.S.) are usually a dull brown or gray color. They have two hairy wings, not powdery scale-covered wings as moths have. They have chewing mouthparts, not a long sucking tubes as moths and butterflies have. They have two wings like flies, but hold them above their backs like a tent (see drawing), not flat like flies.

The larvae are hatched from eggs deposited into the water by adult females, or dropped into the water from overhanging plants. Once the larvae hatch they start to construct the type of case unique to their particular species. Most of these "case builders" are vegetarian, eating algae or plant materials. Carnivorous larvae usually don't build cases. Larvae spend about a year underwater, many serving as food for fish and other aquatic predators. This is why one of the most popular artificial trout flies are made to mimic caddisflies.

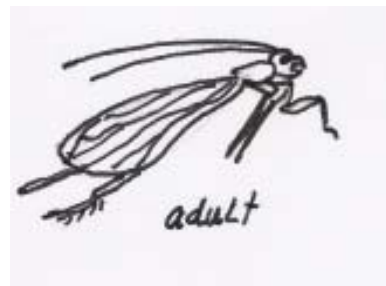
The aquatic worm-like or caterpillar-like larvae are called "caddisworms." Each variety of the plant-eating species builds different type cases to live in, hence their other name, "casebuilders." Cases are so unique for each species, that they are often identified by the type of case they construct (see drawings). They often use sand, small pebbles, sticks, bits of leaves or shells, or plant debris.

All of these materials held together with silk or saliva produced by the insect. Most of the larvae cases are tube-shaped or funnel-shaped, open at one end, where the head, thorax, and crawling legs of the larvae hang out. The abdomen is fastened snugly inside the case for protection. The entire body can be pulled inside in times of danger, but their main defense from predators is simply camouflage. Some caddis cases are spiral or snail shaped to mimic creatures not sought by caddis fly predators.

While aquatic, larvae caddisworms have filamentous gills to capture oxygen attached to each segment of their abdomens tucked inside their cases. Some also construct silk nets to catch passing algae and plant debris in fast-moving streams for food.

When ready, the larvae begin to pupate by attaching their cases to the bottom of the stream or pond. The caseless varieties just spin a silk cocoon. After about two weeks they chew their way out of the closed up case or cocoon, crawl to the shore or up onto some emerging object, molt and come out as adults with wings and two long smooth antennae. Adults seldom eat, live about a month, swarm, mate, lay eggs, then die.

Caddisflies, like mayflies, stoneflies, and fresh-water clams, are very sensitive or intolerant to water pollution, hence are indicators of water quality. The fact that we saw so many on the stretch of the Grand between Hague Road and Vandercook Lake is a good sign that the river is healthy there.



GREAT Board Members

Chuck McKeown, President

Dennis Whitehead, Vice President

Nancy Lapinski, Secretary/Treasurer

Todd Zeller, Rivermaster

Barbara Anderson Jeff Grund

Bill Bivins John Hand

Ken Dodge Bill Sonnet

Bryon Ennis Warren Renando

The GREAT board meets on the second Tuesday of each month, at 7:00pm, in the Summit Township Municipality Building. Meetings are open and visitors are welcome. If you would like to have an item placed on the agenda, please notify Nancy Lapinski at 783-3661

GREAT
P.O. Box 223
Jackson MI 49203

To be a joint member of GREAT and the American Canoe Association, send \$30 to the address above. Joint membership includes free boat use, this newsletter, and advance notice of river trips.

The GREAT Newsletter editor is Bryon Ennis.
bryon_ennis@jccmi.edu

Upcoming GREAT Activities

Grand River Clean-up

September 17, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Meet at downtown Jackson Amphitheatre next to the Consumers Energy building

Canoe Outing Homer to Albion on the Kalamazoo River

Sunday, October 9, 12:00 noon
Meet at Kalamazoo River Park at the Grist Mill in Homer. Take out across from cemetery on M-99. Pizza at Cascarelli's
For information or to reserve a boat, please contact Rivermaster Todd Zeller at (517) 750-1276.

Upper Grand River Watershed Council Meetings

3rd. Tuesday of every month, 1 p.m.
County Commissioners Chambers, Tower Building, downtown Jackson.