

Friends Join With Shiawassee County Health Department for River Cleanup 2008!

by Heidi Frei, Friends of the Shiawassee River and The Nature Conservancy in Michigan

Help the Friends celebrate and care for one of the centerpieces of our community, the Shiawassee River! This year, the Friends of the Shiawassee River, through the support of the Michigan DEQ and Great Lakes Commission Volunteer River, Stream and Creek Cleanup Program, will partner with the Environmental Health Division of the Shiawassee County Health Department to help restore the quality of our River! The grant, awarded to SCHD, will include an effort to remove tires from the river's habitat the weeks leading to the 11th Annual Shiawassee River Cleanup on Saturday, August 2, 2008.

Grant to include tire removal and recycling

With the support of the grant, the FOSR is also looking for groups or individuals interested in tire removal in the river and along the banks prior to the cleanup. Tires collected from the river by volunteers participating in the Cleanup will be recycled free of charge by SCHD at their annual collection, located at the

Shiawassee County Road Commission. Tires will be accepted by others for a fee of two dollars per car & truck tires without rims and three for those with a rim.

From Byron to Henderson

Volunteers will meet at 9:00 a.m. at one of the following locations: Walnut Hills Campground, Geeck Road Park (near Bancroft), McCurdy Park, Loop Park (Owosso), or Henderson Park. Large groups and service clubs are encouraged to sign up early for a location. All volunteers should wear sturdy shoes (no open toes or sandals) and sunscreen and bring gloves. Following the cleanup, volunteers are invited to the Owosso Amphitheater for the River Celebration which will feature music and



Owosso students do their part for a cleaner, healthier river system. Photo: TNC Archives.

lunch, generously donated by Mancino's of Owosso.

Sign up Early!

Groups interested in participating in the voluntary early tire collection or large groups wishing to preregister should contact Heidi Frei, Program Coordinator, at 989-723-9062 or shiawassee_mi@tnc.org.

2nd Annual River Stewardship Day a Success!

Through the efforts of over 100 community volunteers, the Spring River Stewardship Day, which also celebrated Arbor Day with a tree planting along the bank, of the river banks was completed this spring. Thank you to Owosso Middle School, Owosso High School, Lincoln High School, the City of Owosso, Boy Scout Troop 371 from Howell, Kiwanis, Owosso Rotary, the Youth Advisory Council, the Builder's Club, and the community for their support. Be sure to extend your support to Gilbert's True Value Hardware,



The crew from Lincoln High in Owosso helps plant a tree. Photo: D. Stewart, LHS.

Roma's Backdoor Restaurant, David-Lorne Photographic, and Tim Horton's Restaurant for their commitment and continued support of our natural resources!

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Dates with Friends

Upcoming Events

July, 2008

River Tire Removal

Lend a hand and help remove tires from the Shiawassee River before the cleanup. Volunteers and groups are needed to help collect tires for storage until the Cleanup. To register, please contact Heidi Frei at 989-723-9062.

Saturday, August 2, 2008

Shiawassee River Cleanup & Celebration

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Join the FOSR for our yearly event to improve habitat along the River. This year will cover Byron to Henderson. For more details, visit us on-line or contact us at 989-723-9062. All volunteers are invited to enjoy music and lunch, donated by Mancino's of Owosso, at the Owosso Amphitheater beginning at noon.

Friday, September 5, 2008

FOSR Winetasting Fundraiser DeVries Nature Conservancy

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Join the Friends for a wonderful evening sampling wine along the Shiawassee River. All proceeds benefit the conservation activities of the FOSR. Cost is \$25/person for members, \$30/person for non-members. For information or reservations, call 989-723-9062.

Wed., September 10, 2008

MiCorps Informational Session

**Baker College Welcome Center,
Conference Room E**

5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Get more information on volunteering for our new MiCorps program!

Fall Macroinvertebrate Sampling on the Shiawassee & Macroinvertebrate ID

Date TBA

Join the FOSR and Livingston County to help collect information on the species of bugs living in the River! Data collected will be used to determine the health of the River's habitat. Work alongside expert aquatic ecologists to learn about the life in the River and help identify macroinvertebrates. Please visit shiawasseeiver.org for more information.

1st Annual Garlic Mustard Festival a Success with Your Help

by Tracy McMullen, DeVries Nature Conservancy

The DeVries Nature Conservancy and the Friends of the Shiawassee River would like to thank everyone that helped celebrate another successful season of invasive species removal. The 1st Annual Garlic Mustard Festival on Friday, May 16 was a great success. With over 40 attendees and an excellent five-course meal, the garlic mustard pulling season was brought to a close in style. Guests of the Festival were treated to cuisine, including fresh soup, pate, and pesto grilled chicken/shrimp, prepared by Adam Baumgaertel of Eddie O'Flynn's with garlic mustard from the DeVries woodlot and locally produced wine provided by Burgdorf's Winery of Haslett.

This season, volunteers removed over 300 pounds of garlic mustard from the woodlot at the DeVries Nature Conservancy. Garlic mustard is an invasive weed that was originally brought over by Europeans for food, but is now taking over the forest floor. DeVries Nature Conservancy held five weekly pulls, with over 65 volunteers helping out on Saturday mornings this spring. Since 2007, volunteers have removed approximately 1,900 pounds of garlic mustard from the DeVries property considerably improving its habitat for native plants and wildflowers such as trillium and spring beauty.



New 'Friends' enjoy wine and garlic mustard at the First Annual Garlic Mustard Festival hosted by DeVries Nature Conservancy and the FOSR on May 16, 2008. Photo: H. Frei, TNC.



Garlic mustard pate created by Eddie O'Flynn's. Photo: DeVries Nature Conservancy.

heritage of Shiawassee County. DNC encompasses 136 acres and over 4 miles of trails through floodplain, farmland, prairie and forest. For more information on DeVries Nature Conservancy contact info@devriesnc.org, or 989.723-3365.

DeVries and the Friends of the Shiawassee River will continue to remove garlic mustard and other invasive weeds during the spring 2009 season, and hope to continue to hold yearly Festivals. Come out to DeVries Nature Conservancy and see how you can help. The DeVries Nature Conservancy, located at 2635 North M-52, ¼-mile north of the Northside Animal Hospital, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation and demonstration of the natural habitat and agricultural

Save the Date!
**Friends of the Shiawassee River
Annual Winetasting!**
Friday, September 5, 2008
5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
@ the DeVries Nature Conservancy

Call to Action

Discover the Hidden Side of the Shiawassee River!

Learn about life in the Shiawassee River while working to improve its conditions! This fall, the Friends of the Shiawassee River and the Livingston County Office of the Drain Commissioner (LCDC) are looking for volunteers to sample macroinvertebrates, or bugs, in the Shiawassee River at five locations each in Shiawassee and Livingston Counties. Participants will discover the wealth of life found in the river while working side-by-side with experts to help them identify bugs. The program is funded through a grant from the Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) and the Great Lakes Commission. The FOSR partnership with the LCDC is one of four programs funded statewide.

"This is a great stream!" remarked Paul Steen, Watershed Ecologist for the Huron River Watershed Council at a training for grant recipients held at DeVries Nature Conservancy on the Shiawassee River. Come find out for yourself about the aquatic life in the River and its unique habitats. **An informational session for those interested in volunteering will be held at the Baker College Welcome Center, Conference Room E on September 10, 2008 at 5:30 until 7:00.** For more information on how you can become involved please contact Heidi Frei at shiawassee_mi@tnc.org.



MiCorps grant recipients from around the state are trained in the Shiawassee River. Photo: K. Algozin, DNC.

Your Lawn and Your Water...

by Josh Shields, Shiawassee Conservation District

How are lawns tied to the quality of our water resources? If you have a lawn, proper maintenance not only helps meet your aesthetic and recreational goals, but it's also an effective way to reduce the possibility of contaminants reaching our lakes, rivers, streams, and of course, our groundwater, which many of us (nearly half of Michigan's residents, in fact) depend on for safe drinking water. Here are a couple of steps you can take to help protect Michigan's valuable water resources:

If you are considering fertilization, get a soil test to determine the nutrient needs of your lawn and avoid fertilizing before green-up in the spring. You may get a soil test at your local Michigan State University Extension office. If you live next to a lake, river, or other surface water body, consider using a fertilizer with no phosphorus. Improper fertilization techniques may lead to excessive nutrient losses, which can lower the quality of both surface water and groundwater.

Mow your lawn to a height of 2.5-4.0" (removing approximately 1/3 of the leaf blade each mowing), and return grass clippings back to the lawn (or compost them).

Goals of the Friends of the Shiawassee River

Care for the River

Maintain and improve the River's water quality, habitats, and natural banks.

Enjoy the River

Increase recreational access and responsible use of the river for anglers, canoeists, walkway users, park visitors, and others who enjoy the River.

Share the River

Enhance the community's appreciation and knowledge of the River, especially among our youth.

Become a 'Friend' of the River on page 4. For more information about the Friends of the Shiawassee River and membership, contact Heidi Frei at 989.723.9062 or shiawassee_mi@tnc.org.

Proper mowing practices help promote a healthy, vigorous lawn, which in turn discourages pest invasion and losses of fertilizers, pesticides, and other chemicals that may penetrate your landscape.

Plant a buffer, or row of perennial vegetation, along the river or other water body. This will trap chemicals and fertilizers that can run off of lawns before they reach our waterways and contaminate our drinking water.

GET A LAWN*A*SYST! Through the Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program (MGSP), homeowners can take advantage of Lawn*A*Syst, which is a FREE and CONFIDENTIAL exercise that examines how common lawn-care practices are tied to surface and groundwater quality. Essentially, you and a groundwater educator evaluate each of your lawn-care practices and assign a risk level (low, medium, or high) as it pertains to water quality. Practices include fertilization, mowing, irrigation, pest control, and seeding, and each practice is evaluated by season (spring, summer, and early fall). For each practice that is assigned a medium or high risk level, an action plan is developed to reduce that risk level.

For more information or if you are interested in a Lawn*A*Syst, contact Josh Shields, AmeriCorps Environmental Educator, at the Shiawassee Conservation District via phone (989.723.8263 ext. 3) or email (shieldsj2@michigan.gov).

membership

Do *your* part to help protect our freshwater!

Just 3 percent of the world's water exists as fresh water-
2 percent is locked in the polar ice caps,
less than 1 percent resides in freshwater lakes and streams.

You can help protect the Shiawassee River by becoming a member today! Members will enjoy a discount at our annual Winetasting plus a membership gift, donated by Meijer.

Your membership supports the Friends' programs, including River Cleanups and educational events.



Membership Levels

- _____ \$15 Friend
- _____ \$30 Supporter
- _____ \$50 Benefactor
- _____ \$100 Blue Heron

Please make check payable & mail to:
Friends of the Shiawassee ·
P.O. Box 402 · Owosso, MI 48867

Name _____
Address _____
City/ST/Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

The **mission** of The Nature Conservancy is **to preserve** the plants, animals and natural communities that represent **the diversity of life on Earth** by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

The Conservancy and its 1 million members worldwide have protected more than 117 million acres on Earth. The Nature Conservancy embraces a **non-confrontational, market-based** approach for accomplishing its **science-driven** mission.

For more information, visit <http://nature.org/michigan>.

This publication produced by Friends of the Shiawassee River volunteers.



Friends of the Shiawassee River

The Friends is a nonprofit volunteer organization in Shiawassee County, MI.

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c/o The Nature Conservancy in Michigan
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