

Boyne River Bulletin

Friends of the Boyne River, Inc.

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This issue of the newsletter is dedicated to reporting our 2011-2012 accomplishments

1. We continued our FoBR Marie Zoberiski Scholarship program. Marie Zoberiski was a founding member of the FoBR and the scholarship was established through her generosity. Each year, the FoBR awards \$1,000 (\$500 per semester) to a student who will be majoring in an environmental field and lives in the watershed of the Boyne River or Charlevoix County. In the spring, our scholarship committee (Marie Sheets, Mark Contrucci and Dick Cunningham) contacts the surrounding high schools and North Central Michigan College and distributes applications for the Scholarship. In the 2011 – 2012 school year, we divided the scholarship between two applicants: Jonathon Haver, who has now graduated from Lake Superior State University and Ethen Mapes, who is a Junior at Northern Michigan University. This spring the scholarship for 2012 - 2013 was awarded to Alex Wangeman, who will be attending Michigan State University this fall, majoring in Environmental Engineering.
2. We continued having monthly meetings with speakers talking on diverse topics about the environment. We consider our meetings important because they provide our members with: 1. Environmental education and 2. A time to enjoy being with other environmentalists and to make new friends.
In the past 12 months we had many excellent speakers. Two presentations that met with definite success were Tip of the Mitt Watershed Specialist, Kevin Cronk who enlightened us on Storm Water Issues and Michigan. Author of four books, Doc Fletcher, who entertained us with information and photos of his adventures while paddling the rivers of Michigan. Much to appreciate this year!
3. We continued to maintain the anti-erosion plantings in Old City Park. This year we hired Ryan's Landscaping to weed and prune the plantings on the bank of the river because we needed some professional help. The remainder of the money from the Old City Park project paid for this and there is enough to last through approximately 2014. We also continue to maintain the wood chip paths at Dam Road.
4. We continued having educational programs for the youth of our area by doing presentations at Boyne City School's Sixth Grade Camp. Four of our members (Suzie Dickow, Donna Swift, Candy Greene, and Marie Sheets) went to Camp Daggett and gave presentations about: 1. Identifying plants that are pertinent for survival and relating folklore about those plants and 2. Identifying plants and preserving them for use as bookmarks and bookplates.
Some of our members volunteered their support for the Lake Charlevoix Association and Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council's environmental education program of Experience Lake Charlevoix. All the sixth graders in Charlevoix County go out on Lake Charlevoix on the Beaver Islander. They go through stations to learn about the Lake. Suzie Dickow gave presentations about Invasive Species and the damage they do to our lakes and rivers and Ed and Diane Strzelinski gave presentations about the Watershed and Groundwater of Lake Charlevoix and how pollutants flow into the rivers and the lakes.

5. We continued to monitor and protect the Boyne River through our volunteering for the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council's River Monitoring Program. Every spring and fall, members of the Friends of the Boyne River collect data and representative samples of insects from the Boyne River at four sites (Old City Park, Dobleski Rd., Dam Rd and the North Branch Deppa Preserve). The collected insects are evaluated and used to determine ecosystem health. Although total diversity scores from the collected insects for the Boyne River are not as high as on some other similar rivers, the number of sensitive and very sensitive family diversity numbers are impressive at all sites. This is good news for the Boyne River and gives our river system a water quality grade of A which is "Excellent".

The water quality of the Boyne River could be improved. There is beaver activity at the Deppa Preserve on the North Branch, sedimentation at Dobleski Rd, erosion at Dam Road and urbanization in the Boyne City Area. The ponds on the river make the water warmer and, especially on the North Branch, road crossings are deteriorating and sediment is washing into the river.
6. We arranged for a monofilament collection container at a "high use" fishing site (the river above Dam Road) and we (thanks to Darryl Parish) are maintaining that container.
7. We have established a new website. The old one was no longer being supported by software. Ed Strzelinski contacted Adam Patterson who set up the new site and Jack Moran, a member of the Friends of the Jordan River watershed, who transferred all of the information from the old site, reorganized the new site and trained us. Jack has done all of this work - at no cost to us – thanks to his devotion to environmental groups and his expertise in working with websites!
8. We have continued to work with other environmental groups in our area. Examples of this are: 1. Volunteering with the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council for the monitoring of the Boyne River (see above), 2. Volunteering for the Lake Charlevoix Association and the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council for "Experience Lake Charlevoix" (see above), 3. Donating \$1,000 to Conservation Resource Alliance to help pay for engineering and construction costs of the Springbrook Road bridge over the North Branch of the Boyne River. We have also signed a letter of support for "Don't Frack Michigan"; a local group organized to eventually stop natural gas "fracking" and thereby preserve the health of Northern Michigan's water systems and environment. We have also supported Tip of the Mitt's drug disposal program (the "POD" program) to properly dispose of drugs and keep them out of our water systems. The program has been so successful that other organizations are using it as a model.
9. We have started working on our newest conservation project – The Boyne River Nature Area – which will improve and conserve a wetland alongside the Boyne River. So far, we have received approval from Boyne City's City Commission and the City's Park and Recreation Board. Nancy Cunningham is writing grant applications and to date we have received \$6,500 from the Charlevoix County Community Foundation, \$2,500 from Great Lakes Energy People Fund and \$5,000 from the Oleson Foundation. The budget for the project is \$54,975 so we have a ways to go. If we have enough money this fall to do one set of stairs with a boardwalk and a deck, then we will begin with that and finish the project next spring.