



### Good Websites Good Information

EPA CARE Program  
[www.epa.gov/care](http://www.epa.gov/care)

EPA Lead Safety  
[www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)

E-Waste Recycling  
[www.reconnectpartnership.com](http://www.reconnectpartnership.com)

County-wide Health Concerns  
[www.muskegonhealth.net](http://www.muskegonhealth.net)

Link from National Wildlife  
Federation  
GARDENER'S GUIDE TO  
GLOBAL WARMING  
Challenges and Solutions:  
[www.nwf.org/gardenersguide/  
Gardeners\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.nwf.org/gardenersguide/Gardeners_Guide.pdf)

# Your Environment

*A collaborative information resource for the Muskegon County Community*

## Autumn 2011

You can't turn back the clock, but you can surely wind it up again. Joe Branch borrowed those words to discuss the transformation of the old Hooker Chemical site to a wildflower meadow at the MCECC quarterly meeting. DEQ's Tom Berdinski's introduction described the voluntary employee initiative as going from brown-field blight to native prairie and savannah wildflower meadow. Branch also said that a portion of the space was turned into a soccer field and donated to the local school. And it doesn't stop there! A conservation easement grant is planned, and by 2013 there will be an extension of the Montague Bike Path to take the path to Lake Michigan. That takes the federally mandated clean-up job to a voluntary initiative that goes above and beyond.

When Occidental Petroleum purchased Hooker Chemical, it also inherited its pollution issues. The 1950's chlorine chemical plant went from being a popular employer to a disdained toxic waste dump. Oxy Chem assigned a new branch of the company, Glenn Springs Holdings, to tackle the issue, and 3 employees, including Joe Branch, are still highly involved in the clean-up effort, doing "remedial actions taken to the limits of science." The majority of the 880 acre site is "property set aside with intent to hold as a legacy property for habitat restoration" by the company; and the voluntary beautification efforts are impressive to behold. They make their own on-site compost from residential yard debris and local dairy farm materials to amend the soil, then plant native grass and wildflower seeds. Control burns are done to release nitrogen and pot ash, which adds nutrients; and it burns off the competition from invasive plants with shallow roots, while stimulating growth of native plants with long tap roots. Native plantings support native species, so the beautification goes beyond aesthetics to wildlife preservation. Very inspiring!