



Your Environment

A collaborative information resource for the Muskegon County Community

FALL 2005

Improving Muskegon Lake

Kathy Evans, Timberland RC & D

The Muskegon Lake PAC will convene its habitat committee to advise on a new project to improve fish and wildlife habitat along the shoreline and urban tributaries. A grant was awarded to Timberland Area Council by EPA's Great Lakes National Programs Office. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation will administer the EPA grant and contracts will be signed this fall.

The Muskegon Lake habitat project is in partnership with Timberland Area Council, Muskegon River Watershed Assembly, Muskegon Community College Biology Department and GVSU-AWRI. The group will set wildlife targets, perform education and outreach, develop a student monitoring program and physically improve habitat.

In addition to the wildlife grant, the PAC is completing a Great Lakes Basin program grant. One of the shoreline erosion sites that has been improved can be seen between Heritage Landing and the YMCA. A stormwater management workshop and a tour of sites will be held for local officials and the public later this year.

For more information, or to become involved, please contact Kathy Evans, Coordinator, Muskegon Lake Public Advisory Council at 231-740-7511 or visit the web at www.muskegonlake.org.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air	2
Computer Recycling in Muskegon	2
Environmental Policy Certificate Program	3
Do You Know Where Your Drains Go?	3
PEAK HOUR Conference Announcement	3
Fishing Around in Muskegon	4

Terms in body text that are underlined and printed in green are defined in the terminology section on page 2 of this issue.

Good Web Sites Good Information

Timberland Area Council
www.natureandpeople.org

EPA CARE program
www.epa.gov/care

It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air
www.italladdsup.gov

National Drinking Water Clearinghouse
www.nesc.wvu.edu/ndwc

**COASTAL
LAND USE
SURVEY INSIDE**

EPA's CARE program coming to Muskegon County

The Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council has been selected to receive a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency's Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program for implementation of a number of activities related to a community environmental assessment effort facilitated by the Muskegon County Health Department in 2003. The MCECC is one of four organizations in the nation to receive this award.

CARE is a new EPA initiative designed to establish and sustain multi-media, community-based and community-driven projects to reduce local exposure to toxic pollution. The objective of CARE is to empower communities by responding to their needs, helping to reduce risk, and working with

them on solving problems identified within their community.

With funding from the CARE program, the MCECC will be able to follow through on a number of awareness activities identified by the community in the assessment including contamination of local fisheries and drinking water, lead poisoning, and local air quality concerns. The EPA will be providing targeted technical assistance and educational materials to assist in the effort. For more information on the MCECC's CARE project, contact Jill Montgomery, MCECC Chair, at montgomeryji@co.muskegon.mi.us.

A copy of the assessment report *Community Profile* can be found on the Muskegon County Health Department website at www.muskegonhealth.net.

It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air

Amy Haack, WMSRDC



People want both mobility and clean air yet most are unaware that the transportation choices they make directly affect air quality. The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission (WMSRDC), acting as the designated air quality planning agency for Muskegon and Northern Ottawa Counties, understands this problem. That is why WMSRDC is reaching out through a second *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* door hanger campaign to inform residents that their individual travel and household activities can make a big difference in air quality. This program is similar to the *Ozone Action!* program, but encourages modified travel and household behavior during all warm months, not just on *Ozone Action!* Days.

What is *It All Adds Up*?

WMSRDC is utilizing the national *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air* initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to enhance the door hanger campaign. *It All Adds Up* is designed to support local public outreach efforts to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. The initiative provides samples of outreach materials and activities that emphasize simple and convenient actions people can take to improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion, while saving time, money, and stress.

***It All Adds Up* in the City of Roosevelt Park**

The City of Roosevelt Park was chosen as this year's project site for the *It All Adds Up* due to demographics, location, and accessibility. This particular project was funded through [Federal Congestion Mitigation, and Air Quality Funds](#). Essential activities of the Roosevelt Park project included weekly door-to-door hand delivery of door hangers offering unique air quality themed transportation and household activity alternatives. Door hangers were delivered for three consecutive weeks during the months of June and July 2005. Press releases also generated various local media coverage.

For more information on this project or other air quality programs, please contact Amy Haack, WMSRDC Program Manager at (231) 722-7878 ext. 19 or at ahaack@wmsrdc.org.

DELL INC., STATE OF MICHIGAN, & MUSKEGON COUNTY TEAM UP TO HOLD A FREE COMPUTER RECYCLING EVENT ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2005

The State of Michigan's Department of Information Technology and Environmental Quality have teamed up with Dell Inc. to host a free computer recycling collection in Macomb, Ingham, and Muskegon County.

Organized through the Muskegon County Environmental Coordinating Council, the Muskegon collection will run from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm at Great Lakes Downs (I-96 & US 31 Interchange) in the North end of the parking lot near Hile Road.

Residents will be able to clean out their closets and garages of all brands of computers, monitors, printers, scanners, keyboards, and computer mice and drop them off at project locations on collection day. Whenever possible, collected equipment will be refurbished and reused. All the rest will be properly recycled.

All data should be removed from computer hard drives before equipment is dropped off. All floppy discs, CDs or other storage media should also be removed.

Televisions, stereo equipment, cell phones and other electronic appliances, will not be accepted.

For more information on this particular event or other collection sites, please contact Jill Montgomery at 231-724-1293 or montgomeryji@co.muskegon.mi.us. To volunteer your assistance on the day of the event, sign up online at www.volunteermatch.org.

Terminology

Tributaries

A stream that flows into a larger stream or other body of water.

Federal Congestion, Mitigation, and Air Quality Funds

Federal funding for transportation projects to improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion in counties classified as air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas for the federal criteria pollutant ozone.

Environmental Policy Certificate Program Offered at MCC

Participants will learn practical information about the way natural resource/environmental decisions are made in the Muskegon area, with a focus on past and current issues and local case studies, in order to provide a comprehensive introductory background on environmental policymaking for local government officials, community conservation organization board members, and interested citizens. Classes will be held, on Thursdays, October 6 - 27 from 6:30 to 9:00 pm. Fee is \$69 for the entire course or \$29 per evening. Participants must attend all four sessions to obtain a certificate.

Instructor: Tanya Cabala - former Michigan Director, Associate Director, and the Land Conservation Program Manager of the Lake Michigan Federation (Alliance for the Great Lakes). Current owner of *Great Lakes Consulting*, working primarily for environmental interest groups and agencies in the Great Lakes region. Cabala's primary goal is to motivate and engage people in efforts to protect what matters most to them in their communities – lakes, rivers, wetlands, dunes – and to view their own actions as a crucial part of a larger effort.

For more information on this course, contact Tanya Cabala at tcabala@msn.com or Muskegon Community College registration (Section 6802) at 231-777-0410.

Do you know where your drains go?

Mona Lake Watershed Council

If the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality showed up at your door and said they traced contamination found in a nearby creek to your business, would you have appropriate records on-hand to prove otherwise?

A local company on Little Black Creek learned this lesson the hard way - they had an accidental spill in their shop. Believing the floor drain was connected to the sanitary sewer line, the company thought their spill was being treated by the Muskegon County Wastewater Management System. After investigating all drains and connections for their business, they learned the contrary - the drain lead directly into Little Black Creek. Unfortunately, the subsequent inspection and cleanup for the spill cost the company \$10,000.

The average inspection to check drain connections costs between \$500 and \$1,500.

Would it be a wise investment for the protection of your business and the environment? Absolutely.



Interested in Alternative Energy and Health Approaches? The *PEAK HOUR* Conference may be for you.

Peak Hour is a one day gathering of visionaries and experts on community development, alternative energy, and alternative health approaches. Peak Hour will provide participants with information and inspiration on how they -- as citizens and consumers -- can take charge of their own future -- and make it better.

Speakers at the conference will include Christopher Bedford, President of Sweetwater Local Foods Market; Dr. Michael Ryce, a nationally known healer and educator; Joseph Genia, a Native American elder from the Ottawa Tribe and expert on Native American traditions; Fatumatti Sesi, distinguished educator from West Africa and spokeswoman for North African Women worldwide; Steve Gibb, Director of the Creative Health Center; Reuben Miller, President of Green Meadow Foods LLC; Jim Meyerle, Education Coordinator at Urban Options Energy Center in East Lansing, Michigan; Don Haughey, Director and Founder of the Creative Health Institute; Paul Veltkamp, urban and environmental designer, and Phil Wilson, expert on holistic health and massage therapy.

The First Congregational Church, U.C.C., 1201 Jefferson in downtown Muskegon will host the day long *Peak Hour* Conference on Saturday, October 1 from 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. Meals will be prepared by Werner Absenger, Head Chef of Sygnus Restaurant of Grand Rapids. To find out more, please contact Vancy Bown at 231-780-4501 or vbown@aol.com.



Wildlife Federation, United Conservation Clubs “Fish Around” in Muskegon

Adapted from an article written by Cynthia Price for the Norton-Lakeshore Examiner

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Ann Arbor office and Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC) chose Muskegon for the first of three challenge fishing tours. Members of the Michigan Anglers Association (MAA), most of them nearby residents, rose to the challenge posed by Kobi Platt of NWF and Jimmy Gretzinger from MUCC's Michigan Out of Doors TV show. The group was joined by Representatives David Farhat of Norton Shores, Jerry Kooiman of Grand Rapids, and Senator Gerald VanWoerkom at Fisherman's Landing in Muskegon.

The purpose of the event was to draw attention to the fish consumption advisories. All of Michigan's inland lakes along with about 2200 miles of Great Lakes coastline have fish consumption warnings due to contaminants such as PCBs and Mercury.

NWF and MUCC would like to see something done to reduce mercury in the air and deposition into the Great Lakes. Mercury in the food chain can cause irreversible memory and attention problems in children and reproductive and cardiovascular problems in adults. In addition, it damages the region's tourism industry which relies heavily on sport fishing activities to draw visitors.

Recent rule changes made by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) call for a 70% reduction of mercury by 2018. NWF, MUCC and many other groups and individuals, including some of the 1.3 million anglers in Michigan, do not think this is good enough when technology to make a 90% reduction is currently available and comparable in price.

Recently, the State of Michigan joined fourteen other states in a lawsuit against the EPA rule. Governor Jennifer Granholm has pledged to continue this fight.

Note on the fishing challenge: The MAA team caught a lot more fish than the out-of-town challengers, but they chose to throw them all back.

If you would like to submit information on an issue, an environmental organization, or have questions pertaining to an article, please contact:

Jill Montgomery
Muskegon County Health Department
at montgomeryji@co.muskegon.mi.us (231) 724-1293

or
Liz Vos
Project Director, MCECC
at liz@mcecc.org (231) 557-2915

**Muskegon County
Environmental Coordinating Council**

**P.O. Box 1512
Muskegon, Michigan 49440**