

**THE FRIENDS OF THE MAPLE RIVER  
GOALS, PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES  
2008 – 2009 ANNUAL REPORT**

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**OFFICERS:**

Jeff Wadell, President  
Ed Mikula, Vice President  
Anita Ladouceur, Secretary  
Jon Morrison, Treasurer

**“How You Make a Difference”**

Volunteers are the force that allows the Friends of The Maple River (FOTMR) organization to get things done. Please consider the following list of activities and determine if you are interested in helping move any of them forward. If you are interested, please contact any Officer or Committee Chairperson thru the FOTMR website at [www.friendsofthemapleriver.org](http://www.friendsofthemapleriver.org)

The mission of FOTMR is “To preserve, improve and educate the public regarding the wise use of the Maple River and its watershed. We will strive to be partners in conservation with local citizens, organizations, groups and businesses.”

The vision of the FOTMR is “All life is part of our Earth’s complex ecosystem. People share space on this planet with all other forms of life (flora & fauna) and we interact with this planet’s air, water, soils and minerals. It is in our best interest to promote and support a healthy and sustainable environment. The Maple River and its watershed is a cohesive unit that reflects our behavior and actions relative to its survival. Everyone needs to make a commitment to promote the wise use of the Maple River and its watershed.

**MONITORING COMMITTEE, Gary Boersen, Committee Chairperson, 517-420-7962**

1. The committee has completed the Maple River Watershed Monitoring Plan. The Plan has received review and comment from a broad range of state and federal agencies and organizations. The first element of the plan, the Little Maple River sub-watershed monitoring plan is under development. A grant application for funding of the monitoring equipment has been completed and sent to the Capitol Region Community Foundation for consideration. Local volunteers will be trained to use the equipment and record findings. One year of baseline data will be required before comparisons and conclusions can be made about the findings. A decision regarding the proposal is expected by the end of May 2009. For more information, please contact the committee chairperson.
2. 319 Watershed Management Plan Development Project – The FOTMR is one of many partners working together under the coordination of the Clinton Conservation District to develop a management plan for the upper Maple River watershed area. The planning process is a multi year effort to identify, evaluate and develop plans for the correction of non point source pollution and other

problems. The FOTMR is participating by providing volunteers to help perform field survey work and to chair and be members on the various communities.

WATERSHED IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE, Jack Nutter, Committee Chairperson, 989-862-5541:

1. RIVER CLEAN-UP AND CHANNEL CLEARING PROJECTS - The group organizes an annual river clean-up. The Clinton County Department of Waste Management provides a dumpster for waste disposal. Volunteers sign-up for portions of the river, and leave their bagged collections at predetermined road crossings, where they are picked up and taken to the dumpster. The committee also conducts channel clearing efforts. Debris and trees are removed from the channel in an environmentally friendly manner so that the river is navigable. If you are interested in volunteering for these efforts, please contact the committee chairperson.
2. ELSIE DAM RESTORATION PROJECT – The committee is supporting and assisting Duplain Township, which owns the dam, in efforts to stabilize/restore the dam. The Elsie Dam was constructed in 1840 and is currently used for recreational purposes. In the past, the dam has been the source of power for mills and electricity. It is currently in need of attention. Current efforts are directed at developing a community plan and finding funding for engineering studies and restoration efforts.
3. MAPLE RAPIDS RIVERSIDE PARK AND BOAT LAUNCH – The property has been identified and the property owner is cooperating to sell the property to the Village of Maple Rapids. The Clinton County Green Space Commission is assisting the village with its parks and recreation plan update. State land funds will be applied for in 2010 to complete the sale/donation. The park will be designed to include a launch ramp, picnic area, parking area, and a future facility for the FOTMR.
4. MUSKRAT LAKE WATER LEVEL RESTORATION PROJECT – The Clinton Conservation District, the Clinton County Drain Commissioner, Timberland Resource Conservation and Development, Olive Township, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and the FOTMR are cooperating in this project. To date, this effort has taken several years of volunteer engineering work and a lot of cooperation. A permit application has been submitted to the MDEQ to restore the lake level so that the state-owned and operated public boat launch and parking area can again be used to launch and recover boats.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE, Joe Latoff, Committee Chairperson, 989-307-9000:

1. PUBLIC EDUCATION & INFORMATION DISPLAY BOOTH AT FAIRS AND OTHER COMMUNITY EVENTS – Currently we have a portable tent/booth, two tables, two chairs, several information boards and brochures about the FOTMR as well as other associated organizations and activities. The new addition for the display is the development of a three dimensional table top model of the

- watershed. The table-top model will allow adults and children to identify where they live, work and play in the watershed. It will help individuals better understand how the watershed works and how they influence it. FOTMR has submitted a grant application to the "Great Lakes Basin Program" of the Timberland Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, Inc. to fund the production of the model. Volunteers are needed to help transport and staff the booth at festivals, etc.
2. VIDEOTAPED WATERSHED HISTORY PROJECT – FOTMR makes video-audio tapes of interviews with senior citizens from the area that have memories to recall, and stories to tell about their family history relative to the river. The FOTMR has a video camera and tapes. A library of tapes is maintained by the organization at the Briggs Library in St. Johns. Volunteers are needed to publicize the project and to tape interviews. This project is coordinated by Sara Morrison, who can be reached at 989-224-1106, and Ed Mikula, who can be reached at 989-224-3654.
  3. BROCHURES AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT – FOTMR currently has a general descriptive brochure that is shared with the Upper Maple River Watershed Management Project coordinated by the Clinton Conservation District. A brochure revision effort is currently underway.
  4. BIG TREE PROGRAM – FOTMR participates in the Big Tree Program. The nationwide program encourages the identification of the largest of each species of tree in the watershed. The trees will be judged by and entered into the national and state big tree programs. Trees are identified and used as the talking point for the discussion of history, agriculture, etc, with young people. This project is coordinated by Jon Morrison, who can be reached at 989-224-1106.
  5. LAND CONSERVANCY PROGRAM – Land owners can obtain significant financial tax benefits from committing their land to the program that allows its continued use and control by the property owner. In return, the property is legally determined to never be developed for anymore intensive use. A brochure describing the benefits and requirements of the program is under development. A volunteer Project Coordinator is needed to publicize this important program.
  6. ANNUAL MAPLE RIVER FLOAT TRIP PROJECT – The organization sponsors and staffs an annual float trip in cooperation with the Maple Rapids Lamplighter Festival. The trip includes several different launch sites that allow participants to enjoy a four, two or one hour trip. Volunteers assist participants with rides back to their vehicles. Volunteers also promote the event with canoe and kayak clubs as well as the general public. The Float Trip will take place on Saturday, August 22, 2009. Many clubs schedule their summer events during the winter months. This project is coordinated by Fred Olmsted & Jim Ellickson, who can be reached at 989-224-8288.
  7. HISTORICAL RIVER TOUR PROJECT – This project involves developing a map of the Maple River with river side markers and descriptions of various historical sites and events along the way. The brochure/map provides a self-guided tour of the river and information regarding the history of this cross state waterway first used by Native Americans to travel between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron.

Volunteers are needed to conduct research and design the brochure/map. The work being done relative to the Maple River watershed is being coordinated with the Grand River Heritage Water Trails Project. To date, the committee has developed a draft list of sites to be marked along the river. This draft list will be shared with the public via a news release, and the public has been asked to nominate additional sites/events for consideration. The next step will be to write a brief description regarding each marked site. The committee is in the process of establishing working relationships with area historical societies for additional site alternatives. A framed watershed map is under development that will show all sites addressed by the project. This project is coordinated by Sara Morrison, who can be reached at 989-224-1106.

**YARD SIGN PROJECT** - The FOTMR has “yard signs” that can be loaned to individuals who are willing to site and maintain them. These signs help to increase the public awareness of the Maple River and FOTMR. The yard signs cost \$15.00 each. Contributions toward the purchase of additional yard signs are welcomed. For more information, please contact the committee chairperson.

8. **PUBLIC LANDS INFORMATION BOARDS** - A laminated watershed map with educational information is available for display at boat launches, state and county parks, and other sites. These postings must be installed, inspected and maintained. A framed watershed map is under development that will show all posting sites. The postings cost \$10.00 each. Contributions toward the purchase of additional postings, as well as suggestions for additional posting sites are welcome. Volunteers are needed to coordinate and expand this project. For additional information, please contact the committee chairperson.
9. **WATERSHED BOUNDARY – MAJOR ROAD CROSSING SIGNS** - The FOTMR has completed a plan to erect roadside signs, approved by the respective county Road Commissions, to be located at each road-watershed boarder crossing. Estimates have been received per the cost of signs & the road commissions have agreed to install the signs. The FOTMR needs to raise funds for the signs and to acquire property owner’s permission for the sign placement. A framed watershed map is under development that will show all road sign sites. Each road sign costs \$50.00. Contributions towards the purchase of the signs are welcome. A volunteer Project Coordinator is needed to lead this project.
10. **FRIENDS OF THE MAPLE RIVER AWARD** – This award is presented to individuals, groups, and businesses that have demonstrated a high regard for the Maple River watershed and its quality of life. Nominations are made by members and approved by the group in open meetings. Presentations are made at public gatherings or at FOTMR meetings. News articles are often written and publicized regarding the award and its recipients. A list of awardees is maintained on the FOTMR web site. A Cub Scout Pack was nominated at the February meeting for their annual work including the construction, erection and maintenance of a series of Wood Duck nesting boxes in the watershed. The public can submit nominations. The current nominees are: Boy Scout Troops #72 & 520, & Cub Scout Packs #520 & #572, including Allen Soros, Pack Leader, Blain Sochor, Troop Leader, & Steve Stolz, Assistant Leader. This program is currently coordinated by Joe Latoff, who can be reached at 989-224-2085. A volunteer Project Coordinator is needed to lead this project.

11. EXPLORERS POST SPONSORSHIP – The FOTMR, with funding from The St. Johns Kiwanis Club, sponsored the development and implementation of an Explorer's post that specializes in giving high school students direct exposure to careers in the environmental and natural sciences. The adult Post Guide position is currently vacant. If you are interested in getting involved with helping young people explore possible career options, please contact the committee chairperson.
  
12. WETLANDS RESTORATION – The FOTMR is a partner to several groups that can provide guidance, planning, and funding for wetlands restoration. A brochure describing these resources is currently under development.

The Friends of the Maple River  
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