This newsletter is dedicated to Terry Stilson, who many of you have heard, retired on July 10 after 14 years of tireless dedication to the Muskegon River. Terry will be missed, for there are few individuals in the watershed with the knowledge, connections and friendships Terry has developed with people throughout the watershed, from Muskegon to Houghton and Higgins Lake.

In order to truly express our appreciation, each MRWA Board member and staff has contributed to the article, sharing their thoughts, musings and experiences they’ve had with Terry over her career. We’ll miss you Terry! Congratulations! And may the sun always be shining on your kayak!

Ken Johnson: “In 2007 my son Kyle and I paddled the entire length of the Muskegon River. We had no idea what we were doing. I called Terry Stillson because someone had recommended that I talk with her. The rest is history. She gave Kyle and I some good ideas, maps and helped chronicle our trip. In life you meet few people like Terry. For me, she is the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly. She cannot be replaced. But she can be missed both professionally and personally.”

Doug Trembath: “It has been my pleasure to work with Terry for 8 years, both as a water quality sampler and as a MRWA Board member. She is conscientious, and always does more than expected. I’m sorry to see her retire. Best wishes and best of luck in retirement, Terry”.

Greg Mund: “As a founding MRWA Board member, I’ve known and worked with Terry from the get go and does she go! Terry’s diligence and dedication to this wondrous river is amazing, and though she’s left her work professionally, I know her dedication will continue, to protect the energy, serenity and beauty of the river. Congratulations on your retirement and job well done!”

Dixie Ward: “Terry was undoubtedly instrumental in helping the MRWA become what it is now. Her many years of hard work and dedication has made a positive impact on the organization.”

Pat Jarrett: “I have only worked with Terry for three months but what she has done for the MRWA is quite evident. It is such a big loss for the organization but it is a well deserved retirement.”

Tom Anderson: “In my short time with the MRWA I have found Terry to be very helpful, quick to respond and she takes action and is very pleasant to deal with.”

Cindy Fitzwilliams-Heck: “Terry and I started to develop a friendship soon after it.”

Terry has given 110 percent to the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly. It is that dedication and love of the river that has made the MRWA a living organization that benefits all those who use and appreciate its beauty. She will be missed both professionally and personally.”

Jean LaLonde: “Terry has always been a fervent caretaker of the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly. It is that dedication and love of the river that has made the MRWA a living organization that benefits all those who use and appreciate its beauty. She will be missed both professionally and personally.”

Nancy Burmeister (Bill too): “Terry Stilson has been a fervent caretaker of the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly. From educating young and old to creating rain gardens and natural shorelines, she leaves a legacy of engaging others in caring for everyone and everything that exists in our watershed.”

Wayne Groesbeck: “I spent fourteen years trying to find something Terry Stilson couldn’t do, and I never succeeded. She was the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly’s Swiss Army Knife, and I still think our turtle mascot should have been named Terry rather than Woody.”

Don Henning: “I knew Terry by reputation before I met her in person. It seemed that everyone who had worked with her had something good to say about her. In particular I heard from several close friends who went on the first voyage of discovery. They all said the same things: “she keeps her promises”, “somehow she gets it all done”, and “she loves working for the MRWA”. Now that I’ve gotten to know her a little bit the last few years it’s easy to understand why so many people speak so highly of her. She is the genuine article and we will all miss her.”

Ron Kadelsik: “Terry has been the face and backbone of the MRWA since it’s inception, and she will be sorely missed. Good luck on the Farm!”

I became a member of the MRWA Education Committee in 2002. We have spent many hours together driving throughout the watershed for programs or reconnaissance trips, or facilitating workshops or water fairs, or sharing ideas in meetings, or planting rain gardens side-by-side, or paddling a canoe on the Muskegon, or just catching-up when we could on family events or life’s curiosities. I know I won’t lose her as a friend, but not having her as the pulse of the watershed will take some getting used to - to say the least. Her dedication, high-quality work, foresight, and knowledge about the watershed will be missed but not forgotten. Terry has made a positive and hopefully sustaining impact on the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly. Thanks for everything, Terry! Your friend in and out of the watershed Cindy.”
It has been exciting for me to see the new developments the MRWA has had during the last several months. We have added:

- a new employee,
- a new board member,
- and have initiated a marketing plan.

I remember when I first designed and uploaded our website to the internet almost 13 years ago. So much new technology has been developed since then with cellphones, tablets, and iPads now accessing the internet, our old website was outdated. Our new website has just gone online with a fresh design, and you can now use your credit cards to pay for memberships and donations.

Our “Keep it Cool” campaign is now going public and you have already received a letter requesting a donation. This campaign is imperative in continuing the many MRWA programs we have done and are currently doing.

It seems like yesterday when I was hired as Executive Assistant for the newly formed Muskegon River Watershed Assembly but it has been 14 years! During those years, our organization has completed projects and programs valued at more than four million dollars! During the first couple years, I spent my work days creating databases, newsletters, and annual reports, initiating our QuickBooks files, designing and updating our website, and filling out countless organizational forms for countless government agencies.

I soon began writing grant proposals and the Board changed my title to “Program Coordinator” as I began managing those projects along with continuing my original job tasks. Several years ago I took over the responsibility of most of our project management and programming. Our Board then changed my title to “Program Director”. Last fall, I was appointed Executive Director.

Yes, many things have been accomplished and my title has changed many times over the last 14 years. And it is about to change another time. I will be retired as you read this article. As a result of a recent major accident in my family, I have decided it’s time to retire and focus on my family’s health and welfare. I only regret that I have had such a short time as Executive Director.

The highlight of my many years of service has been all the dedicated people I’ve met. Our Board members have spent many hours and miles directing the organization, many volunteers have accomplished tasks that saved our organization time and dollars, and many partners have assisted us with our numerous projects. The friendships I have made with everyone are invaluable.

I will be retired but not entirely absent from the MRWA. I will be retained as a sub-contractor to finish a couple projects and assist in the acclimation of our new director when he/she is hired.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped us make the MRWA an important force in our watershed. I hope you will continue to support the MRWA as it continues to “protect, preserve, and restore” the Muskegon River Watershed.
**MRWA Website:** If you have visited the MRWA website (http://mrwa.org) recently, you probably noticed some changes. In an effort to make it easier and more convenient for our friends to interact with the organization we have redesigned the site. All of the things you have come to expect and rely on—the data repository, the project tracker and the event calendar—are still there and easy to find.

In addition, you will see an email sign up button that allows you to receive the most recent new and latest updates directly to your inbox. You can also make a donation on renew your membership securely online with a credit card.

**New Director Comes Aboard:** Thomas Anderson is the newest director of the MRWA Board. Tom has degrees from Michigan State University and the University of Detroit. He is now a retired attorney who had a general practice in Cedar Springs for over 50 years. He and his wife live on Little White Fish Lake in Montcalm County and has been a member of the Little White Fish Lake Association for many years. Tom also participated in several of our Voyage of Discovery paddling trips. His experience and love of the watershed will benefit the MRWA tremendously.

**New Administrative Assistant Joins Staff:** Patricia Jarrett joined our staff in April as administrative assistant. Pat and her husband owned a jewelry store for many years which she helped manage. She also worked for Central Michigan University for several years completing administrative and clerical tasks in the development office. Pat has an Associate Degree in Business Administration. Welcome Pat!

**Keep It Cool:** Did you receive the “Keep It Cool” campaign literature either in the mail or via email? Please take a few moments to look it over your help would be greatly appreciated. The River relies on the annual support of members and individual donors to pay a significant percentage of staff wages and enables us to focus on local projects and programs. Please consider supporting and investing in the MRWA. Your help will enable future generations the ability to enjoy the spectacular Muskegon River.

**MICROBEADS**

*by Wayne Groesbeck and Nancy Burmeister, At Large Board Members*

This Board Member recently made a visit to the dentist. As a reward for an hour of moderate torture, I received a roll of dental floss, a neon toothbrush, and a small tube of major brand toothpaste. Unlike the toothpaste of my youth which resembled, well, paste, this was blue and bubbly-looking. I mentioned to my dentist that this product contained microbeads, and he asked “Who thought it would be a good idea to put plastic in toothpaste?” Obviously, someone who makes plastic.

Microbeads are synthetic polymeric material less than five millimeters in size that wash down the drain with normal use. Manufacturers add them to facial cleansers, toothpastes, and other such products, and millions of them are going down the drain. Unfortunately, they are small enough to wash right through the systems at waste water treatment facilities, so they end up in our rivers and lakes. Also, their shape and consistency tend to cause toxins to attach to them as they float in the water. Then, fish and other wildlife mistake them for food and eat them, toxins and all.

Most of the companies that manufacture these beads are aware that there is a problem. They are willing to take them out of their products as soon as they find a replacement for these tiny “scrubbers”. Some have replaced them with other plastics that are no better. Others are asking to postpone their removal for several years while they reformulate products.

Because of the seriousness of these materials getting into the food chain, several states have already taken action to eliminate them. Six states now have laws prohibiting microbeads. California is awaiting a final Senate vote that, when passed, will establish the strongest policy yet. A bill being considered by the Michigan legislature would prohibit the sale or distribution of products containing microbeads by 2017.

Cosmetic manufacturers have powerful lobbies, but we can encourage our elected representatives to support this legislation with calls and letters. We can also have an immediate impact by reading product labels and not buying products containing polymeric microbeads. We can always protect our waters with education that spreads awareness of such threats. Who, indeed, thought it was a good idea to put plastic in toothpaste?
Below: Cargill Corporation employees completed a Hersey River (Osceola County) cleanup in May. The Newaygo Nationals river cleanup was also held in May along the Muskegon River. MRWA provided supplies to both groups.

Above: Students from the Mecosta Youth Center assisted in the planting of the rain garden in Canadian Lakes (Mecosta County) on May 27th. The rain garden is located in the new Morton Township Park adjacent to the Little Muskegon River.

Above: A rain garden was planted in the park that is located at Tamarack Lake in Lakeview (Montcalm County) on June 17th. The Montcalm Conservation District and the Village of Lakeview assisted in the planting.

Right: The MRWA conducted a Water Fair for 55 third grade students from Twin Lake Elementary (Muskegon County). Students shown are enjoying the Enviroscape.

Below: Over the July 4th weekend AIS Coordinator, Logan Nevins, worked with the HLB and the HLLA as well as local businesses to hold an aquatic species awareness weekend. Boaters could get their boats washed to prevent the spread of invasive species as well as learn the importance of washing their boats before entering a new waterbody. There was also a free hot lunch provided to boaters thanks to donations from local businesses. A total of 48 boats were washed over the event with hundreds of people educated on aquatic invasive species.

Below: Two hundred Tri County fourth graders enjoyed the water fair that was conducted by MRWA. Sixty high school students were trained to facilitate the sessions. MRWA representatives also facilitated a session at the MOISD Water Festival held in Big Rapids (Mecosta County).

Left: Seventeen people participated in the MRWA’s Voyage of Discovery on Friday, June 5th. The voyage covered about three miles of the Tamarack Creek from Minnie Farmer Park’s artesian well to Artman Park on Howard City’s west side. The group of 17 were warned there would be some portages along the way. According to Elisabeth Waldon, news editor for the Daily News, who was part of the group of paddlers “We portaged as much as we kayaked. Fallen trees awaited us around every other bend in the stream. Some we snuck under, others we slid and wiggled over while spiders of various sizes and other creepy crawlies snuck or fell into our vessels.” Ms. Waldon further stated “That’s not to say the trip wasn’t enjoyable. On the contrary it was a blast. Finding ways over, under and around the fallen logs was an adventure. Riding the occasional small set of rapids was exhilarating. The scenery was beautiful.”
Watch Out for the Knotweeds

By Vicki Sawicki, Program Director for North Country Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area

Japanese knotweed has been frequently planted as a part of landscaping projects. Regionally it is sometimes called Michigan bamboo, but it is NOT native to Michigan. In fact, the purposeful propagation or distribution of this plant is prohibited under Michigan law. Once established, Japanese knotweed is very difficult to control, often requiring numerous control strategies working in tandem. This plant is so virulent in its growth that it has been known to damage building foundations, sometimes resulting in lowered property values. Giant knotweed is similar to Japanese knotweed - the difference being that giant knotweed has leaves more than 6 inches long which are heart-shaped rather than rounded at the base. Like Japanese knotweed, the stalks of this plant also resemble bamboo, a trait that none of Michigan's native plants possess. The DNR would like observations of either knotweed variety reported at www.misin.msue.edu or through the free MISIN (Midwest Invasive Species Information Network) app.
Yes, I would like to help the MRWA by contributing the following:

Membership fees (per year) are:

- $10—Students
- $20—Individuals (non-student)
- $300—Individuals (non-student) lifetime
- $30—Organizations (community based/nonprofit)
- $50—Townships/Cities/Villages
- $100—Counties
- $50—Small business (20 employees or less)
- $100—Business/Industry/Agencies
- $100 per county—Regional (multiple counties) Entities/Tribes
- $50—Muskegon River Book—$10-members $13 non-members (plus $5 shipping)

Name: __________________________ Organization: __________________________
Street and Mailing Address: ________________________________________________
City, State, Zip: ___________________________________________________________
Phone: __________________________ Fax: __________________________ E-mail: ________
Comments/Questions: _______________________________________________________

☐ Please send me a copy of the 2014 MRWA Annual Report when it becomes available.

Memberships & Donations payable to: MRWA
*Endowments payable to: CFFMC
@Ferris State University
1009 Campus Drive JOH303
Big Rapids, MI 49307-2280

MRWA Brochure—free
New MRWA map brochure—Free to "MRWA"
MRWA donation in the amount of $ ____________
*Endowment contribution in the amount of $ ____________

Another project goal is to increase knowledge of the recycling program. Educational and informative information will be available to the public. The program will be promoted through the use of mass media, group meetings and individual contacts. There also will be three direct mailings to county residents which will increase awareness of recycling opportunities.

The grant will allow the county to increase the number of mobile recycle sites and have increased hours at the permanent facility. The need for this expanded service is great and community support is overwhelming. The project will continue beyond the grant term with ongoing financial support from Mecosta County and Recycle of Mecosta County. The grant opportunity will ensure a long term partnership between MRWA and Recycle of Mecosta County that will establish collection opportunities for recyclable materials as well as community outreach and education.
MRWA Board of Directors
Greg Mund, Chair
Cindy Fitzwilliams-Heck, Vice-Chair
Doug Trembath, Secretary
Ken Johnson, Treasurer
Jean LaLonde, Education Chair
Kurt Ray, Finance Chair
Ron Kadelsik, Resource Chair
Don Henning, Governance Chair

Directors At-Large:
Wayne Groesbeck
Nancy Burmeister
Thomas Anderson

MRWA Staff
Terry Stilson, Executive Director
Dixie Ward, Project Manager
Patricia Jarrett, Administrative Assistant
Gabrielle Blythe, Clerical Assistant

MRWA Calendar of Events

***See page 6 for more activities***

Houghton Lake Steering Committee Meeting
August 18th at 2:00 p.m.-Denton Township Hall
For More Information (231) 591-2324

Education Committee Meeting
September 10th at 4:00 p.m. at FSU

MRWA Meeting-at-Large
September 14th at 6:30 p.m.-The Depot in Reed City
For More Information (231) 591-2324

MRWA Executive Board meetings

MRWA Executive Board meetings are open to the public and usually held on the
third Monday of each month with some meetings being held via conference
calls. Please check the MRWA website for last-minute changes of meeting
schedules or call 231-591-2324

“The Muskegon River Watershed Assembly is dedicated to the preservation, protection, restoration, and sustainable use of
the Muskegon River, the land it drains, and the life it supports, through educational, scientific and conservation initiatives. “