

Highland Conservancy E-Newsletter
September 7, 2008

FUN RUN 5K IN HIGHLAND

The Highland Conservancy is sponsoring a 5K walk, trot or gallop in Highland on Sunday September 28th in partnership with the DDA and Horsin Around Highland. The route starts at Highland Feed store downtown and allows everyone to appreciate the aesthetic and rural beauty of our great community. Check in and registration begins at 7am and the race starts at 8:30 at Highland Feed store, 217 Livingston Road. The entry fee of \$18 includes a free pancake breakfast, t-shirt and a medal for the top 100 finishers. Call 810-494-7186 for more details.

CLEANING UP OUR ROADS

The Highland Conservancy has adopted two sections of road in Highland and we are dedicated to keeping them free of litter. As we begin the arduous task of picking up other people's trash, this is a gentle reminder to all of us to do our part in keeping our roads and highways clean. When I zip by in my car, I hardly notice the garbage – but on my bike, that is another story. So let's all do our part and pick up a bottle or two each time you go for a walk.

HARVEST FOR COMMUNITY SHARE

Some of our conservancy members donated their time and efforts to work on a new community garden at Highland United Methodist Church this summer. Thus far, it has been a great success, both for the weeds and the crops! In the past weeks, we have harvested some pretty hefty bags full of fresh, organic tomatoes, some broccoli, beans and other veggies that have been donated to various groups including Community Share in Highland. If you have an abundance of zucchini or other homegrown food or canned goods, we invite you to donate them to your local food bank. Community Share is now located at the former Apollo Elementary School on Milford Road a few miles north of M59. Many folks have been laid off and times are tough, so I hope you will consider helping out.

RIDE YOUR BIKE TO WORK CHALLENGE

Okay, to be honest I figured one way to force myself to actually do this would be to announce it in our newsletter. Soooo, I am challenging all Highland residents to ride their bikes to work one day during the week of September 15-19th. If it rains, try doing it on a sunny day. If your work is too far away, try riding to church! If that is too far, well then just get out and ride. No excuses. I have been trying to hitch up the courage to brave M-59 for two years now and I'm just going to do it. It will save gas and maybe get you started on a great habit! Maybe if I ride 12 miles to work and back I won't have to go workout! So if you see some crazy lady riding down M-59 to Oxbow Elementary in White Lake early some morning, give me a thumbs up.

TREE PLANTING

It's almost fall and time to start thinking about planting trees. I discovered an excellent article on tree planting when surfing through Land Choices superb website. Go to: www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard/treeptg.html for more information. Trees are an excellent way to shade homes and reduce energy usage. Remember, please plant native trees.

REMEDIATION WORK STARTED AT PARK BY LIBRARY

First off, let me warn you that this park is my passion so please forgive my wordiness! On July 23, 2008, the Highland Township Board approved an important clean-up project on the township's parkland directly north of the library – part of the proposed Nature Park our conservancy is fighting to protect. As you drive in to the library, this area can be seen just north of the entrance road by the pond west of the library (directly north of the post office). (Please note, I heartily support our board and am glad they support this important cleanup). It seems that the Numatics Company on Milford Road had been working to clean-up a contaminated underground water aquifer near their facility for some time. I don't know the full history of this contamination but I understand that it has been slowly creeping its way toward this beautiful park and other nearby undeveloped commercial land. Specifically, they had been attempting to clean up this toxic plume with a remediation well. Unfortunately, it is my understanding that this was ineffective so a new method was approved. This involved the drilling of various remediation wells and the installation of a compressor to aerate the toxins out of the water and allow them to dissipate into the air. I support the need for this clean up process to be done. However, I am dismayed at the amount of destruction to the local habitat that is occurring in the pine forest surrounding the pond just west of the library. Numerous pine trees have been gouged and their bark torn off. (If enough bark is removed from a tree, it allows disease and bugs to enter and can girdle and thus kill the tree). I walked the site this weekend and noted piles of branches and downed trees (hopefully they will be cleaned up)? Along the newly cut in roads to access the wells, tree roots were exposed thus potentially killing otherwise healthy trees (if left uncovered).

This was a pristine and densely forested area up to this point. I sincerely hope that the operators of the machinery putting in these wells will take more care as they continue this process! I also hope they will clean up all the brush and downed trees, remove plastic debris from the pond, cover up the exposed tree roots and return the area to as much of its former beauty as possible. This parkland deserves protection now, more than ever, to preserve it for future generations (of animals *and* people). I am not suggesting we install asphalt paths, or soccer fields, or anything that would detract from its natural beauty. This park is a treasure trove with rolling tall fields of prairie grass with big blue stem, blazing stars, and wild flowers. The marsh and wetlands are rich with wildlife including turtles, hawks, herons, sandhill cranes, snakes, and insects such as the praying mantis I saw there today.

Nearby residents have expressed worry that people will invade this paradise and I can certainly see why. The Highland Conservancy does not envision a huge change or invasion of people. Instead, our goal is to preserve this area in its natural state, clean up all the dumped trash, and protect it from further destruction from dirt bikes, development,

the spread of invasive plants that push out native plants, or pollution in any form. This already is a township park – a beautiful spot to walk your dog through meadows, tall prairie grass and pine forests or ride your horse along its gently rolling dirt paths. I invite your comments and concerns in protecting this fragile land at our blog:

www.highlandconservancy.typepad.com

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