



Local News

Hickory Creek Watershed Partnership to meet Jan. 31

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Hickory Creek from Niles Road in St. Joseph Township Tuesday. Don Campbell / H-P staff

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STEVENSVILLE - The Hickory Creek Watershed Partnership will meet at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 31, at Lincoln Township Hall.

The organization has been meeting over the past year to talk about the quality of the water and the habitat of the creek, and come up with ways to improve that quality. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission has been helping the organization.

Hickory Creek, which has been designated by the state as a cold-water trout stream, is part of the St. Joseph River watershed and has long played a significant role in Berrien County. Boys used to find Indian arrowheads near its banks, and old-timers used to tell yarns about the Phantom Skater of Hickory Creek.

However, civilization has caused problems along the creek. Baroda Township Supervisor Jim Brow, who announced the Watershed Partnership meeting at Monday's Baroda Township Board meeting,

said the creek badly needs to be cleaned up in some areas.

Watershed Partnership officials said major pollutants and threats to Hickory Creek include soil erosion, lack of public awareness and involvement, lack of communication and collaboration, polluted runoff, loss of wetlands, increases in flooding, eroding banks and the destruction of fishery habitat. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality said the water quality is poor or trending toward poor, based on the status of small aquatic insects that are reliable indicators of water quality.

Last summer, the Berrien County Conservation District with the help of the Watershed Partnership conducted a creek clean-up. The Watershed Partnership is working with the Conservation District and others such as Sarett Nature Center to develop a program, which involve youth in surveying and monitoring the creek.

Hickory Creek's headwaters are southeast of Baroda. The creek drains 53 square miles of land, including land in Oronoko Township, Weesaw Township, Buchanan Township, Baroda Township, Baroda, Buchanan Township, Lake Township, Lincoln Township, Stevensville, Shoreham, Royalton Township, St. Joseph Township and St. Joseph.

Those who want more information may contact Marcy Colclough at colcloughm@swmpc.org or at 925-1137, Ext. 25.

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