

# 2010 Water Festival Report

On August 14, 2010, the Kalamazoo County Drain Commissioner's Office, the Kalamazoo County Road Commission and Kalamazoo County General partnered to present "Stormwater Otter World", a large demonstration exhibit within the Kalamazoo Water Festival site designed to attract children and their parents. The exhibits for the children focused on the River Otter, a local species that is an indicator of good water quality. The exhibits for the adults focused on innovative stormwater techniques known as Low Impact Developments (LIDs). In part, this effort was motivated by the educational requirements of the Kalamazoo County federal stormwater (MS4) permit.

Signage and banners welcomed children and their parents to the site, explained the activities offered and presented stormwater slogans like: "Stormwater: Slow it Down. Grey to Green. Keep our waters Cool and Clean"; "Clean Water: It's Everybody's Business"; "Be the Solution to Stormwater Pollution".



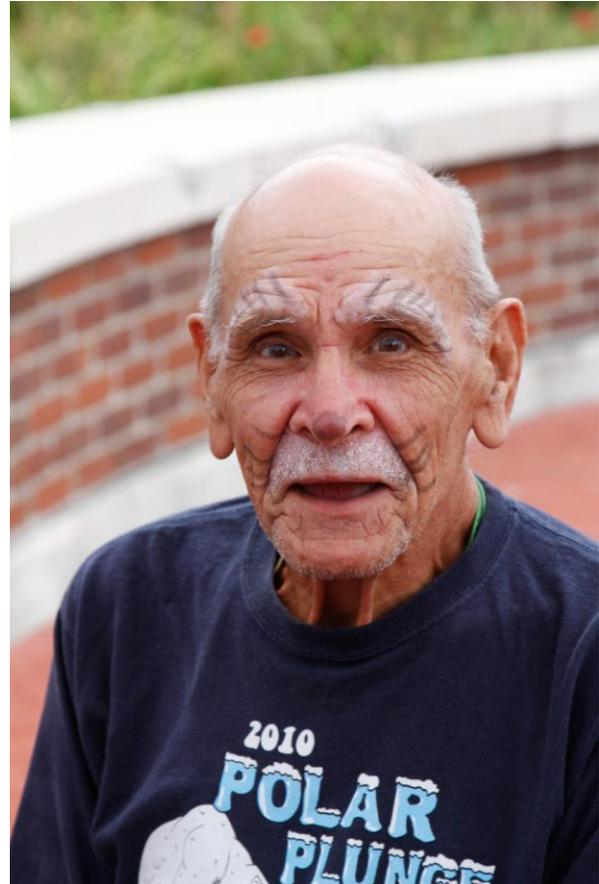
Stormwater OtterWorld featured five child-sized stuffed otters positioned around the playground among cattails as if playing on the equipment. Otter related activities included climbing and playing among the big otters, learning the difference



between sea otters and river otters, instructions and materials for drawing otters, a nine book otter library for young readers, an exhibit of six stuffed local fish and how to identify them, a fishing game, and an hourly raffle giving away 20 tee shirts with “Together We Otter Plan for Stormwater” and 10



small otter figurines. Three artists did otter face painting and background music included “Michigan Rivers (which mentions the Kalamazoo River)”, “Clean Water”, “Have to have a Habitat” by Kitty Donohoe of Lansing; and the “Fishing Blues” by Taj Majal. The weather was very humid and hot with occasional sprinkles and we rented two tents, and brought an umbrella and a large canopy to provide shelter for participants. For the adults and older children, there were also exhibits on pervious



concrete, geo web and geo block living surfaces and pervious surfaces made from recycled glass. There was a doghouse featuring a “green” filtrex sock roof planted with sedum. There was also an extensive exhibit showing the many uses of compost-filled filtrex soxx for inlet protection, rain gardens, shoreline restoration and erosion control.



This exhibit was conceptualized in late May and took over two hundred hours of effort, mostly nights and weekends. Sponsors included the Festival Sponsors: the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, the Kalamazoo River Watershed Council, and demonstration materials were provided by Consumers Concrete (in partnership with Michigan Concrete Association), Superior Groundcover, Inc (in partnership with Filtrex Inc), and Price and Company. There was also a demonstration provided by Michigan Dept of Transportation that was not displayed because of threatening weather.

Anna Bernham, an intern with the Kalamazoo Valley Museum, filled and positioned the large otters using internal chicken wire structures. Two Kalamazoo County employees, Kellie Layman and Jimyo Ferworn, volunteered, and Kellie also brought two teenagers; Jessica and Ashley. Ashley supervised the cattail arranging; Kellie helped with setup and take down, and Jimyo managed the fish and drawing.



John Byrnes from the Kalamazoo County Road Commission set up the City of Portage's "Stormwater Savvy" banner and managed the drawings. Helen Davis, from Prein and Newhoff, bought paints for face painting and brought two other volunteers to help with painting and setup. Three Earth Core volunteers helped with reading and watching the kids. Walter Smolenski took pictures and arranged the Filtrex exhibit, Kaz Smolenski did the green roof and Lyrica Smolenski helped register kids for the drawing and painted faces. Kellie, Jessica, Ashley and the Crowley and Smolenski family helped put up, take down, and clean up. Chris Barnes from the City of Portage lent us the "Stormwater Savvy" banner and a dog house. Signwriter of Kalamazoo, did the signs, banners, and tee shirt printing and design guidance.

The Drain Office, the Kalamazoo County Road Commission and the Kalamazoo County General contributed \$300 towards Festival partnership and spent



an additional \$900 dollars on materials and rentals. Almost all signage, books and other materials are reusable for future events. The exhibit was open for 6 hours. A total of 165 children registered for the raffle. Because there were two entrances, not all children were registered. There were about 1 to 2 children per adult. If we assume that 90% of children

registered and there were 2/3 adults per child, total attendance can be estimated to be just over 300 over a 6 hour period. All of the children's activities were well attended except the one about the differences between the sea and river otters but that probably would have needed another volunteer to do. The fish exhibit needs more work.







The fishing game is a reliable draw. More help was needed with the stormwater exhibits. We did not get the rainbarrel as promised and that would have significantly made the pervious surface demonstration more interesting. Also people really liked the Filtrex sock planted with Sedum. We will plant the eight other soxx with a variety of sedum, and display variety types next time. The otter costumes can be used in a cold weather demonstration; perhaps a Christmas parade. Having toys in addition to tee shirts was good, some of the smaller children really preferred them. 14 post festival orders for shirts were received from people who liked the design.

