

OBITUARY

GRACE M. HARRIS

Services for Grace Marie Harris, 74, of Farmington were held March 2 at Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home in Farmington with the Rev. Halboth officiating.

Mrs. Harris was born Sept. 14, 1926, in Detroit and died Feb. 26, 2001, at Botsford Hospital in Farmington Hills.

She knitted items for the Farmington Hills Senior Center and the Mercy Center and was an active member of the Women

of the Moose since 1962. She enjoyed gardening, knitting, bowling and walking.

She is survived by husband, Harold; father, Otis Harris; brother, Donald (Sue) Harris; sisters, Victoria Harris and Carroll Harris; sisters-in-law, Enid (Mike) Grucella, Bonnie Gibson and Betty Gibson; and many nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Winifred; brothers, James and Jack Gibson; and sister, Patricia Johnson.

Initiative aims to preserve waterways, greenbelts

BY PAT MURPHY

STAFF WRITER
pmurphy@ee.homedomain.net

Have you noticed how green space in Metro Detroit is rapidly disappearing?

The Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM), a nonprofit civic organization, has. On Thursday, CFSEM unveiled the GreenWays Initiative — an extensive project designed to leverage \$25 million into seven counties in southeast Michigan to establish and preserve a network of waterways and greenbelts.

Included in the network will be a variety of existing parks, wetlands, bike paths, waterways and hiking trails. The long term goal is to have existing parks and natural attractions connected by a network of greenbelts, providing a variety of recreational opportunities.

The network would include an array of natural attractions — such as parts of the Clinton River in Oakland and Macomb counties as well as the Rouge River as it flows through Wayne County into the Detroit River. It will include greenbelts, swim-

ming areas, railroad rights-of-way converted to trails and other natural attractions.

The initiative will help individual groups — such as Friends of the Rouge River — to preserve open spaces while they are still available, said Paul Tait, executive director of SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments).

"It will help combat urban sprawl," explained Steven K. Hamp, president of Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village.

Tait and Hamp were among

the dignitaries at Thursday's press conference who explained how the GreenWays Initiative can impact Metro Detroit's quality of life by making money available to dozens of community organizations.

The Community Foundation has already raised about \$14 million — from organizations like the McGregor Fund, the Kresge Foundation, the Carls Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Matilda R. Wilson Fund, the Whitney Fund, the Americans Foundation and the Frey Foundation — to be distributed in the form of grants to community-based organizations.

"Competition for grants will be highly competitive," said Thomas M. Woiwode, CFSEM director. But projects that contribute to the ultimate goal of a recreational greenbelt encompassing Metro Detroit will be considered, he said.

A spokesman for the Rouge River Remedial Action Plan Advisory Council said the GreenWays Initiative will enable more people to enjoy the area's natural beauty — at individual sites or as a connecting network of trails and waterways encircling the metropolitan area.

"It will mean a lot to the Rouge River watershed," said Kurt L. Heise, chair of the advisory council and executive assistant to the mayor of Dearborn Heights.

Rochester Hills resident Dan Keifer, spokesperson for the Friends of the Clinton River Trail, said his organization will likely apply for one or more GreenWays Initiative grants. "It's great that private sector money is involved," he said. State and federal grant moneys are vital, but private money — like grants from the CFSEM — indicates widespread support, he continued.

To illustrate how the Clinton River Trail group could use GreenWays Initiative grants, Keifer noted that negotiations have been under way to buy railroad property in the Rochester area, Auburn Hills, Pontiac and Sylvan Lake. Grants would help in the acquisition of that land, he said.

Neither Heise nor Keifer were at the press conference. But they — and hundreds of others involved in local preservation projects — were aware the GreenWays Initiative had been in the planning stages for years. When the initiative was announced, they already knew what it could mean to the metro area.

"It will make a big difference in the quality of life for the entire area," said Larry S. Falardeau, a principal planner with Oakland County.

Now that the initiative has been announced, the grant application process is expected to proceed at a serious pace, said CFSEM director Woiwode. Organizations expecting to apply for grants should be prepared to move, he said.

Grant applications can be made beginning April 9, Woiwode said. Information is available through CFSEM at (313) 961-6075.

The GreenWays Initiative is a five-year effort, said Mariam Noland, president of CFSEM, with the results impacting the quality of life in metro Detroit for 50 years or longer. It's first projects will likely get under way quickly, she said. "We expect to see shovels in the ground by the end of the year."

The initiative represents a great opportunity to local organizations committed to preservation and beautification, said John H. Hartig, spokesman for the Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative. His organization plans to preserve, beautify and enhance the Detroit River as well as its tributaries, including the Rouge, Ecorse and Clinton Rivers.

Hartig likened existing parks and nature sites — such as Hines Park in Wayne County and Metro Park in Mt. Clemens — as beads on a beautiful necklace.

The initiative, he said, will enable community organizations to provide a resplendent strand connecting those beads — with trails and waterways.

"Wouldn't it be great," he said, "to take a bicycle from Greenfield Village to Fort Wayne?"

Hartig is excited in the leveraging opportunities presented by the grants. "Groups are always looking for seed money to be part of the match required to qualify for state and federal grants," he said. "This is a great opportunity."



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