



# Rock River Reflections

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## Coalition “Rocks the Rock!”

### Rock River Coalition Board Announces 2007 Initiative

### New Member/Sponsor Benefits Available Now

“Rock the Rock!” the Rock River Coalition’s 2007 membership and program sponsor initiative was approved unanimously by the Rock River Coalition Board of Directors at their November 1st meeting in Jefferson.

With it’s big mission to protect and improve the economic, cultural, recreational and environmental resources in the 10-county Rock River Basin (north to Horicon, south to Beloit, east to Oconomowoc and west to Madison), the Rock River Coalition Board has set an ambitious annual fundraising goal. The Coalition seeks to raise or receive pledges of more than \$100,000 from memberships, foundations and legacy gifts to support its 2007 Rock the Rock! initiative.

RRC Board President Joe Dorava, said: “The purposes of our “Rock the Rock” fundraising drive is three-fold. One, it is designed to create a sense of urgency about generating crucially needed support from Rock River Basin businesses, foundations and individual members to continue to implement and expand the excellent programs and results the Rock River Coalition has produced in the last decade. Two, it is intended to link the problems of our planet, which we see every day in the news, such as global warming and increased violent storms – hurricanes on our coasts and tornadoes in our backyards – with what we can do now, right here in our Rock River Basin communities. Three, as our communities face challenges to adequate clean water, clean air, open space, and threats to our special places, our initiative reminds community leaders and policy makers that a healthy environment is the foundation of a healthy economy.”

**Check out page 7 for a complete list of RRC accomplishments over the past three years.**

In addition to benefits of receiving the RRC newsletter, and announcement of special RRC sponsored educational programs and tours, new businesses, individuals, foundations and others who become members or supporters at the \$100 or more level will be eligible to link their logo and website from the RRC’s Rock the Rock! New 2007 Members and Friends page for one year.

A membership form will be sent to all members, volunteers and partners within the next few weeks. We hope you will consider becoming a member and giving a generous gift to support our projects. For more information on how you, or your business, can participate in this effort, contact Ellen Rulseh at 608-240-9424 or 920-674-7443 or ellen@rockrivercoalition.org.



### Congratulations Monitors of the Year!

RRC past wetland monitoring coordinator, Bryan Huberty and RRC stream and wetland monitor, Shirley Ellis, were both named 2006 Citizen-based Monitor of the Year. Above, Bryan teaches UW-Whitewater students how to recognize invasive plants during his first monitoring training session. Below, Shirley uses GPS technology to record the position of invasive trees in the rare tamarack forest at Zeloski Marsh.



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# RRC & UWEX annual letter describing nondiscrimination policy

Dear Reader:

Periodically, UW-Extension and the Rock River Coalition take steps to assure that our partners know and understand our policy of nondiscrimination. This letter is to remind or notify you that neither the RRC nor the University of Wisconsin-Extension discriminate in the treatment of individuals, in the admission or access to its programs and activities, in the provision of services, or in employment.

Further, UW-Extension and RRC will not participate with organizations or in activities which discriminate on the basis of any of the legally prohibited categories of discrimination. Categories of prohibited discrimination include race, color, gender/sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental status, arrest or conviction record, or membership in the national guard, state defense force or any other reserve component of the military service.

Consistent with the Americans With Disabilities Act, persons who need materials in alternative format or other accommodations must write or call the UW-Extension contact person for the specific program or call the main telephone number of the Jefferson County Extension Office, 920-674-7295 at least ten (10) working days prior to the event.

Individuals who need TTY access may contact the Jefferson County Extension Office or RRC by calling the Wisconsin Telecommunications Relay System, 1-800-947-3529 or 711.

On behalf of Jefferson County Extension, the Rock River Coalition and the University of Wisconsin-Extension, I want to thank you for collaborating with our faculty and staff in their many educational endeavors and activities. We appreciate your support and working relationships as we provide programs designed to empower the diverse citizens of the Rock River Basin.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Wade, UWEX Rock River Basin Educator

Joe Dorava, RRC President

## Welcome Jennifer

Jennifer Hanneman is our new Administrative Assistant, keeping an eye on all things financial. She comes to us after having been a tax and corporate attorney for Godfrey and Kahn, S.C. and a CPA for Ernest & Young LLP. Jennifer has now turned her talents to being a full-time Mom of two year old Alex. Working with RRC will give her an interesting challenge as well as an opportunity to spend time with an organization and adults trying to make a difference.



## A note from Stefanie

"Hello! My name is Stefanie Nadeau and I am the new Wetland Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator for the Rock River Coalition. I have a Bachelor's degree in wildlife ecology from Northern Michigan University and a Master's degree in water resources science from the University of Minnesota. I have worked in both the private and public sectors monitoring wetland bird, macroinvertebrate, amphibian, and vegetation communities, as well as assessing water quality.



As the new wetland volunteer monitoring coordinator, I hope to further the development of the monitoring program by updating the monitoring methods to better capture post-restoration conditions and, as monitoring efforts are completed in 2007, begin to make comparisons between the pre-restoration and post-restoration data. I am very impressed with the knowledge and commitment of many of our volunteers. I look forward to working with them and using the success of their efforts to help us attract more citizen scientists to our program."



## Mission

*"To educate and bring together people of diverse interests to protect and improve the economic, environmental, cultural, and recreational resources of the Rock River Basin in Wisconsin"*

### **PRESIDENT:**

Joe Dorava

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### **Photos:** Ellen Rulseh, Town of Rutland, Lisa Conley, Ed

Grunden, Suzanne Wade

*RRC is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, providing equal opportunity in employment & programming.*

*If you need special accommodation for programs please contact the RRC at least two weeks in advance.*

## RRC submits EPA grant to reduce phosphorus pollution to the Horicon Marsh



Governor Jim Doyle is submitting a special targeted runoff grant application to the EPA for 1 million dollars over 5 years to reduce sediment and phosphorus to the Horicon Marsh. The Wisconsin Cooperative Conservation Initiative (WCCI) developed the proposal. The RRC, a WCCI member, will receive and manage the grant if awarded.

The WCCI partners create a unique and innovative mechanism for ensuring multi-agency and multi-organization cooperation that will lead to more effective and efficient application of project resources. The partnership consists of USFWS, USEPA, NRCS, WDNR, US Forest Service, University of WI, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Rock River Coalition, and others. Through their priority setting efforts, the WCCI has identified the Upper Rock River Watershed and phosphorus and sediment loading within the watershed as a priority.

The Upper Rock River Watershed and important natural resources in the watershed, such as the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, are substantially degraded by sediment and phosphorus loading from agricultural lands. The project will use an innovative approach that combines one-on-one contact with farmers with direct payment of monetary incentives to farmers that implement desired best management practices. Each farmer in the project watersheds will be contacted directly and during that meeting they will be educated about sediment and phosphorus management. During that initial meeting or at subsequent meetings, best management practices that meet watershed and farm needs will be discussed for implementation. Then cash incentives will be paid to the farmers that implement acceptable practices such as no-till cropping, nutrient management, riparian buffers, and wetland restorations. This project builds upon existing Wisconsin Cooperative Conservation Initiative partnerships and their expansive work efforts to improve water quality in a degraded river system. The goal of this project is to decrease sediment and phosphorus loading to Horicon Marsh through the following objectives:

- Identify and prioritize sediment and phosphorus source areas in the West and South Branches of the Rock River.
- Increase interaction with farmers and educate them on sediment and phosphorus concerns and BMPs that can reduce sediment and phosphorus transport downstream.
- Provide incentives for farmers to implement appropriate BMPs.
- Increase farmer awareness of other local, state, and federal programs that could provide additional incentives for implementing BMPs.

## The Glacial Heritage Area Initiative in the Greater Jefferson County Area

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in conjunction with Jefferson, Dodge, Rock and Dane counties is proceeding with the development of a feasibility study and examining the possibility of establishing a network of conservation lands, parks, recreation trails and facilities for the Glacial Heritage Area centered in western Jefferson County. The ultimate purpose of this effort will be to determine if it is practicable for the DNR and its partners to acquire, develop and manage new property such as wildlife areas, forests, natural areas, state parks or trails in this region of Wisconsin.

In 2006 the DNR published the Wisconsin Land Legacy Report identifying the places believed to be most important to meet the State's conservation and recreation needs over the next 50 years. The result was the identification of 229 special places that collectively "make Wisconsin Wisconsin".

The report states that it is unrealistic to expect that all 229 "Legacy Places" will be protected. And to date the Natural Resources Board and DNR staff are addressing a relative shorter list of priority legacy places through its formal Feasibility Study/Planning processes.

The good news for this area is that the Glacial Heritage Area has been identified by the Natural Resources Board as a priority area to increase and expand its protection efforts.

Public input in this study and planning process is integral to the success of a project of this

nature. An External Advisory Team comprised of over 30 members representing an experienced and diverse cross section of leaders from government, conservation and recreation organizations, agricultural interests, private sector companies, nonprofit organizations, the University, civic interests and the general citizenry has been established. This

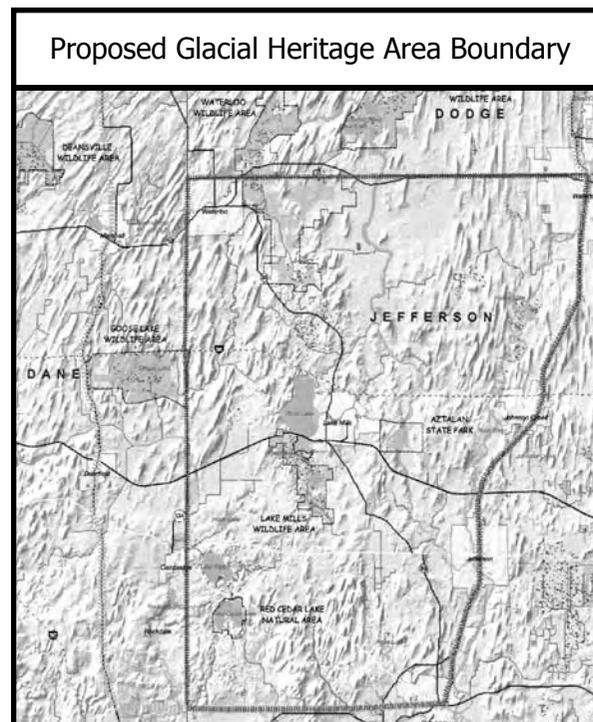
leadership team is committed to a process that enables strong public education, information and opportunities to influence this process.

The amount and nature of public involvement varies based on the complexity, size, and type of project that is proposed. The public involvement processes for the Glacial Heritage Area project are intended to be extensive and inclusive. Without local public support for potential new natural or wildlife areas or new trails or even a state park. In addition to potentially acquiring property for these ventures the Feasibility Study will also look at ways of protecting existing farmland to buffer both existing properties and new natural or

recreational areas.

Once the Feasibility Study is completed, it will be presented to the Natural Resources Board for their approval. If approved by the Natural Resources Board, it is forwarded to the Governor's Office for approval. Only once the Board and the Governor have given their approvals, the Department of Natural Resources staff can begin acquiring property or work to protect adjacent farmland and open space. If interested in knowing more contact either Steve Grabow, UWEX Community Development Educator for Jefferson County, 920-674-7295 or John Pohlman, DNR at john.pohlman@wisconsin.gov.

*This is a summary of a four-part story that ran in local papers. The effort was led by Jefferson County CNRED Educator, Steve Grabow.*



### Glacial Heritage Situation Statement (Abbreviated) ---

Between Wisconsin's two largest (and rapidly growing) metropolitan areas lies a place that epitomizes the image that many residents and visitors have of Wisconsin's rural countryside. Green farm fields mix with wetlands, woodlands, lakes and meandering rivers. And smaller cities and villages balance character and charm with changing economic times.

Given our area's easy access to Milwaukee/Waukesha and Madison, change is occurring quickly here. Although being between these large and growing cities presents challenges, it also presents opportunities including the ability to accomplish a number of interrelated goals – protecting remaining natural areas, providing a variety of outdoor activities, improving water quality, encouraging the preservation of important farmlands, and growing the local economy – in ways that integrate with the population growth that we are experiencing. All with the goal of preserving our exceptional quality of life for the Glacial Heritage Area.

## Last Tile Standing

Thanks to all of you who participated in the "great tile giveaway". You made the event a success! Over 3000 tiles were removed from the oak woods storage site on the Zeloski Marsh project area by 70 vehicles.



The tiles will be utilized as lawn ornaments, art work, planters, herb and flower gardens, covering an old concrete foundation, and whatever the imagination and creativity of the new owners can conger up. Thanks again, to all who helped recycle this drainage tiles. The area has now been cleared of any remaining tiles. Many were used to fill existing drainage ditches on the property and a few were used to create a reptile hibernacula, where they can enjoy a retreat from the Wisconsin winter.



## Snake hibernaculum

This snake hibernaculum was built by first digging a hole deep enough to get below the frost level, the hole was then filled with broken tiles and gravel, leaving lots of spaces where snakes can curl up and hibernate through the winter.

The Zeloski restoration will provide important habitat for many different types of animals, not just wetland species. It will be important as a resting place for migrating birds and insects and a year-round or winter home birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects and others.

-photos by Ed Grunden

## International Delegation Enjoy Riverwalk, Lunch on the Farm, and Wetland Restoration Tour

by Ellen Rulseh, RRC Outreach Coordinator

The Rock River Coalition recently hosted an international delegation of visitors from Egypt, Israel, Japan, South Africa, Mexico, Scotland, and India. The sixteen international visitors, all water quality professionals, and another dozen local staff and citizens, learned that Watertown, a community with a one-hundred-and-fifty year history, has the most historically intact downtown in the state and initially grew its industry, lumber and wheat mills and commercial tobacco production, near the water-powered muscle of the Rock River.

Mayor John David shared his work to position Watertown for an environmentally and economically viable future through the renewal of the River Walk. "This is a jewel flowing through our city," David said of the Rock River. He acknowledged the work of the Rock River Coalition through his Mayor's Riverwalk Committee which he said had provided consistent support for his work to establish a TIF (tax increment financing) District, to develop design standards for new development and to ensure that development includes environmental, educational and art components "that will make Watertown's Riverwalk really unique."

Mayor John David's welcome was preceded by an overview of the Rock River Basin and the work of the Rock River Coalition by UW-Extension Rock River Basin Educator, Suzanne Wade, and by former RRC Board President and Watertown-area resident, Warren Topel. Wade also discussed the incredible partnership activities occurring in the area to preserve farmland and open space including the recently published second edition of the RRC Rural Development Guidelines and Policy Manual and the work in Jefferson County on the Feasibility Study for the Glacial Heritage Area. (See page three for a story on this effort.)

Ellen Rulseh, Community Outreach Coordinator for the Coalition, described her work on the "Rain Garden in Every Community" project, the Watertown Senior Center's demonstration rain garden and with the Watertown Riverwalk. Also on hand were members of the Riverwalk Committee: Councilman Augie Tietz and County Board Supervisor Yvonne Duesterhoeft, who welcomed the delegation and assisted Mayor David in the walking tour along the Rock River, a stroll in bright, Sunday sunshine and fresh fall winds, from the Watertown Senior Center "upstream" to the public plaza across from the Keystone Building (formerly Fishers). The public plaza is one of the areas along the Riverwalk slated for re-development.

Afterward, the international delegation was hosted for "Lunch on the Farm" at Greg and Sandy David's Prairie Dock Farm where all the food came from local growers and producers including local brew from Tyrana Brewery, and food from Harmony Valley Farm, Prairie Dock Farm, Bleu Mont Dairy, Pecatonica Farms, Ela Orchard, Carpenter Farms and other friends of the Rock River Coalition.

The visitors took a horse-drawn wagon ride around the orchard, plantings and prairie while learning about community supported agriculture and County Board Supervisor Greg David's recent tour of Sweden and The Natural Step.

While the "grand finale" of the tour was slated to be a visit to the Zeloski Wetland Restoration, west of Lake Mills, conducted by RRC's Volunteer Monitoring Director, Ed Grunden and new Wetland Monitoring Coordinator Stefanie Nadeau; there was a report that members of the international delegation and their new-found friends from Watertown and Jefferson County enjoyed socializing (in the interests of international good will) until one-thirty in the morning.

## Wetland Monitors enjoy tour and potluck at the Marsh

The Rock River Coalition Wetland Monitors met new Wetland Monitoring Coordinator Stefanie Nadeau and Monitoring Director Ed Grunden on a blustery evening in October. They enjoyed a tour of the finished restoration work, the cleaned up oak opening and the snake hibernaculum. Afterwards they got to know each other better over a potluck dinner. New monitors are welcome, contact Ed at [ed@rockrivercoalition](mailto:ed@rockrivercoalition) if interested.



Ed points out features of the restoration to monitors.

-photo by Lisa Conley

# RRC continues efforts to establish rain gardens

The RRC through the work of Outreach Coordinator Ellen Rulseh has completed water quality improvement projects in both Middleton and Madison.

## Middleton adds more area to their infiltration efforts:

The Middleton project began last year during Earth Week, when Mark R. Baker of CONTECH Stormwater Solutions Inc. presented a check in the amount of twelve thousand dollars to students at Elm Lawn Middle School and City Administrator Mike Davis for the successful grant application, ranked first nationwide, to improve water quality going into Lake Mendota from Middleton's Tiedeman and Stricker kettle ponds.

Through the "Rain Garden in Every Community" project of the Rock River Coalition, Elm Lawn Grade School teacher, Lynn Karle and her fourth grade students have incorporated an understanding of the problems of stormwater runoff, and how native plants, rain gardens and buffers can help alleviate these problems into their classroom curriculum. Then the fourth graders assisted with planting the infiltration area and continue to work on maintenance at the site.

Students and teachers, lead by science teacher Eric Engel, from Kromrey Middle School continued the project this fall when they helped plant two rain gardens above Tiedeman Pond and some 2,500 native plants at Orchid Heights Park.

Sponsors of the Middleton Rain Garden include Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, EPA, Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, Glass Nickel Pizza and the Hubbard Street Diner. Site preparation, design and planting plan were overseen by Earth & Water Works, LLC.



A Kromrey Middle School student presses soil around a native plant, securing it for a cosy winter "sleep".

-photo by Ellen Rulseh

## Kipp Corporation and the Madison Bike Path Rain Garden

Whitehorse Middle School teacher Kit Rittman and the students in her three science classrooms have taken the lead in planting a 2,800 square-foot demonstration rain garden alongside Madison's bike path behind Kipp. This project, initiated by the Friends of Starkweather Creek and Earth & Water Works, LLC, was made possible by a Dane County's Water Quality Initiative Grant.

In addition to working with the students, Ellen Rulseh, RRC Outreach Coordinator appealed for help from the community through guest newspaper columns, TV and radio. Along with the students, volunteers helped plant, apply weed barrier, and mulch.

The rain garden will help capture stormwater runoff coming from the Kipp parking lot and will buffer and protect one of the most remarkable surviving fen-like communities along Starkweather Creek.

The students became involved through the Rock River Coalition's Rain Garden in Every Community Project which allows a consultant to work with the students in learning about storm water and groundwater concerns and then helping to design and install the garden. Other project partners include: SASYNA (Schenk, Atwood, Starkweather, Yahara, Neighborhood Association), City of Madison, Madison Kipp Corporation, Madison Gas and Electric Co., Atwood Community Center, Glass Nickel Pizza and Whitehorse Middle School.

If anyone would like to help with maintenance of the rain garden they should contact Carol Berglund by e-mail at [berglund@tds.net](mailto:berglund@tds.net) or phone at (608)249-5096.



Getting shoes and clothes muddy was part of what it took for Middleton's Kromrey Middle School students and teacher's valiant efforts to build a 2,500 sq ft rain garden at Middleton's Orchid Heights Park.

-photo by Ellen Rulseh

## Storm water studies in the classroom

The storm water curriculum that the students use in the RRC Rain Garden in Every Community Project is a joint effort of the UW-Arboretum's Earth Partnership for Schools Program, the Madison Area Municipal Storm Water Partnership (MAMSWaP) and the University of Wisconsin-Extension.



Funded by MAMSWaP, the storm water curriculum focuses on what storm water is, why is it an issue and what can be done about it. UW-Extension educators Mindy Habecker and Suzanne Wade along with Dane County Stormwater Educator Marcia Hartwig worked with UW-Arboretum staff Cheryl Bauer-Armstrong and Libby McCann on the curricular outline and potential activities. The Arboretum staff took these ideas and developed an extensive stormwater unit.

Separately, with funding from the Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, the Arboretum staff developed educational materials for designing and building a rain garden. The draft rain garden curricular materials are now available for schools to pilot.

Feedback is sought on both and once received will be used to improve materials for the next printing. If interested in getting a copy of these materials, teachers can go to [www.myfairlakes.com](http://www.myfairlakes.com) to download a copy or contact Cheryl Bauer-Armstrong at [cherylbauer@wisc.edu](mailto:cherylbauer@wisc.edu)

Two of more than 100, of Science Teacher, Eric Engel's Kromrey Middle School students who participated in a RRC sponsored rain garden design workshop conducted by Susan Priebe of Earth & Water Works, LLC.

-photo by Ellen Rulseh

## Help Wanted: Restoration of Badfish Creek

Several Town of Rutland residents are forming a group to assist the Dane County Parks Department with restoration and preservation of Badfish Creek. They are looking for more Town residents or other active neighbors to participate.

Badfish Creek is classified as needing protection in the Dane County Water Body Classification Study, Phase I, March, 2005.

It is listed as having "impaired water" by the North American Lake Management Society.

The northern section of the river is believed to be affected by fertilizer runoff from surrounding farmland and treated waste water discharged by the Village of Oregon. The southern portion of the Creek is already being managed by the State Department of Natural Resources.



A request to the Dane County Parks Department for inclusion of Badfish Creek in the revised Dane County Parks and Open Space Plan was accepted by the Dane County Parks Commission in June 2006. A draft of the Plan went to local governmental bodies for approval in August 2006 and is expected to go to the Dane County Board in December or January.

According to group organizer Caroline Werner: "Once approved, Dane County Parks Department staff will help us form a plan of action and will help us locate funding resources to which we can submit applications. Although we don't know exactly what we'll be doing, it will be volunteers doing the majority of the work to restore the upper section of Badfish Creek, since the County has few staff to assist."

If you're interested in helping with this Badfish Creek effort, please contact Caroline Werner at carolw@terra.com.net or at 4712 Roosevelt Street., Oregon, WI 53575; or (608) 835-8971.

## Minnesota's phosphorus free lawns helping lakes

by John Barten Water Resources Manager, Three Rivers Park District *reprinted with permission from Wisconsin Association of Lakes newsletter - The Lake Connection.*

Phosphorus in runoff water can be reduced by eliminating the use of phosphorus fertilizer on lawns without compromising turf quality.

Soil tests done on lawns in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, (TCMA) found that approximately 75% of lawns had high to very high phosphorus concentrations and additions of phosphorus fertilizer did not improve turf growth (1994). High soil phosphorus levels are not unique to Minnesota. Approximately 90 percent of soil tests collected from 15 northern tier states by Cenex/Land-O-Lakes, Inc. had high to excessive (their rating) levels of phosphorus.

Despite high natural fertility, homeowners in the TCMA apply approximately 6 million pounds of phosphorus fertilizer annually to lawns.

When phosphorus fertilizer is applied to lawns with high phosphorus concentrations, some of the phosphorus is carried into adjacent lakes and streams with runoff water. Runoff collected from fertilized lawns with very high phosphorus levels had significantly higher phosphorus concentrations than runoff from unfertilized medium and high fertility lawns. Similar results were found in runoff from shoreline lawns in Lauderdale Lakes, Wisconsin.

In response to these concerns, a number of municipalities in Minnesota adopted ordinances that prohibited the application of phosphorus fertilizer to lawns unless a soil test indicated a need for this nutrient. In 2003, the state of Minnesota

adopted legislation prohibiting the application of phosphorus fertilizer to lawns in the seven county TCMA, unless a soil test indicated a need for it. In 2004, the legislation was expanded to include the entire state.

### Study shows phosphorus free lawn fertilizer makes a difference

In 2000, a study was initiated to determine if a reduction in the use of phosphorus fertilizer would result in a reduction in the phosphorus export from urban residential areas. From 2000 to 2004, six watersheds, three in Plymouth, (phosphorus fertilizer not allowed since 1995), and three in Maple Grove (phosphorus fertilizer applications allowed) were monitored. Each watershed area was between 9 and 39 acres in size and had between 34 and 128 homes. The impervious area of the

watersheds ranged from 28% to 43%. Neighborhoods were selected to have similar soils, slopes, street widths, house sizes, turf quality, and rainfall.

Automated flow monitors and samplers were installed in storm sewers at the discharge of the watersheds to measure water volume and quality. Runoff data from the six sites showed a steep inflection point for rainfall events over 2 cm (0.75 inches). This appears to be the rainfall volume necessary to generate runoff from turf

areas.

There was no difference in phosphorus export from the six watersheds for rainfall events less than 2 cm. This was not unexpected since runoff from streets and rooftops would not be affected by lawn care practices. For rainfall events more than 0.75 inches, the three phosphorus-free neighborhoods had significantly less phosphorus export than the three neighborhoods where phosphorus fertilizer was used. The preliminary data from the four-year monitoring program comparing phosphorus export from municipalities with and without fertilizer ordinances indicate that reducing phosphorus fertilizer applications could reduce phosphorus export by 12% to 16%.

No decrease in turf quality was observed in lawns not receiving annual phosphorus applications. Restricting use of phosphorus fertilizer can be an effective and low-cost best management practice for reducing phosphorus export.

### Healthy lawns, for healthy lakes in Wisconsin

*The Wisconsin Association of Lakes (WAL) Board passed a resolution supporting a statewide law modeled on the existing Dane County ordinance.*

*Lawn fertilizer is one of many sources of phosphorus runoff pollution and, while not the largest source, it is an unnecessary and preventable one given the high levels of phosphorus in most soils in the state.*

*"At WAL we are asked continually, 'What can I do to help our lakes?' Using phosphorus free lawn fertilizer (whether or not you live on a lake) is an easy and important way everyone can help," says Peter Murray, WAL Executive Director.*

## The RRC To Receive Lake Planning Grant for Phosphorus Education

The Rock River Coalition has been awarded a small DNR lake planning grant to support development of a lake education program that will begin primarily in Jefferson County. The educational program will promote partnerships between lake organizations, youth organizations, and local communities by bringing them information regarding the effects of phosphorus on lake management. By focusing on specific lake issues with regional and state-wide significance (example: phosphorus pollution) the public will be well informed and better able to make educated decisions about future lake management opportunities. The educational program will be presented at public meetings of lake organizations, municipalities or county board committees. In addition, the project report, which will describe the project activities and include the project's PowerPoint presentation, will be presented at the Wisconsin Association of Lakes Conference and will be widely distributed via the World Wide Web through the Rock River Coalition's website. This project fits perfectly into the goals of the Rock River Coalition, it is matched well with the goals of the State's lake planning program as well, and it will result in great benefits to the basin's water quality.

## Your membership helps support the Rock River Coalition efforts

If you are a Rock River Coalition member, you will soon be receiving your membership renewal notice. You can be proud of the work and accomplishments that your support has helped us achieve. Below are some highlights from 2003 thru 2006. We encourage you to return your renewal promptly and even consider an end of the year donation to support our projects. If you are not a member, we encourage you to cut out the membership form on this page and send it in with your payment.

### Major Programs Initiated:

**Citizen Stream Monitoring Program** trains more than 180 people who measure water quality at 56 locations in the basin.

**Wetland Monitoring Program**, initiated in 2004, is already a model for citizen-based monitoring in Wisconsin.

**Rain Garden in Every Community** is a partnership between schools, communities and the RRC resulting in 300 students from eight schools helping design and build 13,800 square feet of rain gardens which infiltrate 982,786 gallons of rain water each year.

USGS begins work on **GFLOW Computer Model**. RRC was responsible for bringing together 17 municipalities and organizations to support the development of the \$96,000 model.

**RRC Rural Development Guidelines and Policies Manual** helps many municipalities develop plans to preserve open space and farmland while utilizing low impact design for new development.

Twenty **native shoreline restoration projects** developed as a result of RRC work. \$10,000 DNR River Grant leverages \$175,475 resulting in 46,145 square feet of new shoreline buffers and 6,000 linear feet of shoreline protected.

The RRC helps organize a **Watertown River Walk** Mayor's committee who work to generate community support for the new River Walk and help make the plan a reality.

**Storm Water Round Tables** are held to help municipalities deal with the complex problem of controlling storm water.

**Environmental Action Guide** published, providing detailed information on ten projects groups or schools could do to improve the Rock River Basin.

**Send Your Legislator Down the River** becomes a major event with great participation from elected officials.

**Other Educational Forums**, the RRC hosts many other educational activities including a recent 'Implementing the Agriculture Performance Standards' workshop for area land conservation, DATCP and DNR staff.

### Projects in Planning:

**Water Star Community:** RRC sponsors focus groups to design new state-wide program and develops a network of partners to begin program in pilot areas within the state.

**Residential Phosphorus Bans:** RRC receives a Lake Planning Grant to encourage counties, cities, villages and towns to adopt bans on the unneeded residential application of phosphorus fertilizer.

**Targeted Runoff Protection Project:** The RRC, as part of a partnership effort, agrees to submit a \$1 million grant to EPA with the goal of controlling sediment and phosphorus loading to the Horicon Marsh.

**2005 Rock River Conference** continues the work of earlier forums in meeting environmental needs in the basin.

**Workshops Held:** Over the past three years the RRC has sponsored workshops helping over 750 people to become skilled or knowledgeable about programs and natural resource issues. These workshop topics include Writing Environmental Grants, Storm Water Techniques, Cost of Community Services and Impact Fees, Computer Assisted Land Use Decision Support, Rain Garden Establishment and Native Shoreline Restoration.

### Recognition:

- 2005 DNR Citizen-based Monitoring Program of the Year
- 2005 Wisconsin Voluntary Stream Monitoring Group of the Year
- 2004 Wisconsin Rural Partners Wisconsin's Top Rural Development Initiatives
- 2003 Wisconsin Groundwater Guardian Team Award
- 2003 Wisconsin Extension Community Development Association Outstanding Team Award
- 2003 Karst brochure wins national University Extension Excellence Award



## Become a RRC Member

*In addition to supporting RRC work, members receive newsletters, notices of forums, conferences, and special events. To become a member, complete the following:*

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Annual tax deductible membership fees

<i>Individual</i>	\$ 25
<i>Family</i>	\$ 35
<i>Student/Senior Citizen</i>	\$ 15
<i>Classroom</i>	\$ 25
<i>Affiliates*</i>	\$ 50
<i>Corporate</i>	\$ 200

*\*Includes small businesses, organizations, lake districts, and municipal departments*

### Tax deductible donation

Amount	Purpose
	<i>General Support</i>
	<i>Citizen Monitoring</i>
	<i>Rain Gardens</i>
	<i>Other:</i>

*Donations are greatly appreciated and can be targeted towards specific projects.*

**Please mail this completed form with check to:**

**Rock River Coalition**

**823 Lucas Lane**

**Jefferson, WI 53549**

*or register and pay online with PayPal at:*

[www.rockrivercoalition.org/membership.asp](http://www.rockrivercoalition.org/membership.asp)

# Turtle emerges with student help in Beloit

## Last rain garden for 'A Rain Garden in Every Community Project'

"Fabulous," was how RRC "Rain Garden in Every Community" Program Manager Ellen Rulseh described recent community participation and partnership in Beloit that resulted in a 1,300 square foot turtle-shaped rain garden etched into the lawn, like an inverted ancient Indian mound, alongside Beloit's



waste water treatment plant on Halloween. Fed by three downspouts from a 4,000 sq. ft. roof area, the demonstration rain garden will absorb more than 61,000 gallons of stormwater a year: more than twelve tanker trucks of runoff that would otherwise discharge into municipal storm sewers.

The Beloit rain garden demonstration project team included: Beloit City Manager, Larry Arft, Water Treatment Plant Director Ed Ganser and staff, Tim Kosier and Cheryl Simplot. Dr. Margaret Thomas with science teachers and 6th, 7th & 8th grade students from Synetics Charter School provided planting power, as did Tanya Zastrow and Stephanie Dobson of the Welty Environmental Center, who were joined by several Master Gardener volunteers and Gina Castro, a student at UW-Rock County.

Susan Priebe of Earth & Water Works, LLC designed the turtle and oversaw installation by students and volunteers, as well as site preparation by Beloit Water Treatment Plant staff. Susan Markley,



Students from Beloit's Synetic's Charter School work diligently on the rain garden 'turtle' at the Beloit Waste Water Treatment Plant. -photos by Ellen Rulseh

Environmental Coordinator of Frito Lay, arrived with "trick or treat" refreshments for all. Mr. Arft stopped by to enjoy watching the busy activity of students and volunteers and to thank them for their efforts to improve water quality in Beloit. Helen Forbeck also addressed the students briefly to thank them on behalf of the residents of Wisconsin and other US communities along the Mississippi and Gulf of Mexico, and her boss, Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin.

Ellen Rulseh also implemented successful "Rain Garden in Every Community" demonstration projects this fall in Madison at Madison-Kipp and the bike path (3,200 sq. ft.) and in Middleton, above Tiedeman Pond (700 sq. ft.) and at Orchid Heights Park (2,500 sq. ft.). The Rock River Coalition, which funded the 2006 program through grants from the DNR, EPA and Wisconsin Environmental Education Board, invites community partners - municipalities, counties and businesses - to participate in the program in 2007. For more information about becoming a project participant or sponsor, contact Ellen Rulseh at 608-240-9424, or 920-674-7443 or ellen@rockrivercoalition.org.

Madison's Whitehorse Middle School teacher Kit Rittman takes pride in student rain garden designs which show color coded planting areas and types of native plants. Student designs were begun in a series of design workshops lead by Susan Priebe of Earth & Water Works, LLC and RRC Outreach Coordinator Ellen Rulseh. These Whitehorse rain garden designs were put on display at the opening of the new City of Madison Engineering field office; some were delivered to the office of Mayor Dave Cieslewicz, a big fan of rain gardens.



-photo by Ellen Rulseh



Whitehorse Middle School science students seemed to enjoy rolling up their shirtsleeves and pants legs to plant more than 2,000 of the 3,200 plants at the Friends of Starkweather Creek rain garden at Kipp and the bike path in Madison. A casualty of the muck: one pair of a student's flip-flops and one of Susan Priebe's pink "Crocs."



## Calendar of Events

### RRC Board Meeting

Dec 12, 4:30 - 7:30, Jefferson County UWEX

### Citizen Monitoring Confluence

Saturday March 3, 2007

### Send Your Legislator Down the River

June 11, 2007 Dane County

### Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the winter newsletter is Jan 8, 2007

### TMDL Meeting

A technical informational meeting regarding the establishment of a Total Maximum Daily Load for the Rock River Basin is being planned for December. Contact Suzanne Wade at 920-674-8972 or suzanne.wade@ces.uwex.edu to receive a meeting notice. More on the TMDL will be coming in the next newsletter.

Sign up for Rock River Basin Update list Each month a comprehensive calendar of events, publications, new websites and other items of interest is emailed. If you would like to be added to this email list send your name and email to Marie at marier@co.jefferson.wi.us

For more information about these and other RRC Events or to enter or view other organization meetings, workshops, or conferences go to [www.rockrivercoalition.org](http://www.rockrivercoalition.org).

Look for more pictures and stories about RRC rain gardens on pgs 4 & 5.