



# Rock River Reflections

A publication of the Rock River Coalition in cooperation with the Rock River Stormwater Group, Town and Country Resource, Conservation & Development and the University of Wisconsin-Extension

Winter 2011 Volume 14, Number 1

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## Your input needed to improve our local environment and economy

by Craig Ficeneck RC&D Coordinator

Town & Country RC&D works to conserve natural resources and advance the local economy across 13 counties of southeastern Wisconsin, including nearly the entire Rock River Basin.

We are setting our priorities for the next five years and we invite you—as a stakeholder in the Basin—to share your concerns and ideas with us by completing our survey described below.

### What is "RC&D"?

Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) is both a federal conservation program and a means for directing local conservation leadership. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) supports over 350 RC&D Councils throughout the nation.

Each Council is comprised of local advocates, entrepreneurs and civic leaders. Councils commit to

advancing overall goals of the NRCS: quality soil and water resources, healthy plant and animal communities, clean air and adequate energy, and preservation of working lands; all with a focus on economic prosperity.

The specific strategies to achieve these goals are left to the local Council to decide.

### Who is "Town & Country"?

Town & Country RC&D is your Council for southeastern Wisconsin.

We are a non-profit organization with a volunteer Board of Directors and a base of members, directing projects that respond to the needs and priorities of our region.

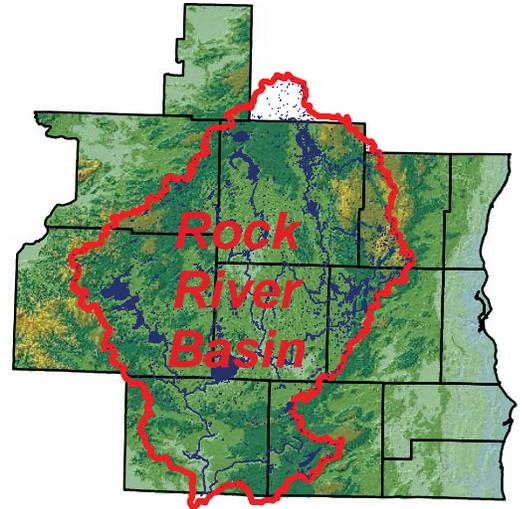
We seek strategies that bridge jurisdictional boundaries and leverage existing resources.

Our role is not to replicate existing efforts, but rather to enhance capacities for resource conservation and community development.

### What do we do?

Among our current projects, we assist livestock farmers to convert cropland into permanent, well-managed pasture; we prepare woodland owners to sustainably harvest trees in the path of the emerald ash borer; and we support partner projects including the Wisconsin Water Star program and the Southeastern Wisconsin Farm Fresh Atlas.

In 2011 we will continue these efforts and also join Rock River TMDL implementation planning; explore algae as a water treatment strategy; offer workshops on invasive species



Town and Country RC&D coordinates projects across the 13 counties outlined above. Our area includes nearly the entire Rock River Basin. Elevation data and county and basin boundaries provided by NRCS

control; support farmers to extend their growing season; and help advance a "Slow Money" movement toward local investment in sustainable agriculture.

### Where are we headed?

2011 is also a year of strategic planning for our organization. We are currently seeking broad input via a short survey and we want to hear from you! We encourage interested residents of our region—and especially those directly engaged in resource conservation or economic development efforts—to complete the survey before March 31st.

Visit [www.tacr.cd.org](http://www.tacr.cd.org) to download the survey or complete it online; or call us at 920-541-3208 to have a

survey mailed to you.

We will compile survey responses in April and conduct our strategic planning through the coming summer. In the meantime, please consider joining our efforts by supporting a project, becoming a member, or attending our annual meeting on March 1st check out our website for location and other details. [www.tacr.cd.org](http://www.tacr.cd.org).



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See page 6 for information on upcoming Town and Country RCD events including grazing workshops, annual meeting, high tunnels, and Natural Step webinars.

# RRC President's Message

The cold days and long nights of January are perfect times for reflection on past achievements and future plans. 2010 was a productive year for the Rock River Coalition by any measure, particularly given the success of the newly established Water Star program and our volunteer monitoring activities. 2011 promises to be equally fruitful as we embark on assisting with the Rock River Recovery Plan and the implementation of the Glacial Heritage Area Plan, publish a new wetland monitoring guidebook and recognize some of our basin heroes at our biennial awards ceremony, to be held at our May 10th annual meeting.

Water Star, a program for recognizing municipalities for water quality protection, has already vaulted ahead of its original goal by granting 22 municipalities Water Star status; 6 were granted gold, 4 silver and 12 bronze. So far, 8 Water Star communities are in our basin, 14 are elsewhere in Wisconsin. We are excited to learn how many communities are making strenuous

efforts to protect water quality.

Thanks to the efforts of our volunteer monitoring director and assistant, our volunteers had a very active year. Our Confluence: A gathering of volunteer monitors was held in April; in addition, 2 training sessions for new monitors were held; and we partnered with Madison Audubon to coordinate the Christmas Bird Count at Zeloski/London Marsh.

Unfortunately 2010 also brought news to lament. Planned completion of a high speed train link between Milwaukee and Madison, through the heart of our basin was halted by incoming Governor Scott Walker.

The Rock River Coalition is a strictly non-partisan organization. We embrace strategies to protect our waters from across the ideological spectrum. Nonetheless I must criticize Governor Walker's decision to halt the Milwaukee to Madison high-speed train link.

Why is the president of an organization focused on water

quality concerned with high-speed rail? Because transportation shapes development and development shapes our waters. Train stations have the potential to concentrate development and reduce the footprints of our cities. Smaller urban footprints, i.e. less pavement and rooftops, means less loading of pollutants to surface waters. Squelching high-speed rail – I believe, an ideologically-based decision, that Governor Walker attempted, and failed, to justify on fiscal grounds – dealt a decisive blow to our ability to curb the impact of our cities on streams, rivers and lakes.

In spite of this disappointment, we are open to ideas from our new leaders at the Capital for ways to improve our waters. Best wishes to all for 2011!

Sincerely,

*Scott Taylor*

President  
Rock River  
Coalition, Inc.



## 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"*

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Next deadline is March 25, 2011. A letter-sized color version of this newsletter is available at [www.rockrivercoalition.org](http://www.rockrivercoalition.org).

**Photo credits:** Cynthia Bridge, DNR file photo, Kim Karow, Jim Kerler, Suzanne Wade

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

*TTY: 711 for Wisconsin Relay*

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

## Nominate a Water Hero for RRC River Protector Awards - Deadline April 4, 2011

Do you know a watershed hero? A business or organization that has made a truly outstanding contribution to the health of the Rock River Basin?

It is our privilege, every two years, to celebrate and honor the achievements of those who have made a difference in our Basin, improving our local economy, our environment, and our cultural and recreational resources.

Now is your chance - Nominate a Rock River Basin Protector today!

River Protector awards are offered in the following categories:

**Individual:** For individuals, teams and families.

**Educator:** K-Adult educators, both classroom and non-formal educators.

**Organization:** Non-profits, agencies, municipalities and municipal departments.

**Legislator:** An elected official at any level: state, federal or local.

**Business:** An LLC, partnership or corporation that has provided support, completed projects, or instituted procedures or methods improving our Basin's environment.

Awards will be based on significance and results of the accomplishment. All actions must either be completed, or major results realized.

Nominating someone is easy; just send the following information to the RRC: nominator and nominee names and contact information, the award category along with a two page maximum description of accomplishments, detailing why you feel the nominee deserves the award.

Supporting documents can be included. We also need the contact information of two people who would corroborate the accomplishments.

Nominations are due by April 4, 2011. They should be sent to: Rock River Coalition Awards Committee, 864 Collins Rd, Jefferson WI 53549 or emailed to [info@rockrivercoalition.org](mailto:info@rockrivercoalition.org)

Our recent River Protector winners with their main contribution are:

### Elected Officials

- Senator Neal Kedzie, Elkhorn: For groundwater legislation
- Jefferson County Board Supervisor Greg David: For sustainability work
- Senator Mark Miller: Great Lakes Compact & lawn phosphorus rule

### Individuals

- Pete Jopke, Dane County LWCD: monitoring coordinator
- Neighbors Standing United: Guardian Pipeline work
- Gloria Hafemeister: For her support of the RRC as a reporter
- Janice Redford: monitoring & Friends of Cam-Rock Park work

### Business

- LanDesign by Margaret Burlingham: rain gardens, planning and shoreline work
- Madison Gas & Electric: For development of co-generation plant
- Veridian Homes: First Green Tier builder

### Organizations

- Paul Moderacki, Johnson Creek: Sustainability & GFLOW support
- Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Watershed Management: For their support
- Middleton Department of Public Lands: For shoreline and stormwater projects
- Madison Audubon Society: For Zeloski marsh restoration
- Lake Sinissippi Improvement District: For improvement to the lake and its entire watershed.
- Friends of Allen Creek Watershed (FACW): For extensive monitoring program & projects

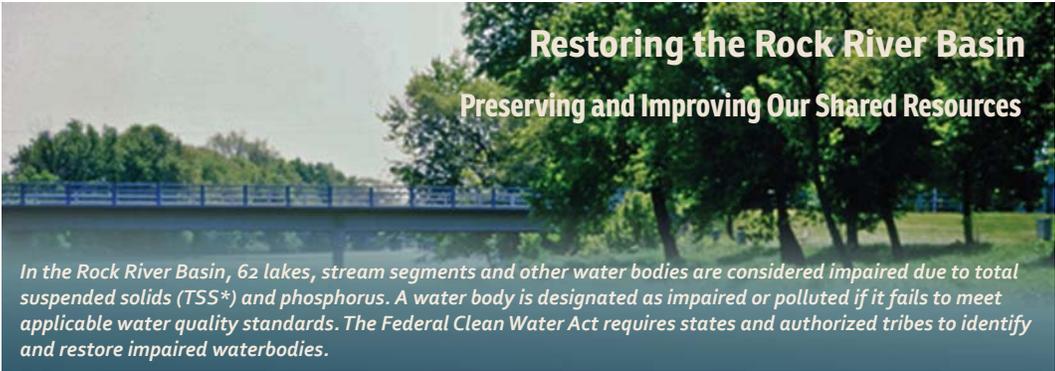
### Educators

- Steve Grabow, UWEX Jefferson
- David Neuendorf, UWEX Dodge
- Mary Beth Steven, Cambridge Elementary: for monitoring with students

### Come Celebrate!

Awards will be presented at the RRC Annual Members Meeting on May 10th.

Save the date and come celebrate with us!



*In the Rock River Basin, 62 lakes, stream segments and other water bodies are considered impaired due to total suspended solids (TSS\*) and phosphorus. A water body is designated as impaired or polluted if it fails to meet applicable water quality standards. The Federal Clean Water Act requires states and authorized tribes to identify and restore impaired waterbodies.*

**A Strategy to Improve Water Quality in the Rock River Basin**

A water body is designated as impaired or polluted if it fails to meet applicable water quality standards. In Wisconsin, water quality standards are established by the WDNR to protect and maintain a waterbody’s uses, such as drinking water supply, fishing and swimming.

The first step in addressing the problem is to determine how much sediment or phosphorus the water body can

handle without impairment. This becomes the target pollution reduction level for the recovery plan. It is known as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

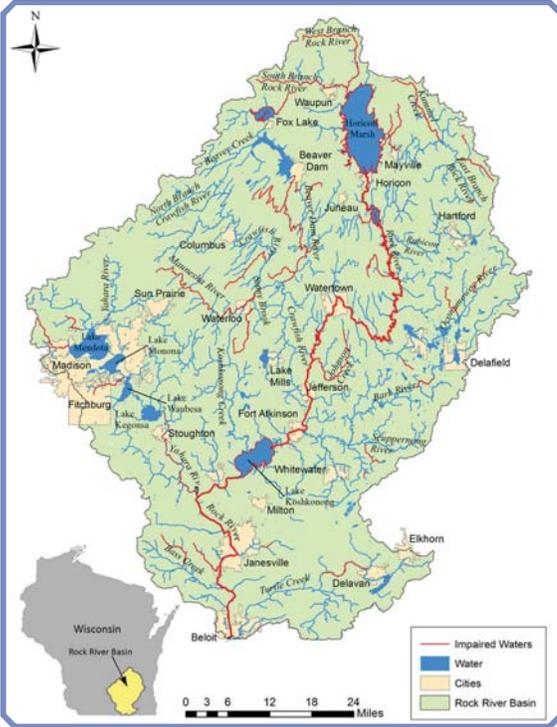
The second step is to determine how to achieve this reduction. This is done by allocating an allowable amount of pollution to individual wastewater treatment plants, industries and to municipalities who have a stormwater permit. Then for each sub-watershed a reduction goal is established for agriculture and other non-point or runoff sources.

The sources and allocations are contained in the TMDL Report, released in December 2010. Once a TMDL report is accepted by the US Environmental Protection Agency, an implementation plan is developed. In the Rock this will be called The Rock River Basin Recovery Plan.

The WDNR staff and others working on the plan recognize that a long-term solution is necessary to address the problem that resulted from 150 years of changing land use. Innovative ideas and “thinking outside the box” will be necessary to achieve these water quality goals.

While the WDNR is legally responsible for developing the Rock River Basin pollution reduction goals, many stakeholders, such as farmers, municipalities, business owners, and citizens, will play a critical role in the creation of the recovery plan as part of special sector teams. Scientific and technical experts will provide valuable information and insight to the process.

As the plan is developed the team members will look at established strategies and will explore new ways to achieve these water quality goals. The plan will provide guidelines to assist municipalities, counties, and individual landowners in improving water quality in the river, its lakes and its tributaries.



\*TSS is mostly composed of sediment washing off the land and will be referred to as sediment instead of TSS in much of this document.

**Rock River Recovery Fact Sheet**

On this page, and continuing through page 6, is the Rock River Recovery Project Factsheet that was handed out at the December 2010 Rock River Basin TMDL public informational hearing.

We thought those of you who couldn't make the hearing would be interested in the fact sheet.

You can also download a letter-sized pdf of the fact sheet from the Rock River Coalition website.

**TMDL Update**

At the writing of this newsletter the Rock River TMDL report has been released for public comment with the comment period extended to February 15.

If comments can be addressed without resulting in significant changes to the TMDL, than the next step in the process is to submit the report to US EPA for approval.

This submittal may occur this spring. If comments result in significant changes, there is a possibility that the report may be re-released for public comment.

In the meantime, there is much that we can do. The Rock River Coalition, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) and others are looking into hosting a series of educational sessions on the many projects and programs that are being initiated in the basin.

The new DNR TMDL Assistant, Theresa Ford, is contacting project leaders to see if they would be interested in presenting.

If you would like to be part of these educational programs please contact Theresa by email at [theresa.ford@wisconsin.gov](mailto:theresa.ford@wisconsin.gov) or by phone at 920-387-7886.



**Rock River Coalition is Now on Facebook!**

To better connect with our members, the Rock River Coalition has created a Facebook page. As the page develops, it will contain announcements of events, news of importance to the Rock River Basin, links to our partners and basin photos, such as the one shown here, taken by Christmas Bird Counter and board member Jim Kerler.

With your input it can also be a forum for discussing issues facing the basin, and a place for monitors to share their findings.

**If you are currently on Facebook, please “like” us!**

As always, you can also visit our webpage at <http://www.rockrivercoalition.org>.

## Rock River Basin Pollutants and Impairments

The pollutants of concern, phosphorus and sediment, can enter the river from many sources. Crop fields, barnyards and pastures, municipal and industrial wastewater discharges, construction sites and urban areas are all potential sources.

Although phosphorus is important for growing plants, a surplus amount in surface waters can cause unwanted algae blooms and excess rooted plant growth. When these plants die, the process of decomposition uses much of the available oxygen. This results in a severely depleted supply of oxygen in the water, endangering fish and other aquatic life.

*The Rock River, a major tributary of the Mississippi River, is one of the top ten contributors to the growing hypoxia or dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico due to its high nitrogen pollution level. Practices to reduce sediment and phosphorus should also result in a reduction in nitrogen. Improving water quality in the Rock is critical to improving water quality in the Mississippi and Gulf of Mexico.*

Phosphorus runoff is also the main cause of blue-green algae growth. Toxins produced by this algae can cause rashes, illness and even death.

An excess amount of sediment causes many problems in water bodies, primarily destroying habitat, blocking sunlight and warming the water.

Decreasing the amount of phosphorus and sediment entering our waters will reduce algae blooms and habitat

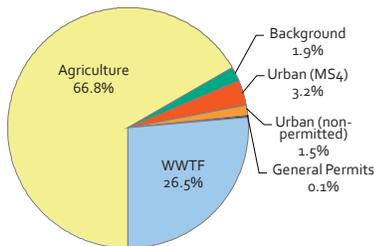


*Excess phosphorus in the water leads to algae blooms that turn the water green, scummy, odorous and undesirable for recreation. Blue-green algae produce toxins that can cause rashes, illness and even death.*

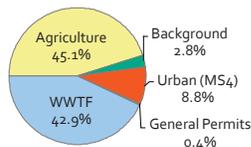
degradation. Land use practices that degrade surface water may also degrade groundwater; therefore steps to improve surface water will likely improve groundwater as well.

Water quality in the Rock River can be improved. Greater water clarity and decreased algae blooms will increase the value and usefulness of the river. We all depend on clean water—for drinking, recreation, agriculture and industrial businesses. Everyone who lives or vacations in the Rock River Basin will benefit from improved water quality.

### Total Phosphorus (TP)

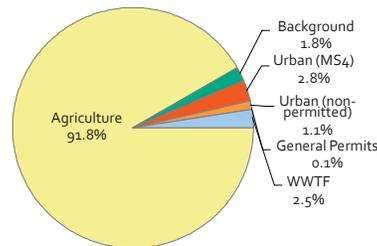


Baseline loading - 1,570,055 pounds per year

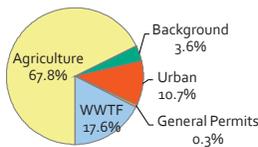


Load allocations - 422,800 pounds per year

### Total Suspended Solids (TSS)



Baseline TSS loading - 179,900 tons per year



Load allocations - 51,628 tons per year

*The TMDL report provides valuable information that will help identify strategies for cleaning up our waters. The top two charts show the current loads as a percentage by source for phosphorus and sediment. The bottom two show the results once the load allocations are achieved as outlined in the report. Total reductions needed to meet clean water goals are approximately 1 million pounds phosphorus and 128 tons of sediment annually.*

## Rock River Recovery Plan

As described in page 4 of the fact sheet, the TMDL report outlines needed reductions to meet water quality standards. For nonpoint sources, the report does not provide specifics on how these reductions are accomplished.

A TMDL Implementation Team will work through sector teams to develop an implementation plan "The Rock River Recovery Plan".

After EPA approval of the TMDL, each sector team will begin meeting quarterly.

Additional educational meetings will start in spring 2011.

To keep everyone up-to-date regarding the efforts of the teams, a Rock River Recovery website is under development.

The Implementation Team members and plan development sector team members are:

**Implementation Team Leader:**  
Jim Congdon, WDNR

**TMDL Development Project Manager:** Kevin Kirsch, WDNR

**Members:**  
Susan Josheff, WDNR  
Maureen McBroom, WDNR  
Theresa Ford, WDNR  
Plus team leaders listed below.

### Agriculture Team

**Co-Leaders:**  
Corinne Billings, WDNR  
Bryan Ellefson, WDNR

**Members:**  
Jerry Bradley, WI Farm Bureau  
Kurt Calkins, Columbia County  
Kevin Griswold, Tag-Lane Dairy LLC  
Tim Strobel, Rosy-Lane Holsteins LLC  
Jim Koepke, Koepke Farms  
Matt Krueger, WI River Alliance  
Nancy Lannert, Jefferson LWCD  
Joe Roche, Town of Elba  
Brian Smetana, Walworth County  
Kim Wright, MEA

*Sector team information continued next page:*

## Mark Your Calendars! River Gathering: There's No Place Like Home - June 16-19, 2011, Rockford IL

Some places boast mountains and beaches, some areas are known for forests and lakes. Our unique region is graced by four beautiful and vibrant rivers! The Four Rivers Environmental Coalition is excited to announce *A River Gathering* to celebrate the ecological, recreational, cultural and aesthetic value of the rivers in our region and to offer ways in which people can work to preserve them as resources and places of inspiration.

*A River Gathering: There's No Place Like Home* is designed to appeal to people of all ages and from all walks of life. The format, a hybrid between a festival and conference, will offer diverse educational, cultural and recreational experiences. Rock Valley College is co-sponsoring *A River Gathering* and their Stenstrom Center will serve as the Gathering's headquarters. Field trips, clinics and demonstrations will take place on and near the Rock, Kishwaukee, Pecatonica and Sugar Rivers in Winnebago, Boone and Ogle counties in Illinois and in Green and Rock counties in Wisconsin.

Keynote speaker: Kathleen Dean Moore. Plenary Speaker: Tim Palmer

More information on the conference at <http://seversondells.com/a-river-gathering/>. We'll also include information in the spring Rock River Reflections newsletter.

## What Can Be Done to Improve Water Quality in the Rock River?

Since 2000, most industrial and municipal point sources have reduced their discharge of phosphorus down to 1 part per million as part of their permit requirements. However, this reduction alone is not enough to restore water quality in the watershed, and further point source reductions will be necessary for many.

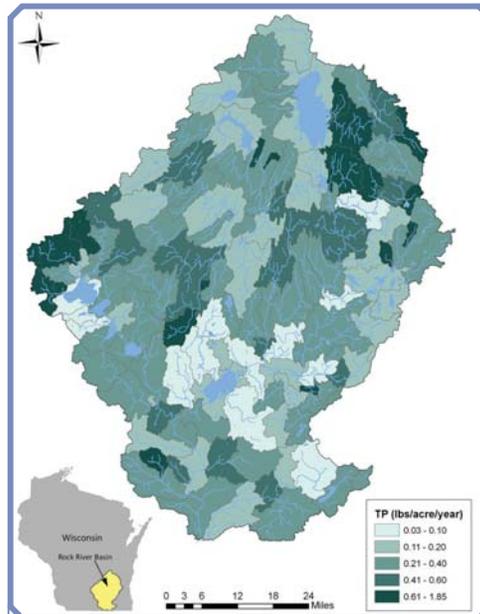
Stormwater runoff from agricultural land and urban areas are major sources of phosphorus and sediment in the basin. Runoff of phosphorus and sediment are closely linked, as phosphorus easily attaches to soil and moves with it when soil is carried off the land and into the water. Some of the actions that reduce the delivery of sediment will also reduce the amount of phosphorus delivered.

Examples of the types of actions to reduce runoff that will likely be part of the recovery plan include:

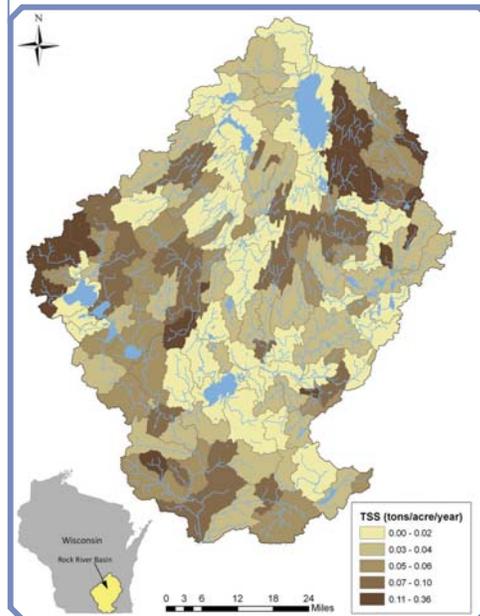
- Reducing phosphorus in agricultural soils and reducing cropland soil loss.
- Developing and implementing cropland nutrient management plans with the most effective and appropriate mix of practices.
- Managing manure application on the landscape and exploring composting, digesting, or other emerging technologies.
- Implementing rotational grazing for livestock and conservation tillage on cropland.
- Retaining natural buffers and installing vegetated buffers and grass filter systems with high trapping efficiency in farm fields and along streams and rivers.
- Using low impact design elements in subdivisions, such as infiltration swales, biofiltration islands, narrower streets, and rain gardens.
- Designing more effective erosion control systems.
- Rehabilitating degraded wetlands and restoring previously converted wetlands.
- Encouraging all citizens to find innovative solutions to improve and protect water quality.

***“To truly be a Rock River Recovery Plan that will be effective in our lifetime, it will take all businesses, municipalities, farmers and citizens working together to find and apply innovative solutions.”***

*- Jim Congdon, WDNR Upper Rock River Basin Leader*



*The amount of phosphorus (TP) and sediment (TSS) that comes from agricultural and natural (forest, wetland) sources. Differences in loading rates reflect differences in soils, farming practices, crop types, past nutrient applications, buffers and slope. Land management practices impact the amount of polluted runoff that comes from agricultural lands and thus the amount of reductions needed to meet water quality targets.*



### Education and Outreach

Team Leader Suzanne Wade, UWEX

Members:

Rick Eilertson, City of Fitchburg  
 Craig Ficenec, USDA-NRCS  
 Jayne Jenks, Waukesha County  
 Matt Hanson, Dodge Cty UWEX  
 Marsha Hartwig, Dane County LWC  
 Fred Madison, UW-Extension  
 David Liebl, UW-Extension

### Industrial & Municipal Wastewater

Team Leader Jackie Fratrack, WDNR

Members:

Pat Cardiff, Grande Cheese  
 Karla Eggink, Walcomet  
 Peter Hartz, Johnson Creek  
 Paul Kent, Anderson and Kent, SC  
 Paul Lange, City of Watertown  
 Betsy Lawton, Midwest Environmental Associates (MEA)  
 Daniel Lynch, City of Janesville  
 Dave Magnussen, City of Horicon  
 Douglas Nelson, Ruekert-Mielke  
 Steve Nighbor, Saputo Cheese  
 Tom Steinbach, Oconomowoc WWTF  
 Dave Taylor, Madison MSD

### Monitoring and Assessment

Team Leader Dan Heim, WDNR

Members:

Jane Carlson, Strand Associates  
 Ken Schreiber, WDNR  
 Mike Sorge, WDNR  
 Laura Stremick-Thompson, WDNR  
 Steve Warrner, WDNR  
 Kim Wright, MEA  
 Maggie Zoellner, Kettle Moraine Land Trust

### Urban Stormwater

Team Leader Eric Rortvedt, WDNR

Members:

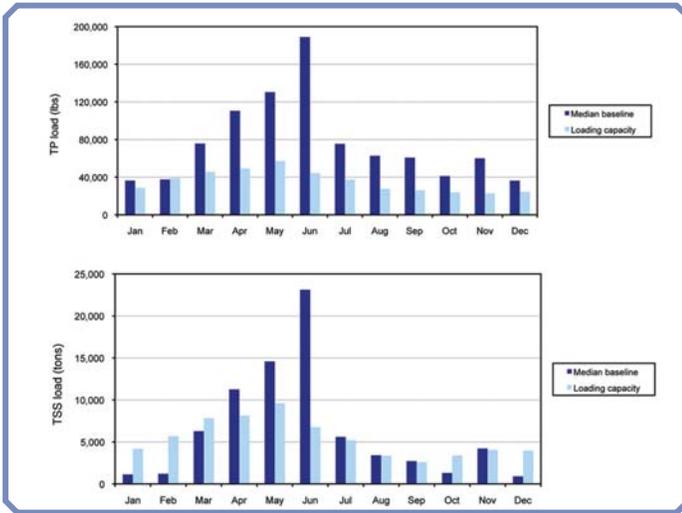
Fay Amerson, Walworth County  
 Rick Eilertson, City of Fitchburg  
 Greg Fries, City of Madison  
 Jim Rose, Waukesha County  
 Richard Schultz, City of Watertown  
 John Siepmann, Siepmann Realty Corp/Metro Builders Association  
 Eric Thompson, MSA Professional Services  
 Steve Wurster, Ruekert-Mielke

## Jefferson County Energy Opportunities During Resource Shortage and Climate Change

Sustain Jefferson & the UW-Madison's Nelson Institute have partnered for an educational video and panel discussion series called "Jefferson County Energy Opportunities During Resource Shortage and Climate Change". The next event in this series will be February 9, 2011, at the Johnson Creek Community Center, 417 Union Street, at 6:30 p.m. Goals of the video series are to educate and promote discussion of various resource issues from the perspective of sustainable development.

The topic on February 9 will be water resources. Video segments will include "The Most Terrifying Video You'll Ever See (Part I)", the 2009 Bioneers video "Basins of Relations" and a PowerPoint presentation by Jim Congdon of the DNR on the Rock River Basin's current and projected clean water standards.

The video presentations will be followed by moderated discussion between local panelists and the audience. A discussion of the "total maximum daily load" concept will be included. Panelists will include speakers knowledgeable in wastewater treatment, modeling of climate change impact, and general water quality issues such as: aquifer depletion, flooding, acid rain contamination of lakes and rivers, clean water for fishing and tourism, sewage treatment alternatives, storm water runoff and non-point pollution.



Just as the amount of phosphorus and sediment entering the Rock River and its tributaries varies by month so does the amount of reduction that will be required to meet clean water goals. The charts at left show how some months will need little if any reduction of sediment and phosphorus, while others have high reduction goals. The dark bars on these two charts show the current loading while the lighter bars show the target reduction. Using a variable percent reduction allows more flexibility in achieving the reduction goals outlined in the Rock River Basin TMDL Report. Each municipal wastewater treatment facility, industrial operation, municipal stormwater system, barnyard, pasture and farm field is unique, and will be assigned a unique reduction amount.

### How Might this Affect Me?

In Wisconsin, the implementation of point source wasteload allocations is done through permits issued under the Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) Program, which includes industrial permits, municipal wastewater treatment plants and municipal stormwater discharge permits.

In order to reduce their contribution to water pollution, industrial and municipal wastewater discharges may need to improve or add additional treatment processes. In order to reduce their contribution to water pollution, construction sites and municipal stormwater systems may be required to install additional management practices to achieve water quality improvements.

Currently, control of pollutant discharge on agricultural lands are implemented voluntarily by farmers, typically with cost share assistance from state, county or federal agencies. During the development of the recovery plan an agricultural team will explore ways to increase farmer participation.

### Additional Resources

For more information regarding the Rock River Recovery Planning Process, contact Jim Congdon at (920) 387-7872, or James.Congdon@Wisconsin.gov

Wisconsin DNR's TMDL Web site - <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/water/wm/wqs/303d/RockRiverTMDL>

U.S. EPA's TMDL Website - <http://www.epa.gov/owow/tmdl>

Department of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency cooperating. EEO/AA employers, University of Wisconsin Extension and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements.

La Universidad de Wisconsin-Extensión, un empleador con igualdad de oportunidades y acción afirmativa (EEO/AA), proporciona igualdad de oportunidades en empleo programas, incluyendo los requisitos del Título IX (Title IX) y de la Ley para Americanos con Discapacidades (ADA).

### Public Participation

Active public involvement will be a vital part of the development and implementation of the Rock River Basin Recovery Plan. The process of creating or implementing a difficult and far-reaching plan cannot be effective unless citizens let their elected officials know of their interest and concerns. Accomplishing reductions in phosphorus and sediment loadings to the river will require participation from every community member.

Everyone is encouraged to become involved in the development and implementation of the Rock River Basin Recovery Plan. At a minimum, citizens are encouraged to participate in the public informational meetings throughout the development of the recovery plan. The success of the Rock River recovery effort rests with you, the basin stakeholders. Stakeholder participation in planning and implementing the water quality improvement actions is what will ultimately restore water quality in the Rock River.

## Town and Country RC&D 2011 Events



### 2011 Annual Meeting

March 1, 2011  
Please see our website: <http://www.tacrcd.org> for more information.

### Southeast Wisconsin Grazing Network Winter Meeting

Monday, January 31, 10:00 – 3:30  
UW-Extension, 864 Collins Rd, Jefferson, WI.

To register, contact Kirsten Jurcek, Town & Country RC&D Grazing Educator at 920-342-9504 or [kjurcek1@centurytel.net](mailto:kjurcek1@centurytel.net).

### Gearing Up for Grazing

Beginning Grazier Training Class

Wednesdays: 12:00 – 3:00pm,  
Feb. 2, 9, 16, 23 & March 2 and 9  
MATC Watertown Campus.

For more information, contact Doug Marshall, 608-524-7727 or [dmarshall@matcmadison.edu](mailto:dmarshall@matcmadison.edu).

### Season Extension with High Tunnels

Workshops for vegetable growers. Seminars and farm tours this spring, dates TBD  
Please see our website: [www.tacrcd.org](http://www.tacrcd.org).

### Urban (wood) Encounter: Furniture Design Exhibition

April 15-16 at *Design Within Reach*: Featuring wood rescued from our southeastern Wisconsin communities. This is part of "Gallery Night and Day" in Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward.

### Powerful Messages in Unnatural Times: Webinars to Change the World

Natural Step Network Webinar Series. Starting February 17th

Details at <http://tnswebseries2011.eventbrite.com>

## Contribute Your Ideas for the RRC Send Your Legislator Down the River Event

One of the fun highlights of the year for the Rock River Coalition is the Send Your Legislator Down the River educational event. It is a time for us to gather together, meet with our legislators regarding issues important to the basin, and enjoy a paddle on one of the many special rivers in our area. In order to make this year's event successful, we would like your ideas and assistance!

Please let us know if you have a favorite stretch of river where you would like us to hold the event. The paddle typically is 3-6 miles in length. Important amenities include either a shelter with restrooms at the put-in or take-out site, or a restaurant or meeting hall near the paddling site where we can hold the picnic and the meeting with our legislators and other elected officials.

Would your local river or conservation group like to help out with the event? Last year, the Friends of Cherokee Marsh was one of our co-sponsors who not only helped with the event, but also shared information about their wonderful organization with participants.

Please contribute your ideas to the Rock River Coalition by contacting Patricia Cicero at 920-674-7121 or [patriciac@jeffersoncountywi.gov](mailto:patriciac@jeffersoncountywi.gov).

# Rock River Stormwater Group: Successful Pilot Leaf Program

by Rebecca Dil, RRSR Education Coordinator

The Rock River Stormwater Group (RRSG) took on a major project this past autumn as they educated the community about proper leaf disposal in an effort to keep storm drains clear and unclogged.

The Rock River Stormwater Group (RRSG) is a coalition of municipalities, state agencies and community groups. As a unified group of organizations, this coalition helps cities and towns comply with Wisconsin's clean water laws. The Group provides a strong infrastructure for efforts to educate the community about stormwater and what citizens can do to protect our rivers and streams for future generations.

The RRSR identified leaf debris as one target issue to address in their 2010 plan, prioritizing media and community outreach to homeowners using several methods, like church and congregation bulletins. The Group also identified the major barriers that could prevent homeowners from raking their leaves correctly, one of which is that people simply do not know, or remember, what they are supposed to do with their leaves since each municipality has a slightly different collection method.

This thorough analysis led to the creation of a very simple, inexpensive, brightly colored laminated sign that the municipal street department could post on trees and light poles. Because the simple sign was printed on 8.5"x11" paper, it can be easily replicated by other municipalities. These signs were intended to change homeowner behaviors, not provide general issue education. Therefore, the municipality-distributed signs used a simple "regulation and fine message" instead of explaining the complicated

connection between leaves, stormwater drains and nutrient pollution. (See inset graphic.)

Two areas in Fort Atkinson, WI, were designated as the initial test area: one to display the simple

**LEAF PICKUP**

November 1-14, 2010

Rake leaves to the terrace--  
DO NOT put in the street.

Separate branches and tree limbs.

Violators face fines up to \$1,000.

*Information on signs posted in Fort Atkinson to encourage proper leaf handling. This resulted in a 30% increase in the correct handling of leaves*

signs detailing leaf pick up rules and another area without signs to serve as the control group. Both areas were monitored to judge resident actions and whether they followed leaf pick up and disposal guidelines.

In the area with signs, which included 202 houses, 116 homes raked their yard during the survey period with 87% (96 homes) of homes staying compliant with city

regulations. Of the residents that raked their yards during the survey period, only 17% (20 homes) of homes were non-compliant with city regulations. In the control area of Fort Atkinson where signs were not posted, an area that included 267 homes, 128 homes raked their yard during the survey period with 57% (73 homes) staying compliant with city regulations. Of those that raked their yard during the survey period in the control area, 43% (55 homes) of the homes were non-compliant with city regulations.

With engaged municipal workers, a few hours of work and a small amount of supplies, the RRSR was able to reduce the number of lawns sending leaves into storm drains by 30%. In 2011 the RRSR will launch new, equally innovative programs, and will continue and expand projects like this to reach the goal of a clean, swimmable, enjoyable Rock River Basin.

## Conservation Lobby Day March 16, 2011

This is a great opportunity for hundreds of citizens to gather, visit with their legislators, and express support legislation that will conserve and enhance the natural resources our state is blessed with, and our ability to enjoy them.

With Wisconsin facing its greatest economic crisis in history, legislators will be forced to make very difficult choices that will undoubtedly put good conservation programs on the table. With that in mind, job number one for the conservation community in the next two years will be defending past conservation victories.

The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters has led a statewide discussion of what initiatives might garner broad support among voters and legislators alike. The LCV has gotten input from over 80 groups, including the Rock River Coalition as well as consulting with key members of our new legislature.

The Conservation Priorities 2011-2012 are:

1. Establish a Wisconsin Conservation Corps. A Wisconsin Conservation Corps would provide practical job training to benefit the conservation programs that make Wisconsin a draw to tourists and residents alike.
2. Create a "Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights." The Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights will demonstrate legislative support and guidance for the programs and activities that encourage children and families to play, explore and learn in Wisconsin's outdoors

At the beginning of each legislative session, the conservation community presents the Conservation Priority issues to the new legislature. The Rock River Coalition Board knows that it's never been more important that the conservation community work together to protect Wisconsin's natural resources.

Save the date, and join us for Conservation Lobby Day 2011.

## Become a RRC Member

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

I am a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter.

### Memberships Fees

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

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

Any donation of \$100 or more will be recognized and linked to your website from our website: [www.rockrivercoalition.org](http://www.rockrivercoalition.org)

Donors of \$500 or greater will receive an ad in this newsletter. Check out our website for more information.

### Tax deductible donation

Amount	Purpose
	General Support
	Citizen Monitoring
	Other:

*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 53549-1182**

or register and pay online with PayPal at:  
[www.rockrivercoalition.org/membership.asp](http://www.rockrivercoalition.org/membership.asp)

# The Best Find of the Day

by Karen Etter-Hale, Madison Audubon Count Compiler

Many birds, including some unusual ones, can be found in winter if you spend a little time looking. Forty-five species were tallied by 15 field observers and 14 feeder watchers on the 11th annual Waterloo Christmas Bird Count on December 14. The 15 mile diameter circle encompasses Lake Mills, Waterloo, Marshall, Deerfield, Cambridge - and the Lake Mills Wildlife Area (Zeloski/London Marsh). Eight field "parties" scoured the countryside, spending more than 50 hours driving 358 miles of road and walking more than 10 miles of trails, woods and prairie.

The best find of the day was an adult Harris's Sparrow, which is more typically found wintering in the Great Plains from Nebraska south. This is the first time one has ever been found in Jefferson County to the best of anyone's knowledge. It was located and photographed by experienced birders on Stoney Creek Road near the creek, along with a Fox Sparrow (also unusual this time of year) and a couple of Song Sparrows. Another unusual find were the three Short-eared Owls that appeared at dusk on Prairie Lane at Madison Audubon's Faville Grove Sanctuary. These owls look like giant moths as they flap slowly, hunting in the twilight. If you interested in trying to find them, be aware that the road is not plowed.



Harris Sparrow documented during the Waterloo area Christmas Bird Count. photo by Cynthia Bridge

Nearly every road driven had scores of American Tree Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos feeding along the edges. Sifting through these flocks often yielded other open-country birds such as Horned Larks, Lapland Longspurs, and Snow Buntings.

In one spot on North Shore Road, there was even a mix of several Hairy, Downy, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers gathering weed seeds and grit on the road and road edge.

Other interesting birds found were two Northern Shrikes, one along the Glacial Drumlin Trail and one in a yard in Shorewood; one Belted Kingfisher at the Lake Mills Fish Hatchery

and another near Lake Ripley; a White-crowned Sparrow in the Deerfield area; 174 Wild Turkeys (in several locations); and one Carolina Wren coming to a feeder on North Shore Road. Unfortunately, the lakes froze completely just before the count or the tally would have been higher as many species of ducks were present on the last of the open water. The only waterfowl found were nine Canada Geese at the fish hatchery and Mallards at three locations with moving water.

Complete results will be available on the National Audubon Society website sometime in January or February. For more information about the counts, see <http://birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count>.

## Friends of Allen Creek Video Project

by Kim Karow

The Friends of Allen Creek Watershed recently completed a video about Allen Creek, located in Jefferson County just south of Fort Atkinson. The video features the talents of students from the Fort Atkinson and Whitewater areas. Video segments highlight citizen water monitoring, pollution and the physical characteristics of Allen Creek. The completed video is 26 minutes in length.

The project was headed by Paul Lauritzen, a charter member of the Friends of Allen Creek Watershed. Paul had a vision of creating a parallel of the baseline study, but making the content understandable to young people. The baseline study was largely written as a scientific document. The video, on the other hand, shows and tells the basics of what we do as an organization to understand this beautiful natural resource in lay terms.

We were very fortunate to have staff support at UW-Whitewater to help with this undertaking. Dr. Elizabeth Harrahy, professor of biology and aquatic ecology, shows macroinvertebrate sampling and describes the qualities of Allen Creek that make it a high quality habitat. Additionally, Alan Luckett of Community TV for the City of Whitewater, contributed countless hours to the editing process.

We have our first few copies in hand and will be ready for distribution this spring. The video is on our website: [www.friendsofallencreek.org](http://www.friendsofallencreek.org). The baseline study is already available on the website.

The project was funded through a generous donation from the C.D. Besadney Conservation Grant Program and a private donor from the Whitewater community. DVDs will be distributed at no cost to local schools.



Dr. Elizabeth Harrahy (far left), UW-Whitewater with her senior student assistant, instructs the students on the ecology of the creek. Standing on her left are students Katie Lange, Nathan Barrett, Ben Matthews, Andra Matthews, Thomas Steffen and Mike Miller of the DNR.

## RRC Monitoring Dates

**Fundraiser Tuesday:** March 22nd 6am-6pm: Water House Foods, located in downtown Lake Mills, will be donating a portion of the day's proceeds in support of Rock River Coalition's monitoring efforts. Please stop by for freshly baked breads and coffee at breakfast or freshly prepared soup and sandwiches during lunch and help support RRC. [www.waterhousefoods.com](http://www.waterhousefoods.com)

**WI Citizen-Based Stream Monitoring Symposium:** Mar 24-25 2011, Lussier Family Heritage Center, Madison. Volunteer stream monitors addressing this year's topic: "Assessing Agricultural Impacts in Your Watershed". Monitors will present their data, network with other volunteer groups and have advanced training. Look for updates at: <http://watermonitoring.uwex.edu/level2/Symposium/symposium.html>

**Crane Count:** April 16 5:30am - 7:30am Join other volunteers in experiencing the thrill of hearing cranes calling at daybreak and help count the crane population in WI.

**Monitor Celebration:** April 16 9:00 - Noon Come join other monitors for conversation, food, recognition, and fun. The morning will begin with food, coffee, a brief recognition of monitors and a look ahead at the 2011 monitoring season. This will be followed by a tour of the Lake Mills Fish Hatchery (spawning season) and a birding tour of Zeloski Marsh, led by Nolan Kollath, expert birder. This event replaces the Confluence gathering for 2011. The RRC Confluence will return in 2012.

**New Monitor Training:** April 30th, 8-2:30 Lake Mills Community Center: Anyone interested in being trained to become a monitor or interested in refreshing their monitoring skills are welcome.

**Snapshot Day:** Saturday, May 14th: All monitors are asked to do their monthly testing on this day in May in order to allow for basin-wide data comparison. 2010 Snapshot Data should be available in March and will be sent to all 2010 participating monitors. Thanks to all monitors who participated in 2010's Snapshot Days. We look forward to having an even larger turnout this year.

For more information on these events contact Ed at 920-648-2673 or [ed@rockrivercoalition.org](mailto:ed@rockrivercoalition.org).

## Plant & Animal Monitors Needed

American Transmission Company (ATC) has generously provided funding for 2011 floristic (plant) and fauna studies to be conducted at the Zeloski/London Marsh (Lake Mills Wildlife Area).

Monitors are needed to conduct a Crane Count in April; duck nesting counts in May; frog counts in May, June, July; and December Christmas Bird Count and monthly bird counts through the year.

For those interested in floristic studies, an exciting new project is being proposed for the London Marsh site. Individuals are needed who would be interested in being part of this new research study in plant identification.

No experience necessary, as volunteers will be trained on-site at each event by experienced monitors. No commitment necessary, volunteering can occur once or multiple times.

For further information, to inquire about specific monitoring dates, or to volunteer to join a monitoring team, please contact Ed Grunden at 920-648-2673 or [ed@rockrivercoalition.org](mailto:ed@rockrivercoalition.org).