



Rock River Reflections

A publication of the Rock River Coalition in cooperation with the Rock River Stormwater Group and the University of Wisconsin-Extension

Winter 2015 Volume 18, Number 1

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Class I Trout Stream Calls Out for Attention: The Story of Mason Creek

By Jill Bedford, Tall Pines Conservancy

You can drive along County Highway CW in Waukesha County and never know you are passing over a significant Class I Trout stream called the Mason Creek.

Originating from the active springs and drainage patterns from the large wetland areas of Washington and Dodge Counties, Mason Creek starts

its life out as a cobblestone creek rich in aquatic life meandering south through the Town of Merton in Waukesha County. In places, the stream gathers momentum with numerous pools, riffles and runs while in other places the stream has been channeled into a ditch and then reverts back into a stream. From a thriving breeding trout stream



Jerry Kaster, School of Fresh Water Sciences, has found numerous mayflies in this stretch of the creek.



Mason Creek entering North Lake with sediment after a rain event.

low dissolved oxygen (DO), elevated water temperature, degraded habitat, and high sediment/total suspended solids and total phosphorus levels. Another concern is the water quality of North Lake, which is seriously affected by the impaired conditions of Mason Creek. During large rain events the creek fills with brown sediment pulling a dark curtain over the aquatic life.

In 2010 a Mason Creek Watershed Partnership Group was formed to explore and address the serious pollution issues related to the creek.

Tall Pines Conservancy has been working with the North Lake Management District along with The Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), Carroll University, Trout Unlimited, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Waukesha County, and Washington County in a working partnership spearheading the Mason Creek Watershed Protection Plan.

Through a \$10,000 WDNR grant, SEWRPC has been studying the riparian uses, widths of stream buffers, in-flow, drainage, erosion,

continuity of flow between the habitat and tributaries and the physical makeup of the stream. Also in 2014 the WDNR began implementing the more intensive water sampling with Tier III monitoring.

Dedicated volunteers are also conducting stream monitoring along the creek. Many of these findings will be made available in 2015 and recommendations will be made in the final report. A Mason Creek Advisory group has been formed to aid in the education and outreach component engaging area schools and Universities.

The ultimate goal of this project is to identify issues/problems within Mason Creek and design management strategies for remediation in order to ensure clean water for the families that reside within this watershed as well as protect the fragile fisheries and wildlife.

Concurrently with the Mason Creek project, Tall Pines Conservancy has partnered with the City of Oconomowoc on an innovative and exciting program called Watershed Adaptive Management to improve the water quality of the many lakes and rivers in the Oconomowoc River Watershed.

Continued on page 2

at its headwaters, Mason Creek makes its way through agricultural lands gathering sediment and phosphorus along its way before it discharges into North Lake.

North Lake is connected by various underground feeder streams to Pine and Beaver lakes, while connecting to Okauchee, Oconomowoc, La Belle, and Fowler lakes via the Oconomowoc River. Eventually this chain of lakes drains into the Rock River near Ixonia in Jefferson County.

Mason Creek has been designated a 303(d) impaired stream by the DNR. The creek is being negatively impacted by a number of non-point pollutants and impairments. These include

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Rock River Coalition President's Message

Many of our surface waters are frozen over, and the volunteer monitors have packed up their equipment for the season. You would think that the winter would be a slow time for the Rock River Coalition. However, our Board members and staff are busy planning for 2015 and doing everything we can to make our programs and projects successful. Activities include applying for funds from a variety of sources to maintain and expand our citizen stream monitoring program, attending a Community Shares of Wisconsin orientation meeting, and continuing to expand our partnerships to the benefit of the Rock River Basin. This newsletter highlights many of these activities and more. I particularly want to thank the Board, especially Suzanne Wade, on all their hard work on our successful application to the Community Shares of Wisconsin. Please be sure to join us for a day of giving on March 3rd – details in the article on the last page.

Nancy Sheehan, RRC's Volunteer Stream Monitoring Coordinator, and I recently attended a meeting

about citizen lake monitoring with the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership that consists of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the University of Wisconsin Extension, and Wisconsin Lakes (a nonprofit). The State's lake and stream monitoring programs have separate management at the state level and separate sources of funding. A portion of the gas taxes are dedicated to fund the citizen lake monitoring program. The younger and smaller stream monitoring program hasn't had a consistent source of funding, but this hasn't stopped them from doing a great job in implementing the program.

With that said however, I encourage everyone to make a donation to RRC's Citizen Stream Monitoring Program (via the day of giving on March 3rd, see page 8) due to the fact that there often isn't enough money in the State's program to fund the equipment and support that the volunteers in our basin need. In fact, additional funds are needed by the Coalition to increase the number of stream sites monitored and to potentially add important elements to the program such as phosphorus sampling and analysis.

One idea that has surfaced and was discussed at the monitoring meeting is to conduct targeted watershed assessments on a certain number of watersheds in the State each year. This would include assessing both lakes and streams in the same watershed at the same time. The scale of the watersheds studied would be smaller than the whole Rock River Basin. I can see many benefits to this approach including a role for citizen monitors, a better understanding of the water resource conditions in the watersheds, and the fact that this information can empower people to take steps to reduce pollution in their areas. I also think it is a great opportunity for the State to partner with organizations like the Rock River Coalition! I hope the idea of targeted watershed assessments in Wisconsin is approved and implemented soon.

Patricia Cicero,
RRC President



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 27, 2015

A letter-sized color version of this newsletter is available at www.rockrivercoalition.org.

Sign up for a monthly email update at <https://lists.uwex.edu/mailman/listinfo/rock-river-basin-update>.

Contact Marie Rubietta at marier@jeffersoncountywi.gov if you'd prefer a pdf of the newsletter emailed to you.

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.

Wetland Regulatory Agencies Sign Agreement to Provide Additional Mitigation Opportunity

By Matthew Matrise, DNR Wetland In-Lieu Fee Coordinator

Leaders from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, and Environmental Protection Agency have signed an agreement to expand wetland mitigation options for permit applicants in Wisconsin.

The agreement expands mitigation options statewide by providing applicants the ability to mitigate wetland losses via an in-lieu fee program. The DNR-administered program still requires proposed projects to first avoid, then minimize adverse impacts to wetlands and meet all other permit conditions before qualifying to participate in the new program.

Establishment of the Wisconsin Wetland Conservation Trust (WWCT) provides an important new tool for businesses and communities to create jobs while establishing a new path forward for protecting and restoring state wetlands.

The WWCT offers credits specific to twelve separate service areas covering the state that may be purchased by an entity seeking to fulfill a permit obligation for compensatory mitigation. The funds generated from credit sales are then utilized within these watershed based service areas to restore, enhance, establish and preserve wetland resources to benefit watershed health.

Among the benefits of our program is the ability to focus mitigation and improvement projects on the greatest watershed needs. Mitigation decisions will be more efficient and predictable while offering new avenues for public participation. Our ultimate goal remains the same – no net loss of wetland acreage and/or function.

As administrator for the program, DNR will collect the credit fees, seek public involvement on future mitigation projects and ensure projects are initiated within three years after selling the first credit.

For more information on the program, visit DNR.wi.gov and search for "wetland compensatory mitigation."

Contact: Matthew Matrise, DNR wetland in-lieu fee coordinator, (262) 574-2124, Matthew.Matrise@wisconsin.gov.

Mason Creek

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Tall Pines Conservancy will be working with willing landowners to place Agricultural Conservation Easements on their properties. These easements offer not only land protection in-perpetuity but also require the implementation of best management practices working with the County Conservationist and the NRCS.

Someday, Mason Creek will meander through restored wetlands with wide-buffered protected shorelines. The trout will be happy and so will all the wildlife and people who live and play on the waters it ultimately affects.

For more information, please visit <http://tallpinesconservancy.org/>.

Notes from the RRC

Don't forget to renew your membership - we depend on you!

We have a new phone number, please update your Address Book:

New RRC Phone Number
920-650-0966

Nominate a Rock River Protector

Do you know a watershed hero? Or 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 by 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 name(s) and contact information; the award category; and a two page maximum description of accomplishments, detailing why you feel the nominee deserves the award.

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

Nominations are due by March 18, 2015. Send them to: Rock River Coalition Awards Committee, 864 Collins Rd, Jefferson WI 53549 or email to info@rockrivercoalition.org.

Come Celebrate!

Awards will be presented at the RRC Annual Members Meeting in May.



Village of DeForest Watershed to Award Improvement Grants

The Village of DeForest is excited to announce that it is accepting grant applications from local non-profit organizations for projects that help improve stormwater quality in the Upper Yahara River watershed.

The Village designates money annually to be used for water quality improvements. Last year, the Village opened this money up to local non-profits with a new grant program.

2014 grants were awarded to the Friends of Yahara River Headwaters and Clean Lakes Alliance. It was a successful first year and the Village is again offering this unique grant for 2015.

Funding is intended to be used in the DeForest area for baseline data collection, analysis, planning, monitoring, education, best management practices and other functions necessary for a comprehensive and effective overall water management program.

The primary focus of the program is water quality, quantity, temperature control, and monitoring.

Preference will be given to projects targeting phosphorous reduction.

Project must be completed in the 2015 calendar year.

The application deadline is: March 2, 2015.

More information and project applications can be found online at www.vi.deforest.wi.us under the Village Government tab. Or search "water quality improvement grant" on the website homepage.

Editor's Note: This great program should be a model for other municipalities looking for ways to optimize impacts for people and our waters.

Recent River Protector Awardees and Why They are Basin Winners

Elected Officials

- Mayor Bob Miller, City of Monona: Year of Water, Water Star, Green Tier Legacy Community, Water Conservation Challenge and Lake Monona Water Walk
- John Molinaro, Jefferson County Board Chair: Glacial Heritage Area work
- Jefferson County Board Supervisor Greg David: Promotion of sustainability in Jefferson County
- Senator Mark Miller: Great Lakes Compact & lawn phosphorus rule

Individuals

- Greg Farnham: Rock River Trail and Lake Sinissippi work
- Joe Nehmer, Jefferson County Parks: Glacial Heritage Area work
- Lynne Diebel and Caroline Werner: Friends of Badfish Creek
- Pete Jopke, Dane County LWCD: RRC local monitoring coordinator
- Gloria Hafemeister: Support of the RRC as a reporter

Business

- Berres Brothers Coffee Roasters: Green Tier and Travel Green accomplishments
- LanDesign by Margaret Burlingham: Promotion of rain gardens, community planning and shorelines
- Madison Gas & Electric: Development of co-generation plant
- Veridian Homes: First Green Tier builder

Organizations

- Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Watershed Management: Ongoing support in the basin
- Middleton Department of Public Lands: For shoreline and stormwater projects
- Madison Audubon Society: Zeloski marsh restoration
- Lake Sinissippi Improvement District: Lake and watershed improvement work
- Friends of Allen Creek Watershed: For extensive monitoring program & projects

Educators

- Joseph Hardgrove, University Lake School: Oconomowoc River monitoring, studies and clean-up
- Jim Lorman, Edgewood College: Friends of Lake Wingra, Clean Lakes Alliance Community Board, and other clean water initiatives
- Steve Grabow, UWEX Jefferson
- Mary Beth Steven, Cambridge Elementary: Monitoring with students



2013 River Protector and RRC Friends award winners, from left are: Nic Tippery, Pete Berres from Berres Brothers Coffee Roasters, Greg Farnham, Joe Hardgrove, Jim Lorman, Mayor Bob Miller, Brad Webb and Lisa Conley. Rock River Protector award winners received a hand painted turkey feather on a wood plaque with a brass plate. Photo by James Kerler

Photo by James Kerler

Is 2015 the Year You Restore Your Shoreline?

By Jason Valerius, Rock River Stormwater Group Education Coordinator, MSA Professional Associates

The depths of winter are the ideal time to think warm thoughts about spring landscaping projects. For those of you "living on the edge," a.k.a. shoreline property owners, we'd like you to consider improvements to your shoreline in 2015.

In natural areas the river's edge typically features a mix of plants that support a complex ecosystem of fish, birds, insects and animals. But in urbanized areas people have often "improved" the shoreline by removing the natural vegetation, replacing it with lawn all the way down to the water's edge.

These lawns not only eliminate wildlife habitat, they also increase the speed and volume of stormwater runoff into the river. And to make matters worse, those lawns are still too often treated with fertilizer and pesticides that wash directly into the river, where they damage aquatic plants and contribute to fish-killing algae blooms.

This is why Wisconsin counties now strictly limit the removal of existing shoreland vegetation within 35 feet of the water.

If your shoreline is still mostly lawn, consider restoring a "riparian buffer" this year. These are the reasons many property owners in our area have already restored native species along their shoreline.

1. Enhanced privacy – you can use trees, shrubs and grasses to strategically frame the views you want and block those you don't.
2. Less goose poop – one of the few types of wildlife that like manicured lawns are geese, when they're able to walk ashore. Taller vegetation will keep them off your lawn.
3. Less maintenance – naturalized shoreline vegetation requires little or no maintenance once reestablished.
4. More wildlife – butterflies and songbirds are among the species that will return when shoreline habitat improves.
5. Cleaner water – a riparian buffer will capture and filter stormwater runoff more effectively, keeping more nutrients and pollutants out of the river.

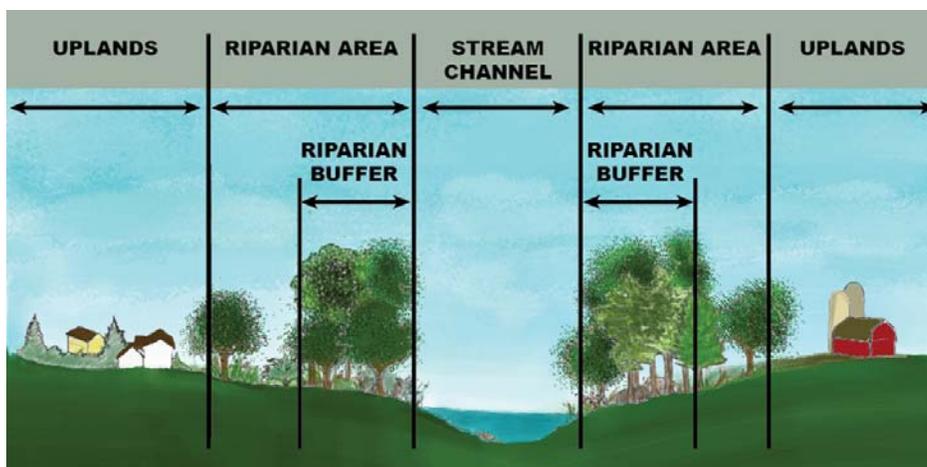


Photo Credit: US Environmental Protection Agency

There are many benefits and it's relatively easy to reestablish a shoreline buffer.

The simplest approach is simply to stop mowing – leave a strip of tall grass between your yard and the river and let it naturalize over time. Or, if you prefer not to let nature take its slow, weedy course, you can select the plants you want and install your buffer.

The University of Wisconsin-Extension, in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, has a guide on selecting shoreline landscape plants: <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/pdf/shorlpl.pdf>.



Shoreline restoration is important to the health of the Rock River. If you have a riparian buffer or create one this spring, we'd love to see it.

If you are planning a restoration, then please check with your County's Land and Water Conservation Department as they may have some additional technical and financial resources to assist you.

You can share your shoreline transformation pictures with us on Facebook at [facebook.com/rock.river.54](https://www.facebook.com/rock.river.54) or on Twitter @RRSGWisconsin.

This article is brought to you by the Rock River Stormwater Group, a coalition of ten communities and UW-Whitewater committed to improving the Rock River's health.

Thank YOU for helping to Renew the Rock by restoring your shoreland buffer. Learn more at www.RenewTheRock.com.

A Check Back on RRC Shoreline Restorations

Fifteen years ago the RRC helped several communities install natural shorelines in their parks.

We're looking for a volunteer who would like to go back and learn how they're doing.

At a minimum we would like photos of the shorelines in late spring and mid-summer. The right volunteer might also like to interview park staff to learn what has worked well, what have been the issues and how these were solved. A story with the photos will be included in a future issue of this newsletter.

We also helped establish a number of rain gardens and would like photos and a report on these as well.

If interested contact Suzanne Wade at suzanne@rockrivercoalition.org.

Enjoy these photos of the original projects.



Whitewater Students Learn About Water at Bluff Creek Field Day

By Maggie Zoellner, Kettle Moraine Land Trust

Environmental education, especially youth education, has long been a priority of the Kettle Moraine Land Trust (KMLT). However it's not the only benefit KMLT provides communities in Walworth County. As a land trust, KMLT's primary mission is to partner with landowners who voluntarily decide to permanently protect their properties' unique natural resources for all time.

Through partnerships with landowners, the Trust executes a conservation easement which limits future uses or development of the land, and the Trust agrees to uphold the terms of the easement in perpetuity.

But that is not the end of the story according to KMLT Program Manager Maggie Zoellner. "Everyone needs to care about land protection. It's not just the landowner but the whole community that benefits when important natural resources are protected from urban sprawl or development. Connecting with nature, that special moment that you remember your entire life – that doesn't always just happen. We help people experience the beauty and wonder of nature close to home. It's really important for our organization



Whitewater High School students measuring the clarity of one of the Rock River Basin gems - Bluff Creek. Photo by Nancy Sheehan

that we have a community that cares about natural resources and wants to keep nature close to home. That's why we invest in local high schools."

Recently, Kettle Moraine Land Trust was able to form new partnerships in the Rock River Basin to provide much needed field experiences for Whitewater High School Students.

In early October, two classes of Whitewater High School students had the unique experience of spending an entire day immersed in hands-on learning and scientific investigation at Bluff Creek State Natural Area, part of the Southern Kettle Moraine State Forest.

A ten minute bus ride was all the time it took for the students to discover the cold water of Bluff Creek racing through hundreds of acres of remnant prairie and sedge meadows teeming with plant and animal diversity. Not only did the students begin to understand how land managers foster plant and animal species diversity and resiliency, they joined in and learned by doing. Under the direction of conservation professionals, land stewards and teachers, the students worked hard to cut and remove invasive shrubs degrading native prairie habitat, collected seed from threatened plants to help establish new populations, and sampled Bluff Creek's water to determine its quality.

Learning by doing is very effective and results in long lasting impressions for the students.

"I learned a lot the whole day! I

learned about the water bugs and the procedures to check if the water was livable for creatures. I also learned about seed picking and harmful plants, and how to protect the land..." Jorge (student).

The field day fostered an understanding of global environmental challenges, and gave the students a meaningful way to make a positive difference by acting locally. The work accomplished will help improve wildlife habitat and speed the recovery of native plants. The Kettle Moraine Land Trust partnered with the Rock River Coalition, We Energies Foundation, The Coburn Company, Inc. and the Wisconsin DNR's State Natural Areas Volunteer Program to connect youth to their local natural resources.

The field days are a lot of work according to Zoellner but very worthwhile, "It's just so successful for everyone. The teachers, students, volunteers and the resource all benefit."

For more information, please visit <http://kmlandtrust.org/>.



RRC Celebrates 20 Years

On November 2nd, RRC staff, board members and friends celebrated their 20 years of engaging citizens to improve the resources of the Rock River Basin at Koshkonong Mounds Country Club. The event began with old friends gathering to catch up and enjoy the music of The Cajun Strangers. After a great meal, current and past presidents shared the memories and highlights. Patricia Cicero, our current president, pictured to the right, also shared our vision for the future.

Steve Grabow, UW Extension, Jefferson County Office Community Development Educator, one of the early organizers of the Coalition talked about the beginning of the Coalition. He completed his remarks with, "Because of the community energy and strong feeling for making a difference along the Rock River, within five years the Rock River Coalition had become a well-known and recognized lead organization around natural resource, environmental, water quality and tourism issues." We believe we will be for the next twenty years as well.

We sincerely thank all of our event sponsors and major 2014 donors including Strand Associates, MSA Professional Associates, the Kunkel Engineering Group, American Transmission Company, First Unitarian Society of Madison, Patricia Cicero, James and Liesa Kerler, Jim and Mary Koepke, SSA Design, Vandewalle and Associates, Waukesha County Agri-Business, Berres Brothers Coffee Roasters, Jane Carlson and Family, Lisa and Bob Conley, Ruth Johnson, LanDesign by Margaret Burlingham, Montgomery and Associates, River Alliance of Wisconsin, Eve Swenson, and Suzanne and Larry Wade.



Photos by Clare Carlson



Stream Side Notes

By Nancy Sheehan, RRC Volunteer Stream Monitoring Coordinator

A NEW YEAR, MANY CHANGES

Integrated surface water database: Stream water quality data collected by volunteers have finally “come of age”. Why do I say this? The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resource (WDNR) is now allowing all volunteer-collected stream monitoring data to be entered into the WDNR database called the Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS). No longer will there be two databases – one repository for the Level 1 stream data and another for the Level 2 data.

Over the past few months, Level 1 volunteers have been busy entering all data for the 2014 monitoring season, obtaining their WDNR WAMS usernames, and connecting to WDNR WAV coordinators. I wish to thank all RRC volunteers for their valuable contribution to this process. Once again, volunteers are playing a critical part in ensuring that water quality data is accessible to all Wisconsin citizens. The WDNR SWIMS is a powerful interactive web application that provides tools for assessing surface water quality across time and space. I am confident that this information will aid in addressing the many challenges facing our streams in the Rock River Basin.

At this point in the transition to one database, I wish to acknowledge eighteen years of work by WAV program coordinator, Kris Stepenuck. We would not be where we are today without Kris Stepenuck's diligence in supporting volunteers through the development of proven water quality protocols, field training programs and YouTube training videos, and quality assurance and quality assessment procedures. Because of this strong foundation, when volunteers follow standardized WAV program protocols, we can state with confidence that our data is reliable and accurate.

I will miss some features available on the WAV database. One, local coordinators will no longer be able to review volunteer-collected data before this data is entered into the database. Two, local coordinators will no longer have a direct link to volunteer information like email addresses. Three, the WAV database allowed users to generate quick summary charts based on water quality parameters selected. While users can download data from WDNR SWIMS onto excel files, no data assessment features are embedded in the SWIMS.

Integrated WAV programs: As many of you have read on the WAV listserv, there are additional changes to the overall WAV program. I wish to highlight several changes which have particular relevance to our own stream monitoring program.

- The WAV program will no longer focus on monitoring “levels”; rather the focus will be placed on the parameters of interest. Basically, local watershed groups and individual volunteers will be given greater flexibility to choose the parameters to monitor.
- Aquatic invasive species (AIS) can wreak havoc with stream habitats. Climate change often favors the growth and spread of invasive species to the detriment of native species. In order to get a better handle on some of the “worst of the worst” aquatic invasive species, the WAV program will now combine the Biotic Index with AIS identification. Volunteers will receive training on how to identify and report sightings of rusty crayfish, New Zealand mud snails and Asian clams. I will be working with the WAV coordinators to disseminate appropriate AIS information to existing volunteers and to integrate AIS identification into spring training programs.
- Water temperatures affect biological, physical and chemical processes in freshwater streams. In an effort to better understand possible impacts of climate change on stream water temperatures, the WAV program will encourage continuous stream temperature monitoring. I will be working with the WAV coordinators to develop a system whereby volunteers, who are willing to participate, will remove their thermistors (continuous temperature devices) for only one month for a quick upload to data and then replace the thermistors in the stream bed to capture year-long temperature measurements.
- Due to budget cuts, the WAV program will no longer purchase dissolved oxygen meters. Dissolved oxygen data using either HACH kits or YSI dissolved oxygen meters will be assessed the same. Previously, HACH DO readings were viewed with more skepticism. Note, if volunteers find that their DO readings fall below 3 mg/L, volunteers should contact me or an appropriate county coordinator (for example, Patricia Cicero for Jefferson County and Anne Miller for Rock County) regardless of the method used to obtain these readings.

- The WAV program hopes to fund more phosphorus sampling. Toward this end, the WAV program allocated special funds in 2015 to support volunteer total phosphorus monitoring.
- Last but not least, the WAV program will place greater emphasis on collecting water velocity data, especially in areas of increasing amounts of groundwater withdrawal. Unfortunately, many volunteers in the Rock River Basin monitor very mucky streams. Collecting water velocity data remains difficult if not impossible. I will continue to work on ways to support these volunteers but, at present, no velocity measurements will be required on these difficult to wade streams.

2014 Accomplishments

- 433 volunteer hours contributed to the Yahara River Watershed project.
- 98% of RRC volunteers have agreed to monitor in 2015.

Funding Initiatives

RRC Receives Funding to Continue Citizen Stream Monitoring in Yahara River Watershed

In December 2014, RRC stream monitoring program was awarded \$23,873 from Yahara WINS (Yahara Watershed Improvement Network) to support Year 3 of our work in the Yahara River Watershed. With these funds, I will continue to support volunteers who monitored 37 stream sites in 2014 while adding an additional 9 sites. Not only will volunteers continue to collect baseline water quality data from approximately 43 sites but also collect nutrient samples from 31 sites. Thank you to all Yahara River watershed volunteer stream monitors and RRC partners!

RRC Receives Sustaining Grant from WE Energies Grant

In the fall of 2014, I submitted a proposal for \$7,802 to the WE Energies Foundation to support stream monitoring efforts in various WE Energy service areas. In December, WE Energies Foundation granted the RRC stream monitoring program \$2,786. With these funds, I hope to expand our efforts along Mauneshia River (with RRC Chapter Mauneshia River Alliance), Stony Brook, Mud Creek and the Crawfish River.

RRC Receives Reduced Subscription Rate For Esri ArcGIS Software

I also submitted a proposal to Esri, an international supplier of Geographic Information System (GIS) software, to receive a discounted non-profit subscription to ARC GIS. Esri granted this proposal which will allow RRC to purchase a single ESRI Desktop license for only \$100. I plan to use this software to create an interactive map for (1) displaying the location of our volunteer monitored sites, (2) linking site reports and (3) uploading photos supplied by volunteers of their stream sites. The Esri ArcGIS software provides tools for telling our story of water quality across the Rock River Basin. I welcome anyone with GIS skills to assist in this project.

RRC Volunteers Seek WAV Funding for TP Monitoring

Approximately, 10 volunteers across the Rock River Basin have requested funding from the WAV program to conduct phosphorus sampling.

RRC Submits Proposal for a WDNR River Planning Grant

Patricia Cicero, RRC Board President and Jefferson County water specialist, burned the midnight oil to translate my draft proposal for creating a Rock River Basin “report card” into a form acceptable for consideration as a WDNR River Planning Grant. If we are awarded this grant, we will be able to produce a basin-wide summary – or water quality report card – of in-stream water quality data. The report will include data generated primarily by volunteer monitors but augmented as well by other monitoring entities as needed. Grant monies will also be used to build and strengthen an effective RRC stream monitoring advisory committee whose primary aim will be to guide and formulate goals for the stream monitoring program. The RRC needs a water quality report card for the basin to help focus efforts where they are most needed and to track progress toward meeting the overall mission of the organization.

Springing Ahead

Look for our spring training schedules in the months ahead. I am anxious to get out on the water soon.

University of Wisconsin-Madison Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)

The University of Wisconsin-Madison is offering a unique learning experience with their Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). MOOCs are free, non-credit, online learning opportunities that are available to anyone interested in learning. They are one of the many ways UW-Madison extends its lifelong learning and outreach mission to new audiences.

There are six MOOCs being offered by UW-Madison in 2015. The following MOOCs are starting soon and may be of interest to Rock River Coalition members.

The Land Ethic Reclaimed: Perceptive Hunting, Aldo Leopold, and Conservation: This MOOC runs from January 26 through February 22, 2015. This course will provide students with an understanding of the historical legacy of wildlife management and recreational hunting as a part of conservation, the role of wildlife in ecosystems, the importance of ethics in guiding management decisions and hunter choices, and the politics and economics of controversies surrounding game and non-game management, hunting, and conservation. The course will also look at the emerging face of hunting today, and contemporary models of conservation.

Changing Weather and Climate in the Great Lakes Region: This 4-week MOOC starts February 23 and ends March 31, 2015. It will feature a new season each week through short lectures and activities covering Great Lakes weather, observed changes in the climate, and societal impacts of climate change. The course will share important data in addition to focusing on people and communities adjusting to climate changes. And to slow the rate of future climate change, the instructors will share actions you can take that benefit you and everyone who loves the weather and climate of the Great Lakes Region.

Additional 2015 MOOCs include:

Shakespeare in Community: April 26-May 23

Energy and the Earth: June 21-July 18

Forests and Humans: From the Midwest to Madagascar: Sept 30-Dec 28

Climate Change Policy & Public Health: Nov 9-Dec 4

Registration and other information can be found here: <http://moocs.wisc.edu/>



A great time was had at the RRC 20th Anniversary Celebration on November 2nd. Pictured here are Jeanne Scherer, past Wetland Coordinator, Suzanne Wade, RRC board member and event co-chair and Nancy Sheehan RRC Volunteer Stream Monitor Coordinator.

The RRC sincerely thanks Suzanne Wade and Dan Lynch for co-chairing this fantastic event.

Photo by Clare Carlson

Chapter Updates:

When is the last time you dipped your feet in the "Johnson Creek"? Do you even know where the creek is? What is the water quality in the creek? What type of fish and other aquatic species call the watershed "home"? You might be surprised to find out the good, the bad, and the ugly about the watershed.

A new citizen action group has been formed to inspire and bring awareness to your watershed. The Johnson Creek Watershed Alliance is the newest chapter of the Rock River Coalition.

The Johnson Creek watershed comprises an area of approximately 17 square miles located entirely in Jefferson County. There is mixed use inside this watershed including agriculture, recreation, forest, and grassland ecosystems as well as urban development.

Please stay tuned for upcoming events sponsored by the Alliance coming this spring. We have a stream monitor actively collecting valuable data on the creek. We have information for home owners on how to better protect the groundwater and increase infiltration in their landscape.

We have to plan to have a "Creek" clean up event once per year.

The public lands and trails along our "Creek" are vastly under-utilized. Get out there and enjoy.

JWCA needs a logo to represent the goals of our Chapter. We intend to hold a contest in partnership with the Johnson Creek School District to create a logo. Until then, check out our new webpage through the Rock River Coalition: <http://rockrivercoalition.org/chapters/johnson-creek-watershed-alliance-2/>.

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
Municipal**	\$125
Corporate	\$ 200

**Includes small businesses, organizations, lake districts, small municipalities and individual municipal departments*

***Covers entire municipality including all departments, administrative staff and elected officials*

Any donation or membership of \$150 or more will be recognized and linked to your website from our website: www.rockrivercoalition.org

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

Tax Deductible Donations

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
864 Collins Rd
Jefferson, WI 53549**

or register and pay online with PayPal at:
www.rockrivercoalition.org/membership.asp



Rock River Coalition Joins Community Shares of Wisconsin

The RRC is thrilled to be one of Community Shares of Wisconsin seven new members. Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW)—together with its donors and member nonprofits—addresses social, economic, and environmental problems through grassroots activities, advocacy, research, and public education. CSW is the nation's first social action fund. They were among the first social action federations to include environmental nonprofits. And they're now the first in our area to create an online giving day to benefit nonprofits.

We're Part of the Area's First Giving Day: The Big Share on March 3

On Tuesday, March 3, Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW) is hosting the area's first-ever online giving day, The Big Share™. The RRC is one of 70 worthy groups who will benefit from this one day event.

CSW is hoping to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for their nonprofit member groups—all building a fair, just community and protecting our environment.

The RRC goal is \$3,000 - this will provide critical support for our monitoring effort including providing equipment, training and support to five new teams.

The RRC is asking you to do three things:

- Mark your calendar for MARCH 3, 2015.
- Follow us on Facebook and help build the buzz.
- We're counting on you to spread the word. Share our Facebook posts to three friends and family members along with a personal note as to why you believe in our work, and why they should give on MARCH 3, 2015.

The minimum gift is \$10, and the maximum is . . . up to you!

But you don't have to wait until March 3—you can pledge your gift online now. Your credit or debit card will be charged on March 3 and we will receive your gift shortly thereafter.

For more information on Community Shares of Wisconsin go to: <http://www.communityshares.com/>

For more information or to pledge your support go to: <http://thebigshare.org/>



Just use your smart phone to scan this CR code and it will take you right to our page.

Interactive Map Celebrating of 20 Years of Coalition Accomplishments

Want to learn more about Rock River Coalition's accomplishments? Have an accomplishment to share?

Check out our new 20th Anniversary Map showing major accomplishments over the last 20 years. You'll find it under About -> Accomplishment Highlights on our webpage: <http://rockrivercoalition.org> or use the QR Code to go directly to the map.

The map was created by students in the GIS Center at UW-Whitewater using funding that the Coalition received through a Brandt Quirk Foundation Grant. Thanks to our free Esri (page 6), we'll be able to do more work with on-line maps in the future.



Content for this story map was graciously provided by current and past group members. Have a look and let us know what you think.

We have stories for you to read and a number of adoptable sites.

We're looking for additional content -- images, stories, or even video -- to add to the map.

If you have a current or past story about the Coalition to share, please contact suzanne@rockrivercoalition.org.

Wisconsin DNR New Adaptive Management and Water Quality Trading Webinar Series

The DNR recently announced a new adaptive management and water quality trading webinar series that will be held starting January 2015 to help answer outstanding questions from point source dischargers, LWCD staff, and other entities regarding these phosphorus (P) compliance options. Questions that will be addressed during this webinar series include:

When might water quality trading or adaptive management be right for me?

What are some examples of water quality trading and adaptive management success?

What is the EVAAL tool and how can it help develop a trading or adaptive management plan?

How do I use the P Trade report in SNAP+?

This new webinar series complements the previous webinars and guidance already available. To review these existing materials, and to register for the new webinar series, visit <http://dnr.wi.gov/>, keywords "adaptive management" or "water quality trading".

The dates for the live webcasts are shown below. You may also view them later at your convenience.

Great phosphorus compliance adventure: January 21, 2015, 11:00-Noon

Case studies: Opportunities for AM/WQT to be successful: February 18, 2015, 11:00-Noon

EVAAL model overview: March 18, 11:00-Noon

Using the P Trade report in SNAP+: April 22, 2015, 11:00-Noon

Adaptive management or water quality trading questions may also be submitted in advance of the webinars to Amanda.Minks@Wisconsin.gov, 608-264-9223.



Commemorative glasses were held high at the RRC 20th Anniversary Celebration.

You can have one too, just email, info@rockrivercoalition.org or call 920-650-0966. We can make arrangements for you to pick them up at an event, or at the RRC office in Jefferson.

Cost is just \$6 each.