



2023 Annual Report

Mission of Rock River Coalition

To educate and provide opportunities for people of diverse interests to work together to improve the environmental, economic, cultural and recreational resources of Rock River Basin

President's Report

The Rock River Coalition never ceases to impress me. Though there are certainly challenges with staff changes and limited funding, the Coalition seems to find ways to expand and improve our programs, partnerships, and educational offerings. Our 2023 accomplishments wouldn't be possible without the great leadership of Becca Dymzarov, Executive Director, and the guidance of the Board of Directors.

Guided by the goals of our Strategic Plan, the RRC worked to strengthen our internal operations, expand our financial resources, support and expand programming, and build community and develop partnerships. The Board and staff worked hard drafting a document whose purpose is to achieve safe and inclusive internal dialogues. We are always grateful for our members who generously support our work! In addition, we had several events last year that helped add needed financial resources including The Big Share, Bingo hosted by the Tyranena Brewing Company, and our online-auction. Our major programs last year included volunteer stream monitoring program which expanded in 2023, aquatic invasive species educational efforts in Dodge and Rock Counties, and multiple and popular rain barrel workshops. Rock River Coalition is proud of our partnerships. In 2023, one such partnership was with the City of Watertown and the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department. The Coalition contributed marketing materials and assisted in a landowner meeting to promote the Watertown Watershed Improvement Program which strives to reduce phosphorus and sediment into the Rock River. We also started working with citizens who want to pursue becoming a RRC Chapter and accomplish good things for Whitewater Creek.

2023 brought some changes in staff. As Addie Schlusel embarked on world travels, we welcomed a new Stream Monitoring and AIS Coordinator Lizzy Reitzloff, who has quickly learned the ropes. Anna Dugan joined the Coalition as the Communications Intern working on our social media and website.

The RRC Board welcomed Jeremiah Beitzel and Chris VanGundy who both contribute valuable perspectives and expertise. Grace Vanderhei made the change from student Board member to Board member and continues to serve as co-Secretary. Sue Josheff took on the Treasurer position. Thanks to the Board for their dedication and work in the last year!

Patricia Cicero, Board President

Executive Director's Report

Much like the conservation work we support, Rock River Coalition's success is powered by the individuals who graciously donate their time to our cause. The enthusiasm and positive feedback we receive from our community will energize our mission for years to come.

These many warm welcomes were joined by one significant goodbye. In the fall, Addie Schlussel, our longtime AIS and Stream Monitoring Coordinator, amicably resigned from her position as Stream Monitoring and AIS Coordinator. Addie's impact surpassed her title, but with all endings are new beginnings, and Lizzy Reitzlaff has continued this work without skipping a beat. Lizzy has a background in streamside restoration and volunteer coordination and has quickly proven to be an invaluable member on our staff.

Highlights from 2023 include the introduction of rain barrel workshops in Watertown, Beaver Dam and Milton, the continued growth of our volunteer stream monitoring, aquatic invasive species prevention, and purple loosestrife prevention programs, support for the newly-created Watertown Waterways Improvement Program, and coordination of the Creekside Restoration Planting at Riverside Park in the City of Watertown. We also published two issues of our print newsletter, Rock River Reflections, and monthly e-newsletters, both of which feature timely updates from around the Basin.

Additionally, Rock River Coalition organized, "Understanding the Landscape: Wetlands, Dams and Flooding in Dodge County," a panel discussion about flooding in Dodge County. Panelists were Katie Beilfuss of Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Erin Cox of the Wisconsin DNR, and Uriah Monday of the Wisconsin DNR. This educational event allowed constituents to gain insight into one of Dodge County's most important ecological issues.

These programs and events are the cornerstone of our mission to provide opportunities for people of diverse interests to work together to improve the Rock River Basin. Our strategic plan, which was created in 2022 and put into action in 2023, will fortify both growth and impact for years to come. On behalf of Rock River Coalition, I express gratitude to our Board, our members, our volunteers, and our community.

Best wishes,

Becca Dymzarov



Turtle Creek Training- credit Addie Schlussel



Photo Credit Lori Compas

Board members at 2022 Annual Meeting, from left: Patricia Cicero, Eric Compas, Monty Baker, Liz Khomenkov, Susan Josheff, Grace VanDerhai

Chapter's Report

Johnson Creek Watershed Alliance

The JC Watershed Alliance is a very small, loose-knit group. As such, they continue to advocate for shoreline restoration of our namesake creek as originally outlined in a plan for "Conservancy Park" nearly 20 years ago. While the village has prioritized other projects, they are still waiting for shoreline restoration work to be completed. They are concerned about erosion around a new kayak pier at a new park. Still, they have been talking to the Village Board President to communicate the need for shoreline work to prevent erosion as well as adding some beauty/color with native plants when the next major project takes place. That project will add a bridge over Johnson creek to enable access to the school campus. Removal of buckthorn on both sides of the creek will be hard work but needs to be done before planting anything else. They are searching for native plants/shrubs/trees that will successfully compete with buckthorn.

Friends of Badfish Creek Watershed

FBCW has been continuing their long term project of convincing Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) and Oregon Wastewater Utility to reduce the E.coli levels in their discharge to the Badfish, FBCW again monitored the creek for E.coli levels (February, May, July and November.) They hope to convince DNR to require Oregon to begin disinfecting its discharge when its permit is renewed in 2025. Long-term results reflecting MMSD's seasonal disinfection indicate that if Oregon begins disinfection as well, the E.coli levels will drop to much safer levels for recreational activities like canoeing and kayaking.

FBCW's main project for 2023 has been to broker a land transfer from MMSD to Town of Rutland of three acres of land where CTH A crosses the Badfish. FBCW is building a new canoe landing next to the bridge, and the landing should be ready this spring. In October of 2023, FBCW received a \$6,000 grant from the Stoughton Area Community Foundation to create parking and a trail to the creek at the CTH A. The Rutland Town Electors approved the transfer and the use of the land by FBCW. The land is now officially Town of Rutland property. An official public landing at CTH A will make accessing the creek there safer by getting paddlers off the highway and will add 1.5 miles of paddling opportunities to the upper reach of the 22-mile-long Badfish. The three acres of undeveloped land also gives the Town of Rutland a new parcel of public property where a recreational nature trail could be developed.

Maunesha River Alliance

The Maunesha River Alliance (MRA) is proud to report a successful year of protecting and restoring the Maunesha River in 2023. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers, who contributed a remarkable 233 hours of their time, the MRA was able to make a significant impact on the health of the river.

Throughout the year, the MRA organized eight river clean-up events, removing a substantial amount of trash and debris from the riverbanks and waterway. These clean-ups not only improved the visual appeal of the river but also helped to protect aquatic life and the overall health of the ecosystem. Additionally, the MRA hosted a Stream Monitoring Demo Day in collaboration with Marshall High School students. This educational event provided valuable hands-on experience for the students, teaching them essential techniques for monitoring water quality and stream health. The MRA looks forward to continuing its vital work in 2024 and beyond, thanks to the continued support of our volunteers and community partners.

Outreach, Education, and Recreation Events

Bark River Paddle

Rock River Coalition partnered with Color in the Outdoors and Madison School Community and Recreation to have a group paddle and lunch out on the Bark River.

Creekside Restoration Planting in Riverside Park

Rock River Coalition partnered with the City of Watertown to plant native grasses and flowers along a portion of Riverside Park Creek. This event included education about native plant gardens and streamside restoration.



Photo credit Brooke Alexander



Photo credit Brooke Alexander

Rain Barrel Workshops



Photo credit Garrett Hopkins

We had three successful rain barrel workshops in 2023: Milton, Watertown, and Beaver Dam! These workshops educated participants about water conservation and water pollution prevention, and each family got to take their own rain barrel home!

2023 Snapshot Day

Snapshot Day, which RRC held in Janesville on August 19, is Wisconsin's largest community science event for monitoring aquatic invasive species and contributes a huge amount of data for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources database. The event has led to the early detection of new invasive species or new waterbodies impacted!



Photo credit Addie Schluskel

Educational Lectures in Dodge County

December 2023: Understanding the Landscape: Wetlands, Dams and Flooding in Dodge County
April 2023: How Clean Are Our Lakes and Rivers? (And How Do We Know?)

Attendees joined panels and guest speakers to learn about water movement and the underlying factors of flooding in Dodge County. They examined the implications of wetlands and dams on flooding, and learned about the cleanliness of the water bodies around them.

Stream Monitoring and Aquatic Invasive Species Programs

Stream Monitoring Program

In 2023, Rock River Coalition celebrated its 21st year of volunteer stream monitoring. Since 2002, Rock River Coalition has collaborated with the Wisconsin DNR, Water Action Volunteers, and county land and water conservation departments to coordinate volunteer stream monitoring in the Rock River Basin. RRC volunteers visit stream stations monthly between April/May and October and measure important indicators of water quality: stream temperature, dissolved oxygen, water clarity, stream flow, and macroinvertebrate diversity. Some volunteers also collect samples that are tested for nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus.



Waunakee training, credit Addie Schluskel

- Rock River Coalition and its partners equipped and supported 207 stream monitors, with 58 new volunteers.
- Volunteer teams monitored 147 stream sites across the Rock River Basin.
- Volunteers collected nutrient samples at a record 73 sites, with support from the Yahara Watershed Improvement Network, Water Action Volunteers, Wisconsin DNR, Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society, the Earl and Eugenia Quirk Foundation, and Fox Lake Inland Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District.
- Rock River Coalition bolstered its stream monitoring program in Dodge County by establishing baseline monitoring at five sites that previously only had nutrient monitoring. RRC added two new sites on Beaver Dam River and the East Branch of Rock River.
- Rock River Coalition hosted gatherings at the start and end of the monitoring season for Yahara River Watershed volunteers, with presentations on local water quality topics and data access

Aquatic Invasive Species Program

In 2023, Rock River Coalition expanded its Aquatic Invasive Species Program into Rock County, in addition to Dodge County. Funded by Wisconsin DNR's Lakes Monitoring and Protection Network, this program focuses on preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species through monitoring and education.



Purple Loosestrife
Biocontrol



2023 Dodge County
Training

- Raised and released *Galerucella* beetles to control purple loosestrife at three locations in Dodge and Jefferson County, including Horicon Marsh in partnership with Neighborhood House Nature Center, Lake Koshkonong Wetlands Association, Lake Ripley Management District, and Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department.
- Recorded 24 incidents of invasive species populations across Dodge, Rock, Dane, and Jefferson County. All were relatively widespread species such as purple loosestrife, Eurasian water-milfoil, yellow iris, and curly-leaf pondweed.
- Monitored five locations in Janesville for Snapshot Day, a statewide bioblitz for aquatic invasive species.
- Distributed materials to six bait shops to educate boaters and anglers about invasive species.
- Trained one volunteer team on lake monitoring methods for water clarity and invasive species.
- Partnered with J&R Aquatic Animal Rescue on exotic pet surrender events in Monona, Beloit and Waupun



Turtle Creek Training- credit
Addie Schluskel



Photo credit Addie Schluskel

Rock River Coaliton Financial Summary

Income

Memberships and Donations: \$50,570.57

Grant and Restricted Income: \$119,331.36

Events and Other Income: \$4,904.45

In-Kind: \$500.00

Total Income: \$175,306.38



Photo credit Brooke Alexander

Expenses

Program Services: \$140,246.05

Management and Administration: \$30,436.31

Total Expenses: \$170,682.36



Photo credit Brooke Alexander

Board of Directors

Patricia Cicero, *President*
Susan Josheff, *Treasurer*
Liz Khomenkov, *Co-Secretary*
Grace VanDerhei, *Co-Secretary*
Eric Compas
Jon Lindert
Jeremiah Bietzel
Kirsten Jurcek
Christina VanGundy

Staff

Becca Dymzarov, *Executive Director*
Lizzy Reitzlof, *AIS and Stream Monitor Coordinator*
Garrett Hopkins, *Communications Specialist*
Anna Dugan, *Communications Intern*
Brooke Alexander, *Rain Barrel Workshop Leader*
Sue Heffron, *Administrative Assistant*

Thank you to our Members, Donors, and Grantors

\$10,000 and over

Rock River Stormwater Group
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Yahara WINS

\$1,000-9,999

Alliant Energy
Anonymous
Beaver Dam Area Community Foundation
Community Shares of Wisconsin
Constellation Energy Group
Earl & Eugenia Quirk Foundation
Friends of Lake Kegonsa Society
James Danky and Christine Schelshornn
Lake Koshkonong Wetlands Assoc
Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program: City of Oconomowoc
Shannon Oreel
Shortcut Mushrooms
Stoughton Area Community Foundation
The City of Watertown
Tyranena Brewing Co
We Energies Foundation
Webster School

\$1-999

2 Rivers Bicycle and Outdoor
A Glo Spa
A Room of One's Own
Amazon Smile
American Players Theatre
Amplifi Yoga
Andrew & Debbie Bissonnette
Andy Hoernemann
Anonymous
Arlene Grimm
Bad Dog Frida
Badger Company
Basics Cooperative
Becca Dymzarov
Benvenutos Italian Restaurant
Big Top Chataqua
Bill Boettge
Billy and Susie Hobart Feitlinger
Bob & Anne Weiland
Bradley and Royan Webb
Bradley Sillman
Brooke Alexander
Callie Armstrong
Capitol Water Trails
Carl & Peggy Glassford
Carol Mankiewicz
Carol O'Neil
Caroline Werner

Cave of the Mounds
Children's Museum of Madison
Children's Theater of Madison
Chilimania
Chipotle
Chocolate Shoppe Ice Cream
Chris VanGundy
Christine Stocke
Chuck Failing
City of Fort Atkinson
City of Hartford
City of Janesville
City of Lake Mills
City of Oconomowoc
City of Stoughton Utilities
City of Watertown Waste Water Treatment Plant
City of Whitewater
Clear Water Outdoor
Colin McGuire
Colorado Rain Catcher
Community Pharmacy
Crema Cafe
Cynthia & William Arbiture
Daisy Cafe & Cupcakery
Dan Russler
Dan Sable
Dancing Goat Distillery
Daniel Moore
Darin Kalisak
Darlene Berth
Dave Hoffman
David & Darice Brumm
David & Sandra Neuendorf
David Abell
David Frankson
David Musolf & Roger Packard
Deb Turski
Deb Vandenbroucke
Debbie Hafenstein & Steve Drake
Deborah's Frame Shop
Delta Beer Lab
Destination Bicycle
Don Nettum
Donnell Geib
Elizabeth Berg Diez
Emily Stanley
Eric Compas
Eve & Michael Swenson
Everly Restaurant
Field and Forest
Food Fight
Forward Madison FC
FPC Live
Franklin Berkowitz

Friends of Badfish Creek Watershed
Friends of Starkweather Creek
Gary Hermann
Glass Nickel Pizza Co.
Green Life Trading Co
Harvey Dym
Haus Logic
Hawk's Bar & Grill
Holy Wisdom Monestary
Ian's Pizza
I'm Board! Games & Family Fun
Inject Tech LLC
Inner Fire Yoga
Ira Zarov and Darcy Norville
It's A Keeper Bait & Tackle
Jacque Mackey
James & Cheryl Congdon
Jan Axelson
Jane Dauffenbach
Jane Schreiber
Janesville Jets
Janet Axelson
Janice & Fredrick Redford
Janie Riebe
Jason Pitzer
Jeanne Scherer
Jeanne Schlusell
Jeff Daane
Jefferson County Rowing Club
Jeremiah Beitzel
Jim Post
John Booske
John Bottorff
John Hamilton
John Kempf
John Landowski
Jon Lindert
Jonathan Zarov
Joseph Greene
Julie Zeigler
Jung Garden Center
Just Coffee
K&A Greenhouse
Karen Etter Hale
Kasy Culbertson
Kathleen Calnin
Kathleen Dutilly
Kathryn Hosey
Katy's American Indian Art
Kay Deupree
Kay Gabriel
Kim Walz
Kirsten Jurcek

Kitteh Ward
Kris Mason
Kristin Silva
Kwik Trip
Lake Geneva Cruise Line
Lake Koshkonong
Wetland Association
Lake Sinissippi
Improvement District
Lake Waubesa
Conservation Association
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Leann and Scott
Wasemiller
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Lori Bennett
Lori Compas
Lori Schultz
Love Infusion Foods LLC
Madison Capitals
Madison Children Museum
Madison Comedy Club
Madison Mallards
Maggie Honig
Margaret Krueger
Mark Micek
Mark Spreitzer
Marsha & Stuart
Dymzarov
Mary Manering & Dennis Tande
Melissa Reed
Michel Nesemann
Michelle Hennings
Midwest Clay Project
Mike & Carol
Hoppenrath
Mike and Janet Dow
Miko Poke

Thank you to our Members, Donors, and Grantors

Millie's Coffee & Eatery
Milward Farrell Fine Art
Milwaukee Public Museum
Montgomery Baker
Muskellounge & Sporting Club
Nancy Stanford
National Mississippi River Museum
& Aquarium
Natural Resources Foundation
Ned & Kathy Miller
Nelson & Barbara Fischer
Network for Good
Olbrich Botanical Gardens
Oregon Tradesmen
Overture Center for the Arts
Paleo Mama Bakery
Pamela Alsum
Patricia Cicero
Patricia Giese
Patricia Kandziora
Paul & Joy Zedler
Paul & Sandra Lange
Paul Knoll
Paul Woodard
Peter Jacobs
PLOW Restaurant
Polly Hamner
Prairie Moon Nursery
Prairie Nursery
PremierBank
Princeton Club Xpress
R. Tod Highsmith
Ralph Froelich
Relaxation Destination
Restoration Cider Co
Revive Salt Room & Spa
Rich & Andrea Zietko
Robert Suhr
Rodney Scheel
Roman Kaplan
Ron & Nelda Bergsten
Rosy Lane Holsteins
Ruby Rose Gallery

Russ Marr
Ryan McGuire
Sara Krebsbach & Glenn Reinl
Scott Taylor
Shake Rag Allen Center for the Arts
Shannon Batzko
Sharon Beall
Steve Bower
Steve Lewis
Steven Nass
Steven Schooler
Steven Wurster
Stoughton Opera House
Sue and Bob Volenec
Sue Heffron
Sugar Maple Festival
Susan Buchanan
Susan Josheff
Suzanne & Larry Wade
Target
Taylor Conservation LLC
Terry Bradshaw
Tessa Collins
The Greenery
Tim Sprecher
Timber Hill Winery
Tire-Rifik
Todd Ambbs
Todd Clark
Todd Hubler
Tom & Pat Hall
Tom Krejcie
Turkish Kitchen in Madison
UBreakIFix
Upholstery Arts - Atwood
Village of Windsor
Vintage Flip
WalCoMet
Wallflower Market
Watertown Aquatic Center
Watertown Rotary Club
Wendy Kennan
White Oak Savanna Events Farm and Sanctuary

Wild Birds Unlimited
Willy St Treasure
Willy Street Coop
Wisconsin Executive Residence
Wisconsin Saltwise
Wisconsin Timber Rattlers
Wis-Pak, Inc.
Wonderstate Coffee
Zebco
Zip-Dang
Cafe Carpe
Fox Lake Inland Lake Prot & Rehab Dist



Photo credit Brooke Alexander

This annual report is available at www.rockrivercoalition.org

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