



Rock River Reflections

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

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Look Inside

RRC President's Message
Scoop on Poop Correction
Impacts of Pipeline cont.
Page 2

Keeping Grass Green
Water Clean
Rock River TMDL
Monitoring Confluence
Page 3

Wastewater ReUse Systems
Page 4

Bird City Takes Wing
Page 5

Lake Monona Water Walk
TCRCD Water Advocacy
Water Star Looking for
Shining examples
Page 6

Earth Day Beckons
New National Water Trail
Monitoring Opportunities
Rock River Sweep 9/8/12
RRC Membership Form
Page 7

Annual Meeting May 14
Thank You Jennifer
Administrative Ass't
Position
RRC New Monitoring
Coordinators
Page 8

Impacts of Pipeline Installation in Jefferson and Walworth County Wetlands

James M. Doherty and Erik R. Olson, UW-Madison PhD students

In 2002, a natural gas pipeline with a capacity of 750 million ft³/day was installed in the Rock River basin.

Such pipelines are a necessity in modern landscapes, but their impact on the land should be as small as possible. Pipeline installation, and other construction activities, can be especially damaging to wetlands because their moist/organic soils can easily be compacted by heavy machinery and exposure of bare soils

can facilitate invasion by aggressive wetland weeds.

Wetlands are a necessity in modern landscapes, though we sometimes forget the many services they provide, including: flood attenuation, water filtration, provision of wildlife habitat and more.

To Wisconsinites' collective benefit, regulators at the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and advocacy groups like the Wisconsin Wetlands Association (WWA), www.wisconsinwetlands.org,

pre-construction public information meetings for wetland projects in your area and asking what precautions will be taken to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts.

Our research looked for impacts of pipeline installation in wetlands 8 years after construction occurred.

In 2010 we evaluated soil and vegetation in Jefferson and Walworth county wetlands to see if the pipeline installation in 2002 left signs of soil compaction and plant invasion. We split each site into two zones: one near the pipeline (where construction occurred) and one far from the pipeline (as a reference), and sampled random points in each zone.

Across sites, soil results were approximately as expected: soils near the pipeline appeared more compacted (higher bulk density, more difficult to penetrate) and drier, probably due to changes in drainage. In one site soils near the pipeline

were markedly coarser and less organic.

Vegetation results were more mixed: in some sites vegetation near the pipeline had lower diversity and quality, as expected; but other sites showed the opposite; and still other sites were low in diversity and quality throughout. The lack of detail in pre-construction surveys complicated our interpretation. But, we reasoned that sites that started out with high diversity and quality were degraded by pipeline installation, whereas those that started out dominated by weeds were either improved by re-seeding and mowing in the pipeline area or unchanged.

These results suggest that builders should: avoid high-quality sites where impacts are most pronounced (which requires better pre-construction surveys); minimize soil compaction (using timber mats, etc.) given



Soil cores from the same site near the pipeline (left photo) and far from the pipeline (right photo).

hold builders to a sequence of requirements based on federal law (Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act): 1) avoid impacts to existing wetlands, if that's not possible, 2) minimize impacts as much as possible, and as a last resort, 3) compensate for impacts by restoring or creating wetlands elsewhere.

Examples of precautions that builders can take include: minimizing soil compaction by placing timber mats under heavy machinery or working when ground is frozen, and, minimizing weed invasion by covering bare soil with straw matting or re-seeding native species.

You can help by attending

continued on page 2



Erik examining reed mannagrass. Reed mannagrass is tall, has a golden open-panicle inflorescence, and fairly wide, shiny, boat-tipped leaves.

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Rock River Coalition President's Message

While drafting this address, I glanced outside and realized mowing my lawn might top this Saturday's to do list – Saturday, March 24th. I have not yet managed to convert my yard to native plants and therefore still observe the dreary weekend ritual of cutting the grass. But never before as early in the year as March.

When asked if an unusual weather event – a March heat wave, or an off-season tornado – signals climate change, scientists remind us weather is not climate and it is not possible to conclusively link a weather event to climate change. But weather is what we notice; it is what causes people and communities inconvenience, or worse. Weather, I believe, is what will sway public opinion and will ultimately prompt governments to take overdue action to curb greenhouse gas emissions.

I urge our members to visit the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts website to familiarize yourselves with climate change projections for our state and to follow the discussion among experts

on possible impacts to agriculture, fisheries, stormwater management, wildlife and forestry, among other topics. In a brief visit to the WICCI site I learned that southern Wisconsin may have the climate (but hopefully not the corruption) of Springfield, Illinois by 2055; brook trout – the iconic fish of our cold water streams – could be at risk from rising temperatures, especially in agricultural landscapes like those of the Rock River basin; and surface waters could receive even larger loads of phosphorus and sediment, as the rate of soil erosion could nearly double by 2050, due to the expected higher frequency of intense summer storms (sensu June 2008). Will these storms render ineffective the conservation practices we have and still hope to install to curb nutrient runoff?

Eclipsed in the media by the economy, foreign wars and recall elections, climate change is still the most urgent and frightening threat we face. And one that is directly relevant to the Rock River Coalition's mission of improving water quality. I hope and

expect that our members will accept the responsibility of highlighting this issue in their communities. Local governments can show leadership – of the kind missing at higher levels of government – by setting their own targets for greenhouse gas reduction and by committing to aggressive reductions in energy use.

In all likelihood my term as president will end at our annual meeting in May. I was humbled when board members nominated me for president. It has been a rewarding, if tiring, 2 years. However, I would be very pleased to make way for president-elect Patricia Cicero, who I know the Rock River Coalition can count on for professional and innovative leadership.

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 July 9, 2012.

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 want 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.

Scoop on Poop Correction

In the last issue we had a column on dog waste and its impact on the basin. At the end we added a paragraph about pick-up and disposal. We neglected to state that every community is different on the laws that oversee disposal of pet waste. Before tossing that plastic bag of dog pooh in the trash be sure to check that you aren't being a scofflaw in a different way. Some municipalities allow disposal in weekly trash pick-up and others require you to flush or bury it.

We have upgraded the Dog Pooh Index and article on the Rock River Coalition website, www.rockrivercoalition.org. The numbers listed in the Winter RRR were actually for 10% pick-up and not the stated 35%: so instead of 697 tons the real number if 35% don't pick up, is actually **2475 tons of dog pooh into our waterways** - YIKES. When you are using the spreadsheet remember that it calculates two numbers one that reflects a 35% pick-up rate and the other a 10% pickup rate.

Impacts of Pipeline Installation Continued

that compaction was still evident after 8 years and compensate by expanding re-seeding and mowing, which showed some benefits near the pipeline.

Also, in some sites we encountered reed mannagrass (*Glyceria maxima*), an invasive deep-water grass, that can be very aggressive—it dominated almost 54 acres in one site! (See photo this page.)

For more details on our research see our article in Ecological Engineering at www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0925857411003429 or contact jdoherty2@wisc.edu.

We thank DNR and WWA for funding, and we are grateful to the private landowners who allowed us to sample their wetlands.

Jim Doherty is a PhD candidate in Botany at UW-Madison. Eric Olson is a PhD candidate in Environmental Sciences at UW-Madison.



Jim head-high in a monotype of reed mannagrass growing in deep water. Rock River Basin residents should keep an eye out for reed mannagrass, as it appears to be spreading in southeast WI More information about this invasive can be found at <http://wisplants.uwsp.edu/scripts/detail.asp?SpCode=GLYMAX>.

You Can Have It All: Keeping Grass Green and Water Clean

A green and weed-free lawn is the picturesque dream of many American homeowners. Lawns are places for kids to play, families to gather and snowball fights to take place. Throughout Wisconsin, perfect green lawns emphasize the hard work and effort homeowners put into keeping their lawns healthy. But, sometimes, we get so caught up in our efforts to build the best lawn we can, that we can actually damage our community in the process.

Many Wisconsin residents use up to three times more fertilizer on our lawns than is necessary or even healthy. Most yards, even those with clay soil, don't need more than two applications of fertilizer each year, and even the worst soils often don't require more than four applications. More isn't always better.

Chemicals such as fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides are used to maintain lawn nutrition and protect against unwanted invaders. When chemicals are over-applied stormwater runoff picks up the excess chemicals. This unfiltered water then travels across our lawns and into the streets, eventually reaching storm drains that feed into our local lakes and rivers.

The elevated chemical levels enter our water system, contributing to an increase in algae growth and water pollution from the unfiltered water. Both the chemicals and resulting

algae reduce water quality and can make it unsafe for people, pets and, especially, kids.

For these reasons, the Rock River Stormwater Group is working this spring to encourage municipal residents to reduce lawn chemical use for their lawns.

- Do not remove grass clippings from your lawn when mowing the grass. As the clippings decompose on your lawn they provide natural nitrogen for the grass, doing the same job that you buy expensive fertilizers to do.
- Manually pull weeds whenever possible. If you have too many to pull, spot treat your lawn with the chemicals rather than spraying the entire yard.
- If you must fertilize your lawn, fertilize only around Memorial Day and/or Labor Day using phosphorus-free fertilizer.
- If you hire a landscape company, commit to a limited fertilizer schedule and don't let them talk you into more applications than necessary.

By reducing the use of chemicals on your lawn, it is possible to achieve a cleaner future for your local waterways and keep your grass green at the same time.



It's our choice, we can have a future full of clean water and a joyful environment or we can continue to allow runoff to turn our lakes and rivers green. One pound of phosphorus running off the land results in 50 pounds of algae in our rivers and lakes.

photos by Suzanne Wade



Clean water. Bright future.
Rock River Communities

Rock River Total Maximum Daily Load

The Rock River total maximum daily load (TMDL) was approved by the EPA in September 2011. This plan determines the total amount of a pollutant a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards.

In particular, it establishes how much phosphorus and suspended solids each part of the River can take while still staying healthy for humans and other living species.

This policy, part of the Clean Water Act, will impact all municipalities in the basin and require new and different measures to be taken.

Now that the policy is completed, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) is leading the implementation phase. The first step to implementation is ensuring that everyone's questions are answered.

The Rock River Stormwater Group (RRSG), which includes eight municipalities, collaborated closely with the WDNR to host a meeting to start a dialog between all municipalities and consultants who work on urban stormwater issues in the basin.

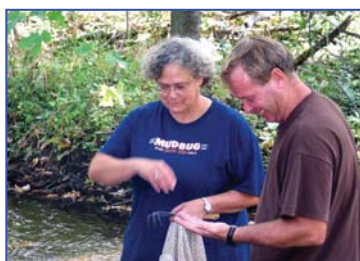
The meeting was held February 22 in Lake Mills. All municipal staff and consultants with MS4 permits were invited to learn more about how the TMDL will be implemented, take part in an open discussion and ask questions of the WDNR.

The very successful meeting included presentations by Matt Diebel, Ph.D., and Kevin Kirsch, PE, of the WDNR and over an hour of questions and conversation facilitated by Andy Yencha of the UW Extension.

The WDNR discussed how they are making plans to incorporate the new policy into existing permits to help make it efficient. They will be creating a committee to specifically address implementation plans.

The complete meeting notes and presentation slides are available on the RRSg website: cleanwaterbrightfuture.org

Clean water. Bright future.
Rock River Communities



Celebrate 10 Year Landmark at the Volunteer Monitoring Confluence April 28, 2012

Everyone is welcome to attend our annual Confluence: a Gathering of Monitors at the Lake Mills Community Center.

While it is primarily an opportunity for veteran and new monitors to get together, share experiences and get advanced training on a variety of topics the speakers may appeal to many interested in the ecology of the basin.

8:15 **Registration**

8:45 **Welcome & 10th Anniversary Celebration honoring long-term monitors**

Stream Monitors Breakout (Lake Monitors will have their own morning agenda)

9:15 Stream Monitoring Status Update & New Opportunities

9:45 Monitor Sharing: Koshkonong Creek Mussels, Road Salt, Macroinvertebrate & Raccoon Creek monitoring

11:15 Breakout Sessions: The Exciting World of Mussel Monitoring, How to Become a Level 2 Monitor, Macroinvertebrates - Detangling the Commonly Confused Critters

12:15 Lunch: Bring your own or order a Jimmy John sub for \$5 and pay during registration

12:45 **Keynote: Aquatic Invasive Species and the Special Role Volunteer Monitors Play**

1:45 **Official close of Confluence but for those interested we will reconvene at Tyrannena Brewery Company with RRC board members for a tour, tasting and continued discussion about monitoring and the Rock River Coalition.**

Pre-register by April 25 with Jennifer at 920-674-9380 or by email to monitoring@rockrivercoalition.org.

Taking the Next Step: Wastewater ReUse Systems

by Cori Bodeman, Applied Ecological Systems

We're all familiar with "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner":

*Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, every where,
Nor any drop to drink.*

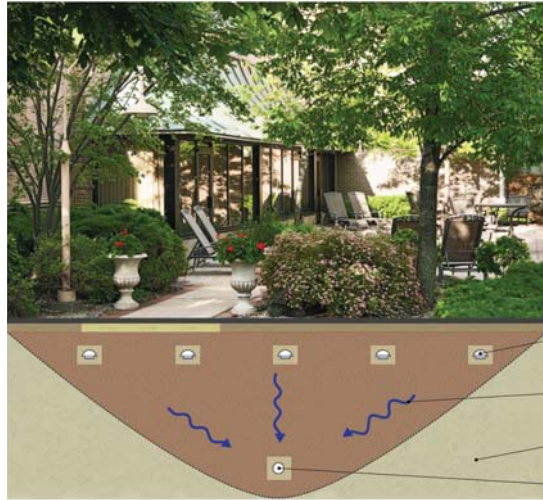
We used to recite that as children when it rained. It might have been a problem back in the 1700's when sailing an ocean but mostly we haven't had to worry about it—until now. In many parts of the world, the US, and in fact, even in our own backyard, water availability has become a serious problem.

And it's going to get worse.

Of late, renewable energy has been the buzzword as the wave of governmental funding has ebbed and flowed. However, the discussion of water, and the lack thereof, has taken on a new tenor and continues to grow louder—as it should.

First, we addressed storm water management, then rainwater collection. Eventually, greywater treatment and re-use came into vogue. However, it is the concept of blackwater recycling that takes it to a new level of sustainable practice.

Yes, BLACKWATER reuse. Capturing it, treating it, collecting it, and re-using it for non-potable uses. Prescribed by nature. Ecologically sound. Totally sustainable.



While the landscaped space above ground can be used however the owner chooses, below ground effluent is being treated through engineered treatment cells and collected for reuse.

NTS

And it's not new. It's been done for years, but we're now calling today's process the Wastewater ReUse System.

How it works is quite simple. Capture the blackwater (and gray water), send it through subsurface constructed wetlands, treat it, re-collect it, and use it for drip irrigation or other purposes.

If it is used for other applications such as process water, toilet flushing, or HVAC make-up water, then it's treated with UV or chlorine before being piped back into the building.

When you use a constructed wetland for treatment you can recapture 95% of the water you sent into it. Use 1000 gallons a day? Get 950 back. Multiply that by 365 days and we're taking serious volumes of water.

Mechanical greywater systems have been around for years and are found throughout the world. However, they are costly and are in constant need of operational supervision and maintenance.

They also take up valuable space in buildings that are already packed to the gills with other infrastructure.

Other treatment systems are available that are unique and work similarly to the Wastewater Re-Use System, but they are cost prohibitive, dictate to the user where they have to be installed, and require mandatory brick and mortar structures.

There are very few limitations to using a Wastewater Re-Use System. It can be seamlessly integrated into any site. In either existing or new construction, the system can be designed to accommodate any size and any challenge.

Do you have a densely developed 27-acre site? No problem. The system can be designed to weave its way through parking lots and around existing buildings, and if needed, it can be installed on the top deck of a parking lot, simultaneously providing pleasing, low-maintenance landscaping and habitat development.

A school can use the system and create not only interpretive gardens and outdoor educational classrooms, but still have areas for soccer and baseball.

This system is a 100% closed loop, self contained, sustainable system. There is nothing too large or too small, as it is scalable to the owner's needs, and it can be designed for not only commercial applications but industrial and agricultural as well.

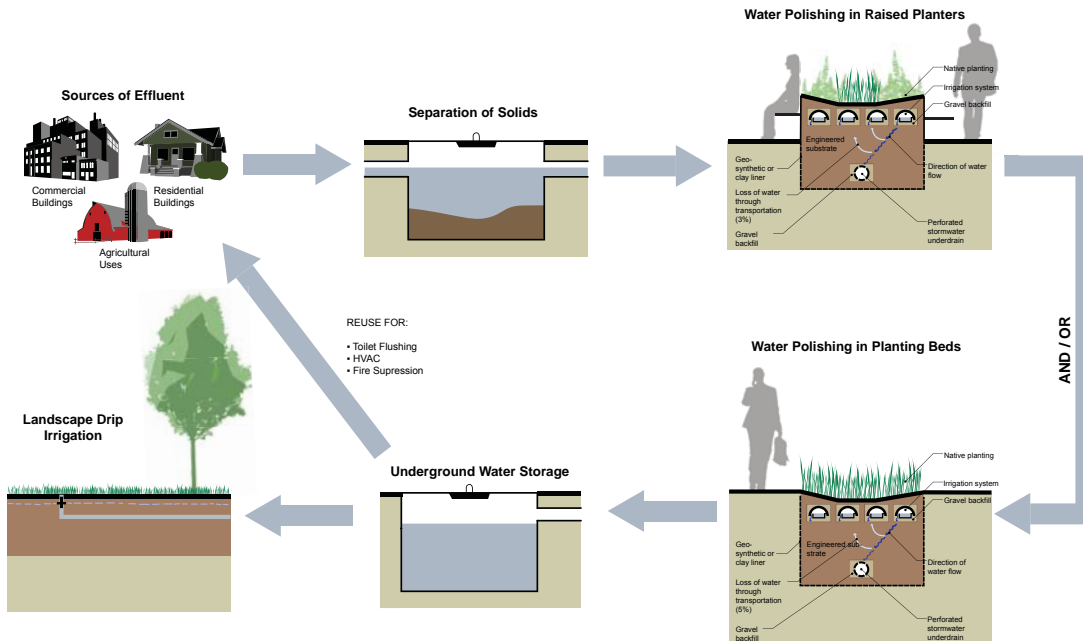
Need is not the only reason to use the system. Of course, it can solve infrastructure challenges, soil challenges, and the obvious: lack of water either because of cost or availability.

However, it can be used anywhere, thereby reducing the "water footprint" by millions of gallons per facility.

And the best part, environmental ethics aside, it's very affordable and has a pretty short payback period.

Want to learn more? Visit the page on Wastewater Re-Use Systems at www.appliedeco.com or contact Cori Bodeman at cori.bodeman@appliedeco.com or 906-361-5449.

WATER RECOVERY AND REUSE



A closed loop system: water is collected, treated, and reused within the building or for drip irrigation.

Greywater (also spelled graywater) is wastewater from showers, bathtubs, sinks, washing machines and dishwashers.

Blackwater is water that contains feces and/or urine, i.e. comes from the toilet.

Bird Cities Take Wing in the Rock River Basin

By Carl Schwartz, Bird City Wisconsin Coordinator

The 3,800 square miles of the Rock River Basin in south central Wisconsin are proving fertile ground for one of the state's fastest-growing and most innovative conservation initiatives.

By summer, the distinctive logo of Bird City Wisconsin will help welcome residents and visitors alike to 50 communities statewide. Members of the Rock River Coalition are more likely than most state residents to see the distinctive signs since nine of the cities and villages that lie along the Rock

Its aim was to see local governments expand their conservation efforts while educating residents to also do more.

In return, BCW offers highly visible recognition to those cities, villages, counties and towns that meet at least seven criteria: two street signs, a flag, a plaque and its own page on the BCW web site. Its emblem was designed by renowned Wisconsin landscape painter Tom Uttech and his wife, designer Mary Uttech.

Now into just its second year, Bird City Wisconsin has:

- Recognized 50 cities, villages, towns and counties and is working with about three dozen others seeking to meet the standards. A new round of applications will be accepted July 1, 2012.
- Seen all 15 of its inaugural year communities renew their recognition, with five upgrading to "High Flyer" status by undertaking additional bird conservation efforts.

Noel Cutright, founder of the Western Great Lakes Bird and Bat Observatory, notes that BCW "provides an excellent vehicle for communities to harness the human connection with birds -- reaching beyond bird watchers to new and essential audiences."

"Over and over again, it has been demonstrated that a place that is a haven for birds and is doing good things to benefit them is a better place in which to live and work," Cutright added.

BCW also stresses economic incentives for practicing conservation. Birds are unheralded assistants to backyard gardeners, flower fanciers, private and municipal landscapers, farmers and foresters.

Without birds, communities would have to spend far more money keeping natural systems in balance. Insect-eating birds reduce the need for chemical pest control. Birds also are voracious eaters of weed seeds and rodents.

With funding from Together Green and the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, BCW is led by the Milwaukee Audubon Society, in partnership with the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative and six other bird conservation organizations.



A good-sized crowd of Bird City Wisconsin backers was on hand at the Feb. 20 meeting of the Beaver Dam City Council for an official ceremony recognizing Beaver Dam as a new Bird City community. Mayor Tom Kennedy (left) and Parks and Forestry Supervisor John Neumann hold up the official Bird City flag presented by coordinator Carl Schwartz (center). After the presentation, resident photographer Jack Bartholmai (far left) treated the council and the audience to a slide show of the many wonderful birds the city is helping to protect so that future generations can also enjoy them. Other members of the Beaver Dam Bird City committee in the background included (from left) City Attorney Maryann Schacht, Community Activities Coordinator Evonne Koeppen, Holly Bartholmai, Thom Neuman, Ald. Teresa Hiles Olson and Jack Ullrich.

River and its tributaries threading their way through 10 counties have been recognized as "Bird Cities."

But even if you have seen a sign, you may still have wondered just what the heck a "Bird City Wisconsin" was.

The program is squarely in synch with the Coalition's mission "to educate and bring together people of diverse interests to protect and improve the economic, environmental, cultural, and recreational resources" of the basin.

When an alliance of bird conservation groups put together their plan for Bird City Wisconsin, they modeled it after the widely-successful Tree City USA program of community recognition.

Their hope was to do for urban bird conservation what the Arbor Day Foundation has done to enhance urban forestry.

Bird City developed 22 criteria across five categories, including habitat creation and protection, community forest management, limiting hazards, public education, and recognizing International Migratory Bird Day.

The nine Rock River Basin communities include Beaver Dam, Fontana, Horicon, Mayville, McFarland, Middleton, Oconomowoc, Shorewood Hills and Williams Bay.

Fort Atkinson is in the process of completing an application, while work on applications has begun in Madison, Whitewater and Janesville.

That still leaves nearly 50 other cities and villages in the basin eligible to seek recognition, not to mention the 10 counties and numerous towns in the area.

BCW is using its website, <http://www.birdcitywisconsin.org>, to guide foresters, parks directors, city planners, Audubon chapters, birding clubs, natural landscape groups and others through the recognition process, while offering how-to details on new conservation strategies.

It also documents how communities earned recognition, providing tips for those who follow.

Is Your Community a Bird City?

Birds need our help now more than ever to help meet the growing threat of habitat loss that is being magnified by global climate change. But millions of birds are killed due to other human-related causes that are more easily combated. Consider these facts:

- Scientists estimate that 300 million to one billion birds die each year from collisions with buildings.
- Up to 50 million die from encounters with communication towers.
- At least 11 million die from car strikes.
- One million birds may die EACH DAY from attacks by cats left outdoors.

Would you, or a group you belong to, like to learn more about how your community can tackle these issues through recognition of your community as a Bird City?

Contact Carl Schwartz at 414-416-3272 or cschwartz3@wi.rr.com to get the ball rolling or obtain a speaker to present the program.



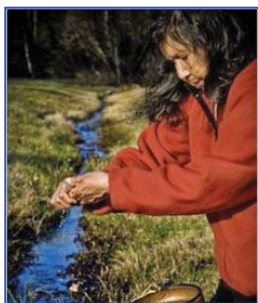
Photo of Great Blue Heron by Jeffrey Strobil

The 50 Bird City Wisconsin Communities as of April 1, 2012

Bailey's Harbor	Mequon
Bayfield	Middleton
Bayside	Muskego
Beaver Dam	New London
Brookfield	Newburg
Brown County	Oconomowoc
Chenequa	Oconto
Elm Grove	Oshkosh
Ephraim	Ozaukee County
Evansville	Plover
Fond du Lac	Plymouth
Fontana	Presque Isle
Fox Point	Racine
Grantsburg	River Falls
Green Bay	Sauk Prairie
Hales Corners	Sherwood
Horicon	Shorewood Hills
Kenosha	Stevens Point
La Crosse	Taylor County
Lake Geneva	Town of Grafton
Manitowish Waters	Trempealeau
Manitowoc	Wausau
Marquette County	West Bend
Mayville	Whitefish Bay
McFarland	Williams Bay

Join Grandmother Mandamin & William Waterway Marks at Lake Monona Water Walk July 6-8

Join in a walk around Lake Monona to raise awareness, appreciation, and gratitude for the waters of our community, the Great Lakes, and all waters of our beautiful, gracious Mother Earth.



Grandmother Mandamin giving thanks for our water..

Photo by Brent Wesley

A highlight of the Year of Water in Monona, the Lake Monona Water Walk 2012 will be led by First Nations Ojibwa Grandmother Josephine Mandamin and William Waterway Marks. Mandamin has walked around all of the Great Lakes and is featured in the documentary *Waterlife*. Marks is the author of *The Holy Order of Water and Water Voices from Around the World*, which is a compilation of writings from 77 renowned leaders, such as Kofi Annan and Dr. Jane Goodall.

It is an honor to have Mandamin and Marks lead a walk around our lake!

The Lake Monona Water Walk is the organizing event around which multiple educational and inspirational activities will expand people's awareness, appreciation, and gratitude for the waters of our community and our world. Plans include a welcoming event with live music, a festival in Winnequah Park that includes a Winnequah Park Water Walk for young families, a "Flick 'n' Float" screening of *Waterlife* at the Monona pool and a community potluck, all building enthusiasm for the Lake Monona Water Walk itself.

The walk will have several stops along the route. Dozens of exhibitors and presenters from water and sustainability organizations will offer hands-on activities, literature, education, and other outreach to the public. At each stop, Mandamin and Marks will share wisdom, prayers and guidance.

Monona Mayor Bob Miller and city leaders are enthused to partner in this effort, as are many groups, businesses, and individuals who care deeply about water in Dane County.

This event is being organized by Dianné Jean Aldrich, Lake Monona Water Walk Coordinator, The Natural Step Monona, the cities of Monona and Madison and many interested citizens.

Register and learn more about participating at <http://lakemononawaterwalk.org>

Water Advocacy & Partnerships a Focus at Town & Country RC&D

Town and Country RC&D Past President Lisa Conley will be speaking on the importance of partnerships and advocacy in water conservation at the Wisconsin Lakes Convention in Green Bay on April 10.



TCRC past president, Lisa Conley

"After years of our networking and working for regulations to stem the tide of soil and manure into our waters, it is abundantly clear that although state laws are absolutely necessary,

they reflect political compromises, not the good science that would require stronger measures," Conley stated. "Neither is there the funding or manpower at the state and county levels to enforce them. Proposed laws have been weakened or defeated and it will take a common message coming from many voices to defend Wisconsin's clean water heritage."

Conley has extensive experience in water policy and land use issues and through Town and Country RC&D has used her network and knowledge to educate members and contacts about current water issues and work for solutions. She has coordinated her efforts and shared her perspectives

with the Wisconsin DNR and its Rock River TMDL, Transition Milwaukee's Water Working Group, Waukesha Environmental Action Committee, UW-Whitewater's Student Water Council, The Madison Area Permaculture Guild, the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters, the Water Table, and has a longstanding working relationship with other Water Table members that predates most of these organizations.

"Town and Country RC&D is putting renewed energy into our water advocacy work," Conley said. "And advocacy and partnerships go hand-in-hand.

"We will be using flexible, innovative and entrepreneurial strategies – like the Water Star Wisconsin program, to increase our effectiveness. Our newsletter, and our website, are being beefed up to provide more information on legislation that has direct impacts on water quality in Wisconsin.

"There never is a time when Wisconsin residents can afford to stop paying attention to the legislation that is being passed on their behalf," Conley said. "Town and Country RC&D is trying to amplify, through partnerships, the voice for sustainability and restoration in water management."

To receive Town and Country RC&D's bimonthly e-newsletter contact Lisa at admin@tacr.com or drop a request on the Town and Country RC&D facebook page. To see the website with its action alert page, check out tacr.com.

The Wisconsin Water Star Program is Looking for Cities and Projects that Shine

Wisconsin Water Star's planners are underway designing the program's 2012 webinar series – free, hour-long webinars available to all that will feature case studies and experts to spread the word about water management BMPs to educate, guide and inspire Wisconsin municipalities.

In the last six months the Cities of Appleton, Monona and Oconomowoc; and the Village of Johnson Creek, became Water Stars, bringing the total number of municipal Water Star winners to 26. All four new winners were awarded bronze stars.

To earn the Bronze, Silver or Gold award municipal staff fill out Wisconsin Water Star's self-paced on-line application to answer questions about city operations that involve water including public works, engineering, planning, public lands management, community outreach, drinking water, public health and wastewater treatment.

Here is what the City of Monona had to say about their recent award: "Whether it is improving fish habitat in Lake Monona, encouraging our residents to help manage stormwater by digging rain gardens and erecting rain barrels, working with businesses to minimize runoff from large roofs and parking lots, or taking special care to protect groundwater recharge areas, the city has record of environmental stewardship and a desire to continue improving," said Janine Glaeser, City of Monona project manager, who led the effort to complete their Water Star application. It was very fitting for the City of Monona to get their award in 2012 which Monona Mayor Bob Miller had officially proclaimed as the Year of Water.

There are two ways that you can help Water Star shine.

Consider asking your community leaders to fill out the Water Star application and see how they rank. It's free and the application is easily accessible online at: <http://www.waterstarwisconsin.org>.

Or let us know about a water management success story, case study, or speaker that you think would be edifying to include in our webinar series. Some topics that are likely to get a dedicated webinar in 2012 are street deicing, wastewater utility by-product usage, water conservation and education programs, and stormwater utilities – usefulness and effectiveness. What additional projects would you like us to feature and what local experts would you suggest we consider as a possible speaker? Let us know at admin@tacr.com or by calling 920-541-3208, so that we can make this year's webinar series even more successful than last year's.

Don't forget to read the success stories posted at the Water Star web site. They will guide, inspire and educate – the mission of this very loved joint project of the Rock River Coalition, UW Cooperative Extension, the Wisconsin DNR, and Town and Country RC&D.



The scenic Rock River - a resource worth protecting. Photo by Beth Gehred

Earth Day Beckons

Go enjoy a celebration or field trip in Memory of 27 years of Earth Days. Here's a selection of some of the activities available to you.

Apr 16 **Nelson Institute Earth Day Conference Envisioning a Fairer Future: Sustainability, Security and Happiness on a Finite Planet** http://www.nelson.wisc.edu/events/earth_day/

Apr 17 **Urban Agricultural Production Webinar:** 12:00 noon, CST. Geared toward urban farmers: Greg Lawless, cell: 608-575-6798 Community and Regional Food Systems Project UW-Extension

Apr 17 **Green Fire: Aldo Leopold and a Land Ethic for Our Time:** 6:30pm Middleton Public Library, 7425 Hubbard Ave., Middleton, WI. Info. or to register e-mail mid@scls.lib.wi.us

Apr 20 **Evening at Cherokee Marsh:** Meet at 6:30 pm at Cherokee Marsh parking lot at north end of Sherman Ave., on Madison's north side. Trip leaders Levi Wood and Tony Kalenic. Questions, call Levi (608) 277-7959.

Apr 21 **Save Our Lakes Summit**
The Pyle Center – UW Extension Conference Center, UW-Madison Campus 8:00 – 1:30pm Register at www.cleanlakesalliance.com/summit. Two reports will be unveiled: The Yahara CLEAN Implementation Plan and the State of Our Lakes Report Card.

Apr 21 **Aldo Leopold Nature Center Grand Opening** Join us on Saturday, April 21 from 11am - 3pm. <http://www.naturenet.com/alnc/index.html>.

Weston Roundtable Series: Nelson Institute <http://www.sage.wisc.edu/weston/> Time: 4:00.
Apr 26: Andrew Light, Institute for Philosophy & Public Policy, George Mason University:
May 3: Jim LaGro, UW-Madison

Apr 30 **8th Annual Clean Rivers, Clean Lake Conference** 8:00am to 7:00pm, registration 7:30am. Discovery World Museum · Milwaukee, WI A full day of comprehensive water quality information. Policy updates from EPA and WDNR, research results and many workshops. For fees and registration details go to <http://www.swwtwater.org>.

New National Water Trail Program



Recent action by the US Department of the Interior establishes a National Water Trails System under the National Trails System Act of 1968. The new federal efforts under America's Great Outdoors initiative hold wonderful potential for the Rock River Water Trail and our river communities to increase access to water-based outdoor recreation, encourage community stewardship of local waterways and promote tourism that supports local economies.

If you're interested in learning more about the Rock River Trail proposal contact Greg Farnham at waterdown@wildblue.net or go to <http://www.rockrivertrail.com>.

Interested in Getting Outside & Help the RRC Protect Our Waters? Check Out These Opportunities:

Stream Monitoring

Stream Monitoring WAV Level One Training

Below are just two WAV Level one training opportunities, there will be at least one more training session in June in our basin. Email monitoring@rockrivercoalition.org for more information.

April 21, Cross Plains area, tentative, Madison area Sierra Club. Contact Kris Stepenuck at kfstepenuck@wisc.edu for more information.

Saturday May 12, 2012: 8:30-2:30 UW-Waukesha field station, Waterville, Waukesha County. You must preregister by contacting Jayne Jenks at 262-896-8305 or jjenks@waukeshacounty.gov.

Thursday, May 17th: 5-8pm at Race Track Park, Edgerton, WI: Hands-on, in-stream look at life in streams and what affects them. We will measure and discuss stream temperature, water clarity, dissolved oxygen, flow, and see what we can catch in our nets. Equipment provided. Bring towel, waders or wear shoes with toe protection. Session is free, but space is limited. To sign up, call Anne Miller at 608-754-6617 ext. 118.

Stream Monitor Level 2 WAV Training

Thursday May 10th, Lake Mills: Limited Availability. Contact Christina Anderson at christina.anderson@wisconsin.gov.

Snapshot Days

2012 Snapshot Days are May 19 and Sept. 22. Everyone out on a single day tells us a great story about water quality in the Basin.

For more information contact Nancy at monitoring@rockrivercoalition.org.

Wetland Monitoring for 2012

Contact wetlands@rockrivercoalition.org for dates of bird, frog, dragonfly and butterfly monitoring opportunities.

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 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

3rd Annual Great Rock River Sweep September 8, 2012

It's not too early to begin planning to be part of this annual event. Go to www.rockriversweep.org/. Organizers needed in the Grellton, Lake Koshkonong, Indianford and South Beloit areas.

Other organizers in Wisconsin are:

Horicon - Horicon Phoenix Group
Hustisford - Lake Sinissippi Improvement District
Watertown - Rock River Rescue
Jefferson & Fort Atkinson - Jefferson County Parks
Janesville - Rock n' Janesville
Beloit - City of Beloit
Waupun is in transition

For contact information about the Sweep or location contacts go to www.rockriversweep.org.

RRC Annual Meeting

Monday May 14, 2012 5:00 - 8:00pm
Water House Foods,

132 East Lake Street, Lake Mills

Hearty appetizers: cost \$10/person. Cash bar available

Register by May 11th, 2012 by email at info@rockrivercoalition.org
or register and pay via PayPal from our website.

5:00 - 6:00 Mingle with members, friends, board of directors and guests.

5:30 - 6:30 **Enjoy hearty hors d'oeuvres from Water House Foods'** amazing kitchen. This is a good time to talk about the Coalition and what we should be doing together to protect and improve our Rock River Basin. Meet our new Stream Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator, Nancy Sheehan and our Wetland Volunteer Monitoring Coordinator Jeanne Scherer.

6:00 - 6:30 **Annual Meeting, Election of Board Members**

6:30 - 7:30 Keynote: **Oxbows, Delta Ponds, and Sloughs: Wisconsin's Forgotten Lakes**
by Dave Marshall, Underwater Habitat Investigations

The amazing story of life in river floodplain lakes in southern Wisconsin will be highlighted by Dave Marshall in our keynote. Dave, retired DNR fisheries biologist, has been exploring this common but little known areas of the river. These mysterious water bodies provide essential ecological services and are critical for maintaining biodiversity within Wisconsin's many rivers. Their habitats sustain some of the rarest and most unusual fish assemblages in the state. Dave will talk about his findings & his plans for future surveys – including plans to survey the Bark River near Princess Point in Jefferson County this year. He will also talk about how other critical habitats such as near shore areas of lakes are impacted by shoreline development using surveys on Rock Lake and Lake Ripley as examples.



We will follow-up with a discussion on how the Rock River Coalition, and everyone living in the basin, can be part of the Rock River Recovery effort and work to protect these incredible habitats.

Note about the location

Water House Foods is a very popular coffee shop, bistro, and gathering space in downtown Lake Mills, Wisconsin. They're located right across from the Lake Mills downtown Commons park area. They offer a warm, comfortable space. Water House features many organic and locally sourced foods. Our evening's menu will feature breads, cheeses, spreads, salads, fruit and sweets.

Call for Nominations

If you care about the Rock River Basin and want to encourage cooperation between people of diverse interests, want to see improved water quality in the Rock River, a vibrant economy that supports agriculture and sustainability and recreational opportunities for all, then please consider running for the Rock River Coalition's Board of Directors.

Board openings include three three-year terms and a one-year term.

If you are interested in being nominated for the Board of Directors, please contact President Scott Taylor at sotaylor@taylorconservation.com.

Thanks Jennifer

The RRC Board is sad to say that our wonderful administrative assistant, Jennifer Hanneman will be transitioning out of that position and into another position with Johnson Controls over the next several months. Jennifer brought many talents to her position as both a lawyer and a CPA, but even more importantly to us, she was a delight to work with. We will miss her as our administrative assistant, but know she will continue to be connected to the RRC.

Administrative Assistant Position

This means that we will be hiring a new Administrative Assistant, most likely starting in mid May. The position description is available on our website. However the primary purpose of the position is to provide administrative assistance for financial record keeping, payroll, grant oversight, membership and record keeping of the organization.

If interested in receiving the position description, when available, please email info@rockrivercoalition.org.



Welcome New RRC Monitoring Coordinators



Nancy Sheehan, is our new citizen stream monitoring coordinator strives to promote Aldo Leopold's belief that "We can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love or otherwise have faith in."

As a part-time naturalist educator and adventure-based facilitator, Nancy conducts environmental education and community-building activities for K-12 students at local natural areas and in school yards. In her work with the UW Arboretum Earth Partnership for Schools, Nancy works with teachers interested in watershed education and school yard restoration.

Nancy knows from first-hand experience the thrill of finding oneself in the middle of a stream on a cold spring morning. She has been a volunteer stream monitor with the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association. She has created several citizen science monitoring programs for teachers and students including a heron rookery study and a sinkhole study.

Nancy has a Master's in Environmental Management from the Yale University School of Forestry and Environmental Management. After her master's program, Nancy worked with various international relief and development organizations in West Africa -- first as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer and later as a Ph.D. candidate with the UW-Madison Nelson Institute of Environmental Studies.

Since 1991, Nancy has called the neighborhood around Lake Wingra, Madison, her home. With her two children and husband, Nancy enjoys biking, canoe, hiking and camping. Nancy looks forward to donning wading boots to support RRC volunteer monitors!

Jeanne Scherer is our new wetland volunteer monitoring coordinator. Originally the board was only going to hire one person as a monitoring coordinator, but we decided that we really needed Jeanne working with us at Zeloski.



"I'm a firm believer in "better late than never." I have a lifetime of interest in the outdoors, starting with hours and hours as a little girl playing with the snails in the stream that ran across my grandparents' farm. After a job loss in 2008, I returned to school and will earn a B.S. with a major in Geography and minor in Biology at UW-Whitewater in May. I also volunteer for RRC and am on the Rock Lake Improvement Association Board. I'm a certified elementary teacher, enjoy writing, and plan to get serious about birding once school winds down. One of my major goals for the future is to help other little girls playing with snails in the streams to realize that they can make environmental science part of their future, too.

- See our monitoring opportunities on page 7.