



# Rock River Reflections

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

Summer 2013 Volume 16, Number 3

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## Blue-green Algae: How to Protect Yourself & Your Pets

by Gina LaLiberte, DNR Natural Resource Research Scientist



High densities of blue-green algal cells are visible as brightly colored water shown in the photo above. To the right, large mats of *spirogyra* look nasty but don't carry the same health issues. Algae (including blue-green algae) are natural occurrences in our lake and river environments and are an important part of the food chain. Their growth is increased during warm water conditions and when rains bring additional nutrients to our waters.

Photos: Above by Steve Greb, right by Gina LaLiberte

During hot summer months, blue-green algae in eutrophic lakes and ponds in the Rock River basin commonly "bloom," or grow to high densities that appear as discolored water or scums. Blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, are actually bacteria, but they are referred to as "algae" because they are photosynthetic.

Blue-green algal blooms impact aquatic life. High blue-green algal densities in

eutrophic lakes shade aquatic plants, impairing their growth. Blue-green algae displace other types of algae, resulting in poorer food sources for the aquatic organisms which eat algae. When blooms die, their decomposition depletes oxygen levels in the water.

Blue-green algae are a particular concern to us because some species may produce toxins that cause illness if ingested or inhaled. Swallowing algae in water can result in nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain.

Inhaling algae in water droplets, such as spray from motor boats, can result in symptoms similar to colds, influenza, or asthma.

Some people experience skin irritation, rashes, or hives if their skin is in contact with blue-green algae, particularly where algae is trapped under clothing. People with allergies or compromised immune systems may be more susceptible to these symptoms.

Dogs willingly drink lake water and can lick large amounts of algae from their fur, so they have more severe symptoms including excess salivation,



weakness, breathing difficulty, and convulsions. If your dog exhibits these symptoms, seek veterinary care immediately.

If you become ill after contact with blue-green algal blooms,

consult your health care provider. You can also report your illness to the Harmful Algal Blooms Surveillance Program (<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/bluegreenalgae/index.htm>), which is tracking illnesses related to blue-green algae in Wisconsin.

One of the "good" things about blue-green algae is that unlike other bacteria such as *E. coli*, you can see when blue-green algae are overabundant.

Colorful floating scums, foams, or opaque, pea-soup-like water signal high numbers of blue-green algae. Some common sense measures can help you to safely enjoy the many opportunities for water recreation in the Rock River basin.

If you waded into knee-deep water without disturbing the sediments and you still see your feet, the risk of illness from swallowing or inhaling blue-green algae in water is moderate to low. You should still avoid swallowing untreated surface water, as other bacteria, viruses, or parasites may be present.

If you can't see your feet in knee-deep water, algae

densities are elevated and there is a high risk of illness from swallowing or inhaling blue-green algae. Avoid swimming in these conditions, if water has an opaque, pea soup-like appearance, or if surface scums or foams are present. Keep small children and dogs out of the water!

Avoid boating, water skiing, or jet skiing through waters that are opaque, pea soup-like green or if surface scums or foams are present, to avoid inhalation of blue-green algae in water droplets.

Shower after swimming in any body of water, and wash dogs off as well.

Eutrophic lakes which offer good fishing may experience blue-green algal blooms. Algal toxins are more likely to accumulate in the viscera and guts of fish, so discard those parts and stick to eating the fillet. Wash your hands after handling fish caught during blooms and rinse fillets thoroughly before cooking or freezing.

### When in doubt, stay out!

For more information, see <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/bluegreenalgae/> and [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/bluegreenalgae/index.htm](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/bluegreenalgae/index.htm).



The filamentous green alga *Spirogyra* is often mistaken for blue-green algae when it accumulates into floating mats. Look for long, green, hair-like filaments, which differentiate them from much smaller blue-green algal species.

Photos by Gina LaLiberte

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# Rock River Coalition President's Message

Summer is my favorite time of year. The waters are warm and very inviting for swimming and kayaking, flowers are blooming and wildlife are more active. Not only do I get to enjoy great outdoor activities on my free time, but I also have a job that gets me outside for field work. My motto is that it is always a great work day if it is a day that I get to wear my waders!

I have seen so many wonderful things while enjoying the resources: bluegills guarding their circular nests in Rock Lake, an eagle flying over Deer Creek while working with some volunteer stream monitors, bladderworts (which is my all-time favorite aquatic plant because it is carnivorous) in a variety of lakes, black terns protecting their nests that they place on white water lily pads on Hope Lake (by dive-bombing me!) and so many other creatures and plants.

By far the highlight this year was my unintentional "run-in" with a Sandhill Crane. I was rowing a boat in a bay covered with white water lilies, trying to navigate to my next sampling point.

All of a sudden I heard a Sandhill Crane squawking at me. When I turned around, I was just 6 feet away from the crane who was standing over a nest with 2 eggs in it! I quickly turned the boat away and decided that we could skip that sampling point.

I'm sharing these experiences because readers can find their own outdoor adventures in the Rock River Basin which has much to offer when it comes to summer activities for the whole family. Horicon Marsh is an incredible resource that is well loved by birders, and is home to the Horicon Marsh International Education Center, which hosts a variety of events throughout the year. Elsewhere, those who have a canoe or kayak can take part in a guided tour of the Cherokee Marsh on August 3.

On August 24th at Korth County Park in Lake Mills, the Friends of the Glacial Heritage Area are sponsoring an event which will feature guided prairie and bird walks, children's games, and a potluck. The Welty Environmental Center is having a Frog Jumping

Jamboree on August 17th at Beckman Mill Rock County Park with live music and food. If biking is your thing, there are a huge selection of bike trails throughout the Basin including the Glacial Drumlin Trail, and the Glacial River Recreational Trail.

This summer take advantage of these and many other outdoor activities in our very own backyard of the Rock River Basin! There is so much to explore and enjoy! Some of these activities (and more) are listed in a monthly e-mail that we send out to subscribers at the beginning of each month. Please visit <http://www.rockrivercoalition.org/events/calendar.asp> to see the list of offerings and to subscribe to the monthly e-mail.

*Patricia Cicero,*  
RRC President



## Welcome Eric, Joe and Dan to RRC Board

The Rock River Coalition Board would like to welcome three new board members. We are thrilled with the expertise and opportunities these three bring to our organization.

Here's a little more about each one.

**Joe Zakovec**, for the past 23 years



I have been employed by the City of Janesville Wastewater Utility. I started as an Operator Trainee and worked my way up to a Wisconsin Department of Natural

Resources Grade IV Certified Operator. In 1997, I was promoted to Chief Operator and in 2009 was promoted to my current title of Superintendent.

He has a Bachelor of Science degree from UW-Stevens Point in Water Resources with an emphasis in Wastewater Treatment. Joe is from Rock County

**Eric Compas** is the director of the GIS Center and is an Assistant Professor at University of Wisconsin - Whitewater, Eric believes in educating the next generation -- giving them a good set of skills, a sense of stewardship, and a path to empowerment. He will look for opportunities to bring the RRC

and UWW students together. Eric likes to build kayaks in his spare time. He lives in Jefferson County and works in Walworth County

**Dan Lynch**, will be considered for the board at the July meeting. He retired as director of the water and wastewater utilities a year ago. Dan lives in Rock County.

**Other Board Members, their affiliation and location include:**

Patricia Cicero, President, Water Resource Specialist for Jefferson County. Patricia lives and works in Jefferson County.

Jane Carlson, President-Elect is an engineer for Strand Associates. Jane lives in Dane County.

Scott Taylor, Past-President owns Taylor Conservation, LLC and is a consulting forester and does ecological

restorations. Scott lives in southern Dane County.

James Kerler, Secretary is a retired IT manager and is active in the Sierra Club and enjoys pursuing a variety of outdoor interests. James lives in Jefferson County.

Suzanne Wade, Treasurer, is retired natural resource educator from the UW-Extension. Suzanne is also the Rock River Reflections newsletter editor. Suzanne resides in Dane County.

James Koepke is owner and manager of Koepke farms along with his son and brother. His farm is one of the state's Discovery Farms with an emphasis on tillage management. Jim lives in Waukesha County.

Joleen Stinson is the Parks and Natural Resources Supervisor at Village of DeForest. Joleen lives in Dane County.



Eric in one of his kayaks.

### Thank You Jeanne

Jeanne Scherer helped organize and run our wetland monitoring effort at Zeloski Marsh this past year. She has moved on to a position with the DNR. The RRC Board wants to give her a huge thanks for all her work and for orchestrating the very successful BioBlitz. For more on the BioBlitz go to page 7.



### Mission

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

#### **PRESIDENT:**

Patricia Cicero  
[patricia@rockrivercoalition.org](mailto:patricia@rockrivercoalition.org)

#### **DIRECTORS:**

James Kerler, Secretary  
Suzanne Wade, Treasurer  
Scott Taylor, Past President  
Jane Carlson, President Elect  
Eric Compas  
Jim Koepke  
Dan Lynch  
Joleen Stinson  
Joe Zakovec

#### **Stream Monitoring Coordinator:**

Nancy Sheehan  
[nancy@rockrivercoalition.org](mailto:nancy@rockrivercoalition.org)

#### **Wetland Monitoring**

[wetlands@rockrivercoalition.org](mailto:wetlands@rockrivercoalition.org)

#### **Water Star Coordinator:**

Andy Yencha  
[andrew.yencha@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:andrew.yencha@ces.uwex.edu)

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[info@rockrivercoalition.org](mailto:info@rockrivercoalition.org)  
[www.rockrivercoalition.org](http://www.rockrivercoalition.org)

#### **Newsletter Editor:**

Suzanne Wade, 608-334-4517  
[suzanne@rockrivercoalition.org](mailto:suzanne@rockrivercoalition.org)

Next deadline is October 4, 2013.

A letter-sized color version of this newsletter is available at [www.rockrivercoalition.org](http://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](mailto: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.*

# Rock River Recovery Efforts

by Sarah MacFarland, DNR TMDL Assistant

Almost two years ago to date, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the WDNR's Rock River Basin Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) for phosphorus and sediment.

Based on 10 years of data, the Rock River Basin's TMDL provides a quantitative analysis of just how much phosphorus and sediment our streams, rivers, and lakes in the basin can take and still remain healthy and meeting water quality standards. But that was almost two years ago – so what now?

Since EPA approved the TMDL report, the DNR has moved into their implementation efforts, what they coined the Rock River Recovery. The Rock River Recovery is bringing stakeholders together – from industry to farmers, from small towns and villages to large cities, from avid outdoorsmen to everyday citizens – to work together



toward improving water quality. And they've made significant progress.

One major focus up to this point has been pollution coming from industrial and municipal wastewater treatment facilities (WWTFs). So far, the DNR has developed guidance on how to implement the TMDL allocation through permits, and how to coordinate these permits with state-wide phosphorus

limits (NR 217). They've held two basin-wide meetings, where all permit holders were invited to explain the upcoming stricter pollution limits, as well as met with facilities on a small-group and individual basis.

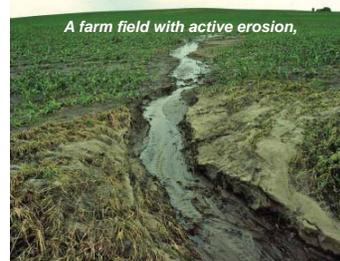
Just last month, a public informational hearing for nine permittees was held at the Horicon DNR service station, where all interested parties were given the opportunity to make a statement regarding one or more of the nine permits and have the statement considered in the final decision. These permits have since been issued, with several dozen more likely to be issued by the end of the year.

While a lot of progress has been made, these point-sources are only one piece of the puzzle. On a monthly basis, WWTF facilities contribute approximately 55% of the phosphorus and only 16% of the sediment ending up in our rivers and lakes. (See Rock River Basin TMDL Report, pg 34). So reducing pollution just from these facilities is not the whole solution.

The Rock River Recovery is also working to develop guidance for implementing TMDL wasteload allocations for municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s), another significant source of pollution in the watershed. The MS4 general permit is expected to be reissued later this year with a stormwater management planning requirement. The MS4 general permit covers about two-thirds of the regulated MS4s in the state, with another dozen or so individual or group permits covering the remaining MS4s. Implementation of overall MS4 stormwater management plans may take 15 years and include additional

stormwater controls when urban areas undergo redevelopment.

And the Rock River Recovery is reaching out to the agricultural community. A team of state and county staff, NGOs, industry professionals, and farmers have come together to reduce agricultural runoff. The team's goals include developing strategies to get more runoff control practices on the landscape, like cover crops and buffers, and to aid county Land and Water Conservation department staff and private consultants facilitate agreements between permitted dischargers and farmers.



But this is just the beginning. Later this year, the Rock River Recovery will hold a series of public forums for industries, elected officials, farmers, and interested citizens to learn more about the recovery efforts in their areas. The first of these forums will be held in the Lake Koshkonong-Watertown area this September. The groundwork has been laid to start nursing the Rock River back to health, but it will be a long recovery process. Over the next fifteen years, the DNR and their partners will continue to work towards a healthier river – which, after all, is the heart of a healthy community.



## NEW: Dredging – Counted for pollutant trading

The DNR recently announced in its draft water quality trading handbook that it will count dredging as an eligible practice for water quality trading.

As more municipal and industrial facilities work to meet stricter phosphorus and sediment discharge limits, dredging may become a valuable practice for pollution reduction for facilities near shallow lakes, like Lake Sinissippi.

Dredging projects must remove sediment to the original (native) layer, and must result in net, long-term reduction of phosphorus released from sediment.

Trade ratios for dredging, which determine trading agreements, are calculated based on mass removed multiplied by average phosphorus concentration of the top foot of in-situ material.

These ratios are significantly better if dredging is accompanied by aquatic habitat restoration, as it helps stabilize the waterbody's bed and ensure phosphorus reduction.

## Thank you Mike

Mike Vollrath has been leading the effort to develop the Rock River Recovery Implementation Plan over the past two years. He has accepted a new supervisory position in the West Central Region. We thank him for his leadership and vision.

Andy Morton, Runoff Management Supervisor for the Water District South will be taking over many of Mike's duties regarding the TMDL and the implementation team until a permanent implementation coordinator is named.

Andy can be reached at [james.morton@wisconsin.gov](mailto:james.morton@wisconsin.gov) or at 608-275-3203.



At the Rock River Coalition annual meeting the 2013 award winners were honored. We highlighted their accomplishments in the last newsletter, but hearing them tell their stories was amazing.

Pictured here 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. Rock River Coalition Friend awardees received a photo taken by Jeff Strobel at Horicon Marsh.

Photo by James Kerler

# Rock River Coalition's Send Your Legislator Down the River



**Monday August 26, 2013**  
**Featuring the Mud Lake Wildlife Area in Dodge County**  
**The confluence of the Crawfish and Beaver Dam Rivers**  
**A Glimpse into our Ecological Past**

The amazing confluence of the Beaver Dam and Crawfish rivers, north of I-94 and between Waterloo and Watertown, is the location for this year's Send Your Legislator Down the River paddle and legislator town hall meeting.

The event will start at the River Bend RV Resort on the Crawfish River where we'll enjoy conversations with legislators and local elected officials as well as an optional meal. The paddle will be approximately 4 miles in length and is expected to take less than two hours. Depending on water levels we may have a motor boat available for those unable to paddle. Note: As of this printing legislators are being invited but none are currently registered.

## Agenda

- 4:30 - 5:30pm Registration -River Bend RV Resort Community Center, W6940 Rubidell Rd. A map will be sent to all registrants or go to <http://www.rbresort.com>.
- 4:30 - 5:30 Meal: Pre-order only, meal cost is not included in the registration fee.
- 4:45 - 5:45 Welcome and River Town Hall Meeting: A chance to talk to your local elected officials and state legislators.
- 6:00 - 7:45 Launch canoes, interpretive presentations will be given during the trip. Limited space is available to rent in our paddle craft. We encourage participant's to bring their own canoe or kayak.

We also encourage you to bring a reusable water bottle. Beverages will be provided.

In case of inclement weather, the meal and River Town Hall meeting will be held at River Bend RV Resort. The canoe trip will not be rescheduled. If in doubt check the Rock River Coalition Facebook page for updates or call 608-334-4517.

### Directions to River Bend RV Resort

#### From I-94 at Lake Mills

Go south on Hwy 89 to the first stop lights, turn left on County V, turn left or north on Cty A. Just past Milford, turn left on Hwy Q. Turn left onto Navan Rd, turn right onto River Road. Turn left on Rubidell Road. Watch for signs. (About 10.5 miles, 18 minutes.)

#### Directions to Garden Road Boat Launch at the Mud Lake Wildlife Area from River Bend.

From Rubidell Road take second left onto River Rd. Turn right onto E. Hubbleton Rd, turn left onto County Rd Q. Turn left onto Cty Rd QQ, continue to Garden Rd, turn right. Follow gravel road and signs to boat launch.

## Send Your Legislator Down the River - 2013 Registration Form

Please make checks payable to the Rock River Coalition. Send signed forms and payment to Rock River Coalition, ATTN SYLDR, 864 Collins Road, Jefferson WI 53549.

Registration can also be done on-line at <http://www.rockrivercoalition.org>. Payment is through PayPal.

For questions call 920-674-7443.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

# adults attending RRC Member \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# adults attending not RRC Member \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# attending age 6-17 \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$5 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# attending age 5 or under \_\_\_\_\_ @ Free \$ 0

**Late registration fee** after Aug. 19, 2013 \_\_\_\_\_ \$5 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**RRC membership** ( \_\_\_ Ind \$25, \_\_\_ Family \$35,

\_\_\_ Senior \$15, \_\_\_ Affiliate/Small Business \$50,

\_\_\_ Municipal \$125 \_\_\_ Corporate \$200) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Optional meal:

Wraps from Willie Street Co-op locally sourced food. Choice of Ham, Turkey or Veggie Wrap plus Granny's Potato Salad, Sumi Salad (an Asian Slaw) and cookies. We will also provide non-alcoholic beverages. Total charge is \$15/person

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ # of vegetarian meals

### Paddle Trip: Note: no charge for youth not paddling.

Reserve spot in Voyageur Canoe \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$5 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Rent spot in canoe \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$5 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Rent spot in kayak \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$5 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**T-shirt**, short sleeved \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I will only be at the River Town Hall Meeting & dinner

\_\_\_\_ I/We have a canoe/kayak which we will use,

\_\_\_\_ I/We have an extra space in our canoe.

\_\_\_\_ I/We would like a spot in the motor boat (if available).

I am an elected official representing \_\_\_\_\_

In consideration of the "Sponsors" (as defined below) accepting this registration, I, the undersigned entrant, intending to be legally bound, do hereby agree not to sue and hereby waive and release all sponsors, governmental bodies, organizations, officials, elected officials and individuals associated with the 'Send Your Legislator Down the River' canoe and motor boat event (the "Event") and each of their respective officers, directors, employees, heirs, personal representatives, successors and assigns from any and all claims, actions, damages or injuries suffered or incurred by me or which arise out of my participation in the Event, unless caused by the willful misconduct of any of the Sponsors. I hereby agree to the use of my voice or picture or any other record of the Event for any purpose whatsoever. This release applies to and binds the undersigned entrant, his/her heirs, personal representatives, successors and assigns and is for the benefit of all of the Sponsors. This registration is invalid unless signed by the entrant. If entrant is under 18 years of age, the parent or legal guardian of the entrant must also sign the form.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_ Age (if under 18): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature (under 18): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

One hold harmless clause must be signed for each person attending. Extra forms will be available at the event.

# Rock River Recovery Forum #1 - Two days to learn about the Middle Rock

The area from Watertown to Lake Koshkonong including Koshkonong Creek

Johnson Creek Community Center  
417 Union Street, Johnson Creek, WI

From Union Street, turn east onto Maple and then north onto Ashland.

Friday Sept. 6, 2013  
8:30 - 3:00

Designed for municipal staff, elected officials, permitted industries, professionals and technical audiences and individuals and representatives from environmental, conservation and farm organizations looking to gain a more comprehensive understanding of water quality improvement efforts in their area. Discussion will focus on how different entities can work effectively together.

## Schedule of Events

- 8:30 Registration
- 9:00 Welcome to Jefferson County - County Board Chair John Molinaro  
Introduction to the day - Andy Morton
- 9:10 Why we are here today. Why is water quality important to this area:  
Tim Ryan, DNR Basin Supervisor  
  
Results of the TMDL report for these specific waterbodies (sediment and phosphorus): Kevin Kirsch  
  
Permit limits and implications for municipalities and industries in these watersheds: Doris Thiele  
  
New Stormwater Guidance: Eric Rortved
- 10:20 Break
- 10:40 Moderated panel: Reaching our goals: Understanding what we're doing, what are our limitations and what are the impacts.  
  
Waste Water Treatment Plants: Kevin Freber, Watertown WWTP  
LWCD: Tom Sweeney, Rock County  
  
Agriculture - Permitted Facilities: Representative invited  
  
Agriculture - Sustainable and Small farms: Kirsten Jurcek, Town and Country RCD  
  
Lake Districts: Paul Dearlove, Lake Ripley Management District
- 11:40 Facilitated Q & A
- Noon Lunch (catered)
- 12:45 Case studies of groups working together to improve water quality.
- 1:45 Facilitated Discussion on ways to achieve water quality goals in this area?
- 2:45 Evaluation: How can we make future forums more effective
- 3:00 Thanks and safe travels home

Saturday Sept. 7, 2013  
8:30 - 4:00

Designed for individuals who have been involved in water quality or sustainability efforts or those who have been impacted by poor water quality, who want to get a better understanding of the Rock River TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) Report and the Rock River Recovery Plan. All are Invited!

## Schedule of Events

- 8:30 Registration
- 9:00 Welcome and Introductions: Greg Searle, DNR and County Board Chair John Molinaro
- 9:20 Introduction to the area: ecology, culture, what's unique and special
- 9:50 Achieving Water Quality in our area.
- 10:20 Panel: What are we doing and what more needs to be done, how do we get there.
- 11:45 Lunch (box lunches can be ordered - see registration form.)
- 12:45 - 4:00 Experience this part of the basin or stay and work with other on ways we can work together for better water quality.

### World Cafe Planning Our Future:

Depending on numbers will either use a dialogue method or a World Cafe followed by dialogue

### Rock Lake Pontoon Boat Tour

Learn about monitoring lake water quality, efforts to keep Rock Lake Clean and identification of native and invasive plants.

### Agriculture Can Protect Water Quality Whether Big or Small

Visit two farms, a large permitted dairy and an organic farm. Talk to farmers and managers about steps they are taking to protect water quality.

### Johnson Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant

Johnson Creek is one of the first wastewater treatment plants to produce Class A biosolids using rotating biological contactors. Working with the RRC they also installed a large rain garden as the entrance to the plant. Learn how waste is managed and what WWTPs can do to protect our waters.

### What's a Person to Do? Rain garden and Shoreline Restoration

Visit locations where people are actively working to insure their land isn't impacting water quality. We'll visit shoreline restorations, rain gardens, see rain barrels and discuss low impact lawn care.

Pre-registration requested by September 2, 2013. Registration form on next page or at the Rock River Coalition website. Drop-ins welcome but meal and field trips may not be available.

Rock River Recovery Forum #2 will be in the Crawfish, Beaver Dam and Maunsha river watersheds in late fall.



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COALITION

## Rock River Recovery Forum Registration Form

Mail in this registration form by September 2, 2013 with payment to:  
Rock River Coalition, ATTN Forum, 864 Collins Road, Jefferson WI 53549.  
Registration can also be done on-line at <http://www.rockrivercoalition.org>.  
Payment is through PayPal.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

For multiple participants, either fill in one registration form per person or attach a separate sheet with names and titles and include meal and registration information for all below.

Write total amount due on appropriate line

\_\_\_\_\_ One Day Registration \$5/person for RRC members\*  
\_\_\_\_\_ Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday  
\_\_\_\_\_ One Day Registration \$10 for non-RRC members  
\_\_\_\_\_ Friday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday  
\_\_\_\_\_ Two Day Registration \$8 for RRC members\*  
\_\_\_\_\_ Two Day Registration \$15 for non-RRC members

*Note: Municipalities and their staff have chosen several different ways to be a RRC Member ranging from individual memberships to full municipal members. You can check on-line at our website to see if you are a current member and in what category.*

*Rules for discounted fee for municipalities:*

*\$125 municipal membership allows you unlimited registrants for staff and elected officials at the \$5 rate.*

*\$50 affiliate membership allows \$5 rate only for staff or committee members from the department that is the member.*

*\$35 family membership allows only immediate family of the member to receive the \$5 rate.*

*\$25 individual or \$15 Senior membership allows only the holder of the membership to claim the \$5 rate.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Meal(s) for Friday (Pizza, salad and beverage) Cost \$8.00.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Meal(s) for Saturday (Sub sandwich box lunches)  
Cost \$8.00. Check desired sub below: Each will come with tomato and lettuce, other toppings will be available.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Italian BMT, \_\_\_\_\_ Turkey, \_\_\_\_\_ Veggie Delight  
\_\_\_\_\_ Saturday Pontoon Field Trip \$5/person  
\_\_\_\_\_ RRC Membership (check membership level below)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$25, \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$35, \_\_\_\_\_ Senior \$15,  
\_\_\_\_\_ Affiliate/Small Business/Municipal Department \$50,  
\_\_\_\_\_ Municipal (covers all departments) \$125  
\_\_\_\_\_ Corporate \$200

\$\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed:

Make checks payable to Rock River Coalition and send to address above

### Please check your Saturday afternoon selection:

\_\_\_ Watershed discussion and planning: World Cafe.  
\_\_\_ What's an individual to do: shorelines, rain gardens, rain barrels  
\_\_\_ Agriculture in the basin: large and small.  
\_\_\_ Rock Lake Pontoon Boat Trip (Please include \$5 fee above.)  
\_\_\_ Johnson Creek Wastewater Treatment Plan

## Stream Monitoring Updates

by Nancy Sheehan, RRC Stream Monitoring Coordinator

I have never been a weather channel addict but this spring I have been checking iMap Weather sometimes hourly.

Today is yet another partly cloudy day with a chance of thunderstorms. The NOAA

National Weather Service verified what I thought were just my night reveries—heavy rainfall did indeed fall over most of central Wisconsin last night. The announcement from the National Weather Service states: “Due to the recent rounds of heavy rainfall and the potential of more heavy rainfall by Tuesday evening...area rivers and streams will likely rise. Due to a saturated ground...additional heavy rainfall Tuesday into Tuesday night will increase runoff rates.”

NOAA has reported that some areas have received over 600% of their normal rainfall. I don't have to tell you that this amount of precipitation has posed challenges to all our RRC stream monitors.

Stream levels are so high that stream banks as well as hip waders are flooded.

Many Level 1 volunteers have not been able to collect flow data which is not a problem. The safety of our volunteers comes first. Please do not enter streams if the water levels are too high.

My advice has been to just note the high water levels in the comment section of the WAV database.

As an additional precaution, volunteers have been using clean buckets (with no detergent residues) to collect water samples to assess dissolved oxygen and clarity from bridge crossings.

Regardless of the inclement weather we have accomplished much together since the beginning of April. I was fortunate to work with some terrific county land and water specialists to train forty six (46) new stream monitors.

To kickoff our 2013 spring training program I headed to the headwaters of the Rock River. Even though the banks of the East Branch of the Rock River were flooded, Marsh Haven Nature Center provided an ideal setting for Kris Stepenuck of Water Action Volunteer Program and I to work with teachers and prospective volunteers alike.

Thanks go out to Renee Wahlen Tileman, Education Director of Marsh Haven Nature Center, who graciously

46 new monitors trained!

New focus in the Yahara River Watershed with the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District.

provided support and treats for all attendees. Later in April, Friends of Cam Rock Park member Janice Redman joined Patricia Cicero of Jefferson County and I to train volunteers along Koshkonong Creek.

Stoneflies and mayflies were

not the only critters to enjoy Turtle Creek in Clinton. Anne Miller of Rock County and I worked with prospective volunteers including several students and staff from UW-Whitewater to assess the water quality of this creek.

Our program would not have been complete without spring training on Black Earth Creek with Pete Jopke of Dane County.

In April, RRC also received news about grants submitted during the winter months. I am happy to report that RRC received funding from Dane County Environmental Council to purchase training equipment and to work with Friends of Pheasant Branch to support teachers and students interested in assessing water quality throughout Dane County.

RRC also received funding from Yahara WINs to strengthen the citizen water quality monitoring throughout the Yahara River Watershed. Since receiving this grant, I have been working collaboratively with the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District, to recruit, train and equip:

- Seven new Level 3 volunteers who are collecting water samples being analyzed by MMSD for total phosphorus, total suspended solids, TKN, ammonia, nitrate+nitrite, and ortho-phosphorus.
- Five new Level 2 volunteers who are collecting data on dissolved oxygen levels, clarity and continuous temperature.
- Nine new Level 1 volunteers who are collecting data on dissolved oxygen levels, clarity, temperature and flow and calculating a Biotic Index.

**Wishing you all a safe and enjoyable summer!**

For more information about stream monitoring email:  
[nancy@rockrivercoalition.org](mailto:nancy@rockrivercoalition.org)

# Zeloski Marsh Survey Results!

by Jeanne Scherer, RRC Wetland Monitoring Coordinator

The weather was nearly perfect, the volunteers were enthusiastic and the critters put on a good show for the Zeloski Marsh BioBlitz held May 18-19. Nearly 100 people participated by conducting surveys, providing general help, educating others, or joining the special hikes and public events during the 24 hour survey of life in the marsh. The BioBlitz capped off a successful year of wetland monitoring funded by a WDNR Citizen-based Monitoring Partnership Program grant.

Surveys of the marsh's thousands of insects, birds, animals, and plants were conducted by University of Wisconsin system professors and naturalists, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) professionals, and citizen science volunteers. Water quality was also assessed by a team of professionals and volunteers.

Aside from Mother Nature providing a gusty afternoon that brought the BioBlitz to a close during its last hour with a short but powerful natural fireworks show, the weekend couldn't have gone better. Frogs and toads created such a ruckus Saturday evening that it was difficult to tell one species from another! The weekend bird counts were pooled into one of the highest counts ever for the site.

Jason Daley led the frog count team, while Andrew Badje, WDNR, taught a group of about 25 adults and children about Wisconsin's frog and toad monitoring program. Seven species, the most in a single day at the marsh, were heard or seen: Spring Peeper, Leopard Frog, Cope's Grey Tree Frog, Green Frog, Wood Frog, Chorus Frog and American Toad.

The birders were out in force! Several people submitted lists and counts of birds they saw. Sunday morning nine people joined the Friends of the Glacial Heritage Area and the Jefferson/Dodge County Bird Walk hike led by Clare Carlson, Karen Etter Hale and Brad Webb. Ninety bird species were sighted, including American White Pelicans, Bald Eagles, Yellow-throated Vireos, and a Common Goldeneye duck that surprised veteran birders by its late spring presence. Jason Daley, his father Alan, and Nancy Stanford, all citizen scientist volunteers, conducted a marsh bird survey prior to their frog count. Amy Staffen (WDNR) conducted a marsh bird survey on Sunday morning. They found several elusive species by using recorded calls.

Entomology, the study of insects, was represented by Dr. Kerry Katovich and Dr. Nadine Kriska from UW-Whitewater (UWW) and Bob DuBois (WDNR). In 2012, DuBois taught volunteers to find and identify dragonflies and damselflies. Nineteen species were found during the last year. Few dragonflies or damselflies had emerged at the time of the BioBlitz, so he concentrated on nymphs, the aquatic form of the insects. Unfortunately, only four species were found possibly due to water quality, a lack of aquatic and shoreline plant diversity, or some other cause.

The broad survey of insects at the marsh was a first for the site. Katovich and Kriska set up several traps in the open and wooded areas, including a blacklight trap. Blacklights attract insects to a large sheet, where they are collected for identification. Results: 130 species representing 73 families of Arthropods (insects, beetles, spiders, and others).

Having a greater diversity of plants over larger areas of the marsh would likely increase these numbers.

A wider variety of insects would provide more food sources for other insects, animals and birds, while also broadening the range of pollinators for the plants on the site.

The Botany team consisted of Dr. Nic Tippery (UWW), Kevin Doyle and Amy Staffen (WDNR), Kim Karow (Fort Atkinson volunteer), and Libby Zimmerman (UW-Madison Arboretum). Once these experts pooled their findings, twenty-eight previously undocumented species of plants were added to the master list maintained at UW-W.

While there are pockets with a wide variety of plants, large expanses of the marsh are covered by invasive plants and aggressive natives. The survey results and suggestions by the experts who participated are useful for site management. Dr. Tippery and his students would like to study methods to improve the diversity of the plant community, which can in turn improve the diversity of other life in the marsh.

Amy Jo Dusick, member of the Society of Mycology, surveyed the fungi and mushrooms in the marsh. To the best of RRC's knowledge, no one had done so before. Dusick found seven species, including Green Stain Fungus, Honey Mushrooms, and False Turkey Tail.

Bats were also surveyed. Using recording devices carried around the periphery of the southern half of the marsh after dark, Heather Kaarakka (WDNR) and Andria Blattner (citizen-scientist bat monitoring volunteer) "heard" and mapped the locations of the three species of bats, including Big Brown Bats. They repeated a similar route taken by Mark Martin in 2009 which also resulted in three species.

Patricia Cicero (RRC), Christina and Ian Anderson (WDNR), Carl Glassford (citizen-scientist), and Judy Horwath (USGS) conducted water quality monitoring at the seven monitoring sites. These include ditch sites and two sites on Koshkonong Creek located before and after the main marsh ditch empties into the creek. Their data will be added to the DNR database along with findings from 2012.

White-tailed deer, muskrats, thirteen-lined ground squirrels, mice, a Midland Painted turtle and a coyote also made an appearance!

Thank you to everyone who provided educational exhibits on Sunday afternoon: Brad Bates (amphibian education-WDNR), Chrystal Schreck (invasive plants exhibit as well as a hike on Saturday-WDNR), Jennifer Mitchell (Project Lady Bug-UW-Arboretum), Gretchen Oleson and Craig Kopacek (WDNR-Jefferson County), Suzanne Wade (RRC with her Carry Creek), Gail Juszcak and Carl Glassford (Rock Lake Improvement Association), Matt Weber (Madison Audubon Society-Faville Grove Land Steward), Kevin Wasserman (Jefferson County Parks Dept.), photographer Eli Wedel (photo walk), and Christina Anderson (water quality monitoring-UWEX and WDNR).

The Rock River Coalition gives a special thanks to Clare Carlson and the Friends of the Glacial Heritage Area, who presented information about the GHA on Sunday AND provided wonderful lunches during the BioBlitz, as well as DNR staff and the Jefferson County Parks Department. Also, thanks to Dennis Zeloski who provided invaluable knowledge of the property, mowed the grassy areas and drained the old tarmac where the Base Camp was set up, provided space for activities, and acted as chauffeur as needed.

## 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

<b>Individual</b>	<b>\$ 25</b>
<b>Family</b>	<b>\$ 35</b>
<b>Student/Senior Citizen</b>	<b>\$ 15</b>
<b>Classroom</b>	<b>\$ 25</b>
<b>Affiliates*</b>	<b>\$ 50</b>
<b>Municipal**</b>	<b>\$125</b>
<b>Corporate</b>	<b>\$ 200</b>

\*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](http://www.rockrivercoalition.org)

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

### Tax Deductible 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](http://www.rockrivercoalition.org/membership.asp)**

# Those Grass Clippings Have an Impact

by Jason Valerius, MSA Professional Services and RRSG Education Coordinator.

So far, 2013 is shaping up as a wet year (what a contrast to 2012!), and lawns are loving the rain. Cities across the region have reported excessive grass clippings in the streets, and are enforcing their ordinances to prevent and clean up those clippings. The City of Beaver Dam, one of the many communities working to improve the quality of the Rock River, revised its ordinance this spring to require the immediate cleanup of grass clippings, instead of the 48-hour grace period previously allowed. Most cities and villages in the region have similar ordinances.



Photo courtesy City of Smithville, MO

The link between grass clippings and green lakes and rivers may not be obvious. Most people understand the damage that petroleum and other chemicals can cause in our waters. But grass is just a natural thing, right? Natural things like grass, leaves and mulch are

rich in phosphorous—the same stuff that used to be in lawn fertilizer. When left in the street gutter, it gets washed into the storm drains and eventually the river, decomposing along the way and adding that phosphorous directly into the water. Like a chemical fertilizer, the phosphorous promotes plant growth, which typically means algae growth in the water. Consider this—a pound of grass clippings left in the street can result in a pound of algae growth in the river.

Algae is natural, but fertilized algal blooms hurt our waterways. Besides the “yuck” factor that turns people away, algae uses up oxygen in the water as it decays, which can kill off fish and other wildlife. Algal blooms can also produce toxins harmful to people or pets. (See *blue-green algae story page 1*)

Grass clippings in the street can be expensive too. Before they reach our waters, those clippings can clog storm drains, increasing maintenance costs and causing flooding. And when they cause algal blooms and fish kills, cleanup costs increase.

We can all help! Just blow clippings away from pavement as you mow, and then come back with a



Dead fish and unsightly algae aren't the only concern with phosphorus in our waters. See the article on blue-green algae on page one to learn about a serious health and ecological concern in the basin.

Photo courtesy University of Michigan

broom or blower at the end to push back the escapees. That's all there is to it. You can either bag the clippings for proper compost disposal, or mulch them into the lawn to return nutrients to the soil that will help your grass grow.

Many Rock River Reflections readers already know the importance of proper “clippings management.” Offer to collect neighbors’ or friends’ grass clippings and mention the link between green grass clippings and green waterways.

See [cleanwaterbrightfuture.org](http://cleanwaterbrightfuture.org) for more lawn care tips that promote the health of your lawn and the Rock River.

The Rock River Stormwater Group thanks you for helping to Renew the Rock by reducing stormwater pollution throughout the Rock River area. Learn more at [www.cleanwaterbrightfuture.org](http://www.cleanwaterbrightfuture.org).



## Don't Miss: Send Your Legislator Down the River - Aug. 26

See page 4 for more details. We will be paddling in the Mud Lake Wildlife Area, Dodge County. An area that is very similar to what the basin was like pre European settlement. We should see lots of wildlife, birds and scenery.

## Rock River Forum #1: September 6 & 7

Over the next two years, the DNR, UW-Extension and the Rock River Coalition will be hosting a series of forums to highlight water quality issues in specific watersheds in the basin. This is also a great time to look for ways partnerships can lead to better water quality. Together, municipalities, wastewater treatment plants, industry, farmers and interested citizens can help the Rock River become a healthier, better place for people, aquatic life and wildlife.

## RRC 20th Anniversary

The RRC started in 1994 as the Rock River Corridor Coalition and in 1996 incorporated as the Rock River Coalition with a focus on the main corridor of the Rock River.

In those early years the RRC worked mainly with municipalities along the river with a vision of making the downtown a vital part of the river with improved river walks along the Rock, and a focus on culture and history.

In 1998 they expanded their vision to include the entire Rock River Basin and began a move toward a water quality emphasis, but never lost their earlier interest on history, culture, economics and recreation.

With that in mind we would like to offer a series of events throughout 2014 -2016 keeping all those aspects of our mission in mind. We would like these events to include one of the following attributes:

### 1. Mind

**Knowledge:** An activity that primarily teaches people a useful skill, informs them about an issue, or challenges them to think about solutions. This could be a presentation, workshop, forum, or field trip.

### 2. Body

**Appreciation:** An activity that focuses on experiences in the basin, whether it is paddling, hiking, Geocaching, or exploring an interesting geologic or natural history feature.

### 3. Heart

A focus on the arts and the human spirit, whether drawing, writing, singing, essays, blogs or other ways of connecting to our inner soul.

The board is working on several events, including sponsoring at least one field trip for each of the Rock River Forums.

But we need your input and help in organizing and sponsoring events for 2014 - 2016.

Soon an email will go out to our friends and members with more details about our plans for 2014 - 2016. If you would like to receive this email [suzanne@rockrivercoalition.org](mailto:suzanne@rockrivercoalition.org).

## Wetlands, Wildlife and Flood Hazard Webinars

Monday August 19 3:00 - 4:30pm

**FEMA Hazard Mitigation Buyouts** – Making the most of the land once the structures are gone – case studies from Wisconsin communities. Confirmed Speakers, Roxanne Gray, DMA and Donna Haugom, Jefferson County Emergency Management Director

Monday September 16 3:00 - 4:30pm

**Conservation in Urban Areas** – Protecting wetlands and floodplains and providing flood mitigation and water quality benefits.

To view archived webinars of our first two webinars or to register for these go to: [http://www.eli.org/Program\\_Areas/wetlandswebinars.cfm](http://www.eli.org/Program_Areas/wetlandswebinars.cfm)