



Rock River Reflections

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

Winter 2010 Volume 13, Number 1

New Basin Initiative: A Rock River Recovery Plan

In order to improve water quality, steps are in progress for the development of a recovery plan for the entire Rock River Basin.

This is in part to meet the Federal Clean Water Act, which requires states and authorized tribes to identify and restore impaired water bodies. Much of the Rock is impaired due to excess sediment and phosphorus.

The first step is to determine how much sediment or phosphorus the water body can handle without impairment, also known as a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

The Rock River Basin TMDL report, expected to be released in mid-2010, will identify the sources of the pollutants and the reductions necessary to meet water quality standards. This then becomes the target pollution reduction for the Rock River Recovery Plan. The targeted reductions must account for point sources, such as wastewater discharges, and nonpoint sources, such as runoff from agriculture fields or city streets, plus natural background sources. The targeted reduction must also include components that address future growth of these sources, variations in flow and seasons and a margin of safety to ensure that, once

implemented, water quality standards will be achieved.

Assigning targeted sediment and phosphorus reductions is only the first step to restoring water quality in the Rock River Basin. The next step, which the Rock River Coalition and Town and Country R, C & D are involved in, is to develop the recovery plan outlining specific actions needed to meet these reductions in the amount of phosphorus and sediment entering the river.

The Rock River Basin Recovery Plan will look for established methods and will explore new ways to achieve these water quality goals. The plan will recognize that a long term solution is necessary to address the problem that resulted from 150 years of development and land abuse. Innovative ideas and "thinking outside the box" will be necessary to achieve these water quality goals. The development of the plan is expected to take two years.

While the WDNR is legally responsible for developing the Rock River Basin pollution reduction goals, many stakeholders, such as farmers, municipalities, business owners, and citizens, will play a critical role in the creation of the recovery plan. Scientific and technical experts will provide valuable information and insight to the process. Turn to page 7 to find out more about this effort and what you can do!



Excess phosphorus in the water leads to unwanted algae blooms that turn the water green, scummy, and odorous. Blue green algae blooms make our lakes and rivers less desirable to swim or boat in. Contact with the water during these blooms should be limited due to potential health risks.

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President's Message

Dear Rock River Coalition Friends and Members,

Today I'm working on my water policy to-do list, and I thought I'd share with you current issues that will impact our Rock River Basin, for better or worse. There is always a lot of push and pull and compromise as these issues get resolved. As we tackle these and more, our RRC Board does its best to support policy that will fulfill our mission to achieve a balance of a healthy environment, economy, and community.

Here's what is on my desk this week:

Exotic Invasives from Ballast Water: The National Wildlife Federation and Wisconsin Wildlife Federation filed a legal challenge today that claims the state of Wisconsin's new ballast water discharge permit violates state law and won't prevent freighters from importing more invasive species, like zebra mussels, into the Great Lakes. RRC has written letters of support for strong rules and legislation at both the state and federal levels to keep more invasives from entering Wisconsin waters from the Great Lakes shipping industry. Zebra mussels are just one example – once, they are here, they are here for good, and our ecosystem is impacted in unpredictable ways.

Buffer Standards: The SE Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission is working with 3 other states' planning commissions to find support for a grant to develop science-based guidelines for the size and structure of shoreline buffers. There are currently very different recommendations from many sources, leading to inconsistent policy and variable protection for the shoreline zones. The Wisconsin Buffer Initiative, for example, looks to protect rivers from sediment and nutrients, and focuses on stabilizing the largest sources – be they next to the river or not. However, if you were concerned about the habitat needed by fish and wildlife in the biologically rich shoreland, you would be looking for a ribbon of green all along the shoreline. These two approaches result in very different solutions for planners. I am drafting a letter of RRC support for the SEWRPC grant, and I hope to participate on the steering committee as the project is developed.

Polluted Runoff Rules: Hearings are coming up in early February on revisions of the DNR rules to control runoff from farms and urban areas. I served on the advisory committee for the current set of rules, and hope to see gaps in current policy filled – resulting in better protection from this pollution (see the article in this newsletter.)

Ashippun/Oconomowoc AG Enterprise Zone: RRC has been asked for a letter of support for the establishment of an Agricultural Enterprise Zone in the two towns. This new program establishes a district designated to be kept in farmland. Participating farmers with a combined 1000 acres or more, agree to keep land in agricultural use for at least 15 years, and comply with soil and water conservation standards. This should help preserve open space, groundwater recharge areas, and better conservation compliance in an area where farmers are facing encroaching subdivisions and wondering if it is wise to invest in improvements to their farms.

Groundwater Legislation: Legislation is being drafted to protect groundwater quality and quantity; and rivers, lakes and wetlands from the impacts of proposed high capacity wells. RRC will work with the Wisconsin Water Coalition that is supporting strong protection and wise use of the groundwater we all depend on.

I love this stuff - it's always interesting, I'm always learning something new, and building networks and partnerships that help us be more effective.



So there you go – a day in the life of the RRC President.

Happy New Year! and don't forget to renew your membership!

Lisa Conley, RRC President

4-Ways Farm Restoration Project - Installation of Vegetated Buffers



Riparian buffers protect and enhance water quality. Vegetated buffers can trap sediment and reduce or remove nutrients and other pollutants from runoff. The percentage of removal of these contaminants depends upon the width of the buffer and the composition of the vegetation in the buffer. Buffers reduce the speed and volume of runoff through enhanced infiltration into the soil. The roots in vegetated buffers also help stabilize streambanks, which reduces erosion. 4-Ways Farm is located near West Bend, WI.
Photos: Washington County Land and Water Conservation Department



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

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

Will Your Nonprofit Organization Lose its Tax Exempt Status?

In 2004, a US Senate panel was convened in response to questionable activities of board members and executive directors of a few nonprofit organizations. As a result, the IRS changed the filing requirements of nonprofits. This is the first major revision since 1979.

All nonprofit organizations must file a 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N report by the 15th day, of the 5 month, after the end of each fiscal year starting with fiscal year 2007.

For example: if an organization's fiscal year is January to December, they need to file a 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N report by May 15. If the organization's fiscal year is April to March, they need to file by September 15. Previously, if a nonprofit organization had gross receipts less than \$25,000, they did not need to file any paper work with the IRS. Now if an organization makes less than \$25,000, the organization must electronically file a form 990-N.

It is not a difficult form to fill out; basically it asks for the organization's EIN number, current address, principle officer, and a yes/no statement saying your organization had less than \$25,000 in gross receipts. Organizations with gross receipts more than \$25,000 are already required to file a 990-EZ or 990 form.

If an organization fails to file a 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N form for three consecutive years, they will lose their IRS designated nonprofit status. Therefore, if an organization has never filed a 990, 990-EZ, or 990-N, they could lose their nonprofit status on May 15, 2010, the deadline for fiscal year 2009 filing, assuming the fiscal year is January to December.

This includes ALL 501(c) nonprofit organizations.

The required filing is more likely to affect small local nonprofits, like the local watershed group or lakes association, since previously they were not required to file any reports with the IRS.

If a nonprofit organization loses its nonprofit status, the organization will need to pay income tax on its profits at the end of the year. The profit is the revenue the organization has left after expenses. Failure to file a 990 form can amount to thousands of dollars in taxes and penalties and charitable contributions to the organization will no longer be tax deductible.

To reinstate its exempt status, an organization will need to go through the entire application process including paying the application fee and filling out the 30 page form.

There is also no guarantee that nonprofit status will be reinstated. For more info: <http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=96103,00.html>

Taken from an article by Patrick Nehring, UWEX Waushara County CNRED Educator.

Help Protect Your Local Rivers from Invasive Species! Training Offered April 24th in Madison

Sponsored by the Rock River Coalition, Friends of Badfish Creek Watershed, and Dane County,

Project RED Training
Saturday, April 24th
9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Dane County Land and Water Resource Management Department
1 Fen Oak Court, Madison

Followed by an optional paddle from 1:00 to 4:00 on Badfish Creek to observe two to three invasives in Badfish Creek and practice the Project RED protocols.

As a result of the success of last summer's training program, the Rock River Coalition has decided to co-host another training for citizens to monitor for invasive species in and along rivers. Paddlers, fisherman, WAV monitors, and river enthusiasts are invited to attend.

The River Alliance of Wisconsin has launched Project RED (riverine early detectors), a monitoring program that trains citizens to identify and report 15 invasive species within river corridors statewide.

During the free training, the River Alliance will teach you to monitor your river by canoe, kayak, or on foot for 15 species of concern. They will help you choose locations and a monitoring schedule that are convenient to you and your volunteers.

The River Alliance will also provide you with online data management tools available through www.citsci.org to help you report and map your

findings. The protocols are easy and fun. In addition, you can use this activity to become more familiar with your river or stream and to engage your friends and neighbors!

The 15 species of concern are purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed, Japanese hops, common reed, flowering rush, hydrilla, curly-leaf pondweed, Eurasian water milfoil, Brazilian waterweed, didymo, zebra mussel, quagga mussel, New Zealand mudsnail, Chinese mystery snail, and banded mystery snail.

To reserve your space, please contact Patricia Cicero with the Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department at (920) 674-7121 or patriciac@jeffersoncountywi.gov.

To learn more about invasive species in our river corridors and how you can help in the fight against invasives, please visit the River Alliance's website: <http://wisconsinrivers.org>.

No P in the Lakes - its a Good Thing!

You might notice, when at the local garden center, that your normal fertilizer isn't available. The new ones will all have a big ZERO for the center number. i.e. 24 - 0 - 12. The middle number signifies the amount of phosphorus or P in the fertilizer.

This is good news for our lakes and rivers. It means you are not adding excess P to your lawn and thus to your lakes and rivers. Phosphorus is an essential plant nutrient. So you might ask "well if it's essential don't I need it"? The answer is, for most people in Wisconsin, **no** you don't. Typically our clay, silt or loam soils have excess phosphorus in them and adding more to lawns is a waste of time and money.

You can still purchase lawn fertilizer with phosphorus, you just have to ask for it. But before you do, think about it. Do you have soil test results that says your lawn needs phosphorus? Or, are you putting in a new lawn? Those are the only two times you should be even thinking about purchasing phosphorus fertilizer.

And why should you pay good money for something you don't need?

Shrubs, trees, flowers and garden vegetables can be fertilized with an all-around fertilizer containing phosphorus. Some plants, especially vegetables and flowers, need a fair amount of phosphorus for good production.

This change in fertilizer availability is a result of a law, which went into effect this past December.

The Rock River Coalition was one of many groups who pushed for the legislation. We thank the legislators who voted for it. It might take a long time, but gradually as we decrease the amount of phosphorus entering our lakes and rivers, we will see improvements.

Many people rightly pointed out that urban lawns are not a huge source of phosphorus across the state. The main sources are from agriculture, both fertilizers and manures and from wastewater treatment plants and industry.

As citizens of the state, we can't do much to prevent runoff from agriculture lands or from our treatment plants. But we can empower ourselves to buy and apply no phosphorus fertilizers.

It's a small, but important step.

TCRCD New Water Team Leader

Kate Heiber-Cobb, founder of 'Permaculture on Stilts' and the Madison Area Permaculture Guild, has joined Town and Country Resource Conservation and Development as Water Issue Team Leader. She shares the position with Lisa Conley. Kate's emphasis on hands-on water quality improvement projects



Town and Country's Water Issue Team members meet at Lake Wingra Boat House, Madison. Pictured from left to right: Victoria Vasys, Kate Heiber-Cobb, Ry Thompson, Lisa Conley.

is a perfect complement to Lisa's strength in policy formation and advocacy.

"I greatly look forward to working with Kate," Lisa Conley said. "Permaculture is a synergistic approach to planning anything - from your vegetable garden to looking for win-wins in water policy and implementation of water team projects. Never heard of stacking functions? You will!"

"I feel privileged to work and learn from Lisa Conley and Beth Gehred," Heiber-Cobb said. "I look forward to our projects and adventures."

Kate brings a strong network with her. In addition to her work with Permaculture, Kate has interests in many areas. She has project and event management experience and many years working in non-profits and small businesses in areas of natural/organic foods, landscaping, gardening, aging and art. She was raised in Waukesha County but has lived in the Madison area since 1971.

Join us for our upcoming Water Issue Team Meetings Wednesdays, February 3 and April 7, 2010, 3-5 pm at the Pyle Center on the UW-Madison campus.

For more information, call Beth Gehred at Town and Country RC&D, 920-541-3208. Town and Country is a volunteer-driven organization working throughout thirteen counties in Southeastern Wisconsin.

Town and Country's Annual Meeting

Program: *Ecopreneurship:*

New Times, New Opportunities, New Minds

Thursday, February 11, 6 pm - 8:30 pm

Oconomowoc Lake Club, 4668 Lake Club Circle, local foods buffet dinner by Chef Jack Kaestner.

Register online at www.townandcountryrcd.org or by phone at 920-220-1927.

\$25 in advance, \$30 at the door

New Mississippi River Program Reaches Upstream to the Rock River Basin

Town and Country Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) recently hosted an informational meeting to profile an innovative opportunity for putting conservation on the ground in the Rock River Basin.

The Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) is a new program of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Through this program, non-federal partners offer competitive proposals to NRCS for specific projects within small watersheds. Eligible partners include local, county, state, and non-profit organizations. Eligible watersheds are 12-digit hydrologic unit code (HUC) areas within each state's focus area. Wisconsin's focus area includes the Pecatonica, Sugar and the Rock River basins.

Dollars from this program do not fund partners directly; rather, they provide additional funds for existing NRCS cost share programs, applied through voluntary participation by agricultural producers. Partners benefit by directing those funds toward their agency's or organization's programs in selected watersheds. Partners provide support such as staffing, education, outreach, monitoring and evaluation

Representatives from county conservation offices, state agencies, lake districts, and non-profit organizations joined NRCS staff at the meeting to investigate whether the MRBI program is a good fit for their objectives. The request for proposals should be released in the coming weeks, with a deadline of 60 days thereafter. If you are interested in organizing partners for a MRBI proposal in your watershed of interest, feel free to contact Craig Ficenece, NRCS Coordinator for Town and Country RC&D: 920-674-2020 x113

For all project details go to www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/mrbi/mrbi.html

Role of partners in MRBI

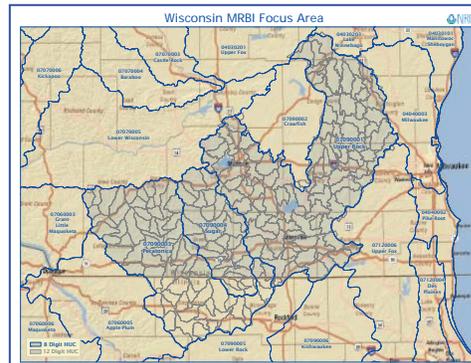
In addition to providing input for watershed selection criteria and the processes used to implement MRBI, partners will have a crucial role in encouraging and supporting producer participation. Partners' involvement will be key in a variety of ways, including:

- Providing information and conducting education and outreach activities.
- Forming agreements to provide staffing for technical assistance and education activities.
- Joining the State Technical Committee to provide input for focus area and watershed selection.
- Submitting proposals for CCPI, CIG, and WREP or partnering with a group submitting a proposal.
- Targeting their agency's or organization's programs toward the Initiative's watersheds.
- Assisting with monitoring, evaluation, and assessment.

MRBI Overview

To improve the health of the Mississippi River Basin, including water quality and wildlife habitat, the Natural Resources Conservation Service is developing the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI). Through this new Initiative, NRCS and its partners will help producers in selected watersheds in the Mississippi River Basin voluntarily implement conservation practices that avoid, control, and trap nutrient runoff; improve wildlife habitat; and maintain agricultural productivity.

These improvements will be accomplished through a conservation systems approach to manage and optimize nitrogen and phosphorous within fields to minimize runoff and reduce downstream nutrient loading. NRCS will provide producers assistance with a system of practices that will control soil erosion, improve soil quality, and provide wildlife habitat while managing runoff and drainage water for improved water quality.



The Initiative will build on the past efforts of producers, NRCS, partners, and other State and Federal agencies in the 12-State Initiative area to address nutrient loading in the Mississippi River Basin. Nutrient loading contributes to both local water quality problems and the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico. The 12 participating States are Arkansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. MRBI will be implemented by NRCS through the following NRCS programs: Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative, Conservation Innovation Grants, and the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program.

NRCS will offer this Initiative in FYs 2010 through 2013, dedicating at least \$80 million in each fiscal year. This is in addition to the agency's regular program funding in the 12 Initiative States and funding by other Federal agencies, States, and partners and the contributions of producers.

Citizen Monitoring Confluence April 10

The Confluence: a Gathering of Monitors is an opportunity for veteran and new monitors to get together, share experiences and get advanced training on a variety of topics.

This is the only time in the year that we bring all monitors together: stream, wetland and lake. So if you are a monitor in the basin, put this date on your calendar.

Learn about exciting new monitoring initiatives and celebrate with you fellow team members.

Pre-register by April 7, 2010 with Stephanie at 608-839-1118 or by email to monitoring@rockrivercoalition.org



Veteran monitors becoming certified in measuring dissolved oxygen at the 2006 Confluence

2010 Citizen Monitoring Confluence:

A Gathering of Citizen Monitors

April 10, 2010

Lake Mills Community Center (City Hall) 100 Water Street

Confluence Agenda

- 8:00-8:30 **Registration**
- 8:30-9:00 **Welcome**
- 9:00-10:10 **Keynotes:** Highlighting the work of monitoring groups within the Rock River Basin
- 10:20-11:05 **Breakout Session 1**
 Zeloski Marsh Update and Monitoring Opportunities: Ed Grunden and Nolan Kolath, Expert Birder
 Invasive Species: Laura MacFarland, River Alliance
 Data Management: Matt Rehwald, WDNR
 Data Services Professional Frog/Amphibian: Bob Hay, Retired State WDNR Herpetologist
 Monitoring Refresher: Kris Stepenuck, WI Volunteer Stream Monitoring Coordinator
- 11:15-12:00 **Breakout Session 2**
 Session one breakouts repeated except for Zeloski Marsh Update
 Three great activities to use with kids: Suzanne Wade, UW-Extension Rock River Basin Educator
- 12:00-12:40 **Lunch** - Bring your own or purchase at the door
- 12:40-1:00 **Feedback Opportunity:** Suzanne Wade, Rock River Basin Educator
- 1:00-1:20 **NEW – Mussel Monitoring:** Lisie Kitchell, DNR
 Learn the how, where and when of mussel monitoring for the new WDNR mussel study.
- 1:20-3:20 **Monitoring What's Involved:** Ed Grunden, RRC Citizen Monitoring Director Q & A session for those interested in becoming a monitor.
Veteran Stream Monitor Certification: Jayne Jenks, Conservation Specialist, Depart. of Parks and Land Use, Waukesha County
 Review of monitoring skills, focusing on procedures and trouble-shooting in the field.
 Bring your DO kit. Refills, turbidity tubes and thermometers will be provided.



Citizen Scientists Key to Understanding & Recording Our Basin Water Quality!

The Rock River Coalition came into existence in 1994. Eight years later in 2002, it began promoting citizens to become caretakers of their local rivers and streams. The RRC recruited and trained stream monitors first, and later wetland monitors. The numbers of monitors has risen and fallen as people move and their interest changed. Most importantly many of our early monitors have moved up to become state Tier 2 monitors, working with DNR to collect more advanced data. Some groups and individuals have also taken on the challenges of the DNR's Tier 3 monitoring: targeted programs to collect specific data. The Rock River Coalition continues to support groups in the basin and our coordinators at the Dane, Rock and Waukesha county Land and Water Conservation Departments.

With the decrease in staffing at the DNR, it is more important than ever for citizens to step up and help with this important work. You can get involved in three ways:

- Take part in the Snapshot Days.
- Sign-up to be once a month WAV (Water Action Volunteer Monitor).
- Help us fundraise for this important effort. It's getting more and more difficult to get grants, so we need your help to get our work done.

Snapshot Days

If the idea of making a commitment to go monitoring every month is daunting, consider participating in our Rock River Basin Snapshot Days. The Rock River Coalition identifies one day in May and another in September as a Snapshot Day. On these days new and veteran monitors across the basin take their water samples thus having everyone out on a single day tells us a great story about water quality.

Become a WAV Monitor

New monitors are trained in the Wisconsin WAV (Water Action Volunteer) techniques. Monitors then go out once a month from spring until fall and collect information on stream flow, dissolved oxygen, temperature, water clarity, macroinvertebrates and habitat. All data is recorded on web-based state databases.

If interested in learning more contact Ed Grunden, RRC Monitoring Director at ed@rockrivercoalition.org or by calling 920-648-2673.

New Monitor Training May 22, 2010

A training session for individuals interested in stream monitoring will be held in Waterville, WI on May 22.

If interested contact Jayne Jenks at 262-896-8305 or jjjenks@waukesha.gov. More information on this and other monitor training workshops will be in the spring newsletter.

Welcome to the RRSG!

Heart of the City in Fort Atkinson is the most recent addition to the Rock River Stormwater Group. Heart of the City is a non-profit organization that encourages sustainable development, the preservation of existing and treasured civic characteristics and active participation of the citizenry. Learn more about Heart of the City at: www.heartofthecity.us



The RRSG officially organized at the beginning of 2009. Current members include:

Non-permitted municipalities and partners:

City of Jefferson
Department of Natural Resources
Heart of the City
Lake Sinissippi Association
Lake Sinissippi Improvement District
Rock River Coalition
Town and Country Resource Conservation & Development, Inc
University of Wisconsin Extension

Municipal members (with permits) are:

Beaver Dam
Beloit (city)
Beloit (town)
Fort Atkinson
Janesville
Milton
Watertown
Whitewater

Join Us!

We welcome any group, organization or municipality that wants to help spread the word about the importance of stormwater to our local waterways.

Non-profits, lake associations and other organization get free membership. Non-permitted municipalities cost is only \$1,000/year.

Membership includes access to educational opportunities and outreach materials and the chance to network with other local groups and municipalities.

As part of the Rock River Stormwater Group, you will be a key part of our efforts to keep our waters clean and our future bright.

Contact Rebecca Dill, rdill@biodiverse.org, 773-496-4020, or go to www.cleanwaterbrightfuture.org for more information, educational resources and to join.

Rock River Stormwater Group: 2009 Growth and Looking to 2010

By Rebecca Dill, education coordinator of the Rock River Stormwater Group

This past year was a year of transition and big growth for the Rock River Stormwater Group, a coalition of 16 organizations and municipalities that promote sustainable stormwater practices in the Rock River Basin.

Over the course of the year, at monthly meetings and through intense conversations, representatives from the member organizations discussed and collaborated on stormwater education and outreach programs. As a result of this great collaboration, the Rock River Stormwater Group (RRSG) had a break-out year.

Throughout the year, we held several events to raise awareness about the effects of stormwater pollution on our region's waterways and ways to protect those waterways from pollution.

We hosted a workshop to educate professionals working on construction sites about erosion control. We also held two very successful public rain garden workshops in Whitewater and in Watertown last fall.

In addition to workshops, during the summer and fall, many municipalities painted local storm drains as an educational activity and permanent reminder to passersby that anything that flows into the drain goes, untreated, directly to the local streams and rivers.

We also involved the public through new stormwater educational tools such as brochures and posters. Truly, 2009 was a big



year for the RRSG. Now, we are moving full-speed ahead with our plans for 2010, which include both new initiatives and the continuation

of last year's successful projects.

The Clean water. Bright future. public campaign, a product of the RRSG, will target several specific topics throughout the year. For homeowners, we will focus on keeping yard debris, like grass clippings and leaves, out of the drains. This yard debris can clog pipes and cause flooding, but it also flows into rivers, lakes and streams, breaks down and adds nutrients that can harm fish and wildlife and spawn ugly, and sometimes dangerous, algae.

The group will also focus on erosion control in construction sites again this year. Construction sites are by far the biggest sources of stream sediment pollution in our basin's communities. This sediment can ruin the habitat of bottom-dwelling aquatic creatures and turns the water brown and cloudy. Because dirt and sediment will always be moved and disturbed during construction projects, we will work with construction workers and developers to limit the impact as much as possible.

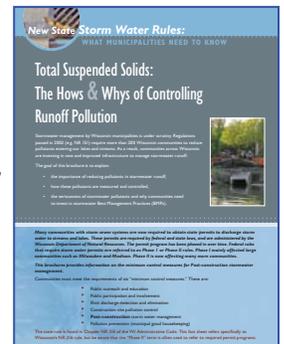
As we move ahead with our 2010 plans, you can do your part to protect our precious waters at your home or business. For example, when the snow melts and the lawn mowers come out this spring, make sure your grass clippings don't end up in the street. In the meantime, by shoveling more and salting less, we can keep chemicals from running off our sidewalks and into storm drains. No matter the season, together, we can make 2010 another wonderful year for the waterways in the Rock River basin.

Singing the Winter Blues...or Blacks, or Greys, or Browns

Notice how black those once billowy white snow piles are? That's a good clue as to what is washing into our Rock River, its tributaries and lakes when the snow melts.

The Rock River Stormwater Group is working to keep salt, sediment, toxic chemicals, nutrients and just plain dirt out of the water.

Want to know what's so bad about urban run-off? Check out a new brochure by the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension and the Department of Natural Resources: *Total Suspended Solids: The Hows and Whys of Controlling Runoff Pollution*. Many of the RRSG municipalities have copies of this brochure or send a request to marier@jeffersoncountywi.gov or go on-line to runoffinfo.uwex.edu. See the back cover for another publication useful for municipalities called, "Where to go with the Snow".



Rock River Recovery Plan

continued from page 1

How can we Improve the Water Quality in the Rock River?

Since 2000, most industrial and municipal point sources have reduced their discharge of phosphorus down to 1ppm as part of their permit requirements. However, this reduction alone is not enough to restore water quality in the watershed and further point source reductions are likely.

Reducing phosphorus and sediment loading to the Rock River Basin will require reducing polluted runoff from such sources as pastures and cropland, construction sites and urban areas.

Runoff of phosphorus and sediment are closely linked, as phosphorus easily attaches to soil and moves with it when soil is carried off the land and into the water. Some of the actions that reduce the delivery of sediment will also reduce the amount of phosphorus delivered.

Actions to reduce runoff that will likely be part of the recovery plan include:

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

How Might This Affect Me?

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

The cost of wastewater treatment and stormwater management are funded through either taxes or utility fees. Once the TMDL report is completed, point source allocation including any further reductions will be incorporated into all existing and future discharge permits.

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

Jim Congdon, DNR Upper Rock River Basin Leader

Agricultural and urban runoff is managed primarily through Wisconsin's runoff management performance standards. Currently agricultural controls are primarily done voluntarily by farmers, typically with cost share assistance from state, county or federal agencies. During the development of the recovery plan, an

agricultural team will explore ways to increase farmer participation, including pursuing new incentives.

In order to reduce their contribution to water pollution, construction sites and municipalities may be required to install additional best management practices (BMPs) to maximize water quality improvements.

Public Participation

Active public involvement will be a vital part of the development and implementation of the Rock River Basin Recovery Plan. Accomplishing reductions in phosphorus and sediment loadings to the river will require participation from every community member.

Everyone is encouraged to become involved in the development and implementation of the Rock River Basin Recovery Plan. Public involvement ensures that the report will be sensitive to local stakeholder concerns and will be integrated with other water quality improvement efforts.

At a minimum, citizens are encouraged to participate in the public informational meetings and the 30-day public comment period.

There are other ways to be involved. Anytime a difficult and far-reaching plan is being developed or implemented, it can not be effective without citizens letting their elected officials know of their interest and concerns.

Finally, the success of the Rock River recovery effort rests with you, the basin stakeholders. Stakeholder participation in planning and implementing the water quality improvement actions is what will ultimately restore water quality in the Rock River.

If you'd like to receive meeting notifications contact Steve Warrner at steve.warrner@wisconsin.gov

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

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

Any donation of \$100 or more will be recognized and linked to your website from our website: www.rockrivercoalition.org

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

Tax deductible donation	
Amount	Purpose
	General Support
	Citizen Monitoring
	Rain Gardens
	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



GFLOW Model Unveiled

The GFLOW Model report was presented to the sponsoring municipalities and groups this past fall. It was an event worth celebrating, especially after all the years of work. The RRC gives special thanks to those who helped us accomplish this special feat! Pictured below are a few of these champions:

From left to right: Paul Juchem, USGS modeler; Dan Lynch City of Janesville; Lisa Conley, RRC President; Joe Dorava, Vierbicher Associates, past RRC President and GFLOW Coordinator; Cindy Arbiture, RRC President when project was initiated and currently on the Town of Concord Planning Commission; Suzanne Wade, UWEX Rock River Basin Educator and Paul Moderacki, who while at Johnson Creek spearheaded the program.



Without him and Steve Wilke of Lake Mills we never would have gotten the support we did. Others who deserve our thanks include Groundwater Issue Team members: Ed Morse, Wisconsin Rural Water Association; Dave Johnson, Steve Ales and Jim Congdon, DNR; Ruth Johnson, Lake Sinissippi; David Neuendorf, retired UWEX; Jim Krohelski and Chuck Dunning, USGS. Again thank you all.

Time to Renew Your Membership

Non-profits such as the Rock River Coalition cannot exist without memberships and donations.

It's tough for a group such as the Rock River Coalition to solicit memberships - we have limited staff and cover a huge amount of land area. Our work is important, we do our best when developing partnerships, bringing people together to make a real difference. That's hard to sell memberships for.

So please if you are getting this newsletter and are not paying a membership fee or giving a donation of time or money to the Rock River Coalition please become a member. Just go online to

www.rockrivercoalition.org and sign-up via PayPal or cut out the membership form on page 7 and mail it in with your check.

You can get this newsletter via email by subscribing to rock-river-basin-update-request@lists.uwex.edu or by emailing marier@jeffersoncountywi.gov. You'll receive a monthly email with an amazing amount of information on upcoming events, job openings, websites, publications and grants, plus a link to the most recent newsletter.

Join the RRC's New Social Network

The Rock River Coalition has entered the social network scene. Be one of the first to join the RRC's social network to stay up-to-date with Coalition news, events and blogs:

<http://rockrivercoalition.ning.com/>

The Rock River Coalition also has a new general email address, please change rriver@excel.net to info@rockrivercoalition.org in your email directory.



Where to Go With the Snow?

The Wisconsin DNR has a publication to help municipalities make good decisions on where to go with snow; it can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/runoff>.

Disposing of snow on land where contaminants and debris can be gradually released, contained or collected is better than dumping it into surface water or on parking lots such as this where it drains directly into surface waters, groundwater or storm drains. The best disposal sites are those that drain to detention basins.

Calendar of Events

Feb. 3 **TCRCD Water Team Meeting:** 3:00-5:00pm UW-Madison Pyle Center.

Feb. 6 **RRC Board Retreat:** Premier Bank Fort Atkinson 9:00 - 2:00 (fundraising and future directions)

Feb. 9 **Rock River Stormwater Group:** 9:30 - Noon, Watertown Municipal Building: Special guest Ed Grunden, citizen stream monitoring.

Feb. 11 **TCRCD Annual Meeting:** 5:30 - 9:00pm more information page 4

March 10 **Rock River Recovery Plan Meeting:** 1:00 - 4:30 Lake Mills Community Center, contact Steve Warrner at steve.warrner@wisconsin.gov to register.

March 24 **Water Star Pilot Testing:** 9:00 - 3:00 Pyle Center, UW-Madison (tentative) More information will be posted to <http://fyi.uex.edu/waterstar>.

April 7 **TCRCD Water Team Meeting:** 3:00-5:00pm UW-Madison Pyle Center.

April 8 **RRSG Sustainable Backyard Workshop:** (tentative) Rotary Gardens, Janesville, contact Suzanne Wade for more information.

April 10 **RRC Confluence:** for veteran and new monitors, Lake Mills Community Center. See page 5.

April 13 **RRSG BMP Basics Workshops:** 8-10am Watertown and 1-3pm Janesville, (for municipal staff)

May 22 **Waukesha County Volunteer Stream Monitoring Workshop:** Waterville, contact Jayne Jenks at jjjenks@waukeshacountywi.gov

Look Inside to Find Articles on:

A New Initiative: A Rock River Recovery Plan	Pg 1
RRC President's Message	Pg 2
4-Way Farms Buffer	Pg 2
Will Your Nonprofit Lose Tax-exempt Status	Pg 3
Project RED Workshop	Pg 3
No P in the Lake - It's a Good Thing	Pg 4
TCRCD New Water Team Leader	Pg 4
Mississippi River Basin Initiative	Pg 4
Citizen Monitoring Confluence	Pg 5
Citizen Monitoring Updates	Pg 5
Welcome to the RRSR - Heart of the City	Pg 6
RRSG 2009 Growth and Looking to 2010	Pg 6
Rock River Recovery Plan continued	Pg 7
RRC Membership Form	Pg 7

Newsletter Deadline

Deadline for the spring newsletter is March 26 2010. To submit, e-mail suzanne.wade@ces.uwex.edu.

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

For more information about these and other area events, meetings, workshops or conferences go to <http://rockrivercoalition.ning.com>