



Rock River Reflections

A publication of the Rock River Coalition
in cooperation with the Rock River Stormwater Group

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State Honors Rock Basin Volunteer Monitors

At this year's Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention & Water Action Volunteers Symposium in Stevens Point in April, several individuals and groups from our basin were lauded with the 2019 Wisconsin Lake Stewardship & Volunteer Stream Monitoring Awards.



Michael Engleson (Wisconsin Lakes) presenting the monitoring award to Jessica and Nate Rice
Photo by Doug Moore

Congratulations to Nate and Jessica Rice and the UW-Whitewater Sustainability Office!

Nate & Jessica Rice ~ Category: Lake Stewardship, Citizen Award

Nate and Jessica Rice are emblematic of the best sort of citizen volunteers for our lakes.

Passionate leaders dedicated to the cause, their impact on Silver Lake in Waukesha County, as well as waters in their region, is impressive. On Silver Lake they've led a massive Clean Boats Clean Waters effort, including the hiring of Summit police officers to help monitor the landing. Nate himself discovered a

questionable plant on one boat trailer that turned out to be Starry Stonewort, a new invader to Wisconsin.

But their work doesn't just involve their own lake, as they've consulted with other area lakes on CBCW and CLMN programs, participated in county and regional planning and educational vents, and been involved on a state level with the WI Lakes Partnership.

As former AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) coordinator for Waukesha and Washington Counties, Bradley Stekart says of the Rice's:

"Their passion for the health of water in Waukesha



UWW students monitoring the depth to determine stream flow on one of their three sites

County's 'Lake Country' is a true example of heeding the call of our Wisconsin waters."

UW-Whitewater Sustainability Office Student Volunteers ~ Category: Volunteer Stream Monitoring Group

The presence of a Water Action Volunteers program on a college campus can motivate and involve students of all majors, giving insight into potential career opportunities for those students.

The UW-Whitewater Sustainability Office Student Volunteers make for a perfect example. With three stream monitoring sites

close to campus, Wesley Enterline, Sustainability Office Coordinator, provided countless opportunities for students to be involved.

In 2018 students Max Gruenberg and John Roberts were trained and led three volunteer sessions a month from April through October, bringing 30 new student stream monitors on board.

In addition, the group engages with the Whitewater community through field trips and summer camps for Whitewater Middle School students.

Their effort, says Gruenberg, is not just to monitor the streams, but for the participants to "realize the importance of their work."



RRC board members thank Nancy Sheehan for spearheading our volunteer stream monitoring program over the past seven years. Pictured from left Eric Compas, Nancy Sheehan, Becca Dymzarov (current stream monitoring coordinator), Joe Zakovec, Patricia Cicero, Montgomery Baker and Ashley Roscoe.



Max Gruenberg, UW-W student, accepts the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Group award on behalf of UW-Whitewater Sustainability Office from Ilana Haimes of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

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Appreciating Outstanding Contributions:



Every two years, we recognize the hard work and dedication of volunteers and groups throughout the basin. Our Protector Awards go to groups and individuals who have made a significant impact on the basin and the values we all aspire to. Our Friends Awards go to individuals and groups who have served as key partners in helping the Coalition accomplish what we do. We conducted our formal award ceremony during our Annual Meeting this May to recognize:

Protector Awards for Outstanding Actions in the Rock River Basin

Tim Whittaker and City of Janesville for their work in helping to restore the habitat of the Rock River by removing the Monterey Dam removal



Wes Enterline and the UW-Whitewater Sustainability Office for their efforts to mentor and educate the next generation of sustainability leaders. He coordinates monitoring efforts and oversees the active student sustainability group SAGE.

Bob and Sue Volenec monitor two streams in Jefferson County providing 4 years of critical data. They are truly monitoring superstars having taken on the challenge of monitoring bat routes on lakes and streams, and surveying bat houses. They also monitor lake water quality, do annual surveys for the breeding bird atlas, and coordinate the crane count in Jefferson County.



RRC Friends Awards

This year's awards went to Jane Carlson, past president; Nancy Sheehan, our previous stream monitoring volunteer coordinator and the Rock River Stormwater Group, who provide content and funds for this newsletter and are doing critical water quality education work in the basin.

Thank you to our award winners for their amazing contributions to the resources of the Rock River Basin. Pictured counter-clockwise with RRC Student Board Member Ashley Roscoe are Tim Whittaker, Wes Enterline (Protector Award), Sue Volenec (and Bob Volenec, not pictured) and President Eric Compas, Wes Enterline for the RRSRG and Jane Carlson. See Nancy Sheehan and her monitors on page 8.

Photos by Patricia Cicero

Thanks to All Our Successful Bingo Night Sponsors!

With the help of our sponsors and the prizes they provided, we were able to raise \$912 for the Stream Monitoring Program and other RRC initiatives this June. Thanks to all that attended and shared our fun evening!

- Rutabaga Paddle Shop
- Crema Café
- Stalzy's Deli
- Ian's Pizza
- Revolution Cycle
- Weary Traveler Freehouse
- The Kissers
- Bad Dog Frida
- Slow Roll Cycle
- Madison Children Museum
- Running with Sweets
- Fire & Knife BBQ
- Tobi Bolt, Mary Kay
- The Keystone Grill
- Tyranena Brewing Company
- Stone Fence
- Café Brittolli



Board members Patricia Cicero and Eric Compas prepare for bingo calling and prizes.



Bingo enthusiasts enjoying bingo and beer on Tyranena's patio.



In Memory of Bill Lamm

With sadness we share that Bill Lamm, a dedicated Rock River Coalition stream monitor, passed away at the age of 77. Bill and his wife Connie Hagen started monitoring Door Creek in 2014.

Bill spent his career as a fermentation specialist in industrial microbiology and held a number of US patents.

In his retirement he volunteered for many lake and stream projects in the Madison area, specifically working on monitoring water quality in the Door Creek Watershed.

Bill passed away on Sunday, July 21, 2019 at the University of Wisconsin Hospital in Madison.

We thank Bill for his service. He will be missed.



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

If you'd prefer a pdf of the newsletter emailed to you contact info@rockrivercoalition.org.

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 Trail Establishes New Visitors Center at Nature at the Confluence

By Greg Farnham and Therese Oldenburg, Rock River Trail Initiative



Learning Center of Nature at the Confluence, South Beloit, IL, and home of the new Rock River Trail Visitors Center.

The Rock River Trail Initiative has taken a big step forward to support and promote its system of public recreational and special interest trails along the Rock River. Earlier this summer RRTI joined with Nature at the Confluence of South Beloit, IL to establish a visitors and information center for the Rock River Trail at the NATC Learning Center.

The half-way point of the 320-mile Rock River Trail is the state line between Beloit, WI and South Beloit, IL.

NATC is an urban ecological park and educational center at the confluence of Turtle Creek and the Rock River near the state line. It is a non-profit organization established in 2017 to restore confluence lands to natural health and beauty, provide

opportunities for public education of natural and human history and various ecological topics, and offer recreational opportunities on



Banners, signs and handouts detail the eleven trail elements of the Rock River Trail at the Rock River Trail Visitors Center, South Beloit, IL.

waterways and trails. The mission of NATC is to inspire the love of nature and cultivate environmental understanding and stewardship.

RRTI envisions the enjoyment and appreciation by all of the scenic beauty, natural resources and historic and cultural assets of the Rock River Valley.

RRTI and NATC have already shared resources on several joint projects and mutually support each other on social media outreach and other promotional activities. The organizations look forward to cooperative work for public outreach and education, support of recreational and leisure activities on the Rock River, and enhancement of NATC and Rock River Trail as regional attractions.

And in conjunction with the opening of the Rock River Trail Visitors Center, RRTI introduced two new trail elements: Rock River Birding Trail and Rock River Wine and Craft Beer Trail.

Available on our website is a birding trail map to enable birders and others to discover the best places in the Rock River corridor to observe birds. The corridor boasts vast wildlife refuges, forests and parks that provide diverse habitat and food sources for birds. The Rock River is part of the Mississippi Flyway, an important migratory route for more than 300 bird species.

And after a wonderful day recreating on the Rock River, why not enjoy a tasty wine or delicious craft beer? The Rock River Wine and Craft Beer Trail was created for just that purpose! Visit the website for a map of unique wineries and craft breweries along the river offering their special potations for your pleasure.

www.rockrivertrail.com
(National Water Trail)

www.natureattheconfluence.com



New Prairie Filter Strips in Dodge County

By Craig Ficenc, Program Director at the Sand County Foundation

Prairies of the past offer a new conservation tool for Midwest farmers. Research from Iowa State University's STRIPS (www.prairiestrips.org) program shows nutrient and sediment loss can be reduced by nearly 90 percent when just 10 percent of a corn or soybean field is converted to a diverse mix of stiff-stemmed, deep-rooted native grasses and forbs. When strategically placed on the landscape, these "prairie filter strips" can improve water quality by capturing farm runoff while also providing habitat for pollinators and grassland birds.

Sand County Foundation is working with farmers in southern Wisconsin to try out prairie strips in their fields. Dodge County farmers, Charles Hammer and Nancy Kavazanjian, plan to seed the first prairie strips in the Rock River basin this fall. Farmers, conservation groups, lake associations, wastewater utilities, and others in the basin can join Sand County Foundation's efforts to incorporate this practice into water quality improvement efforts. Visit www.sandcountyfoundation.org/prairiestrips or contact Craig Ficenc at cficenc@sandcountyfoundation.org or 608-729-1388 to learn more.



Prairie strip in its third year of growth on a farm in Washington County.

Watershed Protection Updates:

Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program (OWPP) and Tall Pines Conservancy. (TPC)

By Jill Bedford, Tall Pines Conservancy

The Schmidt Preserve

Tall Pines Conservancy has purchased 26.46 acres of land on Mason Creek, a Class I Trout Stream identified by the EPA and WDNR as an impaired waterway. The purchased land sits within the upper reach of the Mason Creek watershed, which has been identified as a contributor of sediment and phosphorus to both the Oconomowoc and Rock rivers.



Key stakeholders met at Mason Creek to discuss engineering plans with Stantec engineer Sean Collins.

Photo by Jill Bedford

WDNR awarded TPC a \$50,000 Lake Protection grant to engineer the restoration plans. Goals and objectives for this project are as follows: 1) baseline data review and site surveys; 2) stream design and documentation; 3) education and outreach; 4) water quality and biological monitoring; and 5) remove barrier for fish passage and other stream debris and install native perennial buffer.

A recent meeting was held with major potential partners and engineers from Stantec to solicit input on the final restoration plans. This land will be undergoing many changes and currently offers no public access.

Years ago, Mason Creek had been channelized and ditched through this property to enhance drainage. The re-meandering of the channel and introduction of in-stream habitat features will provide for a self-maintaining stream that provides natural riffle, run, pool, and glide facet sequences, and a healthy riparian buffer between surrounding agricultural lands. A population of brook trout are known to occupy the un-ditched portions of the East Branch of Mason Creek upstream and downstream.

The 26-acre site is contiguous with a 220-acre private wetland mitigation bank to the north, which is subject to a proposed project to restore stream functions to approximately 2,200 linear feet of the East Branch of Mason Creek. Together, these properties present a significant opportunity to recover natural stream function of degraded portions of Mason Creek. Stayed tuned!

Healthy Lakes Grant

TPC has been working with the North Lake Management District and four lake riparian owners who received the Healthy Lakes grant to restore 350 square feet of their shorelines. We hope to encourage many more shoreline owners to participate in 2020. River shoreline owners can also apply for grants. "Healthy Lakes" includes 5 simple and inexpensive best practices that improve habitat and water quality on your lakeshore property. Visit <https://healthylakeswi.com/>

OWPP Update

In 2019, the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program (OWPP) has funded more than 16 acres of prairie plantings in 10-year conservation cover contracts. OWPP also funded 20 acres of harvestable buffers, which allow farmers to reduce water runoff while continuing to take a crop off lands adjacent to waterways. This fall also saw the successful application of 2200 acres of annual cover crops. 1900 of these acres were seeded by helicopter through collaborative funding from the NRCS, the City of Oconomowoc, and Tall Pines Conservancy. The producer-led group, Farmers for Lake Country, provided significant leadership to make the fall aerial seeding happen. OWPP also coordinated aerial seeding of 400 acres in the Rock River watershed near Ashippun in order to support expanded use of cover crops in the region.

NEW OWPP Newsletter

The Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program (OWPP) revealed their new newsletter, which will be distributed 2-3 times per year. Please sign up for the newsletter to learn of the many activities and efforts of TPC, Clean Water Association, Farmers for Lake Country and many other partners. To receive the digital version of the newsletter, please e-mail info@tallpinesconservancy.org – Subject: OWPP Newsletter

New Rock River Coalition Team Member

A warm welcome to Brooke Alexander. She will be joining the Rock River Coalition's team to help visualize the data collected by our volunteer citizen stream monitors making it both easier to access and digest. This project is part of an ongoing initiative to share the data that is collected by Rock River Coalition's Volunteer Citizen Stream Monitors. Over 150 of Rock River Coalition's volunteers currently monitor and collect data at over 75 stream sites in the Rock River Basin for water quality indicators. We will be expanding the use of our data within communities in the Rock River Basin through storytelling and visualization. Brooke will be working on interactive maps that feature active site maps where a simple click will show citizen stream monitoring sites and other data related projects.

Brooke (Weiland) Alexander is a visual science communicator. As a freelance graphic designer she makes complex research clear for broader audiences. Brooke has a background in environmental science and holds an M.S. in Life Science Communication from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She loves illustrating data, stories of the people behind science, and results to diverse audiences. As a concerned citizen for water quality in southern Wisconsin and having conducted stream monitoring herself, Brooke is excited to start crafting a visual narrative for the Rock River Coalition and help communicate about the data collected by its dedicated stream monitors. If you happen to meet, she will also likely tell you about her mushroom company, pond plans, passion for pinecones and quest for the perfect gnocchi. You can see more of her work at Brooke Weiland Studios, online at www.brookeweiland.com.



If you have a story that you would like to share about a stream in the Rock River Basin, please contact Becca@rockrivercoalition.org.

Yahara Watershed Meeting, Saturday, November 2nd

The Dane County Land & Water Resources Department will host our annual meeting of volunteer stream monitors working in the Yahara River Watershed. Speakers include; Todd Stuntebeck, Physical Scientist, Water Quality Assessments and Monitoring, USGS; Kyle Minks, Watershed Manager, Dane Co. LWRD; Mike Miller, Stream Ecologist, WDNR; Scott Taylor, Taylor Conservation; Rachel Johnson, UW-Madison Graduate Student in the Water Resource Management; and Becca Dymzarov, Stream Monitoring Program Coordinator, Rock River Coalition. Save the date Yahara River Watershed Stream Monitors! If you have questions, contact Becca@rockrivercoalition.org.

Date: Saturday, November 2nd
Time: 9am to 2pm
Location: Dane County Land & Water Resources Department
5201 Fen Oak Drive
Madison WI 53718-8827

Mauneshia River Alliance Update

By Laura Rose

The Mauneshia River Alliance has been working hard on two fronts this year.

On the environmental front, we've done eight river clean up days, with two more scheduled this fall. We've taken several hundred pounds of trash out of the river, including old tires, lots of plastic in every form, and even a dirt bike. Along the way, we've cut out snags and dead-falls, making the river more navigable for canoes and kayaks. The Mauneshia is now navigable from Highway TT through Marshall and all the way to Waterloo, a distance of about ten miles with all of the river's twists and bends.

On the public relations and organizational front, we've held several public meetings, elected officers, created a website, gained many followers on Facebook, and held two great events. This July, we held "Launch: A Day on the Mauneshia," where we hosted an on-the-water scavenger hunt, displayed RRC brochures and our own PR, sold food and T-shirts, and helped to debut our town's new kayak rental program.

This October we held "Propel," the first of what we hope will be an annual "dry tri" (dry triathlon). Both events were small but successful.

In 2020, we hope to begin water quality testing and clear river blockages all the way to Mud Lake.



CCR/MRA Informational display at the Marshall Community Library.



The MRA booth at our "Propel" event, July 2019.

Callie Armstrong and Laura Rose sell T-shirts and give out information on the river cleanup project, the Mauneshia River Alliance and the Rock River Coalition.

A large pile of trash taken out during one river clean up, on Koch Dr. near Marshall.



Mauneshia River Alliance members show off an example of the new river trail signs that will be installed.

We are always looking for new members to help us!

If you'd like to follow our efforts, check out mauneshiariveralliance.org or "like" us on Facebook: @mauneshiariveralliance.

See more photos of the Mauneshia Alliance on page 8.

Friends of Badfish Creek Watershed Update

By Lynne Diebel

FBCW kicked off summer with their Adopt-A-Highway cleanup on County Hwy 138 near Oregon, Wisconsin.

Then, with the help of Stoughton High School teacher Amy Hermanson and students in her Environmental Studies class, as well as DNR staff, the group held a workday at the Old Stage Road canoe landing.

Forty volunteers cleared invasive honeysuckle, wild parsnip, garlic mustard and buckthorn, spread a new layer of bark chips on the trail from the parking area to the creek, and moved boulders to improve canoe and kayak access at the landing.

Also, thanks to the efforts of Friends members Jim Post and Jim Danky, new "Canoe Landing" highway signs now point the way.

With the help of landowner Doug Read, Friends members Andy Hoernemann, Jim Post and Ralph Erickson cleared deadfalls in the Wildlife Area and at the Old Stage bridge. The three Friends also led two paddle trips on the Badfish in June, one sponsored by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and the other by Oregon Community Education.

The Friends are now raising money for a long-term project. In the past few years, E. coli levels have risen to unacceptable levels in the Badfish. In March 2019, a manure spill dumped considerable manure into the creek. With testing advice from Rock County Environmental Health Director Rick Wietersen, the Friends are planning microbial source testing and tracking in the creek to help identify whether the overall source is human or animal and plan to use the results to encourage policy changes both in effluent treatment and in DNR conservation warden vigilance.

Our first fundraising event will occur in October when FBCW will be the "Mission of the Month" for the Green Team at People's United Methodist Church of Oregon, Wisconsin.



Thirty enthusiastic Stoughton High School students volunteered for the FBCW workday at the Old Stage Road canoe landing.

The Mauneshia River Alliance and the Friends of the Badfish Creek Watershed are two of the Rock River Coalition Chapter's. Chapter's operate relatively autonomous to the RRC, but follow our by-laws and operating procedures. The RRC manages their finances and for every membership that identifies an affiliation with a chapter, 25% of that membership goes to chapter activities. For more information about our three chapters, check out our website or email info@rockrivercoalition.org

Protecting Our Waterways Starts With the Storm Drain

By Samantha Rennie, Rock River Stormwater Group



Over the course of the 2019 summer, the Rock River Stormwater Group (RRSG) and Protect Wisconsin Waterways (PWW) began a new community engagement and education program called the *Storm Drain Protector Program*.

Through this initiative, community members with storm drains along their property were asked to sign up to be their storm drain's "protector."

What does it mean to be a storm drain protector?

Being a Storm Drain Protector means you agree to prevent pollution from reaching storm drains by keeping the area around the storm drains, specifically the one closest to your house, free from debris and by following these tips:

- Keep leaves out of the storm drains
- Properly dispose of household chemicals (do not dump down the storm drain)
- Compost/leave grass clippings on your lawn and keep them out of the street
- Pick up pet waste (if you have a pet)
- Regularly check your vehicles for fluid leaks
- Wash your car at a car wash or in a lawn
- Direct downspouts into rain barrels or onto your lawn
- Minimize use of fertilizers or use natural fertilizers and keep off hard surfaces like sidewalks/driveways
- Talk to your neighbors about protecting the drain



"Dump no waste. Drains to river." Cities, such as Waupun, stencil messages next to storm drains to inform the community they lead to water and not to the sewage treatment plant.

Protect Wisconsin Waterways volunteers that spoke with community members discovered that many do not realize that storm drains lead directly to the waterways. One of the primary goals of PWW is to educate the public on responsible stormwater practices, so this program fits perfectly with our mission and objectives for cleaner waterways in Wisconsin through community engagement and education.

Protect Wisconsin Waterways representatives canvassed

neighborhoods in Waupun, Whitewater, and Beloit to ask community members to sign up for the program.

The canvassers went door-to-door, stopping at homes with storm drains along the property to inform them of the Storm Drain Protector Program and how they can help keep our waterways free from unnecessary stormwater pollution.

There are already over 100 Storm Drain Protectors and we want you to be one too! While the team will be out in other area communities as weather allows, you can sign up online today!

Visit protectwiwaterways.org/sdpp/ to sign up to protect your storm drain and ultimately protect our waterways!

Follow us on social media for other tips on how you can help Protect Wisconsin Waterways!

Facebook: @protectwisconsinwaterways Instagram: @protectwisconsinwaterways Twitter: @protectwiwater

Protect Wisconsin Waterways' Largest Sweep Yet!

By Samantha Rennie, Rock River Stormwater Group



A student volunteer picking up trash along the shore line of Riverside Park in Beloit during the 2019 Sweep on Saturday, September 7th.

Where could you find over 50 tires, traffic cones, a TV, and children's bikes? Unfortunately, volunteers from across the Rock River Basin found these items in or along the shoreline of the Rock River and other area waterways.

The Protect Wisconsin Waterways Sweep is a series of waterway clean-ups spanning from Beloit, WI to Waupun, WI in a single day. Our volunteer force for the event consists of community members, municipal workers, and students working together to clean-up our waterways.

In 2017, at the first Protect Wisconsin Waterways Sweep, we had three clean-up locations and 30 volunteers, growing to six locations and 130 volunteers in 2018. This year, the event expanded to eight locations and 196 volunteers assisting with the clean-up on September 7, 2019! Volunteers were able to collect over 151 bags of trash, not including large items (such as the 52 tires pulled from the Rock River in Janesville) that could not fit in the bags.



A group of community members posing with the ample amount of trash they collected along the Rock River in Fort Atkinson during the 2019 Sweep.

Each year, Protect Wisconsin Waterways has a goal of growing the Sweep's impact on each municipality through increased community involvement. For the 2020 Sweep, there will be participating locations for all Rock River Stormwater Group member communities including the City of Beloit, Town of Beloit, Janesville, Milton, Whitewater, Fort Atkinson, Beaver Dam, and Waupun.

From picking up basic trash like aluminum cans and wrappers to more unique items - children's bikes, plastic toys, shoes, a TV, and a parks and recreation barrier - volunteers have fun while making a huge splash in the environment and community!

So save the date, **Saturday, September 12th, 2020** and come help us with the 4th Annual Protect Wisconsin Waterways Sweep!



Two City of Beloit employees assisting with the clean up by using nets to catch trash already in the water.



Splash, the Protect Wisconsin Waterways mascot, celebrating a successful clean up with two volunteers.

Farmers' Interest in Soil Health Grows

By Michelle Scarpace, Natural Resource Educator, UW-Madison Division of Extension

It's March 5th at 4:00pm, and I have a Soil Health Workshop starting in 30 minutes—everything is set up, the food is ready to go, and I am really hoping that someone shows up! Anyone who has hosted event knows this uneasy feeling before it starts. There were 15 people registered for the workshop, with 4 of those being speakers for the event, so my attendance didn't seem like it would be too high... By the time the event started, we were getting extra tables and chairs as the number of people who came through the door was over 45! At the time, I was shocked, but now reflecting on it, it's clear that soil health has become quite the buzz around the area.

8 events related to soil health and conservation across the Rock River Basin

Over 500 participants in these events

Hosts included Land Conservation Departments, Producer-led Groups, Environmental Groups, and UW-Madison Division of Extension

Topics Covered: Cover crops, soil health, soil compaction, Reduced tillage and no-till, manure management

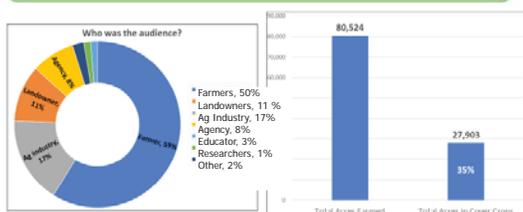


Figure 2: Attendance Breakdown from Dodge Farmers HSHW Feb. and April workshops, Soil Health Workshop in Fort Atkinson and Mason Creek Field Day in Oconomowoc.



Figure 3: Acres farmed and acres planted in cover crops by attendees at the Dodge Farmers HSHW Feb. event and Soil Health Workshop in Fort Atkinson

particles are pushed together thereby reducing pore space between them. When soils are saturated, much like what we saw this spring and fall, there is a higher chance that soils will become compacted because the water acts as a lubricant and makes it easier for the soil particles to move against each other when heavy equipment is driven on fields. Not only can compaction lead to lower yields, but it can also reduce water infiltration and increase soil erosion. So, from a production and water quality perspective, soil compaction can become a major issue. As many farmers had soil compaction from the wet spring and fall, they are looking at options such as controlling traffic patterns on fields, managing equipment loads, and improving soil structure through reducing tillage and incorporating cover crops. With the increase in intense rainfall events witnessed this past year, and the looks of this fall, utilizing conservation practices like cover crops and reduced tillage will become even more important in protecting soil and preventing runoff from entering water bodies.

Through the attendance at these events, farmers are interested in learning more about soil health, but are best management practices being implemented? Based off survey data from the Dodge County Farmers for Healthy Soil & Healthy Water Soil Health Expo, and the Soil Health Workshop in Jefferson county, collectively, the attendees farm about 80,000 acres, and when asked how many acres had cover crops planted, about 35% of the total acres had cover crops planted (Figure 3).

It should be noted that some of the total acres farmed might include perennial crops like alfalfa that would provide soil cover. Even though the amount of acres with cover crops seems low, the attendance at education events around soil health has been high. So, farmers are interested in improving soil health and learning more about practices like cover crops. Implementation of best management practices can take time, as these may considerably alter the management of a farm. However, many farmers who spoke at these events commented on the vast amount of benefits cover crops have added to their operation, but again, it took time to see results. With a vast number of farmers, groups, and agencies promoting soil health, I feel that we can have a great impact and get conservation out on the ground!

Sources: Data from the following events was used: Dodge Co. Farmers Healthy Soil & Healthy Water (HSHW) workshops on Feb. 6th, April 3rd, May 28th, Aug. 7th; Soil Health Workshop in Fort Atkinson on March 5th and Field Day in Palmyra on April 18th hosted by Extension; Conservation Observance Day in Watertown hosted by Dodge County Land & Water Conservation Department; Mason Creek Soil Health Field Day in Oconomowoc hosted by Extension and Tall Pines Conservancy.

*Note: This is not a comprehensive list of all events related to soil health, conservation, and water quality. If interested in providing more information, please feel free to reach out to me!

Michelle.Scarpace@wisc.edu, 608-224-3696

Promoting conservation practices such as cover crops, reduced tillage, filter strips, grassed waterways, etc. on farmed lands can help improve soil health and water quality. A strategy for educating on soil health is hosting field days or workshops to learn and see how farmers can incorporate these practices in their operation. Since the beginning of this year, I have been involved with 8 events across the basin (Figure 1). These events were hosted across three counties and covered topics from soil health to manure management. It's obvious that soil health is gaining popularity among the agriculture community as the combined attendance at all events was over 500! Based off survey data collected at various events, over 75% of the audience consisted of farmers and agriculture industry partners (Figure 2). Not only are these workshops getting a lot of people, but they are attracting people who can have a direct effect on the implementation of best management practices.

A hot topic that was discussed a lot at these events in conjunction with soil health was soil compaction. Compaction occurs when soil

Become a RRC Member

In addition to supporting RRC work, members receive newsletters, notices of conferences, and special events. To become a member, complete the following:

Name _____

Title _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone (____) _____

E-mail _____

I am a member of _____ Chapter.

Memberships Fees

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

*Includes small businesses, organizations, lake districts, small municipalities and individual municipal departments
**Covers entire municipality including all departments, administrative staff and elected officials

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

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

Tax Deductible Donations

Amount	Purpose
	General Support
	Citizen Monitoring
	Other:

Donations are greatly appreciated and can be targeted towards specific projects.

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Rock River Coalition
864 Collins Rd
Jefferson, WI 53549

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www.rockrivercoalition.org/membership.asp

Monitors Thank Nancy



At the RRC 2019 Annual Meeting, an appreciative group of our stream monitors came out to support Nancy Sheehan, who helped grow our monitoring cadre over the 7 years she was the stream monitoring coordinator.

During her time as coordinator, she helped spearhead the successful Yahara WINS monitoring effort, developed a report card that helped monitors understand what their data meant and significantly grew the number of monitors and monitoring sites in the Rock River Basin.

We join these monitors in saying thanks and we wish you well in your future endeavors.

How will you #ValueWater?

Catherine Harris, Pollution Prevention Specialist – Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District

Turning on the tap for safe, clean drinking water, and flushing the toilet with no second thought about what happens to wastewater, are actions that many Americans take for granted every day. Reliable water services are essential to protecting public health and keeping life running as we know it; a single nationwide day without water service would be a national crisis, to say the least.



To bring awareness to local and national water infrastructure, so much of which is hidden from daily life, the Value of Water Campaign led by the US Water Alliance is organizing the fifth annual "Imagine a Day Without Water" on October 23, 2019. This nationwide day of education and advocacy about the value of water will be observed by thousands of organizations across the country to raise awareness of the crucial need for investment in our nation's water systems. It is a unique opportunity for diverse organizations, from environmental advocates to coffee shops, aquariums to car washes, city halls to water utilities, to all take collective action in recognizing the importance of water.

Although it might be hard to literally imagine a day without water in Southern Wisconsin right now, amidst what seems like non-stop wet weather, the advocacy happening on this day extends beyond the literal name. Flooding, drought, population changes and the aging of physical structures are stressing our water and wastewater systems both nationally and locally. Imagine a day without water emphasizes not only thinking about having enough water, but also prioritizing investment in and starting conversations around reliability, equity, water quality, keeping rates low, and worker safety.

"We're thrilled that organizations in Southern Wisconsin are a part of Imagine a Day Without Water. This national day of action educates our neighbors and public officials about the essential role water plays in all of our lives," said Radhika Fox, CEO of the US Water Alliance and Director of the Value of Water Campaign.

The Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District is leading one of many local efforts for this campaign. The district's '#respect every drop photo booth' social media campaign kicks off "Imagine a Day Without Water" locally by inviting people to pose with a water-drop shaped, individual pledge to conserve or protect water. The district aims to bring the national-level concept down to something relatable for individuals and communities. The idea is to show that every single person, no matter who they are, has the power to take actions that protect and conserve our water resources, and that their actions have ripple effects that reverberate beyond their own home, workplace and beyond their own town.

"We recognize that talking about infrastructure, since it tends to be out of sight out of mind for many people, can be somewhat abstract. This is a fun way for anyone to engage and talk about where our water comes from, where it goes, and the investment these critical systems need to keep running."

#Respect Every Drop photo booths will be popping up in the Madison area at various events and locations at the end of October around Imagine a Day Without Water. Follow the conversation on social media at #ValueWater #RespectEveryDrop for inspiration to take your own pledge, whether part of this social media campaign, or just because. Keep in mind that this is just one of many activities planned throughout the region for the day – find an event near you or sign up to lead an event yourself at <http://imagineadaywithoutwater.org/>.

Mauneshia River Alliance

The newly energized RRC Chapter, the Mauneshia River Alliance has had an active year, with more to come.

Here are a few photos of their adventures. Learn more on page 5 as well as news on another chapter, the Friends of Badfish Creek Watershed.



Tony Slager paddles towards shore while Charlie shows off a barrel, the catch of the day.



Terry Bradshaw uses a chainsaw to cut snags in the Mauneshia.



Tony Slager, Terry Bradshaw, Ryan Frey, Jason Pitzer, Joe Greene, and others help pull a large snag from the river.



The Rock River Coalition membership is by calendar year, so this November the board will be sending membership renewals out.

Show your thanks for the work of the Coalition and its chapters and increase the value of your donation by going to the website today, or by mailing in the membership form on page 11 in this newsletter and renewing today.

You can also sign up for an emailed rather than mailed newsletter by sending a request to info@rockrivercoalition.org.