



Rock River Reflections

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

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Coalition Completes Wetland Restoration Study in Headwaters – Restoration Work Around the Corner!

By Scott Taylor, Member & Past President

In the 2014 spring issue of this newsletter, I wrote about the Rock River Coalition's plans to complete a study of "potentially restorable wetlands" (PRWs) in the headwaters region of the Rock River Basin. The landscapes surrounding Horicon Marsh and Lake Sinissippi have been extensively ditched and tiled to convert wetlands to productive cropland. While this process was essential to agricultural productivity, it has led to heavy nutrient loading of waterways, particularly of phosphorus, the main culprit in algae blooms and exotic plant invasions. If draining wetlands helped create this problem, we asked, could not restoring them help to solve it?

Wetland experts in the Department of Natural Resources created a map of PRWs for the Rock River Basin. PRWs are essentially

historic wetlands that were drained and converted to cropland – as opposed to urban land – and could therefore still be returned to their original wetland condition. The Rock River Coalition project, funded by a DNR grant, sought to refine the PRW map by using Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis to pinpoint PRWs contained within single properties. We then field-checked these single-ownership PRWs to confirm actual restorability. This was necessary since there are many barriers, like buried utilities, buildings and roads, to wetland restoration that can only be confirmed in the field.

I am pleased (if a bit late) to report that we completed the fieldwork in the winter of 2014/2015. It was a long journey to find these wetlands. We began with a pool of 919 PRWs (all larger than 15 acres, we did not look at smaller ones) in the project area – the sub-watersheds draining to Horicon Marsh and Lake Sinissippi.



A mapped Potentially Restorable Wetland. Current land cover/land use is row crop agriculture, but drain tile removal could convert this field to shallow marsh & wet meadow wetlands.

The vast majority of PRWs covered 2 or more properties, which wetland restorationists say greatly increases the difficulty of restoring them. So they were eliminated from consideration. However, many large, sprawling PRW basins contained a promising single (or dual)-ownership restoration project within them. It just required manual

inspection of maps to find these. GIS analysis alone could not find all of the best potential restorations. By GIS analysis and some subjective interpretation, we whittled 919 PRW basins down to 105 for field review.

We had the pleasure of spending 4 winter and spring days driving back roads to inspect PRW basins. Since we had much ground to cover, we did not contact landowners for this project. We just relied on inspection of roadside lands, and the use of binoculars for distant features. This process eliminated 30 additional PRWs from consideration, leaving 75 actually restorable wetlands, the large majority of those remotely identified in the first stage of the project.



A cropped field mapped as a Potentially Restorable Wetland. This field contained drain tiles and was judged actually restorable upon field review.

Photo by Scott Taylor

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Rock River Coalition President's Message

I'm writing this message at the end of a family vacation to the mountains of Utah. I'm always interested to learn about the water resources (not to mention the water and wastewater treatment plants!) in the places we visit, and the Salt Lake City area is no exception.

The local water supply comes from several canyons that are open to recreation but otherwise highly protected. Upon entering the canyons there are signs reminding visitors to "Keep it Pure" and "What you see in the watershed today, you may drink tomorrow." Development is limited and you won't even see pets unless they are service animals. And, the water does taste great.

Unlike many parts of the west, the Rock River Basin is a very sustainable place to live with its rich soils and ample fresh water. It would be counter-productive to ban animals and development in our basin.

However, there are many things we can do to protect our resources and improve water quality. These include reducing the use of salts for deicing, keeping spring seeds and fall leaves off of sidewalks and streets, properly managing animal waste, and installing vegetative buffers along our streams, to name just a few.

Speaking of which, the Rock River Basin Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) sets limits on the amount of sediment and phosphorus loadings our local surface waters can handle.

The Wisconsin DNR is in the process of preparing the Rock River Recovery implementation plan for the TMDL. Rock River Coalition board members including Suzanne Wade, Joe Zakovec, and Patricia Cicero have been providing input to this process.

We look forward to the DNR's unveiling of the Rock River Recovery

plan later this year to help restoration efforts reach a higher level.

As we reflect on 2015, we are particularly grateful for the efforts of our volunteer citizen monitors and our program coordinator, Nancy Sheehan.

We also appreciate funding from the Yahara Watershed Improvement Network (Yahara WINs) adaptive management program. Watershed adaptive management is an option wastewater treatment plants can select to comply with stringent phosphorus permit limits. It allows treatment plants and their stormwater partners to implement best management practices throughout their watershed rather than building end-of-pipe treatment. This approach typically reduces the compliance costs and carbon footprint for the treatment plant and its partners, and it improves water quality throughout the watershed rather than only improving it at the treatment plant discharge point.

Watershed best management practices also typically provide ancillary benefits like soil conservation and wildlife habitat. Yahara WINs recently approved funding for a fourth year of monitoring that has allowed the Rock River Coalition to train and place more citizen monitors on streams collecting "level 3" phosphorus and other data. The program is truly a WIN-WIN: helping our volunteers learn and our program grow; and providing a lower-cost way for Yahara WINs to monitor the water quality improvements that result from the adaptive management program.

We encourage other treatment plants to contact us about this option, as well.

One other accomplishment for 2015 that we hope will continue into the future is our "Actually Restorable Wetlands" project led by former

board member Scott Taylor. This project took the WDNR's potentially restorable wetland maps steps further by determining which wetlands could realistically be restored based on several factors.

Restored wetlands trap sediment and phosphorus, remove nitrogen, and provide wildlife habitat and other ecological benefits. The results of this project may be helpful to wastewater treatment plants, municipal separate storm sewer systems, and farms that are exploring options for compliance with TMDL requirements.

Looking ahead, we are very excited about Testing the Waters: a Paddle and Probe Adventure. This event will take place in May and is described on page 3 of this newsletter. Kudos to Suzanne Wade and her planning committee for their great progress so far.

Finally, thank you for everything YOU do to improve the water quality and resources of the Rock River Basin.

If you have not yet joined or renewed your membership, please do so soon and consider making an additional donation to support our basin-wide citizen monitoring program and the Paddle and Probe Adventure.

Please contact us if you are interested in volunteering your time or talking with us about future programs or direction. We wish you a happy and prosperous [healthy?] new year!



Jane Carlson
RRC President

Welcome Joe



Joe Van Rossum showing the results of his work supporting the Master Composter Program.

River Recovery through community engagement and education. Joe has a Bachelors degree in water

and wastewater management from UW-Extension has named Joe Van Rossum, the Rock River Basin Natural Resources Educator.

Joe will be working with stakeholders on the implementing the Rock

and wastewater management from UW-Stevens Point as well as a Masters degree in Environment and Resources from UW-Madison.

Prior to taking on this new role Joe spent 11 years as UW-Extension's Recycling Specialist as part of the Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center.

As a state specialist Joe worked with businesses, local units of government and solid waste professionals to implement and improve recycling, composting and solid waste management programs.

Before joining UW-Extension in 2004,

Joe was the Recycling Manager for Brown County and an Environmental Specialist with the Fort Howard Corporation.

The Rock River Coalition is thrilled that UW-Extension has filled the position left vacant when Suzanne Wade retired.

We anticipate a wonderful partnership with Joe, the power of a non-profit working with an Extension Natural Resources Educator has reaped many benefits in the past.

Welcome Joe to the Basin when you see him at Rock River Recovery and RRC events.



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.

Sign up for a monthly email update at <https://lists.uwex.edu/mailman/listinfo/rock-river-basin-update>.

Contact Marie Rubietta at marier@jeffersoncountywi.gov if you'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.

Testing the Waters a Paddle and Probe Adventure Draft Schedule

By Suzanne Wade Project Coordinator

How exciting it will be to have the Rock River in Wisconsin united through our paddling, monitoring and educational event.

We're working out the details, so EVERYTHING IS STILL DRAFT. Check for updates on our website, Facebook and in our spring newsletter. Sponsors are needed to support this project. Contact Suzanne Wade at suzanne@rockrivercoalition.org if you have suggestions for sponsors. We are also looking for volunteers to help with each day: organizing, paddling, driving support vehicles and driving local paddlers back to their vehicles.

Thank you to our steering committee. We would love to add your to the list!

- Greg Farnham: Rock River Trail Initiative
- Becky Binz and Jason Valerius: Rock River Stormwater Group
- Eric Compas and Anna Coutier: UW-Whitewater
- Mark Riedel and Mike Sorge: Wisc. Department of Natural Resources
- Joe Van Rossum: UW-Extension
- Patricia Cicero: Rock River Coalition and the Jefferson County Land & Water Conservation Department
- Suzanne Wade: Rock River Coalition
- Sandy Thorpe-Weeden: Citizen volunteer

Draft Event Schedule

Sunday May 15: Mayville

Kick off Rotary Park Mayville then paddle 6.4 miles to Kekoskee Village Park then 3.8 miles to Greenhead Landing. Total 10.2 miles

Monday May 16: Horicon Marsh

Launch from Greenhead Landing then paddle 7.7 miles to Legion Park, Horicon with a possible stop at Clausing Bowling Green Park. Community meeting in Horicon

Tuesday May 17: Horicon to Hustisford

Launch from Kiwanis Park in Horicon then paddle 8.3 miles to Neider Park, Hustisford. Evening Community Meeting in Hustisford.

Wednesday May 18: Hustisford to Harnischfeger County Park

Launch from Lions Park, Hustisford then paddle 17.3 miles to Harnischfeger County Park. Community meeting at Harnischfeger

Thursday May 19: Harnischfeger to Kanow Cty Park

Launch from Harnischfeger County Park then paddle 11.3 miles to Kanow County Park

Friday May 20 – rest day or rain day

Time for main paddlers to rest, or make up lost time due to weather delays. However we will enlist local volunteers to paddle this stretch. 15.7 miles to Upper Dam

Saturday May 21: Watertown to Johnson Creek

Start with Educational Program at Tivoli Island Park, Watertown before paddling the 2.6 miles between the dams. Portage dam and then paddle 13.7 miles to Rock River Park. Total distance 16.3 miles

Sunday May 22: Johnson Creek to Fort Atkinson with stop in Jefferson

Launch Rock River Park then paddle 5.7 miles to Rotary Waterfront Park, Jefferson. Portage dam, transportation to East Riverview Drive Boat Launch, Jefferson finally paddle 4 miles to Elmore Klement Park (213.9) Total miles 9.7

Community meeting at noon in Jefferson – no evening program

Monday May 23 Fort Atkinson to Lake Koshkonong

Launch Elmore Klement Park then paddle 8.6 miles, (plus extra up Bark River) to Vinnie Ha Ha Road Community meeting Fort Atkinson Community Center

Tuesday May 24: Lake Koshkonong to Janesville

Launch from either Newville Public Access or Indianford Dam Portage then paddle to Traxler Park, Janesville 11.9 miles (Total miles 15.5 if launch from Newville.)

Wednesday May 25 Janesville to Beloit

Launch from Afton Road Boat Launch, Janesville then paddle 13.6 miles to Riverside Park, Beloit and our Closing Ceremony

Promotion of the Rock River Trail

By Greg Farnham, Coordinator, Rock River Trail Initiative



As we look ahead to activities to move the Rock River Trail forward, it is instructive to reflect on the vision for the trail initiative as adopted in 2012. "The Rock River Trail Initiative envisions a commonality of interests in and respect for the Rock River that will result in active participation by a diverse and growing number of residents and visitors in recreational trails and transportation routes on and along the river, revitalized and prosperous river communities on a clean river and the enjoyment and appreciation by all of the scenic beauty, natural resources and historic and cultural assets of the Rock River Valley."

Eloquent words, but what do they mean in practical terms? The four legs of the Rock River Trail stool -- paddle, drive, bike and hike -- have been established. The fourth and final trail logo that will be used to mark the hiking routes has been developed. Mapping of the trails is complete, trail components are established on our website at rockrivertrail.com and signage for the four trails and routes through Wisconsin and Illinois is being installed.

Are we done? No, hardly. "If you build it, they will come" can only be realized if they know about it! To achieve active participation in the Rock River Trail by a diverse and growing number of residents and visitors will require communication, promotion and marketing. We need to inform residents and visitors alike about the scenic beauty of our natural resources, including our trails, our river communities, and the historic and cultural assets of the Rock River Valley. Additionally, once visitors discover our trails we need to provide a safe,

pleasurable and memorable experience so they return and tell others. Positive reviews and personal referrals will be our most effective and cost efficient form of promotion.

Steve Buchtel of Trails For Illinois has said there are five ways to promote trails and obtain economic value from them: branding, wayfinding, hospitality, amenities and events. Building relationships with towns along the trails is a priority along with integrating a consistent trail theme, according to Buchtel.

We are working with Genevieve Coady of Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium, our friends at Visit Beloit and other key tourism and economic development groups in both states to create

effective promotional tools. Our goal is to establish the Rock River and its communities as a recreational and leisure destination with national reach. Designation of the Rock River Water Trail as a National Water Trail in 2013 by the US Department of the Interior and the National Park Service was a critical step in this process.

The continued support of the Rock River Coalition is important to our efforts.



The City of Oconomowoc Steps Out of its Boundaries to Work in the Entire Watershed

The City of Oconomowoc is spearheading a long term, unprecedented watershed project for the Oconomowoc River Basin. This unique, innovative program is known as the Oconomowoc Watershed Protection Program (OWPP) and is being implemented within the structure of a new Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) watershed improvement program aimed at phosphorus reduction called "Adaptive Management."

The City has selected this innovative approach after determining it is clearly advantageous from an environmental and economic standpoint. A federal grant from the Department of Agriculture has also been awarded to the City to help offset the costs over the first five years of the 15 year project.

This Regional Conservation Partnership Program grant was announced in January 2015 and was one of only three grants awarded in Wisconsin and 105 across the US. This speaks well for the City's program as over 600 applicants nationwide were considered.

The City received approval from the DNR for its Adaptive Management Program on September 16, 2015, allowing the full implementation of the OWPP. This program will include public-private partnerships enabling private companies, local communities and other non-government partners a way to invest in efforts to keep our land resilient and water clean, and promote economic growth in agriculture, construction, tourism and outdoor recreation, and other industries.

Over 30 partners made up of public and private entities, lake management districts, and local government agencies have already joined the OWPP. Two of these partners, Tall Pines Conservancy and Ruckert & Mielke, Inc., have combined efforts with the City to steer the program to significant progress and



recognition since its inception in early 2014.

The project will encompass an area 89,000 acres in size, 49 miles in length, including 17 lakes, two Class 1 trout streams, three impaired tributary streams, and three lakes which have pending impaired status. The City holds the only wastewater treatment plant permit from the State in the watershed and operates a 4 million gallon per day advanced wastewater treatment facility for the City and surrounding communities and lake properties.

The OWPP will focus on both point and non-point sources of pollutants entering the Oconomowoc River and tributary streams in the watershed.

The specific pollutants to be reduced are phosphorus and total suspended solids.

The City is committed to working in partnership to reduce sediment and phosphorus discharges from its treatment plant, urban storm water, construction sites, and agricultural land to improve water quality.

This goal will enable the City to reach compliance with the DNR wastewater and storm water permit requirements in a cost-effective manner. Projects to control storm water and agricultural runoff will be implemented with cost sharing by many entities in the basin.

Since the Oconomowoc River is upstream of the Rock River, the program will also improve the water

quality of the Rock River and aid in the objectives of the Rock River Recovery effort. In addition to improving surface water quality in area streams and lakes, the program will enhance local wildlife habitat and ecology, control excessive aquatic plant growth and reduce algal blooms.

For more information about this innovative program, contact Tom Steinbach at 262-569-2192 or tsteinbach@oconomowoc-wi.gov.

Partners Make it Happen

Leading the Effort:

City of Oconomowoc Wastewater Utility

Other Lead Partners:

Tall Pines Conservancy
Ruckert & Mielke, Inc.

Other Partners:

American Farmland Trust
Camp Whitcomb/Mason
Carmelites of Holy Hill
Clean Water Association
Clean Wisconsin
Erin Meadows Farms
Greener Oconomowoc
Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department
Local Engineering Firms
Local Farmer Leadership Group
Local Lake Management Districts
Local Municipalities
Mid-Kettle Moraine
National Resource Conservation Service
Pabst Farms
Rock River Coalition
Sand County Foundation
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
University of Wisconsin - Extension
UWM School of Freshwater Sciences
Washington County Land and Water Conservation Department
Waukesha County Land Resources Division of Parks and Land Uses Department
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

10 Ways You Can Help Improve Our Waters

By Becky Binz, Education & Outreach Coordinator, Rock River Stormwater Group

Did you know that actions (particularly yard care actions) we take at home have a direct impact on our waterways?



When precipitation falls, water runs off of our yards and roofs, into the streets and eventually down storm drains.

This runoff carries chemicals and pollution directly from our yards into the waters where we boat, swim and fish.

Luckily there are small changes we can make at home to improve the quality of stormwater runoff. Many of these changes save time and money as well!

Here are 10 ways you can help improve the quality of stormwater runoff at home:

- 1) **Build a rain garden** to infiltrate stormwater onsite. Rain gardens also reduce flooding, provide habitat for plants and wildlife, and are a beautiful landscape feature to add to your yard.
- 2) **Cover exposed soil** with vegetation and mulch to prevent erosion. Keep soil on-site.
- 3) **Keep grass clippings** off of the street and sidewalk. Nutrients and fertilizers from grass grow algae when they are washed into streams and lakes.
- 4) **Be conservative when watering your lawn.** Over watering depletes the water supply, makes plants prone to pests, promotes weed growth and adds to stormwater runoff.
- 5) **Use non-phosphorus fertilizers and pesticides sparingly.** Many Wisconsin residents use up to three times more fertilizer than their lawns actually need. If you fertilize your lawn, follow the summer bookend rule – only fertilize on Memorial Day and Labor Day.
- 6) **Mulch, mow or compost leaves.** Leaves are nature's mulch. Leave them on your lawn, they are a great fertilizer.
- 7) **Wash your car at a car wash instead of in the driveway.** Used water at a car wash is treated before it returns to our lakes and rivers. Water that runs off your driveway is not.
- 8) **Pick up and properly dispose of pet waste.** Pet waste can pose significant health risks to our waterways by adding nitrogen and phosphorus which promote weed and algae growth and deplete oxygen in the water.
- 9) **Apply salt sparingly to sidewalks.** Shovel early and shovel often. Chloride is harmful to aquatic life and affects the taste of drinking water. Worse yet, salt doesn't degrade over time.
- 10) **Properly dispose of hazardous wastes** like motor oil, paint and pesticides. Never dump them down storm drains. If you can't use up or give away these items, follow proper disposal procedures listed on product packages.

The Rock River Stormwater Group (RRSG) is a coalition of ten municipalities, UW-Whitewater and WDNR representatives that work together to promote sustainable stormwater practices in the Rock River Basin. RRSG thanks you for helping to Renew the Rock by making these small changes at home. Learn more at www.renewtherock.com.



Johnson Creek Watershed Alliance Stream Cleanup



Mother Nature has finished putting her flora and fauna to bed for the winter. While we wait for our favorite creeks, rivers, ponds and lakes to freeze over so we can skate, hike or do some "hard water" fishing, we start thinking about what we can do in the coming year to benefit our environment, educate our children and promote good stewardship of our natural resources.

Johnson Creek Watershed Alliance held its first annual creek clean-up on Saturday, September 12th in conjunction with the Rock River Sweep.

About 30 youngsters and adults pitched in to collect macadam, tires and other trash from our little creek from the south end

of Watertown Street to the wastewater treatment plant. We nearly filled the dumpster that our Village Board generously provided. Mother Nature gave us some fabulous weather for being outdoors and doing some worthwhile work.

Our local businesses provided the food and beverages to reward the volunteers. Thanks to Kwik Trip, Perna's and to the Johnson Creek Historical Society. At least three of our young volunteers were able to receive "credit" for community service to add to their school portfolio at Johnson Creek Schools.

Put your boots and gloves away until next September when we will repeat this event. In the meantime, we would appreciate it if you help our chapter by joining the Rock River Coalition and check the box for our Chapter, the Johnson Creek Watershed Alliance.



Johnson Creek volunteers support JCWA. For more information about the Johnson Creek Watershed Alliance contact Peter Hartz at hartzpete@gmail.com.

Photo by Heidi Hartz

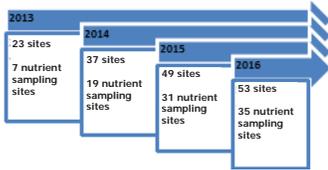
Stream Side Notes

By Nancy Sheehan, RRC Volunteer Stream Monitoring Coordinator

The New Year is upon us.

...We have much to celebrate....

In December 2015, Yahara WINS awarded the RRC a grant of \$23,280 to support our volunteer stream monitoring program in the Yahara River Watershed. In 2016, the RRC will be able to support 53 baseline water quality monitoring sites. Volunteers will collect nutrient samples at 35 sites. The grant also enables RRC and our volunteers to establish 27 stations where continuous water temperatures will be collected by data loggers.



Committed volunteers, some of whom have been with the program since 2013, have contributed to the success of this effort. In 2013, there were 23 volunteer stream monitoring sites and only 5 nutrient sampling sites. In 2015, volunteers monitored stream health at 49 stream sites and collected nutrient samples at 29 sites.

The RRC will continue to collaborate with many partners to ensure that 2016 is as successful as previous years. Partners include (but are not limited

to) the WDNR, MMSD, Yahara WINS partners, Water Action Volunteers Program, Dane County Office of Lakes and Watersheds, Dane County Land and Water Resources Division, Friends of Starkweather Creek, Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, Friends of Yahara River Headwaters, the Village of DeForest, Town of Windsor, Token Creek Conservancy Committee, Friends of Lake Kegonsa, Friends of Cherokee Marsh, City of Fitchburg, Town of Dunn, and Friends of Capital Springs Recreation Area.

In 2016, Yahara WINS partners will embark on the full scale implementation of the adaptive management phosphorus compliance strategy throughout the watershed. Therefore, citizen stream monitoring sites will be distributed across the Yahara River Watershed.

Over the next few months, the RRC will create site reports summarizing the findings for all citizen monitoring sites included in this Yahara WINS project. The RRC looks forward to playing a critical role in tracking progress toward reducing phosphorus runoff in the Yahara River Watershed.

...and much work yet to be done...

Unfortunately, the health of our streams is not improving. The Clean Water Act (Section 303d) requires state regulatory agencies to assess and then publish a list of all waters that do not meet water quality standards. This list is known as the Impaired Waters List. The WDNR has posted their proposed Impaired Waters List for 2016.

- Of the approximately 2,932 total stream miles in the Rock River Basin, 65% of all stream miles assessed are listed as "impaired".
- Since 1998, no stream or river has been "delisted" or found to have improved significantly to meet state water quality standards.
- The major pollutants are total phosphorus (43%) and total suspended solids/sediments (37%).

Over the next few months, the RRC will be working to develop our own water quality report card for the Rock River Basin based on volunteer-collected data. This report will include summary information on parameters typically monitored by volunteers including water clarity, dissolved oxygen, water velocity, biotic index and water temperature.

There is much work to be done across the Rock River Basin. Your volunteer efforts are truly needed. Thank you for your commitment to clean and healthy streams in the Rock River Basin.

Spring Earth Day Activities Planning Starts Now



Storm drain stenciling in Waukesha County.

File photo

Yep, even though the temperature is freezing and there is ice everywhere, if you want a dynamite Earth Day activity this spring, now is the time to begin preparations.

Pictured here is a great spring activity - Stormdrain Stenciling. Where groups painting the message *Dump No Waste Drains to River* [or lake or stream], next to storm drains. Some communities use glued on markers instead of paint, and a few have city staff do the marking.

Most of the basin's stormwater groups offer stenciling kits you can borrow including The Rock River Stormwater Group, participating communities (contact Becky at bbinz@msa-ps.com). Dane County UW-Extension (contact Mindy at melinda.habecker@ces.uwex.edu) and Waukesha County Parks/Land Use Division, (Contact Jayne Jenks at jjenks@waukeshacounty.gov.).

Other good action activities include stream clean-ups, writing letters to the editor of your local paper, poster contests, rain barrel painting contests and natural art

activities. How about using chalk to have students write pledges or Earth friendly sayings on the sidewalk or playground? Earth Day is Friday April 22, 2016.

Publication Layout and Graphic Design Help Needed

The Rock River Coalition is hard at work on a project, partially funded by the Department of Natural Resources, to assess data and produce a report on stream health. Data collected by volunteers who participate in our stream monitoring program is currently being analyzed. Stream segments with sufficient data will be given a grade based on the extent to which the various parameters (temperature, dissolved oxygen, clarity, and biotic index) meet certain standards of stream health.

The end product of this effort will be a report that includes a narrative, graphs, charts, and maps. The water quality report card will provide feedback to our committed volunteer stream monitors, some of whom have been monitoring in the Rock River Basin for over 10 years.

The water quality report card will also assist the RRC in our recruitment of new volunteer monitors by showing that volunteer-collected data is vital to managing and improving the environmental resources of the Rock River Basin. Finally, the report will be a great resource for resource managers and the public to understand the health of our streams.

The look of the report is important to us. And this is where we need help! We unfortunately don't have the funds available to hire someone to make the final report look pretty and professional. But perhaps you are someone interested in lending your skills to a worthy non-profit project.

Are you skilled at graphic design and publication layout? Some of the skills we hope you have include being able to use (and actually own) a graphic design package (such as InDesign, Adobe, Dreamweaver etc.), software that turns boring excel graphs into visually appealing charts (ZingChart, Dygraphs).

We want someone with an artistic eye for turning narrative, graphs and maps into a document that is visually coherent and appealing.

If you are interested in helping with this effort, please contact Patricia Cicero at 920-674-7121 or patricia@rockrivercoalition.org.

Rock River Recovery

By Mark Riedel, DNR Rock River TMDL Coordinator



Our Rock River Basin community has made exceptional progress this past year with our collective Rock River Recovery efforts and implementation of the Rock River Basin TMDL. While most of our newsletters and communications share updates about tasks remaining, deadlines, and upcoming work to be addressed, we'd like to take this opportunity to celebrate the past year by reviewing some highlights:

- The next Rock River Recovery Quarterly Networking Forum will be held in March with a great group of speakers focusing on Local implementation of Water Quality Restoration Projects.
- DNR staff have worked extensively with our municipal partners and communities to issue new WPDES waste-water permits for well over half of the permitted facilities in the Rock River Basin. These new permits include Water Quality Based Effluent Limits (WQBEL) consistent with the TMDL wasteload allocations. Largely as a result of this, we've seen a surge in interest in building watershed projects to support Water Quality Trading and Adaptive Management permit compliance options,
- DNR has developed technical guidance and a strategy for implementing TMDL limits for MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems) permittees. Municipalities regulated under the General Stormwater MS4 permit are in the first stages of implementation with a TMDL planning process during their current permit term. The Madison Area MS4 permit is under revision and will be out for external review early in 2016,
- The Agriculture/NPS Sector Team, with the ongoing support of our counties, DATCP, and US EPA, has made great strides in developing the agricultural NPS implementation strategy (often referred to as the "County Template") via the County Land and Water Resource Management Plans.
- We've negotiated NPS watershed project grant requirements and TMDL Planning/Implementation requirements with US EPA,
- Monthly newsletter subscriptions, updates and readership has ballooned – a year ago we had just over 300 subscribers and we're at well over 900 today,
- The new Rock River TMDL website has been published,
- Quarterly Networking Forums have been very popular and well attended. Feedback received from attendees indicates the forums are an effective means of facilitating communications, encouraging collective efforts for problem solving, and achieving many of our shared goals,
- The Farmer-Led model for Agricultural TMDL Implementation is maturing and gaining acceptance as a local control, grass-roots model that allows Farmers to develop their own innovative solutions that support NPS implementation,
- The Education & Outreach Sector Team has accomplished many of the objectives in the original E&O plan and are now drafting the second version of the plan.

We're looking forward to the coming year and building on all of our shared progress and efforts. If you'd like to learn more, visit the Rock River Recovery website and sign up for our monthly newsletter.

Rock River Recovery: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/tmdls/rockriver/>

Rock River Recovery newsletter: <http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIDNR/bulletins/127b139>

Wetland Restoration Study Continued from Page 1

That most map-identified PRWs were field confirmed points to the effectiveness of GIS analysis and map inspection – by trained eyes – for identification of actually restorable wetlands. While important, field review is time-consuming and expensive. For other watersheds we recommend using maps primarily to identify actually restorable wetlands, with field review only for a subset of basins to verify the accuracy of map analysis.

So we found 75 actually restorable basins – now what? Will they be restored? It was our good fortune that this project coincided with four Conservation Reserve Program enrollment opportunities in the project area (CRP is a federal Farm Bill program that pays producers to convert cropland to natural habitat): (1) CRP continuous sign-up, (2) CRP general sign-up, (3) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, and (4) SAFE (State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement) for the Glacial Heritage Restoration Area, which includes much of Dodge and Fond du Lac Counties.

Erv Lesczynski, Rock River Watershed Planner with the Upper Rock Watershed Project, plays a major

role in coordinating landowner enrollment in Farm Bill programs. Erv, who has decades of experience working with farmers in the Rock Basin, has already contacted many of the landowners whose property contains PRWs identified by us. He will rely on our portfolio of PRWs for years to come in his work with landowners.

Wetland restoration alone will not stem the flow of nutrients and sediment to the Rock River and its tributaries. However, it will play a role. The capacity of wetlands to absorb contaminants is well known.

The Rock River Coalition is gratified to know the identification of actually restorable wetlands will result in restoration of many valuable wetland habitats and ecosystem services that would otherwise have been unrealized.



Scott Taylor is the owner of Taylor Conservation LLC located near Stoughton Wisconsin

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

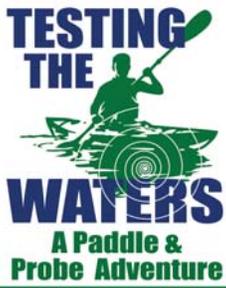
Amount	Purpose
	General Support
	Citizen Monitoring
	Other:

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

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



Testing the Waters a Paddle and Probe Adventure May 15 - 25

10 Days of Collecting Data and Highlighting the Amazing Rock River Basin

Brought to you by the Rock River Coalition with support from the Rock River Stormwater Group, Rock River Trail Initiative, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Our Goal: To engage communities of the Rock River Basin by exploring water quality issues, recreational opportunities and the role of the public in water conservation by:

Collecting, Analyzing and Sharing Water Quality Data:

We'll be collecting data continuously with a probe mounted on the front of a kayak. Parameters include: pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and conductivity.

Data will be uploaded via a cell phone and then digitally displayed on a web map.

We'll also take periodic grab samples for analysis of nutrients and bacteria.

Educating Students: If sufficient funding is acquired, we'll host classroom programs for grades 6-8.

Educating the Public: Community evening and weekend programs will be held. Social Media updates during the event and videos about the river prior to the event.



This dissolved oxygen map from Fort Atkinson shows the type of map that will be produced as we paddle. Everyone will be able to follow us as we travel the river.



We'd like to thank our sponsors and encourage other communities, businesses and organizations to support this innovative and exciting project.

Sponsors: Angus Young, Beloit; Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, We Energies Foundation, the American Institute of Professional Geologists, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and the Lake Sinissippi Improvement District.

See page 3 for the event's draft schedule.

The water quality monitoring probe attached to a kayak, was developed, tested and calibrated at UW-Whitewater.

Learn more at <http://currentdata.co>

Stream Monitoring Trainings

Become a RRC Stream Monitor and learn more about our waters while helping the RRC gather important information about our waterways.

New monitors are expected to attend a training session below is the current workshop schedule.

(It's not a bad idea for our veteran monitors to join a workshop as well, dust off the skills before the year begins and welcome our monitors in-training).

Contact Nancy at nancy@rockrivercoalition.org to register. For more information on our monitoring program see the article on page 6.

Saturday, April 30th

Partner: Token Creek Conservation Committee
Level 2/3 Combination training depending on participant interest

Saturday, May 21st

Partners: Rock County Land and Water Conservation Department
Level 1 Training, Turtle Creek Parkway

Saturday, April 23

Partners: Jefferson County Land and Water Conservation Department
Level 1 Training, Amundson Center

Saturday, May 14, 2016

Hartland Public Library, 110 E Park Avenue, Hartland
Contact: Jayne Jenks, Waukesha County
Level 1 Training Email: jjenks@waukeshacounty.gov



Katie VanGheem, Jeanine Mason, Dale Klingbeil and Julia Sheehan-Klenk during a quality assurance test of Level 2 equipment (7/2013).

Photo by Nancy Sheehan

The Big Share on March 1

On Tuesday, March 1, Community Shares of Wisconsin (CSW) is hosting the area's second online giving day, The Big Share™.

The RRC is one of 70 worthy groups who will benefit from this one day event.

CSW is hoping to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for their nonprofit member groups—all building a fair, just community and protecting our environment.

The RRC goal is \$2,000 - this will provide critical support for our monitoring effort including providing equipment, training and support to four new teams.

The RRC is asking you to do three things:

- Mark your calendar for MARCH 1, 2016.
- Follow us on Facebook and help build the buzz.
- We're counting on you to spread the word. Share our Facebook posts with your friends and family members along with a personal note as to why you believe in our work, and **why they should give** on MARCH 1, 2016.

The minimum gift is \$10. The maximum is . . . up to you!

But you don't have to wait until March 1—you can pledge your gift online now. Your credit or debit card will be charged on March 1 and we will receive your gift shortly thereafter.

For more information on Community Shares of Wisconsin go to:
<http://www.communityshares.com/>

For more information or to pledge your support go to: <http://thebigshare.org/>



Just use your smart phone to scan this QR code and it will take you right to our page.

RRC Chapters

Looking for a way to participate in improving water quality?

Our three chapters do local hands-on work.

Learn more about the Friends of Badfish Creek, the Maunasha River Alliance and the Johnson Creek Watershed Alliance on our webpage at

<http://rockrivercoalition.org/chapters/>

Or from our homepage click on "About" and then the chapters tab.

Winter Fair

Sponsored by Friends of the Glacial Heritage Area

Sat. February 13, 1 – 4 pm
Waterloo Regional Trailhead Facility

<http://www.glacialheritagearea.org/>