



A Citizens' watershed conservation organization

# Reading the River



Volume 13, Issue 3~ Fall 2016

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The Friends of the Black River  
 PO Box 475  
 Black River Falls, WI 54615  
[www.friendsoftheblackriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheblackriver.org)  
[Info\\_fbr@yahoo.com](mailto:Info_fbr@yahoo.com)

Newsletter Editor  
 Pat McKnight  
[pmcknight@centurytel.net](mailto:pmcknight@centurytel.net)

## Board of Directors

**President**  
**Steve Rake**  
 (715) 284-2087

**Vice-President**  
**Mitch Wester**  
 (715) 284-9637

**Secretary/Treasurer**  
**Jackson Burgau**  
 (715) 299-8686

**Members of the Board**  
**Sue Bitter**  
 (715) 896-1632

**Jeff Polzin**  
 (715) 896-5534

**Pete Segerson**  
 (715) 333-2033

**Tom Teeples**  
 (715) 284-4680

**Recording Secretary**  
 Pat McKnight  
 (608) 797-9167

## What's happening here?



See page 5 for the answer. Photo by Pat McKnight

## Greetings from the vice president

While FBR President Steve Rake is away on a trip to Alaska, Vice President Mitch Wester is providing the greetings for this issue.

Hi everyone:  
 I hope you're enjoying the great weather we've had for outdoor activities.

Jeff Polzin has organized several trips on the river and he, with some volunteers, have worked to clear the local creeks and river for our pleasure. Please be sure to thank them for their hard work.

*Greetings, continued on page 2*

## Vision

The Friends of the Black River is a citizen-led organization that is a well-informed, respected, active contributor to projects and decision-making enhancing the river and its watershed.

## Mission

The Friends of the Black River will foster community appreciation, understanding, and sustainable use of the river and its watershed by hosting educational and enjoyable programs, events and conservation projects and by promoting wise decision-making when issues affect the health of the Black River Basin.

## Upcoming meeting, programs and events schedule for 2016

**October 12**—Monthly meeting, program on bird photography and identification

**November 9**—Monthly meeting, program on efforts to halt invasive carp movement upstream

**December 5**—Annual holiday party and movie

*Dates and programs subject to change.  
Anyone with suggestions for future programs is encouraged to submit them by emailing [info\\_fbr@yahoo.com](mailto:info_fbr@yahoo.com)*

Unless otherwise noted, regular monthly meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the lower level community room of the Jackson County Bank.

## Fair photo contest winners

The Friends of the Black River sponsored its annual Jackson County Fair photography class again this year.

This is the third year FBR has awarded prizes to the champion and reserve champion placings in the class.

A winning photo at right was entered by Mary Blazek in the open class division and shows how the river is important for recreation.



The winning photo at left is of FBR board member Jeff Polzin paddling on some high water was taken by Dave Meyer.

Placings were decided by the fair's photography judge and the top two winners in open and junior division receive a cash award from FBR.

**Factoid:** The Black River is approximately 190 miles, flowing from Rib Lake to Lake Onalaska and then into the Mississippi River.

## Greetings from the vice president, *continued from page 1*

The Black River had little trash for our river cleanup, so it should look great. Thanks to the 25 volunteers that picked up that gloomy Saturday morning.

A special thanks to Pete and Rose Segerson for hauling the canoes, Tom Tee-



ples for bringing the Ice Age Trail crew again this year, Ruth Casper for picking up the lunch and Jeff Polzin and Jackson Burgau for gathering and hauling the trash to the Department of Natural Resources dumpster at Castle Mound State Park.

~ Mitch Wester

## Volunteers turnout for annual river cleanup

A group of 25 volunteers turned out Saturday, Aug. 27 for Friends of the Black River's annual river cleanup. Those helping with the cleanup walked the shores of the Black River or paddled down the river in search of trash.

For the second year, FBR members were joined by volunteers who've worked on the state's Ice Age Trail with FBR board member Tom Teeples.

Those taking part in the cleanup reported finding less trash than in the past.

Recyclable items were separated from the nonrecyclables and were properly disposed.



Volunteers turning out for the annual river clean up included FBR members, Ice Age Trail volunteers and two young recruits, Riley Teeples and Braylon Backaus.



One volunteer, Cal Lakowske, had an innovative use for a mesh trash bag as he attempted to fend off mosquitoes.



The levee in Black River Falls received a thorough patrol for litter.

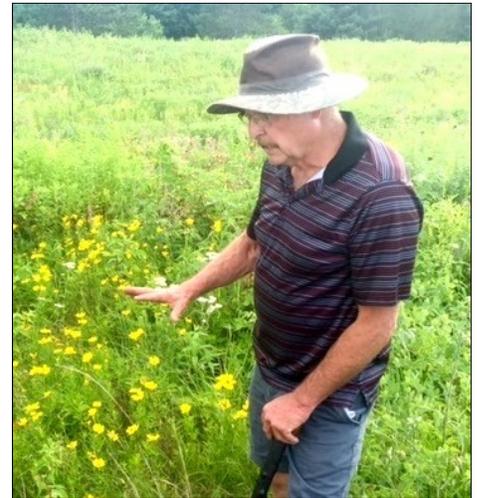


A cleanup crew checks out their findings near the Black River bridge (above) and the trash is loaded in a trailer for disposal (right).



Photos by Tom Teeples

## Restored prairie hosts annual summer flower walk



Wildflowers viewed on the restored prairie were black-eyed Susan (above) Turk's cap or American tiger lily (above right) and a mix of native prairie flowers including bee balm or bergamot, sunflowers and cone flowers (right).

The Friends of the Black River held a walk through a restored prairie July 13 located north of Black River Falls. The walk was led by Steve Humphrey who has been working to rehabilitate former farmland to its native state.

In partnership with the Department of Natural Resources, Humphrey has been returning about 30 acres to vegetation that would have grown on the land before European settlers converted it to agriculture.

Among the native plants now growing on the land include lupine, butterfly weed, lead plant, cup plant, blazing star, cone flowers, bee balm and various species of indigo. The variety of plants supports diverse wildlife. Humphrey has also created a pond and marsh habitat on the farm. Photos by Tom Teeples.

## End of season WAV report

As the stream monitoring season winds down, WAV coordinator Pete Segerson would like to thank the teams who faithfully tested their adopted streams in the Black River watershed this year.

Monitors who will be returning next year are asked to hold on to their kits, but let Pete know if they need any supplies.

He is planning to hold a preseason meeting

next April. Volunteer monitors can get their supplies replenished then.

Pete has a couple more kits available, so anyone interested in becoming a volunteer stream monitor is encouraged to contact him to let him know of their interest. He can be reached at 715-333-2033.

## FBR holds annual Paddle in the Park



Friends of the Black River held its annual Paddle in the Park event July 2 as part of the Festival in the Park celebration.

The paddle gave youngsters of all ages the chance to try kayaking and paddle boarding on the Lunda Community Park in the kids' fishing pond.

FBR supplied the equipment, which got a good workout for the afternoon's activity. Photos by Pat McKnight



## FBR meets and greets visitors to GreenLifeXpo

The Friends of the Black River again had a booth at this year's GreenLifeXpo. This is the sixth year the event has been held.

The environmental, conservation and simple living exposition was held Sept. 10 at the Milt Lunda Memorial Ice Arena.

As in the past, FBR shared a space with the Jackson County Hiking Club.

FBR's display highlighted the various activities our organization undertakes throughout the year. Volunteers manning the booth throughout the day greeted expo visitors and answered questions about our organization.

To attract the younger crowd, this year's display again featured a stuffed bear and plush otters as well as stickers which read "We 'otter' keep our rivers clean."

One visitor, Kookai Selakhun of Thailand, stopped at the booth while visiting friends in Marshfield.



A stuffed bear drew youngsters and their parents to the FBR booth. Raynee Benz, accompanied by her mother Holly, got a close look at the bruin provided by Jeff Polzin. Photo by Pat McKnight

## Couple shares adventures paddling the Driftless Region

Going upstream might not be the best tactic authors of two paddling guides should consider undertaking, but that's what Lynne and Bob Diebel did. The two canoeists paddled up the Wisconsin River to reach their home near Madison.

Lynne recorded the story of their journey in "Crossing the Driftless, A Canoe Trip Through A Midwestern Landscape." She and her husband presented a travelogue of their adventure at the Friends of the Black River's Sept. 14 meeting.

Avid paddlers since youth, the couple authored two paddling guide books, canoeing about 3,000 miles on Minnesota's rivers between 2003 and 2006 to collect information for the books. The two books, "Paddling Northern Minnesota: 86 Great Trips by Canoe and Kayak" and "Paddling Southern Minnesota: 85 Great Trips by Canoe and Kayak," were published by Trails Books. Lynne has also authored three other books.

Despite all the miles they paddled in Minnesota, the couple was still game to do the nearly 360-river-miles trip from Faribault, Minn., to Stoughton.

"We talked about doing the paddle for a couple years," said Lynne. "We finally decided to do it in 2009."

They started in Faribault where Lynne's family has a summer home and then set out on their paddle to Stoughton.

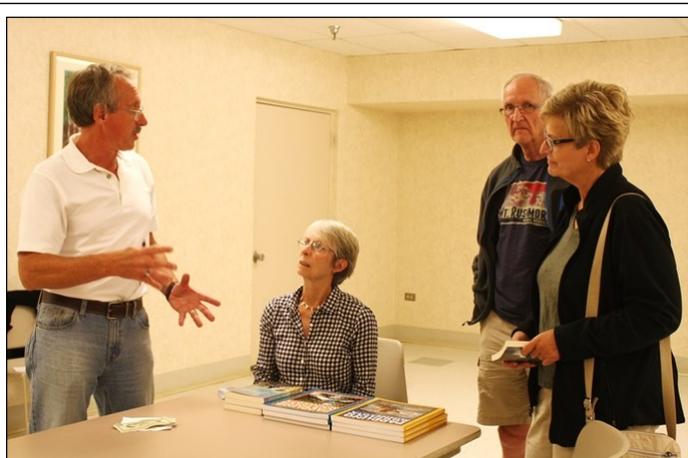
The couple packed their 17-foot canoe and headed down the Cannon River, portaging around two dams. They continued to go with the flow when they reached the Mississippi River. Canoeing down the great river, the paddlers passed through five locks and made two portages.

Unfortunately, the portage wheels they packed proved to be unreliable and with each portage, they became less dependable. They ended up being discarded in Alma, but the paddlers still had more portages ahead of them.

Going through the locks on the Mississippi proved to be less worrisome. When the canoers got to a lock before a barge, they were locked through first and the barge had to wait.

"The next day was a four-dam day," said Lynne. "We were the only boat going through the locks. They (lock operators) were happy to take any boats through; it justifies their existence, and they love to chat."

Being able to paddle with the flow of the river, the Diebels were able to make about 40



FBR members (standing left to right) Mitch Wester, Charlie Meyer and Sue Bitter talk with Lynne Diebel (seated) following her presentation at the Sept. 14 meeting. Photo by Pat McKnight

miles a day.

"On the seventh day, we turned left and headed up the Wisconsin," said Lynne.

However, when they paddled against the current, the Diebels only covered about 20 miles a day.

They paddled up the state's longest river over the Fourth of July holiday, meeting many water enthusiasts enjoying the recreation the waterway offers. Among those encountered were three young men who had cobbled together a raft – a la Huck Finn – and were doing some fishing from the sofa perched on top of the raft.

"They put together the raft from stuff they found at a landing," said Lynne. "They were the only ones who didn't say (to the Diebels), 'You're going the wrong way.'"

Despite all the boaters, tubers and rafters on the Wisconsin, the Diebels found the river quieter than the Mississippi. There were stretches of the river when the couple got out and towed their canoe instead of paddling. Lynne found getting out and walking a welcome change from sitting for long stretches in the canoe.

With much of the river's shoreline lacking development, Bob saw their trip as recreating the type of travel undertaken by Native Americans and voyageurs in resettlement times.

"When natives wanted to travel, there were times when they traveled upstream," said Bob.

As the Diebels neared Madison, they took Black Earth Creek toward Madison and traveled by land to connect to the Yahara River through Madison's lakes. The Yahara flows only a block away from the Diebel's home.

## Ways to support FBR's mission

You can help support the mission of the Friends of the Black River by remembering FBR in your will or with memorials or honorariums.

Checks can be made out to Friends of the Black River and contributions should be sent to PO Box 475, Black River Falls, WI 54615. Thank you.

## Memberships always welcome

Memberships help Friends of the Black River continue its mission of preserving and caring for the Black River.

Show your support for that mission by renewing your membership.

If you are renewing your membership, you do not need to send in a membership form unless there has been a change in your contact information.

### Please help us stay current

**Please help us keep in touch by letting us know your new e-mail and/or postal addresses when they change.**  
Send your e-mail address changes to [info\\_fbr@yahoo.com](mailto:info_fbr@yahoo.com)

Become a member by filling out the membership form below and mailing it with your membership dues to the mailing address listed on the form.

## Support your watershed - Join the Friends of the Black River

### Enroll me as a member

Membership Categories (check one)

- \$1.00 Youth (up to age 18)
- \$15.00 Individual
- \$20.00 Family
- \$30.00 Organization or Business
- \$50.00 Cornerstone Member

I would like to give an additional contribution in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to give this membership as a gift  
(Card will be sent to recipient)  
Occasion \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of recipient \_\_\_\_\_

I'm interested in serving on a committee:

- Land Preservation and Advocacy
- Fundraising and Membership Recruitment
- Programming
- Cleanups and Special Events
- Landings
- I am Interested in becoming a board member

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please check here \_\_\_ if you would like to receive a receipt.

Return registration and checks payable to:

**Friends of the Black River**  
PO Box 475  
Black River Falls, WI 54615

Comments/Questions:

