FRIENDS of the BLACK RIVER
A Citizens' watershed conservation organization

Reading the River

Volume 17, Issue 2 ~ Summer 2019

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What's happening here?

See page 3 to learn the answer to the question.

Greetings from the president

Summer is here again. I don't remember a season like this spring with so much moisture and severe storms throughout the country and the widespread flooding and tornadoes.

The moisture has provided us with a bumper crop of mosquitoes and gnats, making it challenging to work outside.

Our programs continue this summer with a prairie walk on July 16, giving us another chance to learn and identify prairie plants.

Also, we are planning a river cleanup in August. Hopefully, the river will be down to normal levels at that time of year. We are always looking for people to help us with this endeavor.

Sadly, our board is losing our

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 meetings and events for 2019

Tuesday, July 16: Prairie flower walk, rain date is set for Wednesday, July 17, restored prairie north of Black River Falls (see details below)
Saturday, August 24 - Annual river cleanup
Wednesday, September 11 - Monthly meeting, program about fungi in the Driftless Region
Wednesday, October 9 - Monthly meeting, reptile program
Wednesday, November 13 - Monthly meeting, program to be determined
Tuesday, December 3 - Monthly meeting, movie night

Watch for messages sent to your email box for up-to-date announcements of future events.

Announcements about FBR activities are also posted on FBR's Facebook page and website, the Black River Area Chamber of Commerce's calendar of events, the School District of Black River Falls' television channel and broadcasted on WWIS and WCCN radio.

We welcome suggestions for programs and for 2019 meetings. Send ideas to FBR email at info_fbr@yahoo.com.

Monthly meetings are free and open to the public. Programs subject to change. Unless indicated otherwise, the Wednesday evening programs are held at 6:30 p.m. in The Hub meeting room at the Lunda Community Center.

Upcoming paddling opportunities

Saturday, July 6th - Paddle in the Park, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m. on the kids' fishing pond at Lunda Community Park, held in conjunction with the Festival in the Park

Saturday, July 13th - Hatfield Dam release—whitewater paddling experience for kayakers

Saturday, July 20th - Lake Wazee Beach kayaking try-out and demonstration

Saturday, August 10th - Hatfield Dam release - whitewater paddling experience for kayakers

For more information and directions, contact Jeff at 715-896-5534.

Prairie flower walk

A guided prairie walk will be held Tuesday, July 16th on land being restored by Steve Humphrey. Rain date will be Wednesday, July 17th.

Carpooling will be from Theisen's parking lot on State Hwy 54 East at 5:30 p.m.

The hike should last an hour to an hour and a half. For more information, call Steve at 715 284-2087.

Greetings from the president,
continued from page 1

treasurer because he's moving out of the area. We thank Luke Annear for his work in handling financial matters for our organization. We will miss you Luke.

So, this provides an opportunity for someone in our organization to step up and continue our important mission. If you have any interest in this position please contact any board member.

Enjoy the summer activities and keep mowing that grass.....

Steve Rake

Earth Day Cleanup in Clark County

The Friends of the Black River teamed up with Clark County supporters April 27 to hold the first Earth Day Clean-up in Neillsville.

Nearly 50 volunteers turned out to cover a three-quarter mile stretch of O'Neil Creek, nearly three miles of roadway and about 10 acres of public lands.

The cleanup resulted in 58 tires, a chest freezer, mattresses and several illegal dumpsites being removed from the land.

Kevin Syth from Greenwood contributed his dump trailer and took a load of the large items to the landfill. He also donated $111 to cover the cost of the disposal.

Other supporters included the city of Neillsville, Clark County, Hanson IGA, Neillsville Chamber of Commerce-Clark County Economic Development, Sav-Rite Building Center, Ratsch Engineering, Hardee's, Sniteman's Pharmacy, Dairi Concepts, Russell's of Neillsville and the Neillsville Kiwanis Club.

Photos by Seth Klahn

A video of the cleanup can be found on Friends of the Black River's website at http://www.friendsoftheblackriver.org/video/.

Answer to page 1 photo question

A team of volunteers load up a stack of tires during the Clark County Cleanup held April 27.

Annual Black River cleanup planned

FBR will hold its annual river cleanup Saturday, August 24 and is looking for volunteers to help patrol along the shore as well as paddle on the river.

Cleanup supplies will be provided.

Removing trash from the river not only makes experiences on the river—paddling, swimming or fishing—safer and more enjoyable, it keeps the trash from flowing downriver and finding its way into larger bodies of water.

To volunteer, email to info_fbr@yahoo.com or by calling Steve at (715) 284-2087.

Wildflower enthusiasts turn out for annual spring walk

About 20 hikers took part in this year's spring wildflower hike held May 11 along the trail above Dickey Creek. Because of cooler weather this spring, Dutchman's breeches were still in bloom along the trail, but the trilliums were just starting to blossom along the hillsides.

Some of the other plants identified on the hike were hepatica, club moss, Solomon's seal, partridge berry, blood root and Canada Mayflower.

In the marsh area below the trail were yellow marsh marigolds and trout lilies were found in bloom near the creek bottoms.

Trout lily

Blood root

A group of wildflower hikers examine the various plant species found along the trail.

Photos by Pat McKnight

Recycling old mattresses was topic of June program

Keeping old mattresses out of landfills has been 7 Rivers Recycling's mission for a several years. 7RR co-owner Brian Tippetts presented a program about his company's goal of keeping mattresses out of landfills at the June 12 FBR meeting.

In his presentation, "Saving the earth one tired mattress at a time," Tippetts related how 7RR has been addressing the problem.

"Recycling mattresses makes sense," said Tippetts, "and it's the right thing to do. It makes economic sense and is good for the environment. We need to just step up and do the right thing. It (recycling) shows future generations we're accepting the responsibility to take care of the problem and not kick it down the road."

In the waste management field for more than 30 years, Tippetts accepted a challenge a few years ago from Hilltopper Refuse & Recycling Service, Inc. to be part of a business venture to recycle mattresses.

The Onalaska company began recycling mattresses in 2014, dismantling discarded mattresses and finding new uses for the materials while trying to meet its goal of a zero-waste plan.

In just four weeks' time this spring, 7RR received nearly 2,000 mattresses from the city of La Crosse. The company also receives mattresses from several counties, a military post, a prison, hotels and motels as well as private residences.

Mattresses take up a lot of space in landfills and pose other issues for landfill operations.

"The problem with burying mattresses is landfills lose money," said Tippetts. "Landfills need to collect $20 per mattress just to break even. They (mattresses) are also hazardous to machinery and employees. The springs get caught in machinery and when employees try to free the machines, the springs can recoil and strike the worker. Mattresses trap oxygen and when they catch fire, they mostly smolder."

The metal mattress springs are readily recyclable. Other materials such as the foam rubber can be ground up and put into carpet backing or used in pet bedding. The felt can be used as movers' blankets and the Dacron padding can be used for packing. The wood frames have been ground up for mulch.

Brian Tippetts (left) a co-owner of 7 Rivers Recycling responded to a question posed by FBR member Bill Schapfel following Tippetts' program about his business' efforts to recycle old mattresses. Photo by Pat McKnight

However, the company is still working on uses for the coconut fiber, and the owners are looking for someone who's interested in an e-commerce venture to develop a use for that material as well as the felt.

Even when owners can dispose of their old mattresses without charge, the household product is too often found in vacant lots, ditches and other sites around the countryside. Having convenient access to ways to properly dispose old mattresses is as important as affordability.

One of the drawbacks of a mattress recycling business is it's a labor intensive and a low-profit enterprise.

"To make it work, there needs to be a public-private partnership," said Tippetts. "It needs governmental leadership to facilitate acquiring large volumes of old mattresses."

Along with its environmental conservation efforts, 7RR has a focus of being a responsible employer and operating sustainably.

"7 Rivers Recycling is a triple bottom line business," said Tippetts. "We balance the people, business and profit aspects of the business."

During his years in waste management, Tippetts has served as the past international president of Solid Waste Association of North America, a former national director of landfill services for Applied Ecological Services and former national instructor for Manager of Landfill Operations certification. He was also a former solid waste management director for La Crosse County.

Tippetts has a previous connection with the Black River Falls area; he was part of the company that reclaimed Lake Wazee.

Water Action Volunteers report

Volunteers are still welcome to become stream monitors to collect data on the long–term trends of water quality in the Black River basin.

Volunteers are paired to collect data about the water quality of streams in the watershed. Data collected by volunteers is then entered into the statewide water-quality database.

Monitoring takes about two hours per month from May through October. Training and sampling equipment are provided.

Anyone interested in volunteering in the program is encouraged to contact Pete Segerson at 715-333-2033 or email ps205v@hotmail.com.

Cornerstone members

Friends of the Black River would like to recognize our Cornerstone members:

Carl & Joan Herrman
Kathy Carlyle
Thomas Turk
Gross Chevrolet-Buick-GMC, Inc.
Wallen Capper
Brad & Monica Lobenstein
Rob & Mary Percy
CCU
Dan Helsel
Richard Hilliker
Bill & Kathy Potter/The Print Shop

Cornerstone membership is $50

Donations

Since the previous newsletter, the following supporters donated toward FBR's mission :

Carl and Joan: $50
Thomas Turk: $100
Gene and Judy Ransom: $80
Coop Credit Union: $50
Nyla Musser: $15

Support of our mission is greatly appreciated

Charitable contributions assist FBR's mission

Charitable contributions received by the Friends of the Black River will be used solely to support the goals outlined in the FBR bylaws.

Those goals are:

- Educate members and the public about the ecology of the Black River watershed and threats to its health
- Promote sustainable use and recreation on the Black River and its watershed
- Increase public awareness and membership
- Promote sound decision-making when issues affect the health of the river and watershed
- Support the protection and improvement of the Black River and its watershed for the benefit of the general public
- Develop a working relationship with local officials and collaborate with conservation organizations
- Promote improved health of the river and watershed through conservation projects and education
- Purchase land or easements for conservation purposes

Information about how to help FBR with its mission can be found on page 7 of this newsletter.

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, 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.

FBR sincerely thanks our members and other supporters for their continued dedication to FBR's mission to preserve and enhance the sustainable use of the Black River and its watershed.

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's 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

Become a new 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:

Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2019!

We depend on your support to keep Friends of the Black River a strong effective protector of the watershed.

We want to keep this newsletter coming to your e-mail or mail box!

Friends of the Black River

PO Box 475
Black River Falls, WI 54615

The Black River Watershed

www.friendsoftheblackriver.org