



FRIENDS *of the*
BLACK RIVER

A Citizens' watershed
conservation organization

Reading the River



Volume 20 Issue 3~ Fall 2023

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The Friends of the Black River
PO Box 475
Black River Falls, WI 54615
www.friendsoftheblackriver.org
Info_fbr@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor
Pat McKnight
pmcknight@centurytel.net

Board of Directors

President
Steve Rake
(715) 284-2087

Vice-President
Mitch Wester
(715) 284-9637

Secretary/Treasurer
Jill Clark
(715) 299-4491

Members of the Board

Sue Bitter
(715) 896-1632

Adam Marciniak
(715) 610-7529

Jeff Polzin
(715) 896-5534

Pete Segerson
(715) 333-2033

Yvonne Mair
262-470-1000

Staffer
Pat McKnight
(608) 526-9873

What's happening here?



For the answer to what's happening in the photo, see page 6.

President's Greetings

Fall is basically here and I'm always glad to see it come. I prefer cooler weather and enjoy many activities associated with it. It's a great time to get out and

hike or bike and even camp. If you are a hunter, you're always looking forward to the season.

Our organization will be having programs again this fall start-

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 2023

Wednesday, October 18: Annual meeting, Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association (see information below)

Wednesday, November 15: Monthly meeting, topic: Goats on the Go (see information below)

Tuesday, December 5: Annual movie night, movie still to be selected plus a video by Jack Taylor

Monthly meetings are free and open to the public. Programs subject to change. Unless otherwise indicated, the Wednesday evening programs are held at 6:30 p.m. in The Hub meeting room at the Lunda Community Center. The community center is located at 405 State Highway 54, Black River Falls.

Meetings subject to change. For up-to-date announcements of future events, check messages sent to your email in-box.

Announcements about FBR activities are also posted on FBR's Facebook page and website, Black River Area Chamber of Commerce's calendar of events, broadcasted on WWIS and WCCN Radio and published in the Banner Journal and Clark County Press.

Upcoming public educational programs

Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association program

Founded in 1964, Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association formed to promote pure maple syrup harvested in Wisconsin. The organization also helps members make and market the maple syrup in North America. In addition, it assists producers with learning about new technologies and working with the government on issues related to maple syrup production.



Goats on the Go franchise battles invasive vegetation

In the battle against invasive species eradication, goats have become one of the most effective tools. This success has led to the creation of a franchise, Goats on the Go, made up of goat owners. The goat owners rent their flocks to private and public landowners to rid their lands of noxious plants. Goats on the Go herds eat problem vegetation drastically reducing the use of poisonous herbicides and fossil fuel burning machines. Goats are quiet, able to work in rough and steep terrains without causing erosion. They also leave behind natural fertilizer.

Board members election

Elections for the FBR Board will be held at the annual meeting October 18. FBR Board members whose terms are up are Sue Bitter, Jill Clark, Jeff Polzin and Yvonne Mair. While the incumbent board members are willing to serve again, there are openings on the board for new members. Anyone interested in serving on the board, is encouraged to self-nominate for a seat on the board.

Greetings, continued from page 1

ing September 13th. It looks like our October meeting will be held on the third Wednesday this year.

We have room for several people to step up and join our board. If you would like see what it's about, feel free to contact any of our present board mem-

bers. Also consider helping us on our County Highway K clean-up.

Enjoy the fall...

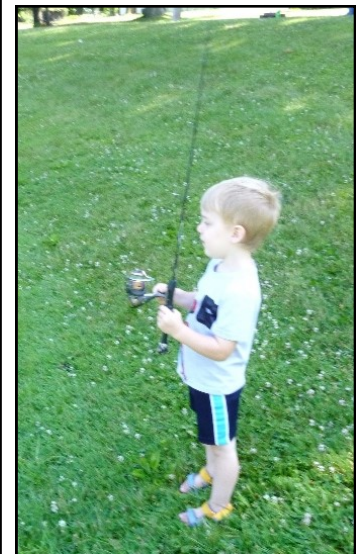
Steve Rake
FBR President

Clark County Chapter News

Take A Kid Fishing Day



Youngsters of all ages tried their luck fishing during the Take A Kid Fishing day held in Clark County. The day was jointly held by the Clark County Chapter of the Friends of the Black River, the Neillsville Trout Pond and Clark Cultural Art Center.



A young angler got acquainted with fishing tackle when he took part in the Take a Kid Fishing day.

Special thank you goes to Mepps Spinners and Spoons who donated fishing lures for the event (value \$332.33). FBR appreciates the company's support for getting youth to enjoy the outdoors in the Black River watershed.

Annual river cleanup held in Jackson County



Friends of the Black River held its annual river cleanup Saturday, August 26. The weather cooperated this year after the event was cancelled due to rainy weather last year. Volunteers from Clark County traveled to Black River Falls to help Jackson County volunteers clean up along the river. The Clark County chapter didn't hold a separate clean up in that county as much of their Earth Day cleanup was held in the spring.



Recyclables are separated from non-recyclables.

FBR holds annual prairie wildflower walk



About 20 walkers turned out for the annual prairie wildflower walk on the Greg and Annette Krueger property.



Lead plant blossom

Greg and Annette Krueger hosted FBR's 2023 prairie wildflower walk at their Hixton area property July 18. Prairie enthusiast and restorer Steve Humphrey led the walk again informing about 20 walkers about the plants found along trails on the 40-acre prairie area.

Among the native plants identified were rattlesnake master, Michigan lily, lead plant, blazing star, swamp milkweed and American germander.

Walkers also learned about the non-native plants growing in the prairie.



Bumble bee visits a butterfly weed

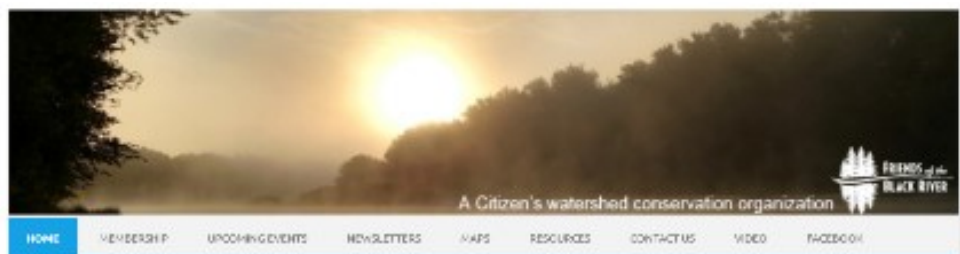


Swamp milkweed

FBR website has new features

The Friends of the Black River's website has undergone some changes recently.

Along with more information about FBR, it is now possible to pay membership dues on line as well as securely make donations to support FBR's mission.



Other features include a video, maps and resourced pages, as well as a link to Facebook.

The website's address is: <https://www.friendsoftheblackriver.org>.

International Crane Foundation presented virtual program

An organization based in Baraboo has had a mission of keeping cranes dancing for 50 years. The International Crane Foundation is observing a half century of trying to reverse the decline in crane populations worldwide.

ICF's interpretive programs coordinator Paige Hall presented a program virtually at the Sept. 13 Friends of the Black River public educational meeting. The program was held in The Hub at the Lunda Community Center.

"Cranes are one of the most threatened bird families in the world," said Hall. "They are one of the largest and long-lived birds in the wild."

Known for their cavorting displays, mating pairs will engage in the acrobatic display, doing so all year long.

ICF combines research, captive breeding and reintroduction, landscape restoration and education in its mission to protect the 15 crane species worldwide. The ICF's Baraboo headquarters is the only location in the world where representatives of all the species are located in one place.

Fifty years ago, two Cornell University graduate students George Archibald and Ron Sauey set about realizing their mission to help cranes by initially renting space on Sauey's parents Baraboo horse farm. It became the site for the first captive breeding of Siberian and hooded cranes.

Other crane species populations, many of which are either endangered or threatened, include the black crowned, red crowned, grey crowned, black-necked, blue, Brolga, Demoiselle, Eurasian, Sarus, wattled and white caped as well as the sand hill and whooping, two species commonly known throughout the Midwest.

Cranes can be found around the world except in Antarctica or South America. ICF has offices and staff in China, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia. Cranes are highly regarded in those countries as well as others.

In the 1940s, the whooping crane population was reduced to around 20 birds due to over hunting and habitat loss.

Now numbering to more than 830 birds, ICF has helped the birds' population bounce back by using artificial insemination with the eggs to overcome the genetic bottleneck created by the limited number of birds.

When the eggs hatched, the foundation staff developed two techniques for rearing the chicks. One technique is parent-rearing where chicks are matched up with adult foster parent birds. Generally, biological crane parents raise only one chick despite laying more than one egg. The extra eggs are collected and incubated. Those hatchlings are then placed with other adult birds.

The second technique involves ICF staff wearing a white coverall with staffers holding a mock crane head and beak in one hand. The costume mimics the color-



A pair of Whooping Cranes engage in calling (photo courtesy of International Crane Foundation)

ing of the adult whooping crane, preventing the chicks from imprinting on humans. Chicks imprinting on the white costumed creature will readily adapt to accepting actual whooping cranes when they are released.

"There were no differences in survival rates of chicks reared by different methods, costume, parent-reared, wild-hatched," said Hall.

In a soft release, the birds are placed in a large net enclosure. They are allowed to leave the enclosure as they feel confident to join other cranes and the work of foundation staff to raise the chicks generally ends. Fortunately the staff doesn't need to teach the birds to fly.

"It's instinctive for cranes to fly," said Hall, "but not to migrate."

At one time, whooping cranes were taught to migrant by following ultralight aircrafts. The operation to teach whooping cranes to migrate, known as Operation Migration, ended in 2016.

Cranes tend to prefer wetlands and grasslands, so ICF also works to protect those habitats. Unfortunately, flocks also favor farm fields.

"Crane flocks can do quite a bit of damage to farm fields," said Hall. "ICF is trying to figure out how to mitigate the conflict between cranes and farmers. We've developed a powdered deterrent for treating seeds. The powder adds an estimated \$6 to \$10 per acre to the cost to farmers, but we hope to find a solution to the problem."

This year, ICF will host its second annual Great Midwest Crane Fest Nov. 10 and 11 at locations around Baraboo. Information is available on the organization's website at greatmidwestcranefest.org.

Hall's presentation was part of FBR's ongoing mission to bring educational programs about the environment and conservation issues to the community.

Paddle on the Pond held during Festival in the Park

FBR hosted the annual Paddle in the Park July 1 as part of the Festival in the Park.

Kayaks and stand-up paddle boards were available along with safety equipment for those wanting to try paddling on the kids' fishing pond at Lunda Community Park.



Answer to page 1 photo question:

FBR President Steve Rake assists young paddlers ready to try paddling kayaks on the Kids' Fishing Pond at Lunda Community Park.

Photos by Yvonne Mair

Stream monitoring volunteers collected data



Water Action Volunteers collecting stream quality data this past season were Mitch and Sue Wester, Mike Brauner, Jerry Schmidt and Pete Segerson, and Dan and Becky Deetz.

The stream monitors work in pairs 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.

The family or friends activity benefits the environment. Monitoring takes about two hours per month from May through October. Training and sampling equipment are provided.

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

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 and 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.

New and renewing memberships always welcome

Please note: Beginning in 2023, individual and family memberships have been raised an additional \$5.

Memberships help Friends of the Black River continue its mission to preserve and care 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. Renewing members do not need to submit a membership form

Support your watershed - Join the Friends of the Black River

- ☐ Enroll me as a member
☐ I would like to give this membership as a gift
(Card will be sent to recipient)

Occasion _____

Your name _____

Membership Categories (check one)

- ☐ Free Youth (up to age 18)
☐ \$20.00 Individual
☐ \$25.00 Family
☐ \$30.00 Business
☐ \$50.00 Cornerstone Member

I would like to make an additional contribution in the amount of \$ _____

I'm interested in serving on a committee:

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

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

___ Jackson County Chapter

___ Clark County Chapter

Return registration form and checks payable to:

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

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

