



A Citizens' watershed conservation organization

Reading the River



Volume 20 Issue 2 ~ Summer 2023

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What's happening here?



For the answer to what's happening in the photo, see page 4.

President's Greetings

Summer is here. We've had plenty of hot weather already. Lakes are warming up for swimming. We are doing some kayaking and getting out on the river.

Due to the heavy snowfall this winter, there has been a tremendous amount of cleanup this spring. All of our creeks were just about impassible due to fallen trees. Dr. Jeff Polzin and several others have been working to clear the creeks for paddling but it is as bad as we've ever seen. If anyone would like to

*Greetings,
 continued on page 2*

Caring for the Black River Watershed

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

Saturday, July 1: Paddle in the Park, introduction to paddling, Lunda Community Park fishing pond, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Thursday, July 6: Clark County paddle, Snyder Lake, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Thursday, July 6 to Saturday July 8: FBR and Clark County Art Center Heritage Days, see flyer on FBR Facebook pages for information about classes and activities

Saturday, July 8: Clark County Take a Kid Fishing Day, Listeman Park, 10 a.m. to Noon

Tuesday, July 18: Prairie wildflower walk (Wednesday, July 19—rain date), 6 p.m., meet at Theisen's to caravan or carpool

Saturday, August 26: Annual River Cleanup, water and land options available. Jackson County: Meet at 8 a.m. at Al Young Park. South 2nd St., Black River Falls. Please RSVP

Wednesday, September 13: Monthly meeting, topic: State Natural Areas presented by Tyler Boudry, DNR

Wednesday, October 11: Annual meeting, Wisconsin Maple Syrup Producers Association

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 Paddling Events

Saturday, July 1 from 4 p.m.— 6 p.m.: Kayak and stand-up paddleboard on the Lunda Park pond during Festival in the Park. No RSVP needed for this event.

Thursday, July 6: Clark County paddle, Snyder Lake,

Saturday, July 8 at 12 p.m.: Hatfield whitewater release to Halls Creek. Please RSVP

Saturday, July 15 from 11-2 p.m.: Lake Wazee beginner paddle. Meet at Lake Wazee Beach for kayaking and stand-up paddleboard demos. Many kayaks available. No RSVP needed.

Saturday, August 12 at 12 p.m.: Hatfield whitewater release. Please RSVP

Saturday, September 9 at 12 p.m.: Hatfield whitewater release to Halls Creek. Please RSVP

At the time of this newsletter's publication—Robinson Creek is open from Old I to Dodge/Kelly. Halls is clear of trees, but very low.



DUE TO VARIABLE STREAM CONDITIONS, ALL DATES AND TIMES ARE TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Contact Jeff Polzin at 715-896-5534 to confirm details and to RSVP

Greetings, continued from page 1

help clear the creeks give Jeff a call. Jeff and I attended the breakfast at Robinson Creek and paddled on a section of the creek that was opened. It ended up being a nice event. We will have our Paddle in the Park on

July 1st and be at Lake Wazee on the 15th. Also we will have a prairie walk on July 18 with rain date July 19th.

Have a good summer....

FBR President Steve Rake

Clark County Chapter observes Earth Day with activities

Earth Day Cleanup

The Clark County FBR Chapter observed Earth Day April 22 with a successful cleanup. A turnout of 20 volunteers of all ages worked almost four hours to retrieve about 30 cu. yds. of trash, several chairs, a couch, a mattress, a truck load of metal, five tires and three TVs.

The Clark County Chapter chair Adam Marciniak expresses his gratitude to volunteers for their work to preserve the quality of the Black River.



A turnout of 20 volunteers of all ages worked almost four hours to remove trash from illegal dump sites.



Earth Day Cleanup volunteers fill trailers with trash.

More photos of the cleanup can be viewed on the chapter's Facebook page.

"We managed to collect three heaping dumpsters, a pile of furniture and a truckload of scrap metal from our local waterways," said Marciniak. "Thank you so much to all the volunteers that worked hard to get a lot of trash out of the Black River watershed!"

Areas cleaned included Hill Road and River Avenue behind Neillsville, the public area at the end of the O'Neil Creek, Listeman Arboretum, areas in the Clark County Forestry and Parks property at the end of Wedges Creek, several bridge crossings at the Black River and feeder creeks, the major landings from Neillsville to Owen and Sportsmen Lake.

Clark County business community and residents appreciated how the cleanup effort benefits their community and urge others to get involved.

"Thank you Friends of the Black River - Clark County for doing this for our community," said Eric Hauge of the Five Seasons. "It is truly a blessed experience to be part of such a wonderful organization. Reach out today to ask what you can do to help! Together we can make a difference!"

The event organizers extend a thank you to Subway and Drescher's BP for providing lunch for the volunteers.

CART observes Earth Day Week with activities



Youngsters created artwork about nature during the painting session.

Earth Week observance at CART included classes on foraging teaching how to identify edible wild plants and how to prepare them; an introduction to Water Action Volunteers program; and a youth art session; and trash transformation challenge.

Prizes were awarded for creative uses of recycled materials.



A fly tying workshop was held Sunday, April 23 to introduce attendees about basic tying tools, materials as well as types of flies.

FBR holds annual spring wildflower hike



A group of wildflower hikers turned out to brave the wet conditions May 13.

Rainy conditions greeted wildflower hikers May 13 for FBR's annual spring wildflower walk. The rain eventually let up and participants enjoyed the outing despite the presence of mosquitos.

Along with guide, Pat McKnight, hikers also learned to identify various wildflowers, some shrubs and trees with the aid of signage set up by Jeff and Sue Polzin.

The trail was cleared the previous day by Jeff and FBR President Steve Rake.



Trilliums, always a springtime favorite, were very prevalent along the trail and the hillside above Clear Creek. The flower gets its name because it has three leaves and three petals in its blossoms. Among the other wildflowers identified during the hike were hepatica, twinleaf, wood violets and spring beauties.



A trail marker is posted by a stand of pine moss.



Dutchman's breeches were still in bloom for the wildflower walk.



Bloodroot gets its name because its roots will seep red sap when cut. It is thought the plants contains cancer-fighting properties.

Answer to page 1 photo question:

Willow Laufenberger (left front) and Nicole Bue check out some of the wildflowers on the Clear Creek Trail during the May 13 spring wildflower hike.

Falconer talks about her organization's efforts to help raptors

Working with raptors in captivity can benefit the birds of prey. That was the message River Valley Raptor falconer and conservationist Abbey Krumrie shared during her April 12 program at the Lunda Community Center.

The Friends of the Black River hosted Krumrie at its monthly educational meeting. Her presentation included live raptors native to the Driftless Region.

Before Krumrie and her husband, Joe, started River Valley Raptors, they worked at several education and wildlife rehabilitation centers around the country. Krumrie is a certified professional bird trainer with the International Avian Trainers Certification Board and is a member of the International Association of Avian Trainers and Educators.

Becoming a nonprofit in 2015, RVR is dedicated to conserving raptors and other wildlife as well as working to protect the birds' habitats. The 14 birds currently in their care serve as ambassadors for the organization's mission. With the birds, the Krumries provide hands-on experiences to motivate students and audiences of all ages to care about the environment and the conservation of birds of prey.

To achieve its objective of protecting birds of prey in the wild, RVR strives to protect the unique habitat and biodiversity of the Driftless Region through community engagement, education and conservation.

"We take the birds to schools, state parks, community centers and other places to educate the public about the importance of conserving birds of prey," said Krumrie.

The birds assisting Krumrie with the program were Harvey Two Tails, a red-tailed hawk, a peregrine falcon and a saw-whet owl. Winnie, the saw-whet owl, was hatched at RVR and has imprinted on people. Because she has been in human care since she hatched, she won't be released to the wild. The Krumries need state and federal permits to keep birds of prey in captivity.

Harvey Two Tails, the young red tail hawk, was caught in the wild and is being used for falconry. After a couple years, the hawk will be released back to the wild.

"Learning to hunt with us for falconry improves their hunting skills," said Krumrie. "She started out chasing the tail of rabbits until she figured out to go for the head. With our ambas-



Falconer and raptor conservationist Abbey Krumrie of River Valley Raptors holds Harvey Two Tails, a red tail hawk, during her April 12 presentation held at the Lunda Community Center. She and her husband, Joe, own and operate the nonprofit they set up to protect and conserve birds of prey.

sadors, we have the chance to double their lifespan in human care."

The various raptor species include buteos, accipiters, goshawk, harriers, falcons, ospreys and eagles. Some birders categorize vultures as raptors as well as shrikes and kites, which aren't common to the Driftless Region.

In addition to eagles, other birds of prey populations suffered from the use of dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane (DDT) during the mid-20th century. An organochloride chemical, DDT was sprayed throughout the environment to control mosquitoes that carried deadly diseases such as malaria. However, the chemical worked its way up the food chain, weakening the egg shells of apex birds. Since the eggs would break before the chicks could be fully developed, an alarming reduction in the number of hatchlings resulted.

Since the reduction in the use of DDT, the numbers of birds of prey have rebounded. Krumrie advises those wanting to help with raptor conservation to start in their backyards. She urges property owners to avoid using pesticides.

See Raptor program, continued on page 6

Stewardship specialist presented program about land trust

Landowners wanting to protect their acres from development can do so through a conservation easement. Information for doing so through Landmark Conservancy was presented at the June 14 Friends of the Black River meeting held at the Lunda Community Center.

Stewardship specialist for Landmark Conservancy, Katie Hahn, talked about the organization and how it helps land owners protect their land from being developed. Hahn's work includes conducting yearly monitoring, conservation easement interpretation and landowner support.

A land conservation easement is a binding contract between the landowner and the conservancy. The legal document guarantees any current and future owners won't build developments or other commercial enterprises on the land with the land trust monitoring the use of the land.

"You basically hire us to watch the land for you," said Hahn.

The largest land trust in Wisconsin, Landmark Conservancy also purchases and oversees lands having special features or interest. Such properties are selected because of their size, connectivity with other lands having unique value, has climate resiliency and community benefit. Through the easements, Landmark Conservancy has been able to conserve more than 40,000 acres in a 20-county area in northwest Wisconsin.

The land trust also acquires land for nature preserves and parks, providing recreational areas for public use. Land-



Stewardship specialist for Landmark Conservancy, Katie Hahn (left), fielded questions about land conservation easements posed by an attendee at the Friends of the Black River's June 14 meeting.

mark Conservancy protects the lands by working with private landowners and local municipalities as well as state and federal partners. Along with donors, the nonprofit gets some funding through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program

Benefits of permanently protecting land from development can include habitat for wildlife, support climate resiliency, maintain high water quality and provide nature-based recreation opportunities to communities. A number of the sites allow public access for recreational uses.

With a conservation easement, privately held lands remain under the control of the owners. If the land is transferred to another owner, the new owner will have to abide by the conditions of the contract.

Raptor program, continued from page 5

Raptors can also encounter dangers along roadways. Motorists should be aware birds of prey will be attracted to carrion and litter they find on roadsides.

"Eagles will eat road kill," said Krumrie. "They might eat too much and become too heavy to get off the ground and can be hit by vehicles. Food such as apple cores can attract rodents that owls eat. The rodents draw owls to where the prey is eating the apples and they can get hit by cars."

RVR will host tours of their facility in Buffalo City. Appointments can be made by calling 507-459-8264 or by emailing rivervalleyraptors@gmail.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.



Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2023!

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!



Contributions to Friends of the Black River are used for -

Charitable contributions received by the Friends of the Black River will be used 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

Support of our mission is greatly appreciated

www.friendsoftheblackriver.org

The Black River Watershed



Black River Falls, WI 54615

PO Box 475

Friends of the Black River