



**FRIENDS of the
BLACK RIVER**

A Citizens' watershed
conservation organization

Reading the River

Volume 21 Issue 4 ~ Fall 2025

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What's happening here?



For the answer to what's happening in the photo, see page 3

President's Greetings

Another hot, humid summer is gone; it brought plenty of rain this year. Rivers and streams had good levels of water for paddling and other water sports.

We had our river cleanup in

August and we have made much progress as there was not much trash to be picked up. We also have a roadside cleanup along County Highway K on September 23rd.

President's 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 2025

Wednesday, October 15: Annual meeting, year-end reports and election of board members, Jessica Ross, DNR rare plant agent, will talk about rare plants in Jackson County area (see below)

Wednesday, November 12: Program to be determined

Tuesday, December 2: Annual movie night, film to be determined.

Programming for 2026 is under development. Anyone with ideas for future programs is invited to send suggestions to the Friends of the Black River's email account address: info_fbr@yahoo.com or via Messenger on the FBR Facebook page.

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.

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.

Rare plants in Jackson County topic of upcoming meeting

Jessica Ross, WDNR botanist, is the coordinator of the Rare Plant Monitoring Program. She will talk about the program at the Wednesday, October 15 Friends of the Black River educational meeting. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. in The Hub at the Lunda Community Center in Black River Falls. The community center is located at 405 State Hwy 54, Black River Falls. The program is free and the public is encouraged to attend.

Ross's presentation will give an overview of rare plant conservation in Wisconsin, discuss the RPMP, how to get involved with the program and highlight some of the rare plants making their home in the Black River watershed.

According to Ross, there are around 1900 native plants species in Wisconsin and 324 of them are considered rare.

"To conserve these rare species, it is critical we have up-to-date information on which ones are most in need of our limited resources," said Ross.

The RPMP was developed to engage the Wisconsin botanical community in these plant conservation efforts. Volunteers are trained to search for known rare plant populations around the state and collect data in a way that will inform conservation assessments and habitat or species management decisions.



So far, volunteers have submitted over 2,000 reports from almost every county in the state since the program began in 2013.

"They have found plants not seen in Wisconsin in decades, discovered new populations of some of the rarest plants in the Midwest and documented the disappearance of others," said Ross. "In short, they have given us a clearer picture of the state of rare plants in Wisconsin."

President's Greetings, continued from page 1

FBR will have monthly programs this fall on the second Wednesday of the next two months.

Fall is a great time for hiking, camping, biking and other activities. Stay active and, hopefully, healthy this fall.

Steve Rake
FBR President

Pollinator supporter hosts guided-wildflower walk



Tim Bodeen sharing information about a plant growing in one of his many flower beds.



Blue vervain (*Verbena hastata*)

During a July 15 garden tour, a group of more than a dozen wildflower enthusiasts discovered a landscape designed to benefit pollinators can be created on an urban lot. Co-hosted by property owner Tim Bodeen and Friends of the Black River, walk participants were treated to the results of Bodeen's efforts and his knowledge of the wildflowers.

Tim Bodeen's property in the Black River Falls does have some conventional lawn area in the front of his home, but much of the sides and backyards are filled with such native wildflower varieties as bee balm, compass plant, coreopsis, black-eyed Susans, St. John's wort, rattlesnake master, blazing star, lupine and cone flowers.

A retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuge Manager, Bodeen admits he isn't a purist when it comes to growing only native plants. His main focus is to support pollinators, particularly bumble bees, so he will include any non-native cultivars in his plantings that will attract the insects. During the tour, bumble bees were seen visiting the blossoms as were monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

Along with the myriad of thriving blooming plants, Bodeen has installed landscape aquatic features. The cascading water is available to animals and plants.



A bumble bee visits a beebalm blossom (*monarda didyma*) growing in one of Tim Bodeen's flower beds.



Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

Answer to page 1 photo question:

A group of wildflower enthusiasts listen to pollinator-friendly gardener Tim Bodeen (center) as he talks about the native and non-native species he's planted around his home in Black River Falls.

Construction company owner uses engineering skills to build mock beaver dams

Anyone wanting to rewild property in the Black River watershed might consider thinking like a beaver. That's what Jim Hoffman, CEO of Hoffman Construction, has been doing on land connected to his cranberry operation.

Hoffman shared the story of his efforts to build mock beaver dams at the Sept. 10 Friends of the Black River public education meeting held at the Lunda Community Center.

Also referred to as beaver dam analogues, the dams Hoffman and fellow beaver devotees are constructing use the same organic materials beavers use to build their dams and lodges.

Although Hoffman has built major infrastructure projects through his company, he is now transferring his engineering knowledge and skills to a



Jim Hoffman (left) stands by a taxidermy display of a beaver while sporting a beaver fur hat as he talks about mock beaver dams with FBR member Eric Adsen. Hoffman talked about his efforts to rewild his property near Alma Center by building the mock beaver dams.

smaller scale to help wildlife on his property near Alma Center.

Hoffman became interested in beavers when he accepted the care of a two-year-old orphan beaver kit. Known as Broadhead, because he was found near that town, the beaver was brought to a wildlife rehabilitation center in the eastern part of the state.

To provide shelter for the orphan beaver, Hoffman and his friend JD Nichols built a lodge in a pond on Hoffman's property. The beaver did go into the lodge, but just a short time later, he moved on and Hoffman never saw the Broadhead again.

No beavers are involved in the construction of Hoffman's mock dam. However, the methods used by the large rodents are incorporated into building the analogue dams to create ponds. The ponds, characterized as "Beaver Ecology," not only provide habitat for the fur bearers, they benefit aquatic animals, birds and other wildlife. They also retain stormwater, assisting in flood control efforts, and nitrate removal. The water from farmland runoff is removed from the water by the plants in the ponds.

"Beaver dams help improve water quality; beavers are wetland biodiversity enhancers," said Hoffman. "They are building stability in the streams and wetlands. We wanted to mimic the positive aspects of beaver dams."



Constructing a mock beaver dam analogue

Mock beaver dams, continued on page 6

Kids young and old try kayaking on the fishing pond

As part of the Festival in the Park celebration, the kids' fishing pond in Lunda Community Park was filled with paddlers wanting to try kayaking. FBR provides the equipment for the Paddle in the Park event where those new to the sport can learn to kayak in a flat-water environment



Photos courtesy of Sue Bitter

Citizen volunteers monitor health of local streams

Water Action Volunteers are nearing the end of this year's stream monitoring season.

The stream monitoring program is an ongoing partnership between the University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and nearly 50 local partner groups and organizations.

Over 500 monitors in Wisconsin provide a good database of information on statewide water quality. The volunteers visit their selected stream once a month, May through October, measuring the waterway's temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, stream flow, and doing an invertebrate biotic index. The data collected is put into a statewide database and provides information on long term trends in water quality.

This year, volunteers in Jackson County have been Mitch and Sue Wester, Mike Brauner, Pete Segerson, Jerry Schmidt plus two new monitors on Robinson Creek, Howard Spegman and Ron Cork. In Clark County, Carrie Morrell monitors O'Neill Creek.

Anyone interested in this worthwhile activity is encouraged to contact WAV coordinator Pete Segerson by calling - 715-333-2033 or emailing - ps205v@hotmail.com.

Equipment and training is provided. It's a great way for couples, parent and child or two friends to get outdoors and help the environment.

How can you get involved?

- Adopt a storm drain
- Install green infrastructure (ex. redirect downspouts, install rain gardens)
- Paint a storm drain mural or stencil
- Contact your city to learn more about local initiatives
- Become a WAV volunteer to monitor local streams and rivers
- Attend a Wisconsin Stormwater Week event!

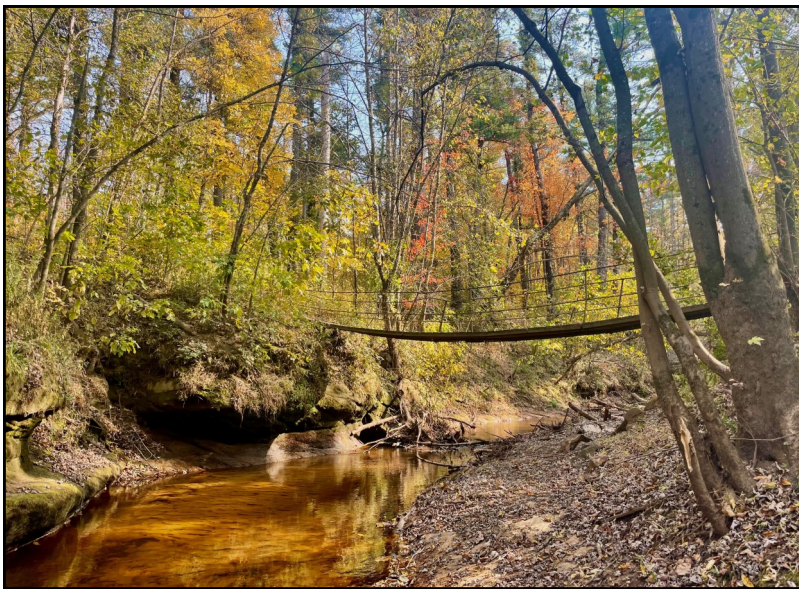


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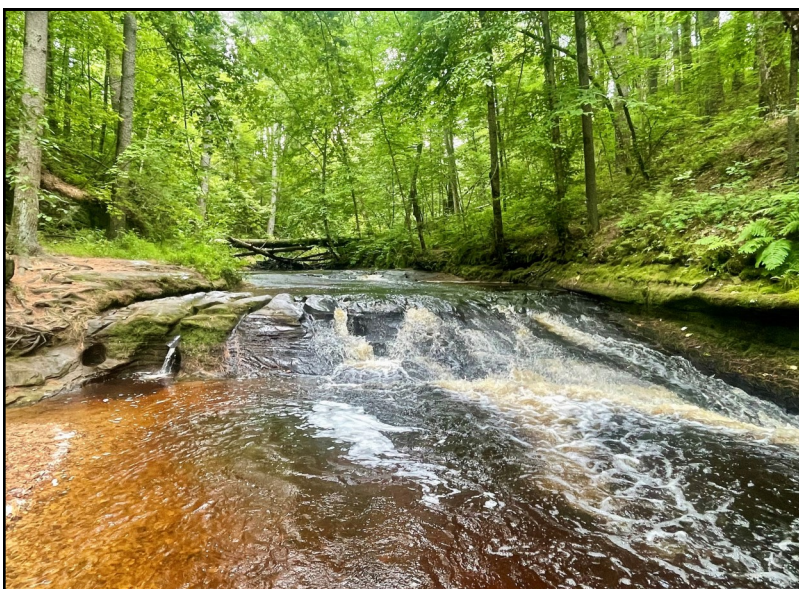
Photographer captures beauty of Black River watershed

Jackson County Fair photo exhibitor Brandi Shramek of Alma Center was awarded champion and reserve champion placings for entries in the Friends of the Black River sponsored photo class at this summer's Jackson County Fair.

Shramek took both photos on Perry Creek, one of her favorite places to explore.



Brandi Shramek's 2025 Jackson County Fair champion photo in the open class.



Brandi Shramek's 2025 Jackson County Fair reserve champion photo open class.

*Mock beaver dams,
continued from page 4*

Despite the mock beaver dam's smaller scale, Hoffman said he needed to obtain permits to erect the water retention structure.

"We went through a long permitting process," said Hoffman. "We did get a DNR permit for 12 mock beaver dams on a tributary to Halls Creek."

Not every outdoors enthusiast is a beaver fan. Hoffman and fellow beaver supporters are trying to convince trout fishers the dams and ponds do benefit the fish species. They are asking the DNR to relook at beaver management and that the ponds help trout as they serve as a nursery for young fry.

"Wisconsin is actively killing beavers and destroying dams," said Hoffman. "The money from trout stamps is being used to blow up beaver dams. The belief is the ponds warm the water too much for trout."

Hoffman reported tens of thousands of beavers have been killed since the policy began.

Other beaver activity causing issues include their chewing down trees homeowners have planted or when the animals create flooding situations in urban areas.

"Beavers don't like the sound of flowing water, so they'll plug culverts which then wash out roads," said Hoffman. "So, a number of mitigation tactics are being developed."

Hoffman hopes those tactics will be effective in developing cooperation between humans and beavers where possible.

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

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

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 2025!

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

Your membership will keep this newsletter coming to your e-mail or mail box!

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