



**FRIENDS of the
BLACK RIVER**

A Citizens' watershed
conservation organization

Reading the River



Volume 22 Issue 2~ Summer 2026

In this Issue

What's happening here?	1
President's message	1
Upcoming meetings and events	2
Clark County Earth Day cleanup	3
BRF group climbs Mt. Kilimanjaro	4
FBR joins effort to regulate wake boats	5
Annual spring wildflower walk	6
Volunteers needed for WAV program	6
Membership and donor form	7
Renewal reminder	8

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
Info_fbr@yahoo.com

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

Dan Moore

(715) 937-5097

Jeff Polzin

(715) 896-5534

Jackson Burgau

(406) 334-9331

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 2

President's Greetings

Friends of the Black River is continuing with our summer programs.

We will be in Lunda Community Park with our kayaks as part of the Festival in the Park.

Also, on July 14th we will have our prairie walk with July 15th set as the rain date.

While it had been dry earlier this summer, now we've received plenty of rain.

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 2026

Saturday, July 11: Paddle in the Park, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., Lunda Community Park kids' fishing pond,

Tuesday, July 14: Prairie wildflower walk, 6 p.m., meet at Theisen's Supply parking lot, (616 St. Hwy 54, Black River Falls) at 5:30 p.m. to caravan or car pool to the site, rain date: July 15

Saturday, August 22: Annual River Cleanup, 8 a.m. to noon, meet at Al Young Park (see more information below)

Wednesday, September 9: Monthly meeting: Danielle Hudson, program research and work with the Xerces Society studying invertebrate species

Tuesday, September 29: County Highway K Adopt-A-Highway cleanup, 8:30 a.m., start at intersection of State Hwy 54 and County Hwy K

Wednesday, October 14: Annual meeting, program to be determined,

Wednesday, November 11: Monthly meeting: program to be determined

Tuesday, December 1: Annual movie night, movie selections to be determined

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 in the Lunda Community Center. The community center is located at 405 State Highway 54, Black River Falls.

Events and dates subject to change.

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

Anyone with suggestions for possible presentations concerning the Black River watershed, environment, outdoor activities, history or other related topics are encouraged to contact FBR. Topic ideas can be sent to info_fbr@yahoo.com or via Facebook Messenger on the FBR Facebook page.

Annual River Cleanup planned for August

Volunteers are needed for the annual river cleanup that will be held Saturday, August 22 from 8 a.m. to noon.

All those who enjoy pristine waters and shorelines are encouraged to assist in cleaning up the river.

Volunteers are asked to meet at Al Young Park at 8 a.m. to receive assignments. The park is located at the south end of South First Street, Black River Falls.

An appreciation lunch will be served around 11:30 a.m. at the park.

The annual cleanups have resulted in less trash clutter in the river.



President's Greetings, continued from page 1

So, as we go into the hot time of the year, we will have plenty of opportunities to participate in outdoor activities.

Be careful of the heat and the bugs (the ticks are really bad this year) and get some exercise.

Have a good summer.

Steve Rake, President of the FBR

Answer to page 1 photo question:

Jackson County volunteers started the morning of the Earth Day Cleanup at Castle Mound State Park campground to receive assignments of locations to clean up.

FBR Clark County Chapter hold Earth Day Cleanup

Friends of the Black River - Clark County had a total of 13 volunteers for its Earth Day Cleanup.

Volunteers cleaned Greenwood Park, the bridge access and all of Neillsville's river front. O'Neil Creek, Listeman Arboretum, Ruby's Landing and parts of River Ave, Snieder Park were also cleaned.

Volunteers also cleaned up along Middle Road bridge access and county land known as Wedges that borders a much of the river.

The effort resulted in taking out three dumpsters worth of trash, about a dozen tires, five televisions, car body parts, two toilets, office chairs and a debris from someone's remodel that was mostly carpet and cabinets.



In observance of Earth Day, a crew of volunteers in Clark County turned out April 25 to clean up various illegal dumpsites.



Adventurers shared story of their Mt. Kilimanjaro climb

Last summer, a group of eight mountain climbers from the Black River Falls area successfully summited the tallest mountain in Africa. Two members of the group, Trisha and Jim Suchanek, shared the details and photos of their eight-day adventure at the May 13 Friends of the Black River meeting.

The presentation was given in the Hub at the Lunda Community Center, the program was open to the public.

Initially, the climbing group was made up of 10 friends, but two members of the group had to abandon the climb after succumbing to altitude sickness. The group did prepare for the trip by walking and hiking, but needed to do the activities at higher altitudes to acclimate their bodies to cope with the thin air they would encounter on Kilimanjaro.

"To train to prevent altitude sickness, we went to Colorado and climbed in the mountains," said Jim Suchanek.

During the climb up Kilimanjaro, native guides continually instructed climbers to go slowly to prevent being afflicted with the ailment.

Mt. Kilimanjaro is a dormant volcano located in Tanzania. Formed over two million years ago, Kilimanjaro is the tallest free-standing mountain above sea level in the world at 19,341 feet, 16,100 feet above its plateau base.

Because of its height, the climbers went through four eco-systems. The lowest environment was a tropical rain forest which then gave way to a dryer climate found at the next level. The third ecosystem was a sage brush type of environment and then the highest altitude was vegetation-scarce rocky landscape.

Despite the hostile conditions, the climbers encountered giant groundsels (*Dendrosenecio kilimanjari*), a prehistoric plant species that only grows on the upper reaches of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

This highest elevation landscape included glacier conditions. Temperatures on the mountain range from summer-like at the base to below 20 degrees Fahrenheit at the summit.

At the base of the mountain, there are multiple trails; higher up the mountain, the trails merge. Nearing the summit, climbers walked single-file on narrow rocky trails with as many as 1,200 other climbers trying to get to the summit.

Each day, trekkers would climb to higher point on the mountain, and then at night they would drop down to a lower level to spend the night at



A group from Black River Falls paused at the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania when they completed their climb last August. Posing for a photo on the summit are (left to right) Nick and Gabby Pardoe, Carol Martin, Jim and Trisha Suchanek, Sandra Reich, Jennifer Boice and Todd Reich.

a campsite. Going to a lower level, allowed the climbers time to acclimate to the thinner air and to recover.

"You're out of breath every night," said Jim Suchanek.

Reaching the summit took place on day seven.

"We got up at 12:30 a.m.," said Jim Suchanek.

"We had to get to the top in six hours because so many other climbers were also going up. The guides sang songs to encourage us. We timed it so we summited when the sun came up. We were extremely excited to be up there."

Each climber reaching the summit receives a certificate of completion from the Tanzanian government.

It took one day to climb down the mountain be-

Kilimanjaro, continued on page 5

cause the climbers were returning to lower levels and didn't need to acclimate to the air.

The BRF group credited their four guides with helping them during the climb. The 40 porters were much appreciated as they provided amenities to make the adventure a positive experience. Everything needed for the climb is carried up by the porters.

The climbers had to only carry a small backpack for their water supply and any snacks they wanted for on the trail. All other supplies and gear – water, food, tents, bedding and an enclosed restroom – was carried by the porters.

"The food was wonderful," said Trisha Suchanek. "The guides made a lot of local dishes that were excellent and also made grilled cheese and French fries that they thought we would be familiar with. They did a great job."

Because of the service they received from the guides and porters, she believed it was a wonderful vacation despite the demands of the climb.

Following the trek up the mountain, mem-



A hold-over from prehistoric times, giant groundsels (*Dendrosenecio kilimanjari*), only grow on the upper reaches of Mt. Kilimanjaro

bers of group went on safari in nearby national parks to view African wildlife.

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

FBR part of effort to regulate wake boats

The Friends of the Black River has joined the effort to regulated wake boats. FBR has joined a coalition of roughly 90 groups lobbying to regulate the boats on smaller lakes.

Wake boats have ballast tanks that fill with water to lower the stern. When the boat is operated with full ballasts, it enhances the watercraft's wake. People towed behind the boat ride the waves much as surfers do in the ocean.

However, the huge waves created on inland waters can damage shorelines, docks and lake ecosystems and can disrupt others use of the lakes.

A couple bills are being debated in the Wisconsin legislature to regulate the boats, but



opposition to the bills concerns the amount of distance from shoreline the wake boats can operate when creating the enhanced waves.

The water sports industry is supporting a bill that allows the boats to operate at least 200 feet from the shore, docks and other lake users. That industry is also resisting allowing local governments the right to enact stricter policies regarding the use of the boats on nearby lakes.

Opponents to the water sports industry's bill proposed changing the distance to 500 feet from shorelines, docks and others using the lake, only operate on lakes at least 20 feet deep and allowing local governments to exercise their rights to enact regulations.

Studies have been and are being conducted to determine the effects the enhanced waves have on lakebeds. Research shows the waves can stir up sediment from lakebeds. The sediments can contain toxins and disrupt fish and other wildlife habitat. Some municipalities obtain their water from nearby lakes, which might mean the supply would be contaminated. The wake boat ballast tanks can also harbor invasive species.

State residents can voice their concerns about wake boats use on their lakes by using the contact information on the representatives' websites or become involved with the environmental groups lobbying to regulate the boats' use.

Spring wildflower enthusiasts take part in hike

The Friends of the Black River hosted its annual spring wildflower hike May 9. The hike was held along Pettibone Pass. A hike--on-your-own along the trail was set up from Thursday, May 7 to Tuesday, May 12 for hikers to learn the identities of the plants.

Some of the May flowers that can be found along the trail include (clockwise starting at right: blooming hepatica, blooming twin leaf, trillium and club moss. Other flowers often found along the trail include columbine, marsh marigold, trout lily, trailing arbutus.



WAV volunteers needed to monitor streams

Volunteers are needed to monitor streams in Jackson and Clark counties as part of the Water Action Volunteers program.

Stream monitors collect data on the long-term trends of water quality in the Black River watershed.

Volunteers 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.

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

The activity is a family-friendly project that benefits the environment.

Anyone interested in volunteering in the program 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

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 unless to update contact information.

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 2026

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

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

Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2026

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

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

Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2026

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

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

Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2026

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

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

Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2026

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

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

Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2026

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

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

- Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2026**

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

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

Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2026

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

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

- Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2026**

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

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

Memberships are being gratefully accepted for 2026

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

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

