



A Citizens' watershed conservation organization

Reading the River



Volume 12, Issue 3~ Summer 2015

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What's happening here?



For the answer to the question, see page 4. Photo by Tom Teeples

Greetings from the President

Summer is pretty well over and fall is always an enjoyable season for me. Leaves turn color and fall so we can rake leaves instead of mowing lawn every week.

Cooler weather and shorter daylight brings on a variety of activities like putting up wood for winter, hunting seasons and great hiking weather.

Hopefully you will be able to participate in some outdoor activities as well as join our group at some of our planned events. It would be great to see more attendance at our meetings and we always are looking for ideas and/or events to sponsor.

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 events for 2015

October 14 — Annual meeting, program on the project to reintroduce elk to Jackson County

November 4— Monthly meeting, program about Wisconsin led campaign to ban DDT

December 7— Annual holiday party, TBD

January 13—Monthly meeting, program about little known species of the Driftless Region

Unless otherwise noted, regular monthly meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the lower level community room of the Jackson County Bank.

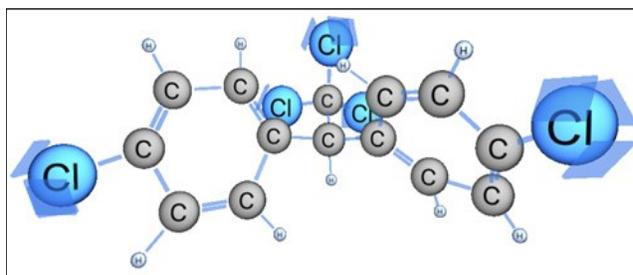
Topics of future meeting presentations

October 14—Scott Roepke will give a presentation about trapping elk in Kentucky for the reintroduction project in the Black River State Forest. The effort to reintroduce elk has resulted in a small herd getting established in the county.



November 4—Bill Berry, author of *Banning DDT: How Citizen Activists in Wisconsin Led the Way*, will talk about the book and the people who took part in the fight to ban the pesticide in the state.

DDT



Annual meeting to take place in October

The Friends of the Black River will hold its annual meeting at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, October 14, in the Jackson County Bank community room. Election of board members will be held.

Current board members Sue Bitter, Grady Gutknecht and Jeff Polzin have agreed to continue to stay on the board.

There is room for a couple more members to

serve on the board. The board meets once a month to discuss and to act on the business of the organization. The board will elect officers at the November FBR Board meeting.

Anyone interested in being on the board is encouraged to contact FBR President Steve Rake at 715-284-2087.

Greetings from the president, *continued from page 1*

Our annual meeting is coming up in October and I hope we have a good crowd to review events and talk about next year.

We elect board members at this meeting



and provide food and drinks, so plan to attend!

I hope you had a good summer and let's look forward to fall.

~ Steve Rake

Volunteers turn out for annual river cleanup



A group of about 20 volunteers turned out Saturday, Aug. 29 for the annual river cleanup. Those helping with the cleanup walked the shores of the Black River or took canoes down the river in search of trash.

This year, FBR members were joined by volunteers who have worked on the state's Ice Age Trail with FBR member Tom Teeples.



The cleanup effort resulted in a pickup load of trash and recyclables.

The environmental protection event sponsored by the Friends of the Black River has been held each year since the group was formed.

Photos by Pat McKnight

FBR sponsors Paddle in the Park and Wazee Paddle



To continue to promote the enjoyment of watercraft and paddling, the Friends of the Black River held its annual Paddle in the Park on July Fourth. The Paddle in the Park is held in conjunction with the Festival in the Park, a fundraiser for the Lunda Community Park maintenance fund.



The Friends of the Black River also held its annual kayak paddling instruction event at Lake Wazee Saturday, July 18. Visitors to Lake Wazee County Park could learn to paddle from seasoned instructors. The more adventurous could also receive instruction in the roll technique.

Photos by Shaun Lescher

FBR members and volunteers clear Morrison Creek



In May, a crew of FBR members and other volunteers worked to clear Morrison Creek of obstructions.



It took plenty of teamwork and a willingness to get wet to clear a large log jam on the creek.

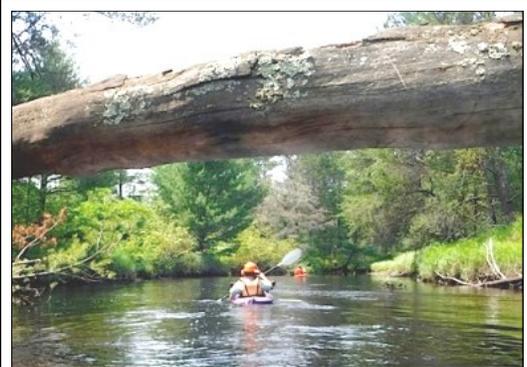
FBR members and volunteers from the La Crosse and Galesville areas fitted up with safety gear and chain saws to take out blockages on Morrison Creek.

They worked on the six-mile section from State Highway 54 to Cemetery Road. One obstacle was a sizeable log jam.

That section of stream flows through a mostly wooded area, attracting paddlers from the Sierra Club and other outdoor groups.

The creek's width can vary between 35 to 50 feet across and can be as much as eight feet deep in places.

Dams on the creek used by cranberry operations play a role in controlling water levels on the stream.



Clear paddling on Morrison Creek.

Answer to front page photo question: The stream-clearing crew head out on Morrison Creek to look for blockages.

Photos by Tom Teeples

Prairie wildflower enthusiasts hike Brockway Barrens



About 15 FBR members and guests joined prairie plant expert Steve Humphries (right of center) on a wildflower walk on the Brockway Barrens July 15.



Photos by Tom Teeples

Conservation specialist talks about land preservation agreements

The Mississippi Valley Conservancy can help landowners stem the tide of bluff land destruction caused by frac sand mining.

That was the message presented by Abbie Church, conservation director with MVC, to the members and guests attending the Friends of the Black River's Sept. 9 meeting.

"There is tremendous development pressure on our lands," said Church. "Wisconsin is losing farmland faster than any other state in the nation. We have to overcome the notion that undeveloped land is a limitless resource."

She said the flood of frac sand mines going into the Black River watershed has resulted in a sharp increase in the number of landowners calling MVC looking for a way to protect their farms from mining.

The goal of voluntary conservation agreements is to permanently protect wildlife habitat, working farmland and natural resources of a particular property. MVC has made the Black River corridor a priority for conservation efforts because of the habitat's quality and biodiversity, identifying the watershed an area of ecological significance.

"I'm not telling anything you don't know," said Church told those attending her presentation. "You realize the need to protect farmland and natural habitat. Land in the Black River corridor is facing unsustainable practices. Along with preserving land from mining and development, the Mississippi Valley Conservancy works to prevent unsustainable timber and land use."

The MVC is a private nonprofit land trust that helps landowners document their wishes for preserving their lands from subdivisions and other development such as landfills as well as mining. Land trusts are regulated by the federal government which guarantees the agreements are binding into perpetuity.

The land trust works with the landowner to develop an agreement known as an easement. Easements are written up according to the landowner's wishes as long they meet the objectives of land conservation. The easements do not require public access to the lands.

"The agreements are custom-written," said Church. "The property remains in private ownership and the landowner could receive an income tax deduction."



Abbie Church (right) conservation director for Mississippi Valley Conservancy, discusses the conservancy's program with (left to right) Tom Teeples, Brady Palmer and Deane Chase, following her presentation at the Sept. 9 FBR meeting. Photo by Pat McKnight

If landowners sell the land, the buyer must abide by the conditions of the conservation easement. MVC monitors the land to be sure usage meets the conditions set down in the agreement.

Founded in 1997 in response to a movement to develop bluff lands, MVC's mission is to conserve the landscapes and natural areas of the Driftless Region of western Wisconsin for future generations. MVC works in Buffalo, Trempealeau, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, Vernon, Crawford, Richland and Grant counties. The conservancy has preserved more than 30,000 acres through the agreements with landowners and purchases.

As part of her presentation, Church presented stories of two private landowners who wanted to keep their land from being devastated by a sand mine operation. They placed their land in conservancy, protecting their properties for future generations while continuing to own and use the land as they had been. They also gained a peace of mind knowing the habitat will remain intact in perpetuity.

"We also work with landowners to seek grant funding to help with wildlife habitat management activities, such as timber stand improvement or prairie restoration," said Church.

As part of its service to landowners who want to preserve their land, MVC will do a title search to be sure no liens are placed on the land and will work to obtain the mineral rights of the land.

Winners of FBR sponsored fair photography class

The Friends of the Black River sponsored photography judging at this year's Jackson County Fair. This is the second year FBR has awarded prizes to the champion and reserve champion placings in the open and junior divisions.

A winning photo at right was entered by Monica Lobenstein in the open division. It was taken from the beach at Lost Falls Campground on an early morning in mid-July.



The winning photo at left was taken by Luke Franks, son of Becky and Tom Franks. The junior class exhibitor took the photo where Perry Creek meets the Black River. The photo titled, "People Fishing on the Black River" took a blue and was chosen as Outstanding and Best of Show in the junior division.

Placings were decided by the fair's photography judge and the top two winners in each division receive a cash award from FBR.



FBR greets visitors at GreenLifeXpo booth

The Friends of the Black River had a booth at this year's GreenLifeXpo. This is the fifth year for the green-living exposition.

The environmental and conservation awareness exposition was held Sept. 12 at the Milt Lunda Memorial Ice Arena.



FBR Board member Tom Teeples (left) visits with FBR members Janet and Gene Krohn when the couple stopped by the FBR booth at this year's GreenLifeXpo.

As in the past, FBR shared a space with the Wisconsin Ice Age Trail and the Jackson County Hiking Club.

New at this year's display were items that would appeal to youngsters such as stuffed animals and stickers which read "We 'otter' keep our rivers clean."



Little Landon Seekamp couldn't resist checking out the stuffed bear that was part of the FBR display at this year's GreenLifeXpo.

Photos by Pat McKnight

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 or 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.

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 has 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 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:

