



A Citizens' watershed  
conservation organization

# Reading the River



Volume 14, Issue 4 ~ Winter 2017

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## Board of Directors

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**Members of the Board**  
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Deane Chase  
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Pete Segerson  
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## What's happening here?



For the answer, see page 6. Photo by Tom Teeple

## Greetings from the president

Winter has arrived! I'm one who looks forward to the snow season because of the variety of activities that are available to us.

While snow storms do cause interruptions in our schedules and activities there is a certain change in our lives, perhaps

meant to slow our activities down to restore ourselves in preparation for the more active seasons.

Daylight is very precious this time of year so don't waste it. Outdoor activities such as skating, skiing, hiking, snowshoe-

*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

**Wednesday, Jan. 10**—Monthly meeting's program topic is the economic impact of Black River and its watershed presented by former Black River Area Chamber of Commerce executive director Chris Hardie.

The 2018 program schedule is being developed and anyone with suggestions for future programs is encouraged to submit them by emailing

info\_fbr@yahoo.com.

Meeting dates will continue to be the second Wednesday of each month except for May, July, August and December.

The Wednesday evening programs will be held at 6:30 p.m. in the lower level community room of the Jackson County Bank.

## 2018-2019 FBR Board



At the Friends of the Black River Board of Directors October meeting, the board members elected officers for 2018-2019.

Steve Rake was nominated to keep his post as president and Mitch Wester was nominated to keep his seat as vice president.

Newcomer Luke Annear was nominated for the office of treasurer.

The slate of nominees was approved on a voice vote. Board members elected at the October annual meeting will serve a two-year term.

Pictured are the members of the board: (back, left to right) Sue Bitter, Tom Teebles, Pete Segerson, Jeff Polzin (front, left to right) Mitch Wester, Steve Rake and Luke Annear.

(Not available for the photo was board member Deane Chase.) Photo by Pat McKnight

## Fair photo winner



A photo of the Black River taken by Matt Franks was the champion winner in the junior FBR photo class at this year's Jackson County Fair.

## Greetings from the president, continued from page 1

ing, and sledding provide both fun and exercise. Also those wood fires feel so good now and cutting wood helps keep us warm on the coldest days.

Hopefully, we will have enough snow for these winter activities. And, hopefully, we won't get the rain that turns to ice and causes problems.

FBR will promote a snowshoe hike this winter and kayak sessions at the pool. Our monthly programs will continue on the second Wednesday of the month.

Enjoy the Holiday Season. ~ Steve Rake

## Hornby presents photography program at November meeting

Nature scenes capture Jim Hornby's creative imagination, which then inspire him to capture them in photographs.

The former Black River Falls High School educator, coach and athletic director presented a slide show of his work at the Nov. 8 Friends of the Black River meeting.

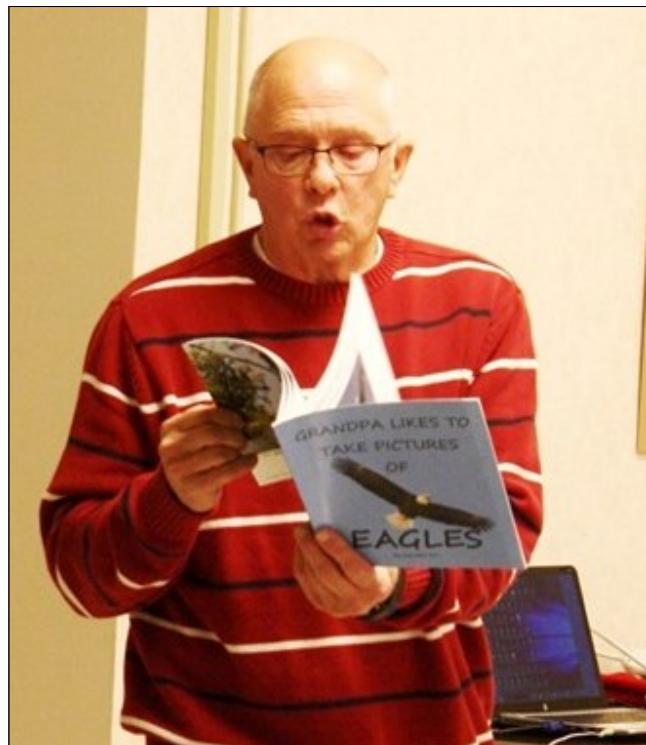
In the presentation, Hornby traced his photography hobby from his early adult years when he borrowed a camera to record a trip to Europe.

He has practiced the hobby throughout his adulthood, but since retiring, he has found more time to pursue the avocation.

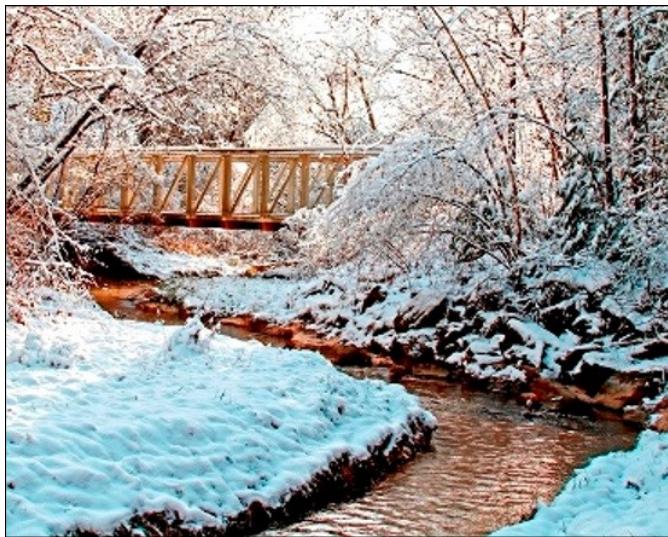
His favorite subjects are bald eagles, leading him to visit three nests in the area to capture the birds of prey with his digital camera. He showed photos of adult eagles in flight and at the nests. He has also been able to get pictures of fledglings around the time they are ready to leave the nest.

"Eagles have flourished in the area since DDT was banned," said Hornby. "There's a nest above the dam, one down along (County Highway) DE and one the Blair-Taylor students are monitoring. That nest blew down, but the students are watching new eagles; their names are Blair and Taylor."

His interest and education background led him to create a children's book titled, "Grandpa Likes to Take Pictures of Eagles" to share his eagle photos with his eight grandchildren.



Jim Hornby showed a copy of the children's book he published containing photos of eagles he has taken titled, "Grandpa Likes to Take Pictures of Eagles" during his slide show presentation at the Friends of the Black River's Nov. 8 meeting. Photo by Pat McKnight



Jim Hornby's photo of Town Creek in the winter was the champion winner in the FBR photo category at this year's Jackson County Fair.

To refine his skill, Hornby took a trip to the Grand Canyon to learn about nature photography from a professional photographer.

"We took pictures at sunrise and sunset, but we took photos of the rocks because as the sun rises or sets, the intensity of the light creates constantly changing highlights on the rocks; the colors change as the sun moves," said Hornby.

He also traveled to Yosemite and Rocky Mountain national parks as well as the Red Rock region in the Sedona, Ariz. area, taking photographs of the rock formations and other scenic vistas.

Other photos in his collection are of the ice caves in the Lake Superior National Shoreline. Along with fellow Black River Falls resident and photographer Tom Teebles, Hornby got photos of the icicles and other stunning frozen sculptures formed by the waves along the rocky shoreline and in the caves.

## LCV representative speaks at annual meeting

Katie Beaton is the new western organizer for the League of Conservation Voters. Based in Eau Claire, Beaton introduced herself to FBR members and guests at the October 11 annual meeting.

Beaton gave a brief update on issues the League is monitoring. She also related how the organization keeps voters in the know as well as informing legislators about their constituents concerns.

"We work in the capital in Madison to keep tabs on bills being proposed," said Beaton. "We then let people know about hearings and provide resources. We engage with legislators and do educational events."

LCV also creates coalitions with other organizations and builds relationships with them.

One of the issues the organization's educational outreach has concentrated on has been sulfide mining. There's currently a requirement, known as the prove-it law, that mining companies show they can operate mines without polluting the environment.

Beaton reported some mining companies are using a mining processing operation in Canada as an example of a nonpolluting mining operation.

"It's not a good example of what a sulfide mine would look like," said Beaton. "We just haven't seen it (sulfide mining) be safe in Wisconsin."

Metallic sulfide mining operations extract metals embedded in sulfur-bearing rock. The hard-rock can contain copper and nickel with trace amounts of cobalt, platinum, palladium and gold.

When the sulfide is exposed to air and water, sulfuric acid is produced. If the toxin gets into surface waters as well as groundwater, it can harm the environment and the people who depend on the water source.

The water can also carry the metals extracted through the mining process. These metals can be toxic to life, taking centuries and even millennia to neutralize.

The LCV is also keeping an eye on mining operations outside the state's borders. One operation proposed for Upper Michigan would be situated on waterways that flow into Wisconsin.

"The Back Forty mine is in Michigan, but any pollution that goes into the river flows into Wis-



Western organizers with the League of Conservation Voters Kate Beaton spoke about the organization at the October 11 meeting. Photo by Pat McKnight

consin," said Beaton.

The organization is also concerned about contaminated water in residential areas.

"We are hearing from people in Wisconsin that water is a big issue," said Beaton. "There are problems with contaminated wells. We are advocating against manure spreading."

Residents in the central part of the state have reported their wells have been polluted by manure spread on farm fields. The land the manure is spread on allows the manure to seep into the groundwater residents rely on for their water supply.

The organization is also involved in the contamination of municipal water systems. Lead contamination made headlines last year when reports showed the level of lead in the municipal water system in Flint, Michigan was at unsafe levels since 2014.

Beaton reported the situation of lead contamination in municipal water systems isn't just a problem in Michigan.

"The lead in Milwaukee's water is higher than in Flint, Michigan," said Beaton.

Anyone wanting more information about LCV, can log on to the organization's website at [www.conservationvoters.org](http://www.conservationvoters.org).

## Wildlife rehabilitator speaks at October meeting

Animal control and care at the Coulee Region Humane Society shelter isn't limited to domestic pets. It also takes in and cares for wildlife.

CRHS animal control supervisor Kathy KasaKaitas talked about the animal shelter's work to rehabilitate sick, injured or orphaned wildlife at the Oct. 11 meeting of the Friends of the Black River.

Since starting at the Onalaska shelter as its animal control supervisor, KasaKaitas has expanded its wildlife program particularly in avian rehabilitation.

"We are the only animal control agency that handles and rehabilitates," said KasaKaitas. "Most animal control agencies only deal with domestic and will refer people to nuisance wildlife people. We get a lot of calls for injured or orphaned wildlife. We get a ton of baby squirrels."

In addition to squirrels, some of the other mammals CRHS has treated are fox, raccoon and opossum. Bird species receiving care from the rehabilitation center include waterfowl such as ducklings and mergansers, as well as birds of prey such as owls, hawks, falcons and eagles.

She emphasized the injured animals are wild and can pose a hazard.



Abbey Krumrie brought a special friend to the Oct. 11 annual meeting. The rehabilitated kestrel is used for educational programs. Photo by Pat McKnight



Animal control supervisor and wildlife rehabilitator Kathy KasaKaitas (left) discusses the work she does to rehabilitate injured, sick or orphaned wildlife with Friends of the Black River President Steve Rake at the Oct. 11 Friends of the Black River meeting. Photo by Pat McKnight

ard. The animals should be recognized as wild creatures.

"We can't save them all, but we do our best," said KasaKaitas. "The ultimate goal is to heal and then release the animals back to where they were found; it's not to make them pets."

KasaKaitas uses her education background to instruct the public about proper animal treatment and care, stressing when to assist a wild animal and when to leave it alone. She pointed out a baby mammal's best chance for survival is with its mother.

Mother animals will often leave their young behind in a nest or hidden while she feeds or roams, putting distance between her and her offspring to draw predators away from the baby.

To become a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, the candidate must take two years of training that includes 100 hours of hands-on instruction with a licensed rehabilitator. Rehabilitator trainees must pass a test with an 80 percent score to be licensed by the Department of Natural Resources and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

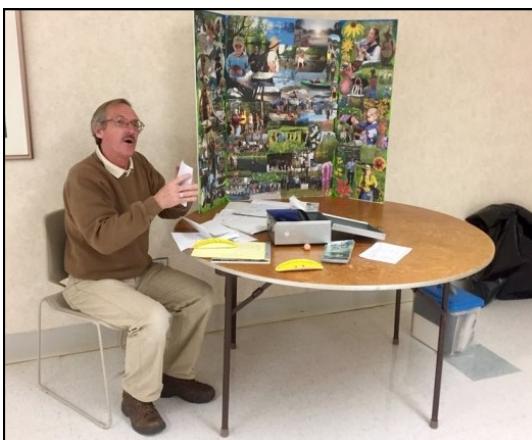
The license designates the specific species the rehabilitator can treat and the license must include the name of the veterinarian the rehabilitator will work with. Rehabilitators must also continue their education, especially if they want to be certified for other species.

KasaKaitas is licensed to treat waterfowl and mammals and is allowed to only treat those animals in which she has been certified.

"If we can't treat it, we have to send it to another center," said KasaKaitas. "We have to transfer it to someone who specializes in the species."

*Wildlife rehabilitator program, continued on page 6*

## FBR hold annual holiday party and movie night



FBR Vice President Mitch Wester greeted those attending the Dec. 5 movie night.



Thirty people attended FBR's holiday party. They were treated to pizza and other refreshments and a showing of a newly released climate change documentary.

FBR held its annual holiday party and movie night Feb. 5. Attendees were served pizza and other refreshments as they viewed the most recently released documentary by former U.S. Vice President Al Gore.

The movie, "An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power" is the sequel to "An Inconvenient Truth," released 10 years ago. In the first video, Gore documented the effects of climate change on the planet.

In the new documentary, he reveals actions being taken to address the issue and the progress being made in renewable energy production and efficient use.

In addition to the meal and movie, Steve Firkins presented his annual award to FBR board member, Jeff Polzin.

Answer to the question on page 1: Jeff Polzin (left) holds the 2017 Steve Firkins Award presented by Steve at the Dec. 5 holiday party. Photos by Tom Teeple

### *Wildlife rehabilitator program, continued from page 5*

Wildlife rehabilitation services must also be a nonprofit or connected to one.

The humane society will also get calls for wildlife removal.

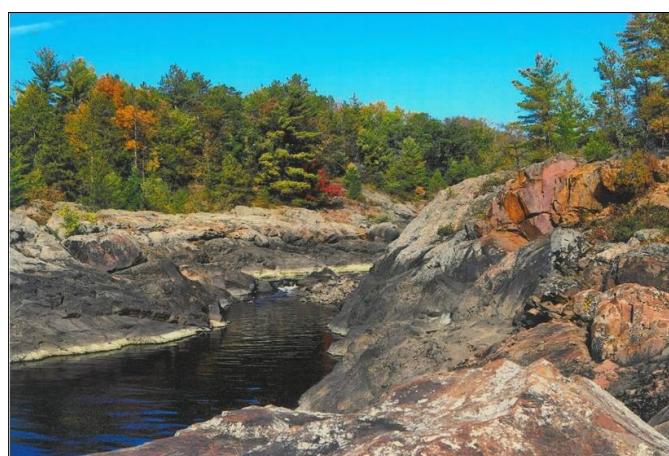
"We get calls from people who complain about raccoons in their yards," said KasaKaitas. "They've built in the raccoons' backyard. I want to tell them (homeowners) to enjoy the raccoons."

The CRHS is licensed to over-winter bats and to monitor diseases such as West Nile virus and mange in wild animals.

Continuing to expand the center, KasaKaitas is currently overseeing building some raptor mews and flight cages for on-site rehabilitation.

La Crosse County Animal Control's Wildlife Rehabilitation program is not funded by municipal contracts, but relies on donations from local supporters.

## Fair open class photo winner



A photo taken by Dave Meyer south of the Hatfield Dam off Clay School Road was the reserve champion winner in the FBR photo class at this year's Jackson County Fair.

## Ways to support FBR's mission

*Donations made since the fall newsletter to assist FBR with its mission:*

Joanne Adsen, \$100 to support the work FBR to conserve the Black River and its watershed

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](mailto: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.



### 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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to give an additional contribution in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_

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

I would like to give this membership as a gift  
(Card will be sent to recipient)  
Occasion \_\_\_\_\_

Return registration and checks payable to:

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

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

**Comments/Questions:**

\*\*\*\*\*  
★ Memberships are being gratefully  
★ accepted for 2018!  
★  
★ 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!  
\*\*\*\*\*



[www.friendsoftheblackriver.org](http://www.friendsoftheblackriver.org)

The Black River Watershed



Black River Falls, WI 54615  
PO Box 475

*Friends of the Black River*