

Volume 19 Issue 3 ~ Fall 2022

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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
pmcknight@centurytel.net

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
- Adam Marciniak**
(715) 610-7529
- Jeff Polzin**
(715) 896-5534
- Pete Segerson**
(715) 333-2033
- Staffer**
Pat McKnight
(608) 526-9873

What's happening here?



For the answer to what's happening in the photo, see page 5.

President's Greetings

Fall is back. I'm almost always glad to have the cooler weather come. It's a great season for outdoor activities. I look forward to working in the woods and spending time with my dog hunting birds. As far as our Friends organization goes, we are trying to get back to our normal schedule of having regular meetings in September, October and November and then having our movie night in December. Hopefully, we will have programs that will interest you. Also hopefully, you will find activities to enjoy during the fall season.

Steve Rake
FBR President

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 2022

Wednesday, October 12, 2022: Annual meeting, Lunda Community Center, 6:30 p.m. Jeff Boyne will present a program about the devastating mid-December 2021 storm.

Wednesday, November 9, 2022: Monthly meeting, Rori Paloski of the DNR will present a program about rattlesnake research done in Jackson County.

Tuesday, December 6, 2022: Annual movie night, movie 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 at the Lunda Community Center.

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.

FBR Board business

FBR Board welcomes new treasurer

Friends of the Black River is happy to announce Jill Clark has agreed to serve as the organization's new treasurer. FBR conducted a search for someone to fill the post of treasurer since Yvonne Mair submitted her resignation due to family and other demands.

After graduating from Black River Falls High School, Jill attended WTC and graduated with an associate degree in accounting. She married her high school sweetheart and the couple lived in the southern and eastern parts of Wisconsin until 1991 when the two returned to Black River Falls to raise their two children.

"We were very active in 4-H and many school sports and volunteer activities," said Jill. "I worked

at the Jackson County Bank for 27 years and am now semi-retired. My husband is fully retired. We are very fortunate to be surrounded by our family; we have two wonderful grandchildren and our friends. We are campers, boaters, travelers but are very content to be at home reading a good book."

Currently, Jill also serves on the Friends Sharing Food, Inc. Board as the organization's treasurer.

"I was asked by a friend to join and am very proud to be a part of this organization which helps to reduce hunger in Jackson County's families through regularly scheduled food distribution," says Jill. "Thank you for this opportunity to serve on this board whose mission statement also makes me proud to be a part of."

Board members election

The Friends of the Black River will hold election of officers at the annual meeting on October 12 in The Hub at the Lunda Community Center.

The current board members whose terms are up this year are Steve Rake, Mitch Wester, Pete Segerson and Adam Marciniak.

Any adult FBR member may serve on the board of directors. Anyone willing to serve on the board may self-nominate at the annual meeting.



Clark County News

Clark County Chapter installs landing signs



This past summer, the Clark County Chapter put up signs at various landings. The sign project in Clark County was made possible through support provided by the Listeman Foundation. A grant from the Black River Foundation provided funds for signs, lumber and hardware. Kiosks were also erected and supplied with paddling and information brochures.

Left photo: Jeff Polzin (left) and Adam Marciniak (right) right photo: Jeff Polzin, (left) Adam Marciniak (center) and Keith Miatke (right). Clark County FBR member Dan Moore (not pictured) also helped put up several signs.

Recently installed landing signs damaged

The Clark County Chapter of the Friends of the Black River has discovered a couple of the signs installed at the mouth of Wedges Creek were vandalized. The “You Are Here” signs provides paddlers with information about their position on the creek.

According Adam Marciniak, the signs were both ripped off the post and discarded into the creek and tall weeds. FBR Clark County Chapter member Dan Moore recovered the sign and reported the situation to Adam.

The situation has been reported to the Clark County Sheriff Department, Clark County Parks and the Department of Natural Resources.



Clark County Chapter takes part in rural technology event



Clark County Chapter had a booth at this year's Farm Technology Days. Held July 12-14 at the Roehl Acres farm near Loyal. The annual event's theme is “Where Tradition and Technology Meet.”

The FBR Clark County Chapter booth was in the Rural Mutual tent which also hosted Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers for his appearance at the event.

The event had an estimated turnout of 1,000 visitors as well as various vendors.

Speaker presents program about furbearing mammals

Furbearers are a group of wild mammals whose fur has been highly prized for centuries. Wisconsin is home to 19 species of wildlife classified as furbearers.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources assistant furbearer specialist Erinn Kiesow-Webb presented a program about the state's furbearers at the Sept. 14 Friends of the Black River meeting held at the Lunda Community Center.

Kiesow-Webb started with the DNR as a chronic wasting disease biologist in La Crosse in January 2021. She earned degrees in wildlife ecology and management as well as biology from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Though the wildlife classified as furbearers represent different species, wild mammals whose pelts have had commercial value are grouped as furbearers. Furbearing species having commercial value include coyotes, two species of fox, bobcats, mink, three species of weasels, martens, fishers, beavers, otters, muskrats, raccoons, two species of skunks and opossums.

Jackson County has a notable population of wolves and coyotes. Wolves prey on large mammals, generally hunting in packs and have the ability to survive two weeks without food. Coyotes are very adaptable and can be found in packs and as solitary hunters.

Red fox are generally solitary hunters, but both the father and mother help raise the young. They will have one litter a year of one to 10 kits. Because they will prey on birds, red fox have been found to succumb to avian flu. Grey fox will eat small mammals, fruits, insects and grasses and can climb trees to access their prey.

According to Kiesow-Webb, bobcats have been found throughout Wisconsin due to their stable reproductive rates. They will have one litter a year of two to four kittens. Generally their diet consists of rabbits and other small ani-



Paul Peterson (left) discusses wildlife furbearers with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources assistant furbearer specialist Erinn Kiesow-Webb at the Sept. 14 Friends of the Black River meeting. Kiesow-Webb presented a program about the furbearing mammals found around the state. Photo by Pat McKnight

mals, but it's been discovered they will also hunt deer.

While river otters mainly eat fish, they can travel on land as well as in the water. In recent decades, they have been successfully reintroduced to Wisconsin by trapping them in other states and bringing them here. The species is now thriving throughout Wisconsin.

Fishers were reintroduced to Wisconsin in the 1950s also through trapping and their population has rebounded. The largest of the weasel group in Wisconsin, fishers can weigh in at between 15-18 pounds. They will eat porcupines and snowshoe hare. Fisher females can delay implantation of embryos for as long as 10 or 11 months. So, the female can time births of between one to six young when conditions are best to rear the young.

The American pine marten is endangered and is protected to help rebuild their numbers. The member of the weasel family lives in old growth forests and feeds on voles and other small mammals. They'll have one litter of between two to four young per year.

The three species of weasel are the long-tailed, short-tailed and the least weasel. Both the long-tailed and short-tailed weasels can be identified by the black tips on their tails. The least weasel is the smallest furbearing carnivore, weighing in at between one and one-quarter and one and three-quarter ounces.

Beavers were highly sought during the North American fur trade era. While they generally weigh between 40 to 50 pounds, they can get as large as 80 pounds. They are strictly herbivores cutting down trees to build dams to create ponds. They build lodges in bodies of water, which can include an un-

Continued, see Furbearers page 6

Prairie wildflower hike held at Cataract area farm



Steve Humphrey (on left facing away from camera) served as the guide for the annual prairie wildflower hike held at the Jim and Bernie Arena property near Cataract. More than 30 people from Jackson and Monroe counties took part in the July 19 walk.

FBR hosted its annual prairie wildflower hike July 19 at the Jim and Bernie Arena property located near Cataract. More than 30 people took part in the walk with guests attending from the Sparta area.

Steve Humphrey again guided the walk, identifying the various plants growing in the native prairie environment the Arenas planted and cultivated on about four acres over 17 to 18 years.

The grey-headed sunflower blooms dominated the landscape, but lupine was evident as it was in its seed stage at the time of the walk. The hikers were fortunate to see a several Karner blue butterflies during the walk.

Other flowers in bloom at the time were hoary vervain, coreopsis, lead plant and wild quinine. Humphrey noted the native prairie changes every three to four weeks because the various flowers bloom at various times during the growing season.

Answer to page 1 photo question:

FBR members and guests from Jackson and Monroe counties scan a native prairie to find and identify plants that grew naturally in the time before Europeans arrived in the area. This year's prairie walk was again led by Steve Humphrey.



Hoary vervain



Butterfly weed



Karner Blue butterfly



Lead plant

Thanks to Water Action Volunteers

As the testing season winds down, a special thanks goes to the teams of Water Action Volunteers. The data gatherers and the streams they monitored are -

Jackson County:

Mike Brauner-Kenyon Creek
Mitch & Sue Wester-Town Creek
Jerry Schmidt & Pete Segerson-Halls Creek
Pete & Rose Segerson- East Fork Halls
Becky Deetz-Allen Creek

Clark County:

Max & Bryce Luchterhand-S Fork Popple and Popple R



Furbearers, continued from page 4

derwater refrigerator for storing food.

Muskrats dig dens and have been known to occasionally have a symbiotic relationship with beavers. They are allowed to “lodge” with the beaver by paying “rent” with food offerings.

The face-masked raccoons are well-known for their bandit ways. They are notorious for raiding human trash containers, but they are also disliked because they can carry rabies, leptospirosis and distemper.

“These critters will survive anything,” said Kiesow-Webb. “They are generalist and very adaptive. They are one of the three species will probably survive the apocalypse along with coyotes and cockroaches.”

Opossum are the only marsupial in the United States and a member of the furbearer grouping. The species might not have a strong fan following, but they are known to eat ticks and do not carry rabies because their bodies are too cold for the disease to flourish. They can have two to three litters a year with 5 to 14 offspring per litter.

Skunks are another furbearer lacking a strong fan base. Of the two varieties, the striped skunk still has a good population presence in Wisconsin, but the spotted skunk is extirpated from the state.

According to Kiesow-Webb, cougars and lynx can be considered furbearer species, but since there’s no evidence of breeding pairs in the state, Kiesow-Webb says the large cats are generally just passing through. However, she encourages people to report any sightings to the DNR.

As part of her presentation, Kiesow-Webb also talked about research projects being conducted by the Office of Applied Science through the DNR along with some insight on educational programs offered through the DNR.

Kiesow-Webb’s presentation was part of FBR’s ongoing mission to bring educational programs about the environment and conservation issues to the community.

For more information about FBR, email info_fbr@yahoo.com or log onto FBR’s Facebook page or website at www.friendsoftheblackriver.org.

Supporting FBR’s mission

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

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 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'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.

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.

