

Wisconsin Rivers

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Everyone deserves healthy rivers

Cross Currents Swirl Around DNR Management of Wisconsin's Rivers

River Alliance Questions DNR's Efforts

People who value Wisconsin's rivers know that our waterways are far from clean, despite the fact that the Clean Water Act has been in existence for more than 30 years. Putting the Clean Water Act and the many state laws protecting rivers to work in this state is the job of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), the subject of a recent River Alliance assessment of the politics and the policy of river management. This assessment is contained in a new report, *Caught in a Cross Current: The Management of Wisconsin Rivers*.

The report identifies both successes and gaps in that management, and includes many recommendations for dealing with the latter. This report launches an effort to design a new blueprint for citizen and agency participation in managing our waters. The River Alliance will make a concerted effort in the next year on a small number of critical "high-leverage" issues that offer an opportunity to shape and direct river management policy. That concerted effort means bringing together interested stakeholders—state resource officials, river advocates, scientists and others—to explore issues, develop policy ideas, and implement solutions.

The report is based in part on interviews with 75 water experts from around the state, two thirds within the DNR. Time and time again experts expressed sympathy for the DNR in this era of political attacks and budget gouging. A common theme in those interviews was the crucial role – indeed, necessity — of WDNR's leadership in grappling with the many challenges facing Wisconsin's rivers.

The report examines individual challenges in the water and on the land — development, polluted runoff, industrial discharges, blockage and damage by dams, groundwater drawdown, motorized recreation, mercury in our fish, and invasive species. It then focuses on institutional challenges within the DNR itself: how different "world views" held by the central office in Madison and the agency's

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It's about enjoying the resources we have while protecting them for future years. River Alliance friends on a recent paddle on the Mecan River near Montello, WI.

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Stream of Thought

Reinventing Events

River Alliance Casts New Strategies

I think I can already say what my most memorable moments at the River Alliance won't be when I'm long gone from this corner on Wilson Street. It won't be some riveting testimony I give to a legislative committee, or deciding on voice mail options, or crafting knock-your-socks-off prose for a grant proposal.

What I will remember is connecting with River Alliance members and supporters in informal settings. What brings us together in those settings is a passion for rivers, but they also are where it's easy to get beyond that one dimension of river interest with folks. You hear travel stories or kid stories, enjoy a good beer or tasty cheese, or find out about life in glorious retirement from someone who's off the payroll.

At the River Alliance, we take very seriously setting the right stage for those informal settings that build the river community and allow people to deepen their connection with us and each other. Our showcase river community-builder for the past several years has been the Annual Dinner, a big gathering in the fall (usually in Madison) that put 200 or so of our friends and supporters together to eat, celebrate our successes, and buy some great goods at the silent auction. We also have had a nice tradition of organizing paddling events to get people out on the water together.

After some careful thought, hard-headed fiscal analysis, and "what-if" brainstorming, we have crafted a new plan for River Alliance-sponsored events. As we re-considered event organizing, there were these rock-bottom principles: we want many River Alliance members and supporters to be able participate easily and often; we want to use events to show people what we do as a river conservation group; and we don't want to lose money doing events.

Our Annual Dinners have been delightful, but our hard-headed analysis showed us it didn't meet at least two of those rock-bottom principles – it is hard for people outside Dane County to attend, and it is an expensive party to throw. We have decided, at least for 2004, NOT to throw another Annual Dinner as we know it. Instead, we've devised several new ways to achieve the organizational goals we want with events.

- Organize "river parties" at the homes of supporters. The idea here is to use the connections and relationships of key supporters around the state to introduce the River Alliance to new people, and at the same time celebrate with existing supporters. The operative phrase here is "around the state": we want to bring our events to people where they are.

- Continue to host paddling events, structuring some a bit differently to bring in a "paddle and learn" element, and collaborate with a sister organization in the process. (See Page 12 of this issue for an example.) And we'll also organize impromptu paddles when the spirit moves us. (See Page 6)

- Beat back the winter doldrums early next year with a soiree in Madison. It will be less formal than the Annual Dinner, with a quicker in-and-out for busy people. We intend to raise money, so we'll keep overhead low. Keeping a Dane County event in our portfolio is intentional: it is where we have a high concentration of active members.

- Host another combination dinner and rivers conference (as we did in 2002), perhaps late in 2005. At that point we will see the culmination of a lot of policy and organizing efforts to bring people together and celebrate.

One "wild card" in our event organizing is the opening of our northern Wisconsin office.

We want to celebrate that as well (in the North of course), and we are still aiming for the end of this year to launch that office. We want to raise \$50,000 from supporters and friends before we do (to match a private foundation commitment for northern Wisconsin work), and we're getting there steadily. Please let me know if you want to contribute to the Second Decade Fund, established to build a financial base for a stronger River Alliance presence in northern Wisconsin.



Denny Caneff
Executive Director



Join us on the Milwaukee River this summer for an urban paddle. July 24, 2004. See page 12.

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Dams Program

Dams Fall, Property Values Rise?

Study Will Find Out How Dam Removal Affects Property Values

Helen Sarakinos
Dams Program Manager

If an impoundment is turned back into a river, how will it affect my property values?"

The impact of dam removal on riparian and local property values is frequently a question on many people's minds when a dam is removed. To get a handle on this question, the River Alliance is teaming up with resource economists from the University of Wisconsin – Madison to examine trends in Wisconsin property values at sites where dams have been removed.

"There has been much speculation and little hard data to address this very legitimate concern," says Helen Sarakinos, Dams Program Manager. We're hoping to bring this objective analysis to decision-makers and landowners to help them make an informed decision that will be good for people and the river."

Data gathering should begin this fall, with analysis and a final report sometime in 2005. The study is funded by the McKnight Foundation.

Stebbinsville Dam Fails; Owner Ignores Advice

Stebbinsville Dam, Yahara River, Rock Co. - Built in 1917, the Stebbinsville Dam has not functioned, and has violated safety standards, since 1996. In 1998, the DNR ordered the impoundment drawn down and the gates of the dam opened. When recent heavy rains caused higher flows in the Yahara River, the gates of the dam were not fully opened as ordered by the DNR. The dam owner did not respond to the emergency promptly and chose to cut into a bank of the dam to channel the water around the structure when he couldn't get the gates opened.

The DNR is looking into whether the owner was in violation of the 1998 order. Canoeists and paddlers should use caution when paddling the Yahara River in this area as a new channel has been carved by the river.

The River Alliance included Stebbinsville Dam on its Twenty by 2000 dam removal campaign as a good candidate for removal: the dam is simply dilapidated, and removing it would open up an additional four miles of warm water fisheries habitat and could

benefit over 50 species of fish found in the Yahara and Rock rivers.

Heavy rains and high river flows in late May strained the capacities of many dams in southeastern Wisconsin, including Stebbinsville Dam, Udey's Dam and Fall River Dam on the Crawfish River and Neosho Dam on the Rubicon River.

Can You Say "Dam Removal" in Japanese?

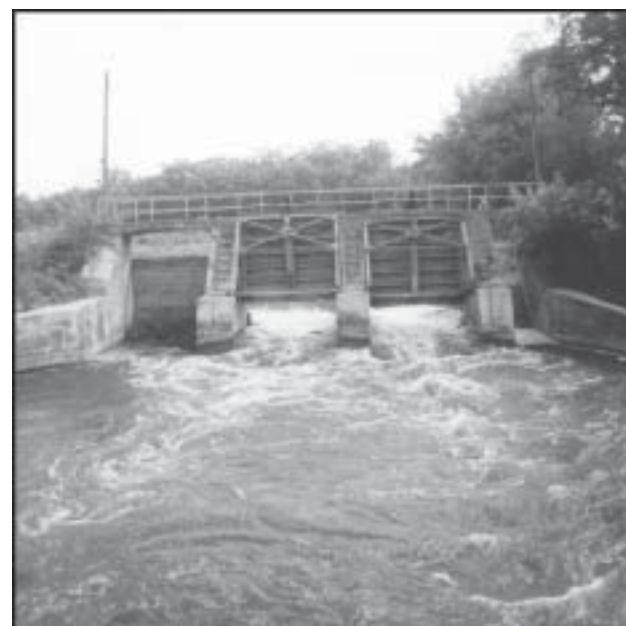
In late March, Dams Program Manager Helen Sarakinos was invited to give a keynote talk at a dam removal conference in Japan. The conference was the start of the Japan American Dam Removal Committee, established to enable Japanese river advocates and elected officials to learn about the U.S. experience with dam removal and river restoration. With funding from the Toyota Corporation, Japanese river groups were able to organize the conference and sponsor Helen and Elizabeth Maclin of American Rivers for a weeklong tour of Japanese rivers and dams. As the Japanese consider restoring some of their heavily managed rivers, they are looking to the U.S., and particularly Wisconsin, as a model for common-sense approaches to dealing with obsolete dams. The tour culminated in an hour-long

It was a little surreal to see the Japanese equivalent of Tom Daschle place an "I LOVE RIVERS!" sticker on his official planner.

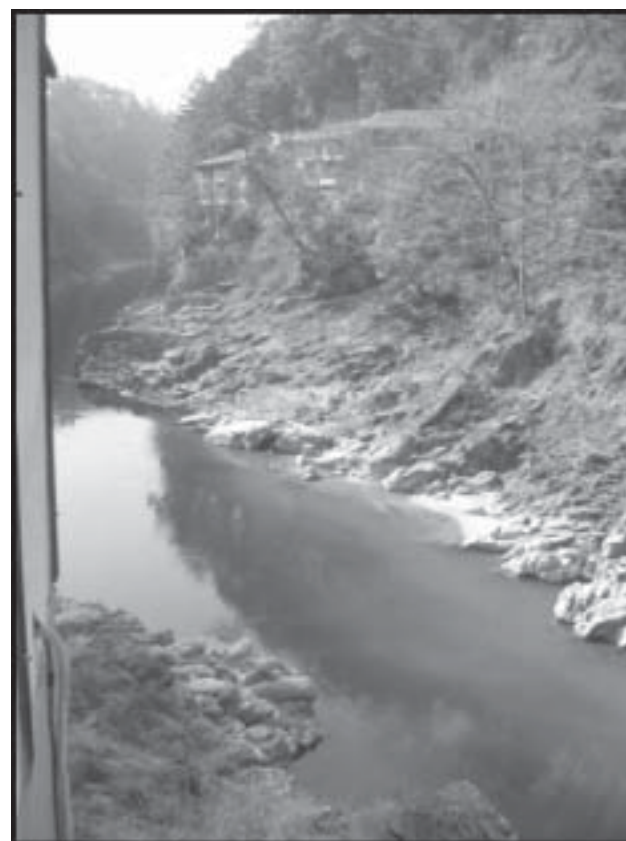
briefing of federal legislators in the Diet (Japanese parliament) in Tokyo.

"It was a little surreal to see the Japanese equivalent of Tom Daschle place an "I LOVE RIVERS!" sticker on his official planner," said Helen Sarakinos. "I feel like the River Alliance has played an important role in educating leaders halfway around the world about why rivers are important."

To read Helen's web log of her trip and see some photos of really big dams (and really good food!), log on to <http://www.wisconsinrivers.org/helen.diary.html>.



Above: Unsafe and uneconomical, the Stebbinsville Dam on the Yahara River. Below: The view from Helen's room overlooking the Nagara River in Nagoya.



Report continues from cover...

regional offices get in the way of efficient resource management; how the WDNR's inability to collect consistent and systematic water quality data affects its ability to enforce laws and regulate polluters; and how their processes to obtain input from the public sometimes work against the agency and the public it is supposed to serve.

What We Recommend

The River Alliance makes several recommendations based on the research conducted for the report. We will urge the DNR to take a fresh look at its responsibilities and powers, particularly those under the constitutional Public Trust Doctrine, the vital legal principle that the waters of Wisconsin belong to the people of Wisconsin. This would include how the DNR educates and reaches out to citizens about their environmental rights.

We are also proposing that the DNR create a distinct rivers program, similar to the well-established lakes program. At present, the management of rivers is fragmented and not integrated, and river-related duties are generally add-ons to employees' existing duties. An integrated river management program

spanning several sections within the WDNR's current structure would give sharper focus, more attention and greater purpose to river management programs at the agency.

Other recommendations in the report include:

- The DNR should engage local governments in at least one watershed—and we suggest the Milwaukee River Basin—about developing a “watershed authority.” This would be a locally led and directed regulatory entity that would be able to sidestep the multiple local governments that lead to fragmented river management in the watershed.
- The legislature should reinstate the requirement that cities and villages adopt conservation subdivision ordinances and specify that established “low impact development” principles be incorporated.
- Under the state's relatively new polluted runoff rules, which require at least 70% cost-sharing from the state for any action required of a landowner, it should be possible to require no-cost

or low-cost “best management practices” regardless of whether funding for cost-sharing is available.

- Change Wisconsin's current tax law so that farmers and rural landowners taking advantage of “use value taxation” of farmland be required to comply with a soil and water conservation plan, or else pay property taxes on the full assessed value of their land.

- The WDNR should consistently add conditions, on specified timetables, to the pollution permits for industries so that their allowed discharges are ratcheted down and eventually eliminated. This would meet the intent of a long-standing Wisconsin law “to eliminate the discharge of pollutants into the waters of the state by 1985.”

- The DNR should be given direct enforcement authority over lesser permit violations, rather than having to refer all enforcement cases to the state's Department of Justice.

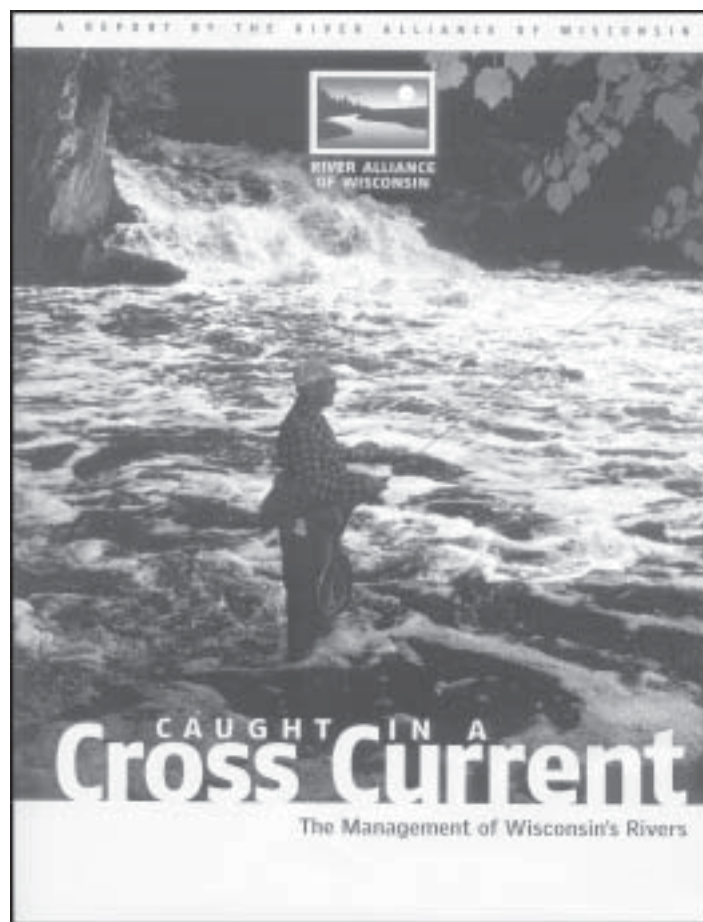
- Within a given watershed, the DNR should issue permits based on the cumulative impacts of those permits on waterways, rather than issuing each permit in isolation.

- The DNR should rate dams in terms of their ecological impact on rivers and use these ratings as an additional framework, in addition to safety considerations, for prioritizing when dams are inspected and how they are managed.

- To encourage groundwater conservation, the state government should study how other states charge water users and determine water rates.

- The DNR should develop a citizen monitoring program that provides written protocols and training to ensure citizen data meets standard quality assurance protocols many other states have in place.

Some of these recommendations are consistent with actions that the DNR is already pursuing, or at least considering, but state agencies are not always able to follow through on good ideas. *Caught in a Cross Current* is intended to encourage follow-through, and simultaneously give the DNR new ideas and a new resolve.



Caught in a Cross Current: The Management of Wisconsin's Rivers challenges current policies regarding the management of our flowing waters.

Know Your River

Grassroots Efforts to Improve Wisconsin's River Management

River Works Update

Erin O'Brien
Local Group Assistance

As part of the November *Rivers 2002* conference and subsequent workgroup meetings, nearly 150 participants helped draft *River Works 2003 – 2005: A Citizen Action Plan for Wisconsin's Watersheds* (http://www.wisconsinrivers.org/prog_local.html). The initial plan identified four priority areas (*River Access, River Corridor Land Use, Water Quality and Watershed Land Use*) and several action items to address each issue. While the plans and priorities are in place, thus far only the *Watershed Land Use* team has actively advanced their agenda. Their incredible success mobilizing public participation in favor of stronger shoreland protection rules (*see winter 2003 issue at <http://www.wisconsinrivers.org/Newsletter/newsletters.html>*), however, offers all the evidence we need that this model works.

The release of *Caught in a Cross Current: The Management of Wisconsin Rivers* provides the perfect springboard for the next wave of *River Works* activity. While the report's recommendations focus on top-down, agency-focused solutions, *River Works* emphasizes how individuals and communities can directly influence improvements in the state's river management programs. Both approaches are needed, and the places where *River Works* priorities and the report's recommendations overlap offer the greatest opportunities.

Citizens Have Right to Enjoy Clean Water Public Trust Doctrine Outreach

Generating awareness that the waters of the state must be protected for the use and enjoyment of the citizens of the state is a top priority for both initiatives. Related *River Works* issues include strengthening shoreland zoning protections, and reinstating river access up to the ordinary high water mark.

DNR Can't Do It All Volunteer Monitoring

The policy report, *Caught in a Cross Current*, identifies polluted runoff as a top water quality threat. Pushing for full implementation of water quality standards was a clear priority for both polluted runoff workgroups, as was the resolve to help get the job

done. Yet the quality of many Wisconsin rivers is still unknown. With monitoring resource needs far exceeding available funds comes an opportunity to leverage citizen-collected data to support DNR decision-making.

Polluted Runoff Stinks Stormwater Management

We need look only as far as Milwaukee to understand that stormwater management problems can seriously impact our waters. Promoting infiltration over detention, incorporating river protection into Smart Growth plans and helping communities comply with existing and soon-to-be released rules were among the related list of priorities for the urban polluted runoff and urbanization groups of *River Works*.

Our goal is to reconvene at least two more *River Works* groups in 2004. To get involved, contact Erin O'Brien (localgroups@wisconsinrivers.org or 608-257-2424).

Watershed Advocate Toolkit
A Series of Helpful Tools
for River and Watershed Advocates

Do you want to know:

- How to grow and maintain your group's member base?
- How to raise money and where to seek funding?
- How to organize river clean-ups?
- More about small dam removal?
- How to use the Clean Water Act to protect your waters?

Get Your Watershed Advocate Toolkit!
Now Available from the River Alliance of Wisconsin.
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Schedule a Workshop for Your River or Watershed Group!

Grassroots Fundraising

Tame your fear of asking for money and learn effective ways to ask. Develop a fundraising plan for your group.

Benchmarking:

An Organizational Assessment

Bring your board members, and identify your group's strengths and challenges. Then create an action plan for your priorities.

Using the Clean Water Act to Protect Your Watershed

Learn the basic river protection tools available under the Clean Water Act. Address and develop an action plan for issues specific to your watershed.

Contact Lisa Goodman
at the River Alliance for details.

Northern Rivers Gathering

June 26, 2004 at 9:00 a.m.

Springbrook Community Center

If you missed last year's Namekagon River Gathering, here's a second chance! Celebrate and support the Namekagon, and other rivers challenged by crossings of the proposed Arrowhead-Weston Transmission Line.

Contact Logan Edinger, (715) 474-2435,
or justsaynoline@yahoo.com.

Hosted by Clean Wisconsin, River Alliance of Wisconsin, SOUL, and Wisconsin Stewardship Network.

The Toms of Illinois

Denny Caneff
Executive Director

Not only were they each one with their own boat and one with the river, they seemed able to anticipate each other's moves on the river, as if they were the right and left hand of a single body.

Tom Richardson and Tom Lindblade, whom we came to fondly refer to as the "Two Toms of Illinois," are master paddlers, good friends, and life-long river enthusiasts. They displayed their paddling prowess and their solidarity with the River Alliance during a day-long outing in April on the Mekan River. The Mekan is a languid paddle, and it allowed us a chance to learn more about the two men, whose paddling exploits have taken them from the Fox River, in their suburban Chicago backyard, and the tumbling whitewater of Wisconsin's Wolf River, to wallowing hippos of the Zambezi River in eastern Africa.

The Mekan offered few hippo-like distractions for paddlers that chilly April day, giving my son Jamie a chance to take careful note of the paddling skills of the two Toms from his kayak.

"Dad, watch those guys, they hardly splash and they never hit anything!" – a decidedly non-technical but astute observation of the two paddlers who, with well-placed and precisely-timed strokes and little fanfare, guided their solo canoes through and around the occasional snag bobbing in the current. They scouted the river for the rest of us and offered suggestions for passage through the deadfall.

The Gestalt of Paddling

Tom Lindblade began paddling at age nine, but for him, paddling a canoe became a means to a bigger end. A summer camp in Michigan, where he worked as a college student, emphasized group dynamics and experiential learning through outdoor activities. As a counseling and therapy major, and later a Gestalt therapist, Tom merged the psychological and the educational into a life-long career in experiential learning.

He started that career in the early 1970s, when academia was more adventurous about what constituted "education," and experiential learning held equal ground with more traditional systems. Tom was lucky to find an institution, the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, a suburb west of Chicago, that allowed him to devote his career to building students' confidence, their awareness of the natural and human world, and their ability to thrive as a team through outdoor adventures.

As coordinator for 20 years of the College's Field and Experiential Learning Program, Tom organized hundreds of experiential learning

excursions that took him around the globe. He helped develop learning modules in field biology, trans-cultural studies, and expedition behavior for which students on the expeditions earned college credit. Now retired from the College of DuPage, Tom continues leading expeditions for the college, including leading his seventh trip to Africa next summer.

"I won't do rafting trips on the Zambezi anymore; I'm just too old to be taking swims in Class V rapids," he quipped. His most memorable run on the Zambezi was on flatter waters, well below Victoria Falls, where local guides advised the group to go with no more than five canoes. "They told us that hippos stay under water about 15 minutes, which is about how long it would take for five boats to get through a section of river where the hippos hang out. Hippos are the most dangerous animals in Africa, and you don't want to surprise them on their river."

The Joy of Cold Toes

By mid-afternoon that day on the Mekan, the sky became a sodden gray, the wind picked up, and anything on your body that got wet also got cold – including the feet of intern Julia McCarthy, who took advantage of the benevolence of River Alliance staffer Lisa Goodman's warm belly that she offered up for Julia's frozen toes.

Tom Richardson had a knowing twinkle in his eye watching that scene. Having paddled solo and with groups all across the country, taught whitewater canoeing on his beloved Wolf River where he has a second home, and accompanied Tom Lindblade on numerous excursions, cold, wet toes was just one of the many paddling pleasures he recalled.

Tom got truly hooked on paddling on a trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in northern Minnesota, though his first paddling memories are of childhood paddling trips in Tennessee. Though paddling of any kind delights him, it's the mystique of river travel that really captivates him.

"I love being on the Wolf River. The closest I can get to bliss is paddling on the Wolf," he said. "There's something about seeing and hearing moving water that really appeals to me. I'm getting too old for the adrenaline rush of whitewater, but I love to use my skills with my boat to dance with the river, not fight with it, and play with it rather than try to beat it. I like catching an eddy, riding a standing wave, getting into a mental flow that flows with the river."

Like Tom Lindblade, Tom Richardson is retired from full-time teaching and administration at the College of DuPage. He's particularly pleased with a



Thomas Lindblade paddling the Shoshone section of the Colorado River in 2003.

joint venture that the two created through the College – weekend adventures for working professionals in which students earn one credit for weekend canoeing, backpacking, sea kayaking and climbing outings that the two Toms organized and led. The pair also co-lead paddling instruction for Prairie State Canoeists, the largest paddling group in Illinois.

Guerillas in the Illinois Mist

Cruising a fine little central Wisconsin stream that day prompted these two Illinoisans to observe how lucky we are in Wisconsin to not only have the clean water and relatively wild rivers that we do, but to have access to them. Lindblade pointed out that Wisconsin is among “the top three in the country” for access to water and regulating land use along rivers. By contrast, in Illinois, “a canoeist’s right to paddle is subservient to the riparian landowner,” Richardson observed, and the concept of building setbacks or natural screening for riverbank buildings is almost foreign in Illinois.

With limited access, Illinois canoeists have to be creative in finding a way onto flowing water – something Lindblade has dubbed “guerilla paddling,” the subject of a workshop he and Bob Tyler, author of *Canoeing Adventures of Northern Illinois*, presented at the 2004 “Canoecopia” exposition in Madison. Lindblade has a goal to paddle “a new creek a week” in



Richardson holding a mature snapping turtle from Mirror Lake in Wisconsin.



Lindblade portaging from the Illinois River to the I&M Canal during the Illinois Paddling Council Fall Paddle in 2002.

retirement and he knows he can’t meet his goal by coming to Wisconsin all the time to paddle. Among his home-state favorites are Carroll Creek, in the driftless area of northwest Illinois, and – for something completely different – the Chicago River, through the Loop, which he called “a once-in-a-lifetime, spectacular experience.”

For his part, Tom Richardson’s love for the Wolf doesn’t mean he overlooks his local waters. He’s active in the Salt Creek Watershed Network that works to improve Salt Creek, which flows near his home in Oak Brook.

Specters in the Wisconsin Rain

Our flotilla on the Mekan also included River Alliance board member Scott Froehlke (from whose riverside redoubt we launched the expedition), River Alliance members Lindsay Wood Davis and Amanda Davis, and staffers Rich Bogovich and Helen Sarakinos. We geared down our paddling to take in some local sites, including an electronic fish fence, built to prevent carp from heading upstream into the upper Mekan’s trout waters, and the earthen dam on the Mekan, built to re-create a wetland for duck habitat.

Meanwhile, the two Toms steamed ahead of us so they could get to an appointment that evening in Chicago – but also perhaps to beat the cold rain that was about to soak the rest of us. This brief excursion on the Mekan was clearly no test for these seasoned river vets.

They told me of lessons they’d learned, separately and together, frivolous and serious, over decades of outdoor activity – leaving the keys of the downstream vehicle at the put-in site, not putting novice paddlers into water they couldn’t handle. I reflected on the friendship and camaraderie that river voyaging has helped forge for them.

Their presence on the river that day, and their stories of river adventures elsewhere, reminded me that truly experiencing a river is as much about the people you share it with as it is about the river’s own personality. Sharing the Mekan that day with the “two Toms of Illinois,” and being in the wake of their own shared experiences, was a privilege for all of us.



Tom Richardson, a self-portrait.

Acting Locally

Providing a Countywide Voice

Rusk County Waters Alliance

On Wisconsin's growing list of river and watershed organizations, one of the newest is the Rusk County Waters Alliance (RCWA), established in late 2002. RCWA was founded to provide a countywide voice for lakes, rivers and streams. Its members bring to their work strong local roots and a wealth of experience.

Recent interviews provide background on this dynamic young organization.

Step up and Protect What's Yours

"Everybody uses the lakes and rivers, and everybody is entitled to access, under the public trust doctrine. We want to invite the average citizen who doesn't live on a river, lake or stream to join us in protecting the waterways of Rusk County," said board member Meg Marshall.

RCWA's Mission:
To preserve, protect and improve the waters and shorelines of Rusk County for future generations.

A fifth generation Rusk County resident, Beth Bettenhausen is "a firm believer that a little bit of prevention costs a whole lot less than restoration." She adds, "I believe children are the future. Why should we mess things up for our children? The consequences of our actions come to rest with future generations." A lover of fishing, wildlife, and the outdoors, she notes, "It's important to me and to my daughter that those things remain here."

Actions Say it Loud and Clear

Bettenhausen is proud of RCWA's priority of providing information and education to the community and to elected officials. To date, their efforts include:

- co-sponsoring a public information forum on shoreline issues
- hosting a fisheries visioning informational meeting to gather public input about local fisheries
- beginning a citizen volunteer water quality monitoring program in the county, which invites citizen volunteers of all ages

- attending and providing information to the Rusk County board, particularly the zoning committee.

One RCWA contribution was an analysis comparing adjacent counties' shoreline zoning regulations.

The River Alliance Local Groups Program has been assisting RCWA on a variety of topics, and has given two workshops, Benchmarking and Grassroots Fundraising. Bettenhausen said, "We found them very valuable. Benchmarking helped to get us more on track. It helped everyone know where the group stands, as a whole." RCWA's board is focusing on long term planning, and will continue working with River Alliance staff support.

"I think more and more citizens have to get involved. The future of Wisconsin's waters is going to rely on grassroots citizen involvement," said Marshall, an Eau Claire resident, and director of the Beaver Creek Citizen Science Center.

Over 25 summers, Marshall has seen many changes in the county. "More and more little cottages are being turned into big houses. There's nothing wrong with that, but it needs to be done in ways that are compatible with the needs of the ecosystem. We've got to look at ourselves as part of the biological community rather than separate from it... We all have to remember that we're here for a little bit of time. The generations that come after need to have clean water and healthy resources too." A 25-year property owner, Marshall is one of RCWA's newcomers to the county. Many RCWA board members' roots extend back three or more generations in Rusk County.

Rights and Responsibilities

"We're for property rights too." Marshall said. "I feel that I have the right to do whatever I want with my property, as long as it isn't harmful to the resource. I'm not saying that people shouldn't have rights; I'm saying balance that with responsibility. It's about compromise. It's about the long term view."

Board president Ralph Heuschele got involved in RCWA following his previous involvement in the Island Chain of Lakes Management District. "My



biggest source of pride is the impact we have had on Rusk County government." Heuschele points to RCWA's role in advocating for a more protective county shoreland zoning ordinance. RCWA member participation in public meetings has been significant.

CeCe Tesky and her children are fifth and sixth generation residents of Rusk County. "As a past zoning administrator in this county, I have observed both the love and the hatred of people impacted by rules intended to protect our resources. It is important to me to see that rules are fair for all and not intended for personal gain on either side. That is one reason I am part of RCWA."

Each spring "when the aspen buds are about the size of acorns," Tesky's family visits the Thornapple River to watch the sturgeon spawn. It "simply amazes me to see these huge fish perform their rituals. This is one of my favorite activities in the spring... along with listening for the first frogs and picking pussy willows."

Like Marshall, Tesky hopes "that more people will see the importance of being a part of a local waters association." She adds, "New people bring new ideas and suggestions. It is very rewarding to be a part of something that is doing positive things for our community!"

For more information contact Ralph Heuschele, 715/353-2228 or 952/884-5944.



*Upper Chippewa River near Bruce, WI.
 Photo: Beth Bettenhausen, RCWA*

Know Your River

The Biggest Little River in Northern Wisconsin

The Thornapple River Brings Beauty to Life

By Robert Ringstad and Roger Steffen

Beauty has been defined as “something that excites the highest degree of aesthetic appreciation.” True beauty cannot be described by mere words, it must be experienced. Paddling and fishing the Thornapple River in Rusk and Sawyer Counties brings those words to life.

We call it the biggest little river in northern Wisconsin. There’s good fishing with northern pike, smallmouth bass, musky, walleyes and brook trout in several of the feeder streams. As with any river, you need to take your time and fish the deeper holes for best results.

Starting at the bridge on Highway W east of Winter in Sawyer County, you are in for a very pleasant two day trip down to Thornapple Grade Road, an old railroad grade and take-out point. This trip can be made in one day, but you will be pushing hard and in for a long day’s paddle. Chances are that you’ll see deer and black bear, hear the Thornapple River wolf pack at night, along with the hoot of owls, sounds of scurrying otters, fishers and mink and see soaring eagles as the forest canopy opens.

You will not be among the first to stand in reverence of this little-known wilderness. The area has a pre-contact history dating back thousands of years to the Old Copper Culture. The river was the highway for the Indian hunters and gatherers who lived along its banks.

A Half Century of Paddling

We’ve paddled the Thornapple for 50 years, walked both sides from its source to its mouth, drank its clear water, made our coffee with it, swam in it and sat on its banks and just gazed into its deep pools. We’ve explored dozens of old logging camps along the river banks. We’ve visited the site of the John F. Deitz homestead and sat on the dike which formed Cameron Dam, listening to hear the spirit voices, straining hard to hear Deitz, wanting to live a legend of bygone days. Read *The Battle of Cameron Dam*, by Malcolm Rosholt, and see if you don’t dream of turning back the time.

The river has some rapids – nothing too big, some overhanging trees, some shallows with big boulders, some right-angle curves and washed out banks under trees. (Be careful of the current here.) It’s best to

run the Thornapple in the spring or after a good rain. Water levels are up fast and down fast, so don’t wait too long. You won’t find a wealth of written information about this river. You must explore it for yourself to fully appreciate its rare beauty and to realize this treasure must be protected.

There are several one-day trip options in Rusk County and a number of put-ins and take-outs at road crossings. Camping is available at the Thornapple River Campground near Ladysmith (715) 532-7034. (The closest USGS gauge is on the Chippewa River, just downstream of the confluence with the Thornapple near Bruce, Wisconsin, <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/wi/nwis/uv?05356500>.)

Oh, and remember lots of bug dope! One day while exploring an old pine logging camp built in the 1860s, I complained to my partner about the deerflies and gnats. He laughed and said, “If it wasn’t for the bugs, we wouldn’t be here alone!” How true. I never complained again.

Bob Ringstad is a lifelong resident of Rusk County. He has thoroughly explored many local rivers. Ringstad and Roger Steffen are board members of Rusk County SOUL, and members of the Rusk County Citizens Action Group. You can contact Ringstad at 715-532-3886.



“Stand in reverence of this little-known wilderness.” The Thornapple River. Photos by Robert Ringstad.



River Alliance Wish List

Any donations of items, time or skills will help our organization immensely! Our list does not need to end here, either. If you have an idea for a donation, please contact us at 608.257.2424 or wisrivers@wisconsinrivers.org.

- **Computer Monitors -Flat Screen**
 - **LCD Projector**
 - **Laptops**
 - **Digital Camera**
 - **Office Supplies**
-
- **Large Portfolio Case**
 - **Publication Design**
 - **Web Design**
 - **General Volunteer Help**
 - **Laptop Carrying Cases**

Tidbits

Welcomes and Watersheds

Welcome Local Groups Intern Hilary Manske

We are pleased to welcome summer intern Hilary Manske. A native of Waupaca County, Hilary is a December 2003 graduate of Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. She brings a wealth of talent and experience and is a welcome addition to the program.

Welcome Membership Assistant Joan Nelson

Bringing much needed assistance backed by years of experience, Joan Nelson will be starting as our first membership and outreach assistant this June. Joan comes to us from Massachusetts and a six-year stint with the Nashua River Watershed Association.

Local Groups Newsbriefs

Central Region, Wisconsin Trout Unlimited

Jim Hlaban, 920-244-7456
wiscpr@wolfnet.net

County conservationist Bruce Bushweiler recently presented to the Central Region chapters of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited on the new polluted runoff rules and what Waupaca County Land Conservation Department is doing to help farmers implement them.



Root-Pike WIN is currently accepting applications for the next grant cycle. Applications are due by August 13, 2004. To request an application contact Allison Werner or visit their website: www.rootpikewin.org.

Root-Pike WIN members review a dam removal project on the Pike River. Photo: Shelley Smart

Stu Grimstad reports Chapter members have met with the DOT to review protection plans for the Tomorrow River during the US 10 reconstruction project. These efforts were part of the Central Region's action plan from the recent River Alliance workshop, *Using the Clean Water Act to Protect Your Watershed*. Jim Hlaban reports water monitoring work on the Little Wolf Headwaters is having some very positive benefits. There are also efforts underway to involve crews from the Rawhide Boys Ranch in trout stream habitat work.

Root Pike Watershed Initiative Network

Allison Werner, 262-638-0482
info@rootpikewin.org

The Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network (WIN) has been awarding grants to community-based projects since April 2001. To date, 39 local projects have received funding, totaling over \$145,000. In April 2004 the Root-Pike WIN Resource Group awarded \$21,110 to five deserving watershed projects. In October 2003, the River Alliance facilitated a benchmarking workshop with the Root-Pike WIN Board of Directors and staff. The workshop helped the board focus their efforts on key issues such as strategic planning, marketing and fundraising.

Volunteer Profile

John Steines

Occupation

Artist, Registered Nurse

Where do you live

Madison

Favorite rivers

Starkweather Creek,
Big Eau Pleine River

Interest in rivers

I grew up on a small farm in north central Wisconsin, reading Huck Finn a the top of an old box elder, tracing my route from that tree to the Gulf of Mexico! Once I realized how changed that route was, I dropped the idea of rafting it. I like the sense of flow and passage of time that a river gives. I read *Siddhartha* at an early age!



Story about a river

Old family photos show my grandfather showing his first calves in the newly cleared opening of the fields of the farm where I grew up. This farm, carved from wet swampy highland mixed hardwood forest, sat on a high, thick layer of clay. From a spot just southeast of our farmhouse, I could trace the route of a spring (stoned up while the land was being cleared), its drainage course remaining wet, through the fields to Rock Creek. Rock Creek rushed through rocky boulder fields into the Big Eau Pleine less than 2 miles away.

I used to walk the railroad tracks along this creek to a railroad bridge high over the Big Eau Pleine and sit daydreaming. Much of that railroad route to the river was, and still is a wilderness corridor. With Rib Mountain in clear view from all highlands, and in reading Mark Twain, Leopold and Muir, I gained an early sense of place. Three miles upstream, my mother and her siblings grew up on a homestead chosen by her parents less for its functionality as a farm, than for its beauty. It was isolated in an unusually deep side valley. This section of the river had beautiful 15 - 20 foot granite cliffs over the river hidden in the woodland edge. The Eau Pleine is the river of my childhood! I still walk it.

Hobbies

Gardening, canoeing, biking, ceramics, singing, theatre.

Volunteer activities with RAW

Simple tasks - envelope stuffing, auto shuttling at canoe race, greeting and registration at intake desks. I'm very compliant!

Why you volunteer

Fun, diversion, good karma, learning/observing and because the River Alliance is an incredible organization!

Thank You!

We are truly indebted to our individual, business and organizational members. Without their contributions, we would not be able to fight so strongly for Wisconsin's rivers! The names listed here are representative of donations received since March 1, 2004. We regret we cannot list everyone.

River Heros- \$1,000+

Todd Ambs
 Jake & Kris Barnes
 Dr. Barry E. Booth
 Robert & Nancy Froehlke
 Scott Froehlke
 Nathan Heffernan
 Terry Hiltz
 Tom Miller
 Pielsticker Charitable Lead Trust
 Glenn Reint & Sara Krebsbach
 Tom Richardson & Barbara Eychaner
 Bill and Ann Schultheis
 Lindsay Wood-Davis
 Amanda Davis

River Guardians

\$500 - \$999

Anonymous
 Steve Born
 Brad and Barbara Glass
 Rob Hagge
 Joseph Heitz, MD &
 Jennifer Engstad-Heitz
 George & Miriam Martin Foundation
 Walter & Stacey Meanwell

River Keepers

\$250 - \$499

William & Ann Beverly
 Patrick & Lloyd Egan
 Henry & Virginia Hart
 Doug & Mary Hudzinski
 Greggar and Susie Isaksen
 Stephanie Lindloff
 Donna & Chuck Poat
 Robert C & Patti Shears
 Gail and William Van Haren
 VF Foundation
 Wendy Watson

River Patrons

\$100 - \$249

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 Robert Bechard
 Bellevue Cat Clinic
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 James and Susan Clapp
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 Chuck Poat
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 Paul Staskowski
 John Sterling
 Thomas and Mary Jo Stock
 Elizabeth Toledo & Jeffrey Lynn
 Margaret Van Alstyne

David and Joan Weber
 Annette Weissbach
 Thomas A and Jeanne Young

River Sustainers

\$50 - \$99

Robert Alexander
 Anonymous
 Frances Barnes
 Charles and Elizabeth Barnhill
 Mary Barr
 Lawrence Bauer
 Doug and Patti Behrens
 Eugene Bilich
 Bob Blackburn
 John and Susan Bleimehl
 Walter and Patricia Bock
 Bill and Cynthia Bomber
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 Peter Davis
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 Matt Frank
 Dr. DJ and Mary Clare Freeman
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 Stanley Goldfarb
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 James and Becky Hart
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 Jennifer Heller-Janezic
 Robert Helminiak
 Bruce Hoesly
 Donald E. Jackson
 Andy and Kristine Jacobson
 Marjorie Janes
 Mark Jeffries
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 Gordon and Jane Maske
 Thomas Mauer
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 Steven Morton
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 Don and Kayleen Neumann
 Kate Nolan
 Larry Paque
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 Mark Peters
 Ray D Piehl
 David W Pluymers
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 Marjorie and Robert Van Handel
 Dave Wehnes
 John Duke Welter & Kathy Ryder-Welter

Tom and Ellen Wermuth
 John K Wilson
 John Wiskerchen
 Dr. Robert Zimmerman

In Memory Of

- Charlie Beavers
- Brian Polsin
- Richard Lee Schulz
- Jim Senn

"My father, Jim Senn, who died in 1998 would be so pleased with the work River Alliance is doing. I donate in his memory every year."

Thanks to Our Funders!

The Beldon Fund of New York recently made a two-year, \$200,000 grant to the River Alliance to support the Local Groups Assistance Program and the northern office we hope to launch in the coming months. We are also grateful to the Beldon Fund for the superb training it has offered River Alliance staff and board members the past several months.

Also, the **McKnight Foundation** of Minneapolis continued its generous support of the organization, with a grant of \$105,000 over three years for all three of our program areas – small dam removal, water policy, local group support.

Additional Funds Provided By:
 American Rivers
 Environmental Support Center
 ESRI
 Environmental Protection Agency
 Joyce Foundation
 Lux Foundation
 Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
 Patagonia
 River Network
 State of Wisconsin
 Steve Miller Foundation

Yes!

You, too, can support Wisconsin's rivers!

Please sign me up as a member of the River Alliance.

- \$100 River Patron
- \$50 River Sustainer
- \$50 Organizational membership
- \$35 Basic membership
- Other

306 East Wilson, 2W
 Madison, WI 53703
www.wisconsinrivers.org
wisrivers@wisconsinrivers.org
 608-257-2424

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I am paying by credit card! **River or County of interest:** _____

Visa MC _____ - _____ - _____ Expiration _____



Canoes and Brews



Paddling with a Purpose

Paddle an urban river with Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers and the River Alliance of Wisconsin

Saturday, July 24 2004
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Enjoy a unique perspective of one of America's great cities by paddling the Milwaukee River with two great river advocacy groups. We'll be putting in at Lincoln Park and traveling through downtown Milwaukee on a 3 to 4 hour tour ending at a local pub. There will be several interpretive stops along the way describing the impact that urban development can have on our rivers and highlighting some of the positive projects happening on the river.

Light snacks provided. Canoes are available on a first come first serve basis so register now! Shuttling provided. Kayaks welcome!

Name/s: _____	_____ Total # in Group
Address: _____	\$15/member _____
City, State, Zip: _____	\$30/non-member _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____	Children under 10 FREE
Visa MC _____ Exp: _____	\$10 canoe rental available _____
<input type="checkbox"/> I need a paddle partner for this event!	Total _____
All registrants will receive directions and confirmation before event.	Mail to: RAW • 306 E. Wilson, 2W • Madison, WI 53703

Win a beautiful wooden paddle from Bending Branches!

Win rafting trips from Buettner's Wild Wolf Inn!

Win a fly rod combo from St. Croix Rods!

Win Great River-related Prizes!

Grand Prize! Perception Sonoma Kayak (\$1,100 value)

First Prize - St. Croix Fly Rod Combo (\$200 value)

Second Prize - Rafting trips from Buettner's Wild Wolf Inn (\$150 value)

Third Prize - Bending Branches Wooden Canoe Paddle (\$100 value)

PLUS - other river related prizes!

1 ticket - \$5 5 tickets - \$20

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I am paying by credit card (orders \$25 and up)

Visa MC _____ - _____ - _____ Exp. _____

Mail to: RAW Raffle • 306 E. Wilson St., 2W • Madison, WI 53703 or visit wisconsinrivers.org

GRAND PRIZE! Perception Sonoma Kayak!