



# From the Headwaters

## Northern River News



### From the Northern Office

Lately I've been thinking a lot about the people responsible for protecting Wisconsin's watery heritage through the years.

It all started when I had the good fortune to meet Dave Martin last spring when I was helping plan a 40th anniversary celebration of the Wisconsin Wild Rivers Act.

Dave was one of the authors of that act back in 1965 when he served in the Wisconsin State Legislature.

All these years later, he's still just as passionate about rivers and protecting them for future generations. Dave has become a real role model for me.

Then a few months ago, I started to think about other "conservation pillars" that were responsible for Wisconsin's strong environmental heritage...people like Gaylord Nelson, Sigurd Olson and Aldo Leopold.

They're all gone now, but their legacies remain through the precious places they helped protect. We owe them a lot.

We can't pay them back, but we can honor the tough battles and personal hardships they endured to save special places for us. We can carry on their work, despite the difficulty and controversy that comes with it.

It's worth it. I'm convinced of that every time my life is graced in some small way by the sights, sounds or feel of a northern river.



Dave Martin lives on and loves the Wisconsin River where it flows through Muscoda.

### Lake Superior Public Partner Team Reconvenes

It's important to remember how very lucky we are to be sandwiched between two of the most impressive water bodies in the world - Lakes Superior and Michigan. With this gift, comes a responsibility of stewardship.

Toward that end, UW-Extension basin educator, Nancy Larson,

recently reconvened the Wisconsin Lake Superior Public Partner Team.

While the whole group had been on hiatus since late 2005, subgroups had been working on a Marengo River watershed health pilot project. The project provided a hydrologic assessment of the watershed and guidance for evaluating hydrology in other Lake Superior watersheds based on this study.

The team got back together in late January to discuss the findings of the study and to determine how to apply these findings to protect the health of the Marengo watershed, and others, too.

Who knew so many dedicated, interested folks would show up at the Iron River community center on a blustery, winter night?

Based on the hard work of this group in the past, the enthusiasm of the group was no surprise.

For more information on this project or the work of the partner team, contact Nancy Larson at 715-685-2674.

### Northern Rivers Initiative Helps "Keep the North the North"

Northern Wisconsin rivers are vital to our way of life, our economy, and our spiritual well-being.

But as development pressure increases, available lakefront property is more scarce, and river shorelands have become the next "frontier."

There's still time to protect northern rivers, if we work together and act now.

That's what the Northern Rivers Initiative is all about. This public information and partnership effort focuses on getting citizens involved in:

- **Protecting** the river buffer they live on.
- **Speaking out** for river protection and sustainable land use practices.
- **Getting involved** in local zoning ordinances.
- **Attending** public meetings.
- **Starting** a local stream monitoring program.
- **Joining** a local river or watershed association.

The waters of Wisconsin belong to all of us. That means we all have a responsibility to hand

them to the future in good condition.

For more information on how you can help move the Northern Rivers Initiative forward contact Jeff Scheirer at 715-762-4684 or Jeffrey.Scheirer@Wisconsin.gov.



The St. Croix River is identified by the Northern Rivers Initiative as "the cream of the crop" for its natural, aesthetic and recreational attributes. Photo by Ed Slaminski.

### Grant Funds Available for River Protection

Don't let money be a limiting factor in protecting or monitoring your river.

The Department of Natural Resources has a River Protection Grant Program that awards about \$290,000 annually for river planning and management projects.

River planning projects might include creating a watershed group, fundraising, marketing, strategic planning or conducting water quality monitoring.

River management grants have supported projects like riparian land purchases and river restoration projects.

Grant awards may fund up to 75 percent of the cost of a project, up to a maximum grant of \$10,000 for river planning grants or \$50,000 for river management grants.

Applications for the 2007 cycle are due May 1, 2007. River Alliance staff can help you in submitting your proposal as long as you request our assistance no later than April 1. To do that, contact Allison Werner, Local Groups Program Manager at 608-257-2424.

### Speak Up...Effectively

Some of our most important work is to help local citizens protect their home rivers.

While most of us may not like it, that often means showing up at

public hearings to voice our opinions and concerns.

We routinely hear from citizens across the state that they would like to advocate for the health of their rivers, but they feel ill-equipped or uncomfortable testifying in a public forum.

That's understandable - especially when people feel passionate about their position and emotions run high.

We think that everyone has the right to be heard, so we're going to offer public workshops on environmental communication strategies at three locations in the north starting this spring.

Participants will learn about the issues, the players, the politics and the best strategies to communicate effectively.

Watch for information on dates and places, or call Lori Grant at 608-257-2424 or Gail Pierce at 715-479-7530 if you'd like to participate.

**Did you know....**that you don't have to speak in front of a microphone at a public hearing to voice your opinion. Public hearings often allow for testimony to be provided either verbally or in a written format, and either is weighed equally by decision-makers.

## "Breakfast on the Marsh" Kicks off 2007 Northern River Event Series

Save April 27 to join River Alliance northern representative Gail Pierce, and Lac du Flambeau Tribal hydrologist Gretchen Watkins for a leisurely stroll through Powell Marsh near Manitowish Waters.

Experience this special wetland as it wakes up with frog choruses and bird song. You'll learn about the importance of wetlands to water quality, tribal connections to water resources, and simply delight in the morning energy of a Wisconsin wetland.

For more information contact Gail Pierce at 715-479-7530 or [gpierce@wisconsinrivers.org](mailto:gpierce@wisconsinrivers.org).



## Is 2007 the Year of Wisconsin Wild Rivers?

A group of dedicated citizens and local leaders have been working together in northwestern Wisconsin to explore the possibility of gaining State Wild River designations for the Totogatic River and Upper St. Croix River.

To find out more, visit the Wild River Proposal website above.

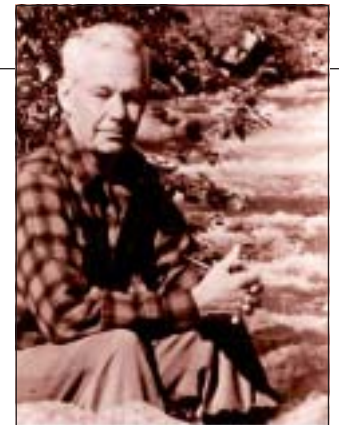
## The River

By Sigurd Olson

*As I approach the Namekagon, peace comes to me and I dare not speak save in a whisper. I tread softly, stopping every so often to listen. Now I can hear it, the soft liquid gurgle of clear water washing over round stones. A breath of wind in the aspen and it is gone. It comes again, a steady undertone of softness and sadness. The flash of rapids through the foliage and then I am at the bank. No, it has not changed as I had feared, it is as I left it years ago. There before me is a deep pool swirling smoothly in its depths against the opposite bank. Here on quiet summer evenings when the June bugs were out rose the great speckled trout.*

*Just below, the river escapes in an ecstasy of motion, laughing and shouting in a sunlit spray far down around the next bend. One of the reasons I love the Namekagon, it is so alive. It has its moods, somber in the big quiet pools, furtive beneath the overhanging banks, mysterious, dark and gruesome in the deeps, laughing and shouting in the rapids. How like our own selves they are as they break away from the depth of introspection. From brooding and disaster, how they break away at last into lightness and sun, gallop and play with no end but escape and joyous movement.*

*On the left bank is a grove of giant cedars. One summer evening years ago, I lay on my back and decided a great question. Then the answer had been wrong. Now, twenty years later, it was still a question. It seemed good to be back at the old river once more. Here was peace and quiet. Here it did not matter whether the question was answered or not. This was the place to decide, not back there in the heat and turmoil. The quiet almost hurt and the rapids seemed to whisper, "We are the same and you are the same." And as I looked long and long at this river of mine I knew it was so. For a long time I lay there watching the rippled water over the stones. I picked up a handful of duff and dirt and rubbed it in the palm of my hand. Here was the real thing, here was life. It smelled clean and elemental and it felt good to my hands. Outside was none of this and then I knew what I wanted. It had taken twenty years, twenty years of the best of my life to find the answer and now back at the little river it had come to me. Now, I knew that only one thing mattered, the feel of sunlight and wind, the smell of fresh earth and kinship with the trees. I had come home at last.*



Sigurd Olson. Essay and photo courtesy of Robert Olson.

## Conservation Seller Offers Shoreland Property

Bob and Merrill Horswill are dedicated to finding a buyer for their 196 acre parcel near Ironwood, Michigan...someone who will keep it intact and care for it as they have.

The parcel has three quarters of a mile of frontage on the Montreal River where Layman's Creek flows from Wisconsin. There are also two small ponds and a cabin. The land is graced with hemlocks, sugar maples and yellow birch with a little bit of wetland mixed in.

If you're interested in finding out more, contact Bob at 715-604-2001 or [nirvanas3@yahoo.com](mailto:nirvanas3@yahoo.com).



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