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THE SCIENTIST

VOTE FOR CLEAN WATER | NOVEMBER 6TH

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One Thing We Know

By Raj Shukla

Wisconsin politicians have grown comfortable eroding long-held protections of our waters. The trend toward “anything goes” sped up in the last few years. But dangers to our waters have been met with great energy from local advocates. We honored many of them recently at River Bash 2018—five River Champions and 40 Water Heroes to be exact. They work on the most critical water issues we face.

Foreign mining interests now have a green light to put local waters at risk. Last year the legislature and Governor agreed that sulfide mines no longer have to prove they are safe. Not a single member of the State Senate spoke in favor of the change on the floor. But local groups have taken up the challenge of ensuring local waters remain pristine.

Permits for high-capacity wells have grown at a staggering pace with no thought to the total impact on surrounding waters.



Farm runoff continues to foul streams and rivers, and drives the spread of algae on lakes across the state. We’ve seen progress with new rules that safeguard groundwater in northeast Wisconsin. And we will soon certify our first two farms through our Clear Water Farms pilot program. We believe the market can help local farms protect local waters. Clear Water Farms proves it.

Invasive species continue to plague the state. The response by volunteers has been remarkable. River Alliance’s state-wide 2018 Snapshot Day brought hundreds of people and organizations out to keep waters free of harmful intruders.

The Great Lakes Compact is being put to the test. Racine won a diversion of Lake Michigan water to solely benefit Foxconn. But your voices were clear and we joined an appeal led by partners at Midwest Environmental Advocates. A hearing on whether to reverse the decision awaits.

There is a lot at stake as fall elections approach. We don’t know who will steer the agencies guarding natural resources

The 2018 River Champions at River Bash in Madison. River Champions are recognized for their sustained, exemplary efforts to protect Wisconsin’s waters and make a lasting impact. Pictured (L to R): Topf Wells, Barb Gifford, Gary Besaw of the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Bill Schultheis, and Terry Daulton of Wisconsin’s Green Fire: Voices for Conservation.

[Photo courtesy TF Miller Photography]



A portion of the 2018 Water Heroes at River Bash in Madison. Learn more about each of them and their extraordinary efforts to protect Wisconsin’s waters at: wisconsinrivers.org/water-heroes.

[Photo courtesy TF Miller Photography]

from our own excesses. We don’t know who will craft policies that impact the health of Wisconsin’s waters.

We know your vote will be decisive.

Despite huge obstacles you continue to show up, speak out and act. And it’s working.

We’ve seen elections won by candidates who champion clean water. We’ve seen business people voice their support for a healthy economy built on a healthy environment. And we’ve seen local groups of water heroes get their feet wet to protect native habitats.

Now you get another chance to protect and restore water.

On November 6, we urge you to use your vote to bring Wisconsin’s policies back in line with our values. Vote for clean, healthy water for all.



Clear Water Farms Update

By Falon French

River Alliance continues to partner with the first two farms in our Clear Water Farms program to certify their water stewardship practices. We are working with the Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS)

to help guide our Clear Water Farms through their process certification. The AWS standard works by helping farmers identify their water-related risks and avenues of pollution.

A year ago, we set out to determine if this certification was appropriate and achievable for Wisconsin’s agricultural producers. Now, we are poised to see the first two farms in North America complete the certification process.

These two farms have already made a commitment to protecting water quality:

- Both farms have identified **groundwater stewardship** as a key opportunity to improve their operations and benefit Wisconsin’s water resources. They have committed to minimizing the amount of water they withdraw, reducing water usage within their waste management system by as much as 15 gallons per day per animal—an estimated 16 million gallons of water saved every year.



CLEAR WATER FARMS



RIVER ALLIANCE of WISCONSIN

- Miltrim Farms, Inc. has committed to converting approximately 50 acres of “marginal” cropland to **wetlands** and pollinator habitat – increasing infiltration and recharge of already scarce groundwater resources and providing critical habitat for native butterflies and bees.
- In addition, both farms are committed to evaluating their potential for **water quality trading** of phosphorus with nontraditional partners such as villages. Since the watershed in which these farms lie is under a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) program framework, exploring water quality trading means meeting significant phosphorus reduction goals.

Protecting Wisconsin’s waters requires collaboration and innovation on the part of all stakeholders. This is especially true for our agricultural partners, who have the responsibility of managing our land responsibly, producing nourishing food and remaining economically viable—and at a time when prices are volatile, certainty is low and farmers are worried about the future of their farms and families. We are honored to be working with the farmers who have opted to join our Clear Water Farms program. We look forward to sharing more about the program and its participants as they work toward completing the certification process.



This image shows interseeding of cover crops, which will help to minimize soil and nutrient loss, increase soil organic matter and draw in pollinators.

[Photo courtesy Miltrim Farms]

For more information, please visit wisconsinrivers.org/clear-water-farms

Cover crops on a field post-harvest prevent erosion and improve soil health.

[Photo courtesy Ben Ketaro]



[River Alliance photo]



Locals Groups (Once Again) Stand Up to Mining Threats

By Allison Werner

Crandon, Penokee Hills, Back Forty and now the Lynne Deposit in Oneida County. These are some of the mining proposals River Alliance has worked with local advocates and partners to stop over our 25-year history.

It feels a little like the Groundhog Day movie, we keep repeating the same type of proposals from legislators and mining companies. The data on the risks of mining to our waters and the resources they support has also not changed. This type of mining poses too many risks to our drinking water and our waterways.

Now that the legislature has weakened Wisconsin's metallic mining laws (Act 134), some communities with known mineral deposits have updated their local ordinances to do their best to protect themselves from metallic mine proposals. However, one county has gone backwards. Oneida County removed some of the good protections that had been in their metallic mining ordinance before the state law changed. Oneida County has also decided to put a referendum on their ballot on November 6th. Oneida County's non-binding referendum states, "After performing their due diligence, should Oneida County allow leasing of county-owned lands in the Town of Lynne for the purpose of metallic mineral exploration, prospecting, bulk sampling and mining?"

Luckily, just like in all of the other communities that have faced potential mines, local advocates have stepped up to educate their friends and neighbors about the issue and the risks this type of mining would bring.

Business owners and homeowners in Oneida County have created a local campaign called Protect the Willow, named for the beautiful river and flowage that



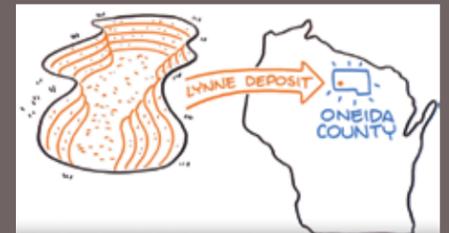
[River Alliance photo]



[River Alliance photo]

would be impacted if the Lynne Deposit is mined. Community members know how vital these waterways are to the \$305 million tourism industry in Oneida County. Healthy and scenic lakes and rivers are one of the main reasons locals and visitors alike have chosen to spend their time and money in Oneida County.

River Alliance is proud to support the efforts of Protect the Willow. We have provided assistance to the campaign, including a new version of the whiteboard video we created for the Back Forty project. If you live in Oneida County, or know people who live there, we encourage you to learn more about the referendum and share information about the risks of metallic mining.



You can watch the video and learn more about the local campaign to secure a "no" vote on the referendum at protectthewillow.org



Support What You Love! By Sharon White

Did you know that one third of River Alliance's charitable contributions arrive in the last 3 months of the year? Here are some ways you can join in!

- **Consider a recurring gift:** Recurring donations are an easy and sustainable way to protect Wisconsin's water resources for future generations. It's budget friendly too! Simply make a donation at wisconsinrivers.org/donate, and check the box that says "Make this contribution recurring".
- **Designate an IRA Distribution:** Under the new tax laws implemented in 2018, charitable donations are no longer tax-deductible for many people. However, if you're 70 1/2 and required to take an IRA distribution this year, you can turn that into a tax-saving opportunity by donating it to the River Alliance. This reduces your taxable income, which reduces

your taxes. You do not need to itemize your deductions in order to take advantage of this approach.

- **Give a Gift Membership:** Did you know that 46% of millennials volunteered for a cause affiliated with an issue they care about in the past month and that 64% of millennials signed a petition about issues they care about in the past month? Connect the millennials in your life to the amazing River Alliance community, unique outdoor events, leadership opportunities, and hands-on volunteer work that protects Wisconsin's waters. Simply make a donation in any amount at wisconsinrivers.org/donate, and check the box that says "I'd like to purchase a gift membership for someone". River Alliance will notify them of your gift of membership.

To learn more about these options, contact Associate Director Sharon White at swhite@wisconsinrivers.org or 608-257-2424.

HELLOS:

FALON FRENCH



We're pleased to welcome Falon French as our Clear Water Program Director. Falon brings nearly a decade of experience in outreach and education, policy analysis, sustainable agriculture and watershed management to River Alliance of Wisconsin. Falon holds a Master of Public Affairs and a Master of Science in Water Resources Management from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In her free time, Falon is an active community gardener and proud river rat. She spends most of her evenings and weekends running, hiking, biking, or paddling her way around the state-when the weather cooperates.

Follow our blog and Facebook page for updates and actions you can take to get involved on these issues and more.

wisconsinrivers.org/blog facebook.com/riveralliance

Snapshot Day volunteers monitored the Mississippi and La Crosse Rivers near bridge crossings—highly disturbed environments that are especially susceptible to aquatic invasive species invasion. La Crosse volunteers identified zebra mussels and purple loosestrife. The good news is that neither species was a “new” discovery. [River Alliance photo]



150+ Sites Across Wisconsin Scouted for Aquatic Invasive Species!

By Natalie Dutack & Scott Caven



On Saturday August 18th, volunteer teams scanned the waterways across the state of Wisconsin for aquatic invasive species (AIS). Some volunteers stood knee deep and dragged a rake for submerged vegetation, while others gathered samples along shorelines. Together—drawing on the training they received from local AIS experts—they all played a game of invasive species “Guess Who?” These 173 volunteers made the 5th annual Snapshot Day a great success.

Did you know River Alliance hosted the very first Snapshot Day in 2014, in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources? The event was organized to detect invasive species entering our rivers through pathways related to human access, with bridges being a key focus.

Snapshot Day has grown in recent years. University of Wisconsin Extension has joined as a coordinating partner and the focus has expanded to include lakes and other sites. The premise and training are the same—volunteers and local partners join up to help prevent the spread of invasive species that harm rivers, lakes and wetlands. The statewide “citizen-science” approach helps maximize the number of sites being checked.

Why is this type of monitoring important? Simply put, volunteers are the early detectors in the fight against invasive species. By providing a venue, training and a bit of fun we can help empower communities across the state to become stewards of their waters. They, in turn, provide invaluable information to the Wisconsin DNR, landowners, and local governments.

Data from Snapshot Day volunteers will be added to WI DNR’s Surface Water Integrated Monitoring System (SWIMS), and is used to help guide management and prevention efforts.

Mark your calendar—and plan to take part— in next year’s 6th annual Snapshot Day on Saturday, August 17, 2019. For more information about Snapshot Day and River Alliance’s other aquatic invasive species monitoring programs, contact Natalie Dutack, Watershed Groups Manager, at ndutack@wisconsinrivers.org



Snapshot Day volunteers inspect and identify aquatic plants collected from Salmo Pond in Cross Plains, WI.

[River Alliance photo]



[River Alliance photo]



A group of happy Snapshot Day volunteers in Cross Plains, Wisconsin about to search assigned waterway sites for aquatic invasive species, including New Zealand mudsnails.

[River Alliance photo]



THE RESULTS ARE IN: After careful analysis of data entered by coordinators, the final results of the 2018 Snapshot Day effort are

impressive—a total of 153 different sites were visited across Wisconsin. Volunteers helped identify 20 previously undocumented populations of Restricted Invasive species. Purple Loosestrife was identified in Mercer, Sweeny, & Surprise Lakes, Yellow Iris was found in in Hasbrook, Grindle, and Shawano Lakes, and Asian clam was identified in the Fox River. Volunteers also helped confirm the presence of six previously observed, but unverified species.

SEE HIGHLIGHTS FROM SNAPSHOT DAY in our Interactive Story Map:

wisconsinrivers.org/statewide-snapshot-day



[River Alliance photo]