



You are invited to join River Alliance, and keynote speaker
Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes, for the water conservation
event of the season:

River Bash 2019

Thursday, September 19, 2019 | 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
The Memorial Union, Madison

Light dinner buffet, silent auction, and more.

Let's celebrate together and draw strength for the work ahead. Our
actions in 2019 are key to the future of Wisconsin's waters.

Space is limited. Reserve your tickets today & get early-bird pricing:
wisconsinrivers.org/2019-river-bash



We are pleased to announce the 2019 River Champions and our Lifetime
Service Award recipient. Please join us to honor them at River Bash!

2019 River Champions: Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance, and
Dr. Michael Alfieri and Dr. Ted Wilson, Viterbo University

Lifetime Service Award: Lindsay Wood Davis

SNAPSHOT DAY
Saturday August 17, 2019

Get outside! Get hands-on!
Scout for invasive species!

Join over 200 volunteers.
Help protect a river or
lake near you!

All ages welcome - no prior experience required.
Events all over the state!

To register, visit:
wisconsinrivers.org/events

Hosted by River Alliance of
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with:
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A Moment Becomes a Movement

By Raj Shukla

Water is having a moment, as they say. A Governor from one party has declared it the “Year of Clean Drinking Water.” The legislature, controlled by another party, has convened a series of Water Quality Task Force hearings across the state.

Could there be consensus on the urgency to protect and restore water? We’re hopeful, if not entirely optimistic, despite the clear risks of doing too little.

River Alliance members can ensure the “moment” for water turns into a movement. Part of doing that is coming together, for formal and informal events, paddles, public hearings, farm tours, meetings with elected officials, and even a slightly wacky parade on an urban river. We are going to need each other to accomplish the work that lies ahead.

Though different water issues impact each of our communities around the state, we can agree there is much to be done and there’s no better investment than our waters.

Recent studies suggest 4 in 10 wells in parts of Wisconsin are contaminated by farm waste. Families in the Driftless are still recovering from the devastating floods of 2018. Businesses that depend on summer tourists have to contend with lakes covered in algae, and fish kills that numbered over 100 in 2018.

To this day, children in 80 Wisconsin communities continue to drink water that flows through lead pipes.

The price of inaction is steep. Local industry depends on clean, abundant water. Agriculture is among the largest industries in the state, pumping \$88.3 billion into the economy while providing 413,500 jobs to grow, harvest and process food. Our water-reliant tourism industry adds \$21.6 billion to the economy, \$1.5 billion in state and local government revenue, and another 199,073 Wisconsin jobs.

Governor Evers proposed significant investments for important oversight and infrastructure. The legislature took a much more modest approach in their version of the budget. Neither have laid out a vision that’s truly big enough to safeguard Wisconsin’s clean water future.

We know that many Wisconsin residents agree. River Alliance members and many others across the state are speaking up to share their personal stories and ideas to move us forward. At Water Quality Task Force hearings that have already taken place, members of the public told stories about the need for Wisconsin to put



Viroqua River Rat Chat 2019
[Photo courtesy Tamara Dean]

water—and people—first. We’ve included a real testimony in this newsletter as well as information on how you can get involved. Each account is unique, but the message is the same—Wisconsin must do better and we deserve real leadership on water from elected officials.

We’ve also spoken with many folks at our River Rat Chat events around the state. Your passion and commitment for protecting Wisconsin’s waters is clear. And it underscores our long-time commitment to bring people, local watershed groups, businesses and new communities together to act on our common cause to protect and restore water.

A challenge is best tackled with a great team. Will you join us to create a Wisconsin where we put water first?



The Water Quality Task Force & YOU!

By Allison Werner

Did you know that the Speaker’s Water Quality Task Force (WQTF) has been holding hearings across the state to gather information from the public about water quality issues? Citizens can attend and share water issues their communities are facing.

We are pleased that leaders from both sides of the aisle are taking the time to learn about water quality issues impacting people around the state. As Rep. Novak stated, “I think the water has risen to the top of the priorities for both parties.”

At the hearings to date, the Task Force has learned a lot about polluted drinking water, rivers and lakes.

They have been asked repeatedly to fund long-term solutions to solve Wisconsin’s water quality crisis. Will they listen? We must continue to sound the alarm.

That’s where you come in. Whether you attend in person or send written comments, we hope you will emphasize that:

- Water quality impacts your health, your finances, and your life.
- Long-term solutions (not Band-Aid fixes) are needed. And, you’ll hold your legislators accountable.
- Wisconsinites want to invest in clean water for all of our communities.

Our biggest thanks if you’ve already been a part of the Task Force hearings so far. There are many hearings left in a variety of locations in Wisconsin and citizen testimony will play an important role. Legislators must hear about how poor water quality impacts Wisconsinites every day.



Here’s real testimony that retired DNR Conservation Warden Charles Horn shared with the Task Force in Lancaster, WI. We hope it will inspire you to share your story, too.

“In February of 2016, a corporate farm just up the road from my residence, lost between 100,000 and 500,000 gallons of liquid manure which flowed across my property and eventually into Castle Rock Creek, a world-renowned trout stream. This incident killed all trout in a significant portion of the stream. Trout fishing is one of the activities that makes Fennimore and southwest Wisconsin a destination location for visitors. The damage caused by the incident not only affected the fish and the fishers who pursue them, but the local businesses which rely on these visitors to support their livelihood.

There are other issues with our water supply as well. I have lived in my house for over 30 years and during that time, my nitrate levels rose from 3 parts per million to 20 parts per million, which is twice the level considered to be safe. I have had to install a reverse osmosis water filtration system to make the water safe to drink.



Charles Horn, retired DNR Conservation Warden

I am also concerned that poor water quality may affect other health aspects as well. My late wife was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2013 and died two years later. There was no family history of brain cancer. Additionally, within a five-mile radius of my house, two other people were diagnosed and later succumbed to brain cancer and several other folks were afflicted with other cancers. When the frequency of these diseases is this high in a relatively small geographic area, one has to consider potential common causes including groundwater contamination.” – Charles Horn, Fennimore Township in rural Grant County, retired DNR Conservation Warden

Share your water concerns with the Water Quality Task Force!

Visit our website to learn more about the hearing locations and tips on testifying: wisconsinrivers.org

Submit your written comments on the Water Quality Task Force website: waterqualitywi.com

Stories from the Flood

A project to collect hundreds of stories from those who experienced last year's historic flooding is underway in Vernon and Crawford Counties. "Stories from the Flood," organized by the Driftless Writing Center (DWC), invites residents to share their experiences in written, audio or video form. The stories will become part of an archive housed at the Vernon County Historical Society and area libraries. They will also contribute to a findings report that DWC will distribute to local, state, and national policymakers and media.

Interviewers are hearing from evacuees, business owners, first responders, and residents of all backgrounds. Together, the stories highlight the strength and resilience of the small communities in the Kickapoo River and Coon Creek watersheds.

Recently, Judy Mixter of Coon Valley described how Coon Creek rose on the night of August 27th and rushed around her house.



Coon Valley resident Judy Mixter, with her granddaughter, Jennifer Guinn
(Photo courtesy Tim Hundt)

After floodwaters caused one of their basement walls to collapse, she and her husband called for help. A city tractor with a loader came to rescue them. In the following days, she said, numerous individuals and organizations helped them with food, cleanup, and replacing necessities such as their furnace. Mixter felt overwhelmed and humbled by everyone's generosity.

DWC board member Tamara Dean says, "We've heard from people who lost everything but what they were wearing that night, from EMS personnel who evacuated a village in the dark, and from neighbors who donated their time and resources after the water went down. We've also heard from people who are frustrated about some of the bureaucracy that's followed the recovery efforts. We hope the information we gather can help inform elected officials at all levels about ways to improve flood responses."

To cap off the project, the Driftless Writing Center will publish a book of photos and narratives about the flood and its effects. Public presentations will also bring these stories to the wider community.



Steve Fortney's farm, Soldiers Grove
(Photo courtesy Tim Hundt)

Do you have a flooding story to share?

Submit your story online at wisconsinfloodstories.org or schedule an interview by contacting DWC by email at WisconsinFloodStories@gmail.com.

The Driftless Writing Center is a nonprofit organization that connects writers, readers, and audiences through workshops, discussions, and public performances. It celebrates the unique culture of the Driftless region and seeks to enhance the creative expression of the people who live there.

Stories from the Flood is funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Council, with funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the State of Wisconsin.

HELLOS:

ALISSA GRISWOLD



Alissa is a senior at Viterbo University, majoring in Environmental Biology with a minor in Sustainability. This summer, Alissa will tackle AIS issues on the Mississippi River and major tributaries in La Crosse, Trempealeau and Buffalo counties as our La Crosse Area Aquatic Invasive Species Intern. The focus of Alissa's position includes conducting "Clean Boats Clean Waters" watercraft inspections at boat landings, participating in statewide AIS prevention activities, assisting at educational outreach events, and educating tournament anglers on AIS at major fishing tournaments on the Mississippi River.

JACLYN LUCAS



Jaclyn joins River Alliance as our AIS Education & Outreach Intern. Jaclyn graduated with a degree in Environmental Studies from Denison University and studied abroad on the islands of Zanzibar. Upon graduation, Jaclyn worked on Catalina Island in California teaching marine science. She has spent the last few years living in Homer, Alaska where she focused on marine education. Jaclyn is excited to be back in the Midwest to concentrate on aquatic invasive species work with River Alliance as she also begins her Master's degree in conservation at UW-Madison.



HANNAH STONEHOUSE HUDSON

River Alliance is pleased to welcome Hannah Stonehouse Hudson to our Board of Directors. Hannah is a public speaker, certified trainer, writer, widow, and outdoor enthusiast. Her in-depth knowledge of the viral nature of the internet comes from being thrust unwittingly into the social media spotlight when in the space of 4 months she had a photo go viral worldwide and she lost her husband to a tragic accident. Hannah gave a TEDx Talk on "Empathy and the Power of Virtual Communities" and brings her communications expertise and social media savvy to the River Alliance staff and board.

GOODBYES:

SCOTT CAVEN



We wish the best to River Alliance's former La Crosse Area Aquatic Invasive Species Program Manager, Scott Caven. For the last 5 1/2 years, Scott developed and led the La Crosse Area Aquatic Invasive Species Partnership—a collaboration of federal, state, university and private entities working together to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. He has worked to educate users of the Mississippi River and its major tributaries about the harmful effects of invasive species and how to prevent their spread. We will miss Scott's passion for the outdoors and his bear-wrangling stories! We're glad we will have the opportunity to work with him in his new role focused on aquatic invasive species in Ashland County, WI.



A Farm Visit with the Governor

For Earth Day 2019, River Alliance invited Governor Evers and Lt. Governor Barnes to a dairy farm in Greenleaf, WI. We wanted them to meet farmers who are implementing solutions to address water quality, including those taking part in River Alliance's Clear Water Farms pilot program. We were pleased to coordinate this successful Earth Day event to shine a light on farmers doing right by water.

Many thanks to Dan Punke & Miltrim Farms, Dan Brick & Brickstead Dairy, everyone at the Fox Demo Farms, and the Governor, Lt. Governor and their staff.



[River Alliance of Wisconsin photos.]

Hundreds Celebrate & Raise Awareness for Wisconsin's Waters at River Alliance's 9th Annual Fools' Flotilla

By Danika Laine

Advocating for healthy rivers and lakes, and clean drinking water for all, can start with a positive experience and good memories of being on the water with family and friends. That's what the Fools' Flotilla is all about! Thanks to everyone who participated and helped make the 9th Annual Fools' Flotilla on the Yahara River a huge—and wacky, and weird, and wild—success!

A "wild rumpus" enjoys music from The River Rats.



The River Rats begin their set with Flo the Paddlefish at the Marquette Waterfront Festival.



The "Flotilla Gorilla" supplied fellow paddlers with bananas.



The Fools' Flotilla makes its way down the Yahara River.



Two jellyfish ready for a foolish adventure!

Fools' Flotilla: whole canoes not needed.



Flotilla would not be possible without our amazing volunteers!



[River Alliance of Wisconsin photos.]

Wader Wash Station Workday Success!

By Natalie Dutack

A brisk spring morning did not deter 25 volunteers from coming together to construct nine wader wash stations that are used by anglers to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species. The sounds of drills buzzing and

laughter from the energetic group filled the park shelter, and within a few hours all the stations were completed and installed along Black Earth Creek and Brewery Creek (two waterways where invasive New Zealand Mudsnails have been discovered).

Special thanks to Dane County Parks, Black Earth Creek Watershed Association,

WI Department of Natural Resources, Boy Scout Troop #87, and Monroe Durand (and Bartlett, too!) from Troop 87.

And of course, our appreciation to Great Lakes Brewing Company for sponsoring the event and hosting a fantastic after party!



[River Alliance of Wisconsin photos.]