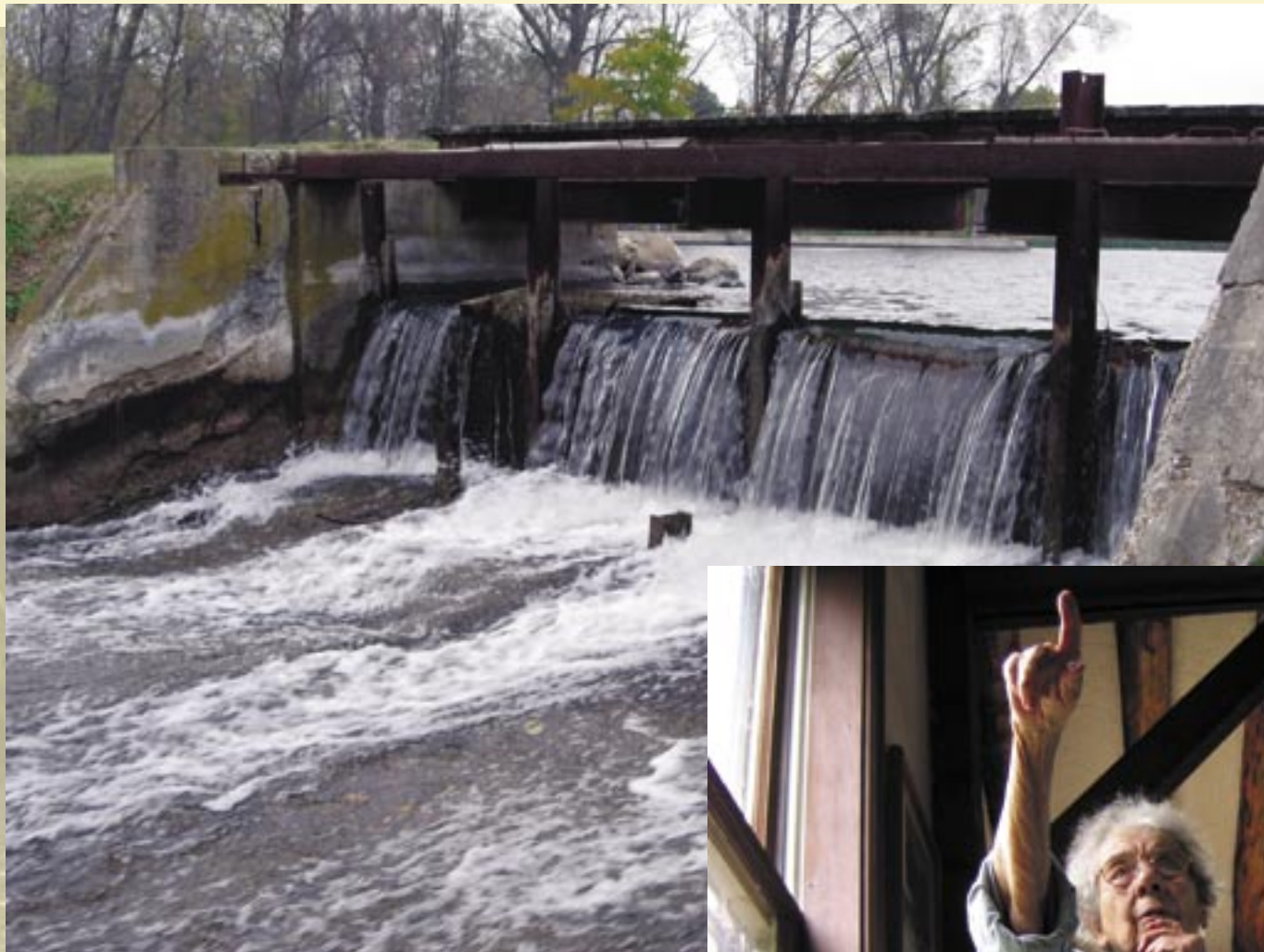


Wisconsin Rivers

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“I don't think people understand how [dam removal] can be a great benefit. If we do this right in restoring the river, people will come from all over the place to see what we're doing.”

— Margaret Zerwekh

(Above) The Bark River flows over the Nemahbin Roller Mill Dam, constructed in 1839. (Right) Margaret Zerwekh and Sarah Murray.
River Alliance photos



Margaret Zerwekh Writes a New Chapter for the Bark River

Sarah Murray

When Margaret Zerwekh first saw the old mill on the Bark River in Delafield, she didn't think much of it.

Her late husband, Kenneth, had bought the mill and its adjoining dam after World War II. An engineer, he added a turbine and generator to the century-old dam to produce hydroelectricity and worked to restore the dilapidated millhouse, converting it into a family home. But Margaret, who had grown up near a creek and lived near the Mississippi River and Puget Sound, was dubious.

“My first impressions were not terribly favorable,” she recalls wryly. Despite the work Kenneth had done on the millhouse, it had only one bathroom and was nothing like houses being built at the time. “It wasn't a conventional house,” she says.

The nearby water didn't improve her opinion. “I wasn't that impressed with the Bark River or the millpond,” she says.

Over the past four decades, however, Margaret—an avid historian—has come to love the house, the river and their

history. She and Kenneth traveled around the world, looking at dams in Ireland, Chile and other countries, and gradually she came to share his interest. After his death in 1990, she continued to visit mills and dams, and has collected paintings of them that she proudly displays in her own home.

“Now I'm interested in the river and the people who lived here,” she says. And she is hoping to write a new chapter in their story by removing the dam that has held back the Bark River for more than 150 years and restoring a free-flowing river.

From Necessity to Nuisance

Kenneth Zerwekh's purchase of the mill and dam in 1947 was inspired by the working mills he saw in Europe during World War II. He saw that, amidst the blackouts and scarcity, the mills provided electricity and a way to make a living for their owners.

When Zerwekh's dam—now known as the Nemahbin Roller Mill Dam—was constructed in 1839, a mill and

Continues on page 6...

Denny Caneff
Executive Director



Stream of Thought

River Cosmos

After several attempts to kayak the Black River (foiled in the past by either low water, bad weather, or both), my sons and I managed to get three superb paddling days on the Clark County stretch of that river over Memorial Day weekend.

The Upper Black River is enigmatic and fickle, and thus beautiful. Its basin is comprised of farmland but you would never know that as you flow down the river. The only paddling information I could find on it was published in 1976. If you get on the Black when the water's high, you are in for a thrilling ride, as all that extra water pushing through the river's many rock gardens takes the rapids classification for paddling up one notch. If the water's low, you run the risk of getting bounced from one rock to the next. It turned out that the water levels were perfect that weekend for rapids running; I may never get my sons, with their healthy teenage male appetites for thrills, onto a flat-water river again.

One of the Black River's charms is the fact that it is relatively undeveloped. The handful of cabins and structures along its banks are unobtrusive, even very appealing; they seem part of the river's ecology. Their owners have resisted suburbanizing their riverside hideouts, preferring to keep the bank wooded, the yard unmowed, and the rough-hewn trail to the water's edge just that. There were few gaudy staircases.

Even though I'm in no financial position to do it (the embodiment of two college tuitions were paddling next to me, after all), I briefly entertained the notion of buying one of those riverside places. How nice it would be to have a place where you could swing from a hammock with the river's whisperings and a kingfisher's skitterings as aural backdrop. I think my putative neighbors on the Black would be my kind of water neighbors. To own property on a river like the upper Black is to appreciate its water as a river, and not just the river's water. A small river does not offer water as a medium for oversized recreation like jet skis, or sparkling sunrises like you get over an inland lake or a Great Lake. Small rivers are really pretty inconvenient for the kind of thing most Americans expect from water bodies; they are shallow and rocky, you can't see what's coming around the bend, and there's that pesky current.

But my brief daydream of ownership of a riverside property got me to appreciate the allure and appeal of owning property by the water, a phenomenon so commonplace now that it is mundane. (See southern Florida.) That allure explains so many of the challenges facing our Wisconsin lakes and flowages – fertile water, lakeshores cluttered with docks, the conversion of old church and YMCA camps to resorts whose names (you know, names like “Wynde Point”) describe the very natural features altered or obliterated by the development.

But what actually explains the allure to be by water? In part, evolutionary biologists say, it is our genetically encoded need to be by water for very pragmatic reasons of sustenance and transportation. Then there is the cosmic connection to water. It defies explanation, really, but you know that feeling of serenity and connection of your own watery self to something bigger and infinitely powerful when you stand on a Lake Superior palisade or on a Mississippi sandbar. Our cosmic connection to water goes way back, too, as evidenced by the thousands of effigy mounds native peoples constructed in this region over a millennium ago, almost all of which are near water.

It's that cosmic appeal of water that I dwell on as a way of trying to understand, and perhaps temper my frustration over, the headlong rush to develop every watery acre left

in Wisconsin. I see myself in that hammock on the Black, and at the same time I want nothing to do with contributing to the clutter of our shorelines, the privatizing of all the land along our public waters. Never mind the cosmic appeal of waterside property; there is the undeniable reality that there is no better financial investment these days than a lakeshore lot.

At the River Alliance, we continue to watch with dismay (and in some cases we challenge) the sale of land along the Wisconsin River flowages, at Biron and Petenwell and Alexander. On the other hand, we are banking on the urban pioneer appeal of waterside real estate to help fuel a renaissance of central Racine and the restoration of that city's namesake river, the Root.

As a culture, we need to find a way to succumb to the cosmic pull to water without succumbing to the crass exigencies of the real estate market. Maybe my sons and daughters will be able to buy the riverfront property that I cannot, but I'll insist that they make their place seem like it belongs to the river. My hammock may be invisible to you as you paddle by, but make a splash so I know you're enjoying the river.

Denny Caneff
Executive Director

Do you purchase goods and services from businesses like Amazon, Target, Orbitz, Netflix or Wine.com? Visit www.giveandshop.com to do your online shopping!

Giveandshop.com is a safe and secure site that connects charities with retailers. Here's how it works: **1.** First you choose your cause (the River Alliance of course). You then choose your retailer which links you to their site where you shop at their regular everyday pricing. **2.** After shopping with retailer, 50% of the commission earned goes to charity at NO additional cost to you.

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Gail Gilson Pierce
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Lac du Flambeau Tribe Takes Proactive Position on Water Protection

Lac du Flambeau ...Lake of the Flaming Torches. It's a place where centuries of tradition and stewardship have guided the native people that live on and care for the land there.

This winter, it became the center of controversy, too. When the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians filed an application with the Environmental Protection Agency to seek "Treatment as a State," their only objective was to gain permission to establish water quality standards on their reservation.

But because one third of the land within the reservation boundaries now belongs to non-tribal members, the application pitted tribal members against non-tribal residents. And citizens in surrounding communities feared that their activities on water that flowed into the reservation would be impacted.

Opponents questioned how it would affect their property rights, while proponents argued that water quality standards would only bring positive effects and increase property values.

The intent of the tribe's application is to allow them to establish water quality standards for the nearly 42,000 surface acres of water and wetlands within reservation boundaries. If granted, the tribe would be limited to determining the most appropriate uses for lakes, rivers and wetlands, and developing criteria to protect those uses. The draft of these proposed uses and criteria would then go back to the public for further comment.

Much of the misunderstanding about the application is regarding the state's role in water management on reservation lands.

"The Clean Water Act specifies that either the EPA or the tribe must establish water quality standards on tribal lands. The state has no jurisdiction on reservations to set water quality standards for point source discharges or to issue water quality certifications for wetland fills," explained Gretchen Watkins, water resource specialist for the tribe.

Establishing water quality standards could also provide proactive protection for both tribal and non-



John Brown, Lac du Flambeau water resource technician, measures discharge to calibrate the stream gauge at Trout River.
Photo courtesy of Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

tribal residents living on and near the reservation.

"As we watch surrounding states like Michigan and Minnesota we see a disturbing trend in potential pollutants—like mining operations—seeking out reservations to conduct their business because tribal lands typically don't have the level of regulatory enforcement for water quality that states do," Watkins said.

Right now, all public comments for the first part of the process have been received by the EPA and are under review.

In the meantime, Watkins wants people to understand that respect for water resources is intrinsically tied to the Ojibwa culture and their spirituality. And that instills a very powerful sense of responsibility to the water

that supports their way of life.

"If you listen to their prayers, the Ojibwa people refer to fishing and collecting wild rice and simply gaining life from the water itself," Watkins said. "We aren't doing this for the near future, but rather for generations yet to come."

Want to learn more about water resource management on the Lac du Flambeau Reservation? Join Gretchen Watkins and Gail Gilson Pierce for a day paddle down the beautiful Bear River on August 15. For more information contact gpierce@wisconsinrivers.org or call 715-479-7530.

that supports their way of life.

"If you listen to their prayers, the Ojibwa people refer to fishing and collecting wild rice and simply gaining life from the water itself," Watkins said. "We aren't doing this for the near future, but rather for generations yet to come."

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The more people who use the site, the more money an organization can earn!

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1. Log on to www.goodsearch.org
2. Type in "river" in second box on page
3. Hit "Verify"
4. Scroll down to River Alliance of Wisconsin (Madison) and select it.
5. Search the internet as you normally would and don't forget to add GoodSearch to your toolbar.



Northern Office Webpage

Visit our northern office virtually! Point your browser to wisconsinrivers.org and see how we're working to protect Wisconsin's flowing waters in the north.



Allison Werner
Local Groups Program Manager
Local Groups Program



A Movement With Over 160 Moving Parts

Recently a River Alliance of Wisconsin friend made the comment that local river groups are the heart and soul of the River Alliance of Wisconsin. As the new manager for the Local Groups Program, I liked his sentiment, but it also made me wonder how true that statement was.

It is true that local river groups are central to the River Alliance's mission. We define local groups as grassroots river or watershed based organizations. A local group can be all-volunteer or have many staff, and they can work on specific issues or cover broad concerns in their watershed.

Each of the River Alliance's program areas are connected to local groups. Many local groups have alerted us to pressing state-wide water issues, submitted comments to or spoken at public hearings, and have informed and supported our Water Policy Program. Local river groups have been at the forefront in advocating free flowing streams through dam removal. These are also the groups that hold events to celebrate, clean, and monitor the water quality of the rivers in Wisconsin.

The core purpose of our Local Groups Program is to support, strengthen and sustain the more than 160 local watershed groups found throughout Wisconsin. We help them build a solid foundation on which to grow their organization by consulting, offering trainings, workshops and conferences, and much more.

I firmly believe in the value of organizational trainings, and not merely because the River Alliance offers them. I know workshops such as Benchmarking and Leadership Development as well as statewide river conferences are valuable because as the former executive director of the Root-Pike Watershed Initiative Network, I participated in these River Alliance trainings. Taking the time to evaluate the organization and my skills, and plan for the future of our watershed, made Root-Pike WIN a more effective organization. Beyond the usefulness of the information, it was always great to meet other river people and learn how they were addressing issues in their watersheds.

As volunteers or staff of a local watershed group I hope you consider contacting us to discuss the assistance we can provide you. Our door is always open.



Winnebago Lakes Council plans how to involve more people in good projects during a River Alliance leadership development training. *River Alliance photo*

New Workshops

This summer we will be mailing our new workshop brochure to local groups. Below is a sneak peek at a few new workshops we are offering.

Mini Board Trainings are one-hour long trainings that can be completed as part of a regular board meeting. We will come to you to help you learn about what it takes to be an effective board of a grassroots group. Your group can take one of these three trainings in sequence, or take them in the order that makes the most sense for your organization's current needs.

- Step 1. The Basics of Non-Profit and Grassroots Boards
- Step 2. Recruiting for Your Board
- Step 3. Making Your Board Successful

After we discuss these concepts, we will help your organization implement activities to incorporate the learning from the session in a board calendar. We don't believe in empty concepts, we want to DO something with your learning. We hope you do too.

The fee for Mini Board Trainings is \$50 per session for River Alliance member organizations, and \$100 per session for non-River Alliance member organizations.

The Reducing Construction Site Erosion Workshop will train groups to influence and watchdog construc-

tion activities in their watersheds in order to reduce their impact on water bodies.

This eight-hour workshop will help your group:

- Understand Wisconsin's storm-water management program for construction sites
- Learn to monitor construction sites
- Know the most common best management practices and

see examples of good and bad BMPs.

The workshop will include a visit to a construction site and tools for observing and analyzing construction site erosion control practices.

The workshop fee is \$250 for River Alliance of Wisconsin member organizations, \$600 for non-members.

All of the workshops we offer are listed on our website, www.wisconsinrivers.org.

River Rally Resources

Several of Wisconsin's local groups were able to attend River Network's annual River Rally, thanks to scholarships provided by the Department of Natural Resources and the good offices of Todd Ambs. We asked the conference attendees to share some of the great resources they discovered at the conference. More resources can be found on the Wisconsin River Groups Blog, <http://wisconsinrivergroups.blogspot.com>.

Suggested Materials

Fundraising

Big Gifts For Small Groups: A 1-Hour Board Member's Guide to Securing Gifts of \$500 to \$5,000, by Andy Robinson

GIS

These links focus on user-friendly approaches to creating

and using Geographic Information System (GIS) data.

- www.ilovegeography.com/sbwagmap5/
- www.vertices.com
- www.gis4kids.com

Rally Presentations

The River Rally presentations can be downloaded from www.rivernetnetwork.org/rally/post.cfm?doc_id=933

Watershed Assessment

Stony-Brook-Millstone Watershed Association's "Municipal Assessment: Partnering with Local Governments", <http://www.thewatershed.org/>

Water Trails

National Park Service water trail tools and presentations, www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/helpfultools/ht_publications.html





Helen Sarakinos
Dams Program Manager
Dams Program

The Best Things and Big Spring

Study Shows that the Best Things in River Life May Be Free (Flowing)

When working with a community on whether to remove or repair a dam, one of the most vexing issues has been whether dam removal and loss of a mill pond will affect the values of properties on or near the water. To date, hard data has been almost impossible to come by, but a report to be released in the fall by the River Alliance and University of Wisconsin - Madison applied economics professor William Provencher brings more clarity to this issue. This study is the most comprehensive and quantitative study carried out to date on this important question.

Results show that dam removal does not appear to cause a decline in property values as is often feared by local residents. In fact, a free-flowing river may eventually increase the value of a property.

Hundreds of property sales at 14 sites around southern Wisconsin where dams were removed, where they remained in place and where the river has been free-flowing were collected and analyzed to determine whether dam removal had a significant impact on the resale value of properties around the impoundment (another term for the water body behind a dam).

Results of the study show that:

1. there is no discernible impact of

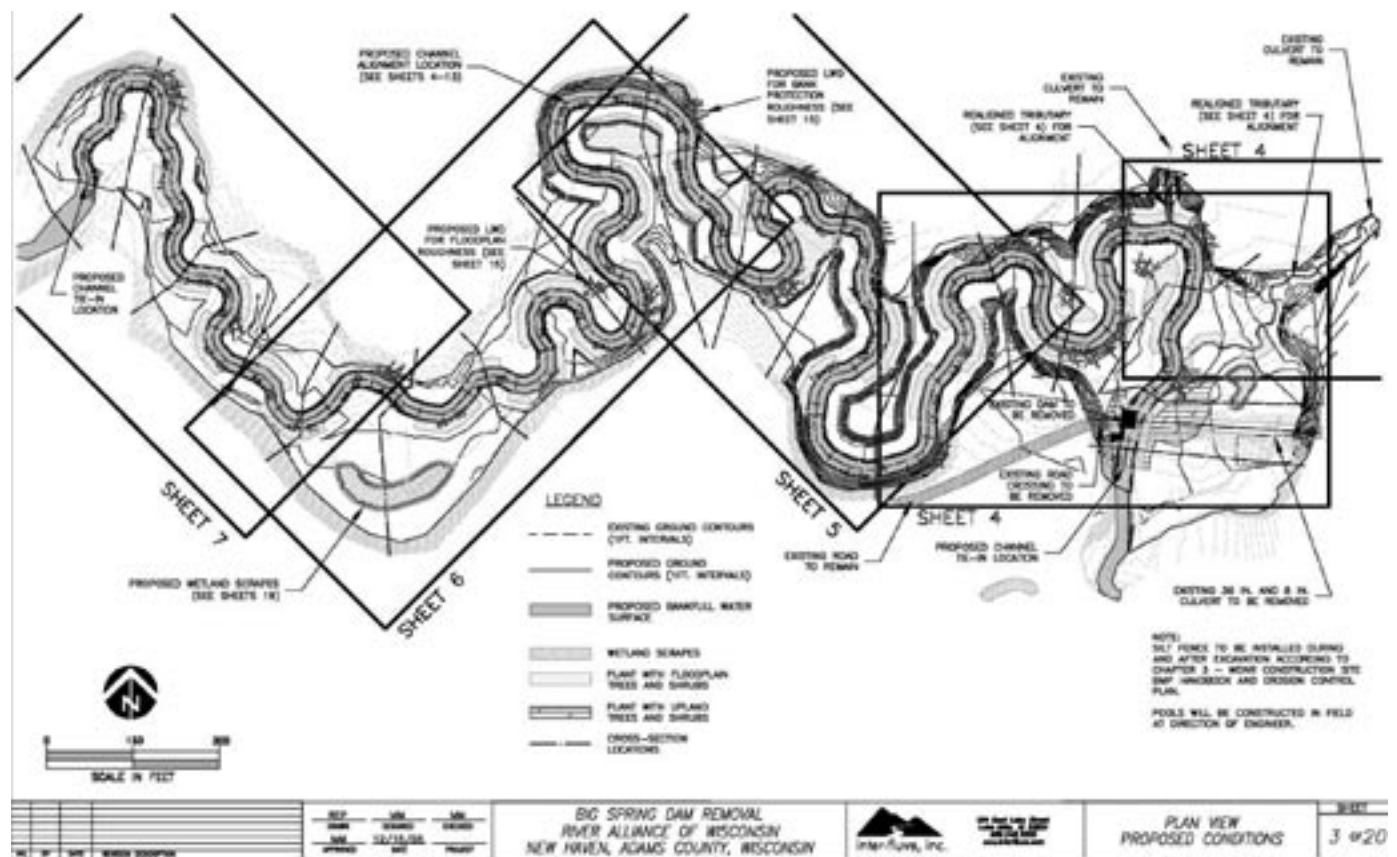


Illustration of the river and floodplain restoration design proposed by Lake Mills-based stream restoration consulting firm, Inter-fluve. Illustration provided by Inter-fluve

2. the most valuable properties (highest sales prices) were at sites where the river has been free-flowing (i.e. no dam) for at least 20 years; and,
3. property values around small impoundments decrease as you get closer to the water.

This third result was a surprising find. But it is consistent with

the history of many of these older millponds that were historically located in industrial and commercial sections of town. While homes may have been built along the pond eventually, the more established residential neighborhoods were rarely located on the millpond or even near the river.

This study and resulting report were supported by the McKnight Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, and come after more than two years of research and data collection on property sales.

Big Spring Restoration Takes One Giant Step Forward

This summer, permit applications were submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for removing the dam and restoring Big Spring Creek in Adams County. All landowners around the proposed restoration area have authorized work on their properties, including the Town of New Haven. Adams County has applied for a DNR River Protection Grant for the project.

If all goes well, a public hearing on the project will be held in September. Plans to breach the dam are scheduled for late fall of 2006. The project has been a three-year collaborative effort of the dam owner Mark Knutsen, the Adams County Land and Water Conservation Department, River Alliance and DNR.

Good-bye and May Our Streams Meander Together Again

Many of you have had the pleasure of talking to and working with Dams Program assistant Tanya Meyer over the last couple of years. Tanya has been an invaluable member of the River Alliance team, first with her Herculean efforts to collect the data for the above economics study and subsequently for the key role she has played in coordinating efforts for the Big Spring restoration. Tanya graduated with a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from UW-Madison this spring and will be putting her engineering and water knowledge to work with the Department of Natural Resources as a water resources engineer. We wish her all the best in her new job!



Photo of Big Spring Dam whose proposed removal will trigger restoration of two miles of coldwater stream and seven acres of wetlands. River Alliance photo



Tanya Meyer

A New Chapter for the Bark River

Continues from cover...

dam, and the river they relied on, were even more essential to daily life. When settlers first came to the Delafield area in 1836, Margaret noted, they would have relied on the water for power, sustaining livestock and other essential functions.

According to Margaret, the dam was built during a period of speculation surrounding the planned construction of the Milwaukee and Rock River Canal, connecting Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River. Its first owner had operated mills in Ohio, and saw an opportunity to not only run a mill with the dam, but capture revenue from locks on the future canal.

It was this revenue opportunity, Margaret theorizes, that caused the dam's odd shape: It starts along the section line, then veers off at an angle into the other section, which she says would have given the owner control over the locks. "That bothered me for a long time, and I finally figured it out," she says, referring to the dam's shape.

The scheme was for naught, however. By 1843, the canal's planners had abandoned the idea due to the increasing competition from rail-



The Bark River downstream from the Nemahbin Roller Mill Dam, constructed in 1839. *River Alliance photo*

roads. The mill proved to be more successful. Over the years, the dam's owners—including Nelson Hawks—operated it first as a sawmill, then as a flour mill. The original structure burned in an 1853 fire, and a new millhouse was constructed on the

other side of the river, where it stands today. Zerwekh believes the remains of the old mill, including its machinery, may still be buried in the gravel across the Bark from her home.

While the mill served as a vital part of the Delafield community through the first decades of the 20th century, its economic viability has since declined. Kenneth Zerwekh succeeded in generating electricity to sell to the power company but in recent years, however, an increasing number of repairs were needed, and the profits Margaret received from the electricity dwindled.

The first major repairs came after a state Department of Natural Resources inspection in the late 1970s. Margaret was required to remove 63 trees, stumps and all, from on and around the earthen dam, a project that cost her \$60,000. "I keep wondering how the heck I came up with that money," she says.

A few years ago, the turbine became damaged and was no longer able to produce electricity. Now, Margaret says, the DNR is requiring that she widen the dam's spillway by 2008 to be in compliance with state law. Facing high repair costs, and after her attempts to get the dam listed on the National Register of Historic Places failed, she came to the conclusion in fall 2004 that the best course of action would be to remove the dam altogether and restore a free-flowing river.

A Vision Not Shared

"I've been living on water all of my life, except for the two or three

years I was in the desert in World War II," Zerwekh says.

Growing up on her family's farm near Rochester, Minnesota, she watched canoes paddle by and trappers track mink on the Zumbro River. Later, she lived in view of the Mississippi and on Puget Sound in Kitsap County, Washington, but it is those memories of her childhood river you hear in her voice when she describes what she'd like to see the Bark become.

"It's a wonderful river for canoeing and the mink will come back and go up and down the river ... and the otter will come downstream ... and the eagles will come back and stay here, both the bald and the golden," she says.

Achieving her vision of the river is proving difficult, however. Since Zerwekh first took steps to remove the dam, by submitting an application for abandonment with the state Department of Natural Resources in fall 2004, she has faced strong opposition in her community and continues to wrestle with the challenges associated with the major undertaking of dam removal.

The residents living around the millpond have been one source of opposition to the dam's removal, fearing a drop in their property values and the loss of the pond they have lived and recreated on. One couple filed a lawsuit against Margaret over the pond's water levels, which they alleged had fallen below what state law required, but a judge

Continues on next page...



Margaret Zerwekh faces many challenges as she takes steps to remove the Nemahbin Roller Mill Dam. *River Alliance photo*



Continues from page 6...
dismissed the case in April.

The city of Delafield has also been a source of opposition. City officials have said they want to preserve the dam for its historic, aesthetic and environmental importance. When Zerwekh said she wouldn't sell the dam to the city, the Common Council took steps to use eminent domain to condemn and take over her property. A consultant hired by the city estimated that it would cost between \$650,000 and \$850,000 to replace the dam, versus \$230,000 to remove it. The consultant said that it was unlikely the current dam could be repaired to meet DNR standards.

A Free-Flowing Future?

Zerwekh is enthusiastic when asked to talk about the future she sees for the Bark if the dam is removed. "If we could get some trees growing here, because I'd love to plant trees, we could get some eagles," she says. She would like to put in "nursery logs" (root wads) along the river's banks to provide habitat for fish, and thinks that four springs located upriver of the dam could help provide cool water for trout and other species. "That's go-

ing to be a cold river when we take the dam out," she muses.

She worries about what might happen if the dam is removed, too, knowing that rivers in their natural state can be unpredictable. "[The river] can't stay the same because it rains differently all the time," she says. Downstream, by Upper Nemahbin Lake, houses are built right up to the river, and she worries what the sediment stored behind the dam might mean for them.

She has concerns about her own property as well, having discovered a 1915 surveyor's map showing the river once flowed where the millhouse stands. "If we take out the dam, where are we going to put the river? It's going to want to keep flowing where the glacier told it to," she says. "It's not going to be an easy job."

Still, Zerwekh seems convinced that taking out her dam is the right thing to do, even if others in her community remain skeptical.

"I don't think people understand how it can be a great benefit," she says. "If we do this right in restoring the river, people will come from all over the place to see what we're doing."



The millhouse, purchased by Kenneth Zerwekh in 1947.
River Alliance photo

3 Simple Steps to Create a Lawn

That's Healthy for Kids, Pets, Wildlife and Water Quality

This time of year many folks are making plans for their lawn. Maybe you're planning a trip to the store to get lawn supplies. Or a call to a lawn care company that promises a lush, green carpet in your yard. Before you take action, consider the following. One lawn is only a small piece of land, but when you add up all the lawns across the country they cover an area the size of the State of Ohio. How we manage our lawns affects the health of our children, pets, wildlife and water quality. Here are three simple steps for creating a lawn that's healthy for all.



Step 1: Avoid pesticide use

Avoid using pesticides because they are dangerous for children, pets and other wildlife. In addition, these harmful chemicals can be tracked into the house or leach into the groundwater. Pesticides include insecticides, fungicides, herbicides and are in weed and feed products.

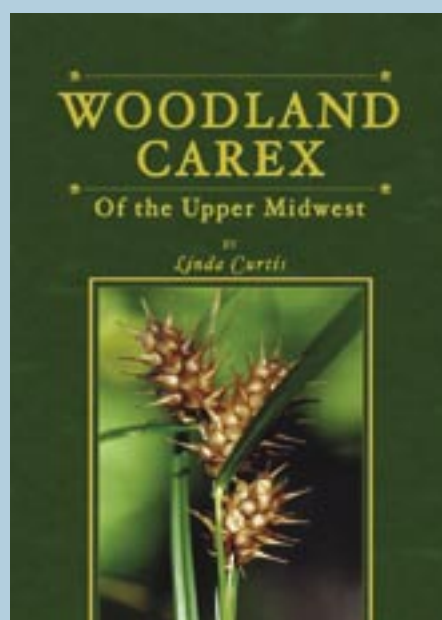
Step 2: Choose zero-phosphorus fertilizer

Before you fertilize, test your soil and see what it really needs. If you must fertilize, avoid fertilizers that contain phosphorus. Remember, it's phosphorous that accelerates algae growth in our lakes and rivers. Whether you live next to water or not, the runoff from your lawn can make its way to the groundwater or local lake or stream. Consider this – one pound of phosphorous in runoff can result in 500 pounds of algae growth! If you follow the instructions on a bag of fertilizer containing phosphorus, you may be adding over 50 pounds of phosphorus to a half-acre lot each year. The middle number on a fertilizer bag indicates the amount of phosphorus it contains.

Step 3: Consider downsizing your lawn

Only mow where you go. If the only time a person walks on a particular piece of lawn is when you mow it, why bother? Mow areas that you use: under hammocks, picnic tables, play areas and the like. Golf course-type lawns are missing many of the benefits that more interesting yards can provide. By planting more trees and shrubs, wildflowers and tall grasses you provide fun play areas for kids as well as nesting spots and food for songbirds, butterflies and other wildlife. In addition, a smaller lawn takes less time to mow, uses less gas and provides more time for rest and relaxation. Caring for children, pets, birds, drinking water, lakes and streams begins in our own backyards.

* For more information, contact: Lynn Markham, Land Use Specialist
Center for Land Use Education, University of WI - Stevens Point
800 Reserve Street, Stevens Point, Wisconsin 54481
Phone (715) 346-3879, email: Lynn.Markham@uwsp.edu



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Jay Krienitz
Local Groups Program
Assistant Manager
Acting Locally



Unlocking the Mystery to Organizing For Rivers

Ellen Barnard never imagined that she would be the founder of a new local river group. But like many people around the Cherokee Marsh, within the Upper Yahara River watershed just north of Madison, she was compelled to act: the large housing development proposed for her neighborhood is progressing rapidly, and the thought of losing everything she loves about the area was too much to take.



Ellen Barnard, right, founder of the Friends of Cherokee Marsh group, speaking out at a local planning meeting. *River Alliance photos*

Despite good laws like the Clean Water Act, and hundreds of state and local laws and ordinances, every day in Wisconsin there is a reason for ordinary people like Ellen to be outraged, and organize to protect their river. Manure spills kill fish, Milwaukee sewage overflows foul Lake Michigan, and construction sites send three times more soil to rivers on a per-acre basis than a cornfield. Political pressure not to enforce

water quality laws and economic pressures to create jobs, build thirsty water parks and golf courses, all work against river protection.

This is why more and more river and watershed protection groups spring up across the state, now numbering around 160. People like Ellen take their newfound awareness of the issues affecting their home riv-

ers and organize their communities to find real solutions.

Many river groups start up in ways similar to Ellen's Friends of Cherokee Marsh and the Upper Yahara Watershed. Groups form around one particular burning issue, which builds energy for community organizing. However, when that original issue eventually gets resolved—the housing development gets built, the factory closes down, the dam gets taken out, the farm cleans up its act—groups find themselves without direction. They wonder why they don't have the members they need, the volunteers they want, and the leaders to continue the good work of the organization. This happens regardless of if they won or lost their fight.

All the groups that continue to have energy and success have one thing in common: they are aware of *all* the important issues affecting their river, now and into the future. They also understand many of the following factors:

- Solving the issue must result in a real improvement in the water body they have organized to protect
- People should get a sense of their own power, as citizens exercising their democratic rights
- They must address an economic angle that would benefit the community
- Their issue must be easily under-

stood, and people must see a path to winning

- They must know what "success" would be, and have a clear time-frame for it
- The group builds leadership through its work on the issue
- Their organizing alters the relations of power by giving strength to local citizens
- Their issue must be presented in a way that builds unity amongst the community and appeals its core values.

River groups may form when they have a big issue to take on, but those groups that sustain themselves and succeed are mindful of many of these factors. And as they succeed, they find the keys to unlocking the mysterious nature of grassroots organizing.

Look on the River Alliance of Wisconsin's website, www.wisconsinrivers.org, or on the Wisconsin River Groups Blog, www.wisconsinrivergroups.blogspot.com, for information about these groups. Learn how you can help them or, just as good, learn how they can help you.

Blog with the Best



Take part in the newest free service for your river group!

This "Blog" is essentially a message board for your group's interest. Post interesting news articles about your group, write a compelling story about your river, announce your summertime events! You can even post job or volunteer opportunities. This is entirely driven by the people interested in protecting rivers. Write to: wisconsinrivergroups@yahoo.com if you'd like to use this free service.





Lori Grant
Policy Program Manager
Policy Program

Doing it like DNR

Instead of the usual doom and gloom about attacks on state rules and regulations protecting our waterways, it's time for some good news. For the past several years we've been pushing DNR to use stream data collected by citizens to help fill gaping holes in their own records, and through a partnership effort this year, we're seeing great strides toward achieving our goal.

Classifying each river to identify its potential healthy state determines how that river will be regulated and managed—for example, whether a new wastewater discharge could be permitted, or whether restoration projects are necessary. If rivers are not accurately classified, they run the risk of being held to lower water quality standards. DNR does not have sufficient data to classify every river and stream. Moreover, even where citizen monitors have invested their time and labor to gather data on their local rivers, it's not being used by DNR.

From Crossed Arms to Embraces

In the spring of 2005, we approached DNR with a proposal to conduct a pilot project together. We wanted to understand why DNR has been hesitant to use citizen-gathered data, and to find ways to overcome their concerns. At initial meetings, we were met with crossed arms and suspicious looks, but the joint pilot project has provided the path to mutual enlightenment. Instead of fears that we are advocating for citizens to take over their jobs or to dictate their day-to-day work, DNR staff are embracing the idea that they could accomplish much more with addi-

tional data, gathered by citizens, and are participating in the pilot project in addition to their regular job duties.

Going into the project, we assumed that citizens working under the Water Action Volunteers (WAV) stream monitoring program were in fact gathering the data required for river classification, and that DNR simply refused to use the data because they did not trust the source. Now we know that DNR's protocols are far more rigorous than WAV's, and that the types of data they collect are different. In order for citizen data to be used for regulatory purposes, it must be collected the same way as DNR.

The River Alliance and DNR jointly fund and manage the pilot project, led by Frank Fetter. As a former DNR lake monitoring coordinator and former executive director of the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association, Frank has the respect of DNR staff and access to the DNR database, as well as the trust of the local groups involved in the pilot project. Frank has trained sixteen local river groups from across the state to collect water quality data in the same way and using the same equipment as DNR, and to input their data directly into a DNR database. At the end of the monitoring season, we'll assess successes, review lessons learned, and recommend ways to expand the pilot project. A successful pilot project will set the stage for developing trainings and opportunities for citizens to learn and participate in the more difficult data collection and analysis, building toward a statewide monitoring program that will lead to better river classification and, ultimately, better river protection.



River Alliance assistant Chris Clayton (left) enjoys cherry pie with executive director Denny Caneff at last summer's staff retreat.
River Alliance photo

Demonstrating that citizens can do it like DNR, and do it well, is critical to full acceptance by DNR of the value of citizen monitoring and the future of a statewide program. While it's still early in the project, DNR's enthusiastic support indicates we're well on the way. At public hearings on the River Alliance's petition to designate pristine northern rivers as Outstanding and Exceptional Resource Waters, DNR staff stated they hope to see citizen-collected data to reclassify additional rivers!

We hope to take them up on that offer, and look for ways to extend the pilot project another year to build momentum and push for a fully-funded citizen monitoring program within DNR that will solidify the agency's relationship with hundreds of citizen volunteers working to protect their rivers.

Good-bye and Good Luck to Chris

Chris Clayton wrapped up his duties this spring as an assistant to the River Alliance's Policy Program. Chris helped boil down the important elements of proposed shoreland zoning rules (so-called NR 115) and got the word out about those rules to our members. He also developed a primer on construction site erosion that will be the conceptual backbone for a training we will offer local watershed groups watch-dogging construction site erosion. And despite his Illinois farm country origins, he's proven he's adapted admirably to Wisconsin's waterways.

He's completed his Master's degree in water resources and is on the job market. We wish him well in his professional pursuits.



Word on the Stream

Word on the Stream is great way for you to keep informed about issues concerning the rivers and streams of Wisconsin. These e-mail updates include tips on what you can do when citizen action is needed on a river issue.

We send a "Word" approximately every other week. These snippets of information are designed to give you a quick overview of key issues impacting the waterways of Wisconsin without inundating you with unnecessary email. When possible we provide a contact number, e-mail address or website guiding you to more information and ways to get involved.

Subscribe to *Word on the Stream* and stay in-the-know about issues affecting Wisconsin's rivers and streams!

Just visit www.wisconsinrivers.org and click on Newsletters or send an email to word@wisconsinrivers.org We'll do the rest!



A River Runs Through Your Schedule

For more information and to reserve your spot, visit www.wisconsinrivers.org, email Sarah Murray at smurray@wisconsinrivers.org, or call 608.257.2424.

Saturday, July 22 3rd Annual Canoes n' Brews Milwaukee

If you do it three years in a row, is it an institution? We don't know that, but we do know it's a unique experience to paddle through a big-city downtown area. Co-sponsored by Friends of



Thanks for supporting
River Alliance events this summer!
Clean water = better beer.

Milwaukee's Rivers, this excursion shows you don't need to go "up North" for an enjoyable day on the water. And, speaking of water, we imbibe in some "malted water" at a downtown brew pub at the end of the trip.

Sunday, August 6 Explore Ancient River Trails with John Bates and Mary Burns

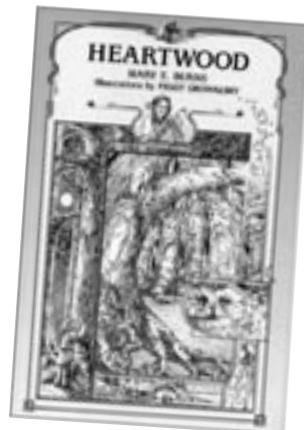
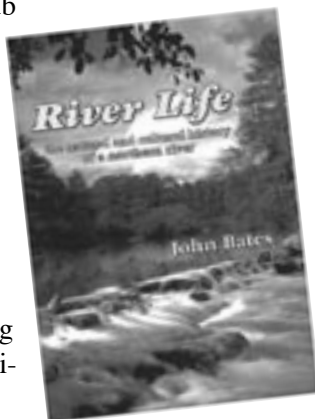
Join naturalist John Bates and artist Mary Burns for a paddle into the past along some of Wisconsin's most noted ancient river trails along the Manitowish River. You will relive the experiences of early explorers and traders, glide past primeval shores that once provided rest spots and campsites for early natives and voyageurs. Listen hard, and you'll hear the "wilderness music" of those who paddled before you. Each participant will receive free, signed copies of John's book, *River Life*, and Mary's book, *Heartwood*.



Tim Palmer



Canoes and Brews, 2005
Photo courtesy Edee Daniel



Receive a free, signed copy of *River Life*, by John Bates and *Heartwood*, by Mary Burns.

Tuesday, August 8 Milky Moonlight in Milwaukee: A Full Moon Paddle on the Milwaukee River

Paddling through a big-city downtown is pleasurable any time of day, but imagine what it would be like at night, with the lights of the city shimmering on the water and a full moon presiding over the whole scene. Co-sponsored by Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers.

Thursday, September 21 An Evening with Tim Palmer, Author of *Rivers of America*, Madison

Author Tim Palmer comes to town to talk about the process of assembling the words and pictures for his latest book.

Saturday, October 14 Run For the Rivers, Verona

This is our first foray into the world of organized runs. Co-sponsored by *Hooked on the Outdoors* magazine, we'll offer a 5k and 10k run to benefit the River Alliance.

Experience a Chilean River and Support the River Alliance

The River Alliance is partnering with Piragis Northwoods Co. to bring you global water adventure. Piragis offers a paddle-and-float adventure across Chile from the Argentine border to the Pacific and a way to experience the Andes as few tourists ever will. The trip takes place February 1-12, 2007. Just mention "River Alliance" when you register for this trip and Piragis will make a \$250 donation to the River Alliance.

You will experience the Palena River, first by raft, then by kayak, paddling through the canyon of the Palena and by several waterfalls with rainforest around you at all times. The fishing for rainbow and brown trout is good and there may even be a salmon or two to cast for. Each night you camp with Chilean ranchers who will host your meals and introduce you to life on the river. Expect lots of barbecues in Chilean style.

One layover day at the most scenic of all ranches we'll mount ponies and head for the hills to explore on horseback. If prefer to hike or fish that is possible, too. Our final days on the river are in sea kayaks as the river widens. Our final destination is a small fiord town where we stay in a B and B and feast on fresh seafood for 2 days while we paddle the fiords and hike on the sand dunes and beaches.

More details are available at <http://www.piragis.com/international/patagonia.html>

Contact Denny Caneff at the River Alliance (608-257-2424 ext. 115), or for trip details, contact Kim McCluskey at Piragis, 1-800-223-6565.

You must register with Piragis; all travel details are arranged by Piragis. The company has graciously offered a contribution for every registration that comes to them by way of the River Alliance. That way, you can take an exotic and expertly guided river trip and support your local river conservation organization.



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Thank You!

We are truly indebted to our individual, business and organizational members. This list represents gifts given since January 1, 2006. We regret, due to space limitations, we cannot list every one of our important supporters.

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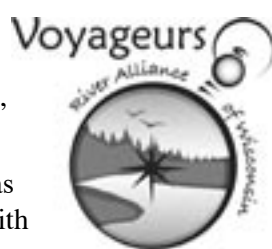
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Donations from individuals, businesses and organizations keep your rivers healthy for all. We'll be recognizing these donors in an upcoming special mailing. Thanks!

Voyageur — literally “traveler” in French.

To many of us who love the north country, the word “voyageur” brings another world to life. The voyageurs’ journeys were packed with challenges, just as our rivers are faced with new challenges every moment of every day.

This Fund is for pioneers willing to push on their paddles to protect the flowing waters of our state.



Join our growing list of dedicated supporters in this important and rewarding adventure. You'll receive special recognition for your contribution, invitations to exclusive events for Voyageurs (e.g. engaging speakers and guided river outings), personal contact with Board and staff members, and the satisfaction of sustaining the River Alliance for the long voyage ahead. Contact Michael Lavitschke for information. 608.257.2424, or email mlavitschke@wisconsinrivers.org.

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Thanks to Whole Foods and all who shopped Thursday, June 15. Your efforts helped us raise over \$3,600 for Wisconsin’s flowing waters!





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Wild Rivers 40th Anniversary Celebration

Over 100 people, including tourism secretary Jim Holperin and natural resources secretary Scott Hassett, celebrated the 40th anniversary of the passage of the Wisconsin's Wild Rivers law in Florence. That law, which protects the Pine, Pike and Popple Rivers in northeastern Wisconsin, helped open the door for a similar federal law that passed a few years later.



Joan and David Martin (left) swap stories with Herb and Genie Buettner. David was the father of Wisconsin's Wild Rivers law. He credits the Buettners with saving the Wolf River, one of Wisconsin's most pristine, from a proposed clam in the early 1960s.

River Alliance photo



Wisconsin Secretary of Tourism Jim Holperin tells the Wild Rivers anniversary crowd that "it is never short-sighted or a mistake to set aside natural resources for the public. Indeed it is short-sighted not to."

River Alliance photo

Wisconsin Rivers

Everyone deserves healthy rivers

A New Chapter for the Bark River
A Movement with Over 160 Moving Parts
Doing It Like DNR